



Our Mission -

"TO ENSURE THE PRESERVATION OF THE CHARACTER AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF WAGNER NATURAL AREA FOR EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH PURPOSES."

Friends of the Fen

WAGNER NATURAL AREA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Upcoming events:

Pale Yellow Iris Weed Pull Day

Where: Meet at Wagner Natural Area parking lot.

When: Saturday June 8 @ 10 a.m.

Who: Anyone who wants to volunteer is welcome; let us know you'll be there by emailing info@wagnerfen.ca and we can be prepared for everyone.

Format: Be sure to wear your rubber boots and work gloves. Come ready to go toe to toe with some Pale Yellow Iris!

2019 Activities

Bat Walk: Friday June 14 – 9:30 p.m.

Orchid Walk: Sunday June 16 -- 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. (Father's Day)

Frog/Toad Walk: Cancelled due to the drying up of habitat along the Marl Pond Trail. Perhaps next year!

Other Work Bees: TBD

For every activity, plan to meet at the Wagner parking lot.

Visit our website:

www.wagnerfen.ca

for more information on upcoming events at Wagner Natural Area.

MAY WAGNER STORIES - Bob. U

Wagner in the Classroom!



During the last week of May, Wagner Natural Area Society (WNAS) President Dave Ealey and I visited two different schools to talk to some elementary students about Wagner Natural Area (WNA). Dave presented on the ecological properties and significance of Wagner, while I talked about some of Wagner's local wildlife. As part of Wagner's public outreach efforts, engaging and informing today's youth on the importance of natural areas is critical in ensuring the long-term protection and sustainability of our environment.

The young minds we presented to eagerly ate up our educational information, especially when we talked about the carnivorous plants and aquatic water tigers of Wagner. Many of them asked engaging questions about Wagner or shared their own stories about their experiences with nature. After our presentations, many students told us how much they enjoyed learning about Wagner and how they hope to visit the natural area with their family. I am a strong believer that the spread of environmental education and knowledge can aid in improving humanity's relationship with the environment. By teaching our youth how we impact the environment and instilling an understanding of the crucial ecosystem services that the environment provides, we can work toward developing a future where humans play a more positive role in the environment.

Wagner for Mental Health



Wagner Natural Area was invited to present at a "Nature for Mental Health" workshop held in Spruce Grove. The workshop highlighted how being outside in nature stimulates your five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. Instead of city environments forcefully engaging or assaulting your senses, the peace and tranquility of nature allows you to slowly engage your senses and seek out those stimulations. This interaction with nature can induce a relaxing and joyful effect. Dave Ealey and I talked about how WNA is an ideal natural area for improving your mental well-being and engaging your senses. Dave discussed Wagner's history and ecological

significance as well as how the public can responsibly enjoy the WNA and its Marl Pond Trail. I presented on my own experience with Wagner as a calming place full of pleasant interactions with the environment, particularly the native wildlife. For myself, simply listening to the local avian orchestra, watching a squirrel chow down on a delectable spruce cone, or enjoying the auditory rhythms of wood frogs provides me with a feeling of contentment. As an advocate for improving mental health through engaging with nature, I recommend heading out to Wagner to walk the Marl Pond Trail and experience the spa-like effects of the local fauna and flora.

Wagner PlantWatch

Near the end of May I toured the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) property that is part of Wagner Natural Area to look for plants that are listed for Alberta's PlantWatch. PlantWatch is a citizen science program aimed at identifying when certain plants flower and leaf-out in the spring. By reporting this information, Albertans can help to establish the timing of spring plant development under changing climate conditions. For information on how you can participate head to plantwatch.naturealberta.ca.

I studied the list of vascular plants found at WNA (this list can be found on the WNA website) and compared that list to the Alberta PlantWatch list. From that comparison, I discovered there are 17 plant species found in WNA that meet Alberta PlantWatch criteria:

• Aspen Poplar • Bunchberry • Choke Cherry • Common Bearberry • Common Dandelion • Early Blue Violet • Labrador Tea • Northern Bedstraw • Saskatoon • Star-flowered Solomon's Seal • Tamarack • Twinflower • Wild Strawberry • Paper Birch • Balsam Poplar • Lingonberry • Common Yarrow

From my initial survey of the NCC Property, I was able to identify six Alberta PlantWatch species on the NCC Property:

1. Aspen Poplar
2. Balsam Poplar
3. Tamarack
4. Dandelion
5. Wild Strawberry
6. Paper Birch



All the plant species I identified had new leaves established, with the strawberry and dandelion still in bloom. I am hoping that during my planned subsequent visits to the area I will discover more WNA PlantWatch species. The majority of the WNA-NCC property appears to be deciduous or mixed forest and dry rather than the wet coniferous conditions in the rest of WNA. This NCC environment may actually lead to more PlantWatch species being found there than elsewhere.

May Species Counts



On May 25th and 26th, Wagner Natural Area (WNA) held its annual bird and flowering plant species counts. I was lucky enough to be able to attend both species count days. On behalf of Wagner, I would like to extend a huge thank you to all the volunteers who helped out with the counts. The volunteering of your valuable weekend time was most appreciated! Some of my favourite highlights of the counts were watching Brown-headed Cowbirds displaying on perches and flying over the fens, witnessing soaring Red-tailed Hawks, and discovering small groups of flowering Bog Violets with the odd Bog Rosemary in bloom. A notable observation was the sheer number of Yellow-Lady's Slippers waiting to bloom in the coming weeks. I think it's safe to say Wagner will have a satisfactory display of its official flower for the Father's Day Orchid Walk. For our July newsletter we plan to publish a full report of the bird and plant counts, so stay tuned!



A letter from the WNAS President: Dave Ealey

Following the AGM of the Wagner Natural Area Society on March 9, the Board members voted for executive positions at our April 30 Board meeting. I am pleased to remain as President and look forward to working with **Beth Jenkins**, as our returning Secretary, and **Alan Hingston** as the returning Treasurer to handle the executive responsibilities. We currently do not have a Vice-President, but do have a full complement of elected and appointed directors to run the business of the Society. Returning Board members include **Ben Rostron** (Past President), **Carolyn Vanderveen**, **Derek Johnson**, **Irl Miller**, **Katelyn Ceh**, and **Tony Sneep**. New to the Board are **Robert Holt** and **Claudia Palylyk**. Many thanks for all the efforts of retiring Board members: **Mike Jenkins** and **Jasper Keizer**.