

OUR MISSION -

“To ensure the preservation of the character and biological biodiversity of Wagner Natural Area for Educational, Scientific and Research purposes.”



Friends of the Fen



WAGNER
NATURAL
AREA

Artist: Skye Midgley, sketches along the Marl Pond Trail, Sept. 2022.

WAGNER NATURAL AREA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Event

Spring Clean-up, Sat. May 6, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Meet at Wagner parking lot.

Help us get the natural area ready for the summer! Pick-up sticks, safety vests, and garbage bags provided. Be prepared for wet conditions (i.e., rubber boots), and dress for the weather.

Snacks and water provided. Let us know you are coming out by sending an email to info@wagnerfen.ca.

Further Events:

Check the wagnerfen.ca website for info on

MAY SPECIES COUNTS

(May 27th – birds; 28th – plants)

Weed Pulls on June 3&4, 24&25, July 15&16, August 5&6

All newsletter stories, unless otherwise noted, were prepared by Dave Ealey, WNAS President.

WAGNER 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

2022 Annual Report Wagner Natural Area Society

Submitted to Annual General Meeting, March 18, 2023

Dave Ealey, Past-President

Still under the cloud of COVID protocols and limitations at the beginning of the year, we gradually opened up on the number and types of events held at Wagner Natural Area compared with the past couple of years.

Board business carried on, often by Zoom, and we held our second virtual AGM! I want to thank my fellow Directors for all their efforts in 2022.

Cheryl Johnson-Dempsey served as our President, contributing to the smooth running of our meetings and championing a recognition program. Alas, with her extensive travel commitments, she has found the leadership role difficult to sustain, but is keen to participate as an ongoing Director in our education and outreach effort, which is an excellent fit with her outdoor education skills.

Beth Jenkins, as our official Secretary and Parliamentarian, quietly alerts us to the procedural rules and regulations that she has learned through her long history with WNAS.

Melissa Chisholm took on the Treasurer role from Alan Hingston and is ably negotiating the financial ins-and-outs of a charitable non-profit organization, including our first foray into managing a Casino opportunity.

Alan, following his departure from the Board at our last AGM, served as our Casino Coordinator for that first Casino, held in early 2023.

Carolyn Vanderveen is perhaps best known for her Neighbourhood Watch role; as a resident of the Osborne Acres subdivision, her counsel is invaluable for our understanding of the district.

Ben Rostron is a busy guy with his academic and geohydrological business activities; we are grateful to be able to consult with him, especially on history of the organization and on dealing with water and land issues.

Robert Holt serves as our site monitor, who consistently checks on the site management needs and any potential safety issues for our visitors; as a Parkland County resident, Robert is our prime connection with some of the municipal representatives, and knows his way around the County!

Support Us!



Artist: Skye Midgley – from her visit to Wagner Natural Area, Sept. 2022.

The Wagner Natural Area Society welcomes new supporters, volunteers, and all people interested in natural history and the preservation of the ecological integrity of this delightful natural area.

VOLUNTEERS / MEMBERS

People of all talents and interests are desired and welcomed to become more closely involved with the Natural Area and the Society.

Email: info@wagnerfen.ca

DONATIONS

All donations help maintain the integrity of the Natural Area and its surroundings, provide educational material, enhance visitor experiences, and support on-going research studies and surveys.

Please see page 7 for the donation/volunteer form.

Claudia Palylyk contributes significantly to our Board capacity with her professional environmental and wetland knowledge; her network of colleagues has connected the WNAS with important forest management and water specialists.

Chris Saunders, who did some of his academic studies on Wagner Natural Area many years ago, has brought a depth of experience in the management of invasive species and natural landscapes to our Board.



Artist: Skye Midgley, 2022.

The boardwalk in September. Is that a moose in the shadows?

The significant increase, in 2021, of public visiting the Marl Pond Trail continued in 2022. Visitors, who had come to recognize a walk-in-nature as a COVID-friendly family activity, frequently jammed our parking lot, especially on weekends.

Student classes, outdoor groups, and our usual May Species Counts and the Orchid Walk graced our Marl Pond Trail, as in years past, with enthusiastic visitors led by Wagner ambassadors.

We are grateful to the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, who enabled us to employ an environmental student, Sydney Cantu, for the summer. Sydney helped us staff display events, connect with visitors and conduct site management, at the same time as learning what type of career she is likely to pursue. In addition, Sydney helped us with research into how to engage potential new visitors from BIPOC communities and played a major role in contributing to our Weed Management Strategy, under the leadership of Director Chris Saunders.

Many volunteers (see volunteer hours listing below) helped us with our weed management efforts in 2022, an important responsibility since Wagner Natural Area Society is essentially equivalent to a landowner for the entire 250+ hectares! And we want to maintain good

relations with our neighbours, by reducing the chance of invasive weeds accumulating along the edges of the natural area and potentially spreading to adjacent properties. It is also important from a biodiversity perspective to minimize the occurrence of invasive weeds as they could also intrude upon the unique vegetation of Wagner fen communities. We are thankful for some funding from Parkland County for equipment and to implement contract weed control efforts in appropriate locations.

We continued to have some challenges with adjacent land development and highway planners. The land development issue led to an unfruitful encounter with the Land and Property Rights Tribunal, who refused to recognize our concerns under a subdivision appeal. We had more success on the highway issue (although we didn't learn the outcome until 2023), thanks to our significant effort to connect with the highway 16 long-range planners early in their public engagement process. We provided clear and consistent criticism of a narrow-minded approach being considered by the engineers; consequently, by the time of their more structured public process in early 2023, we were delighted to learn that there were now no plans to intrude into the natural area at all!

This brings me to our grand celebration for our 40th anniversary Open House in the fall. We were extremely lucky to have John Acorn available to speak to us at this event. John's history with Wagner Natural Area is remarkable and I know several in attendance who were inspired by his encouragement to press on with discovering all that our fen has to offer.

Here's to the next 40 years!



Artist: Skye Midgley, 2022

Highlights and Activities 2022 for Wagner Natural Area Society

Jan. 11—board meeting	June 19—Orchid Walk
Feb. 16—black knot pruning	June 25/26—Volunteer weed pull
Feb. 22—board meeting	July 9/10—Volunteer weed pull
Mar. 5—new Wagner recognition mugs	Aug. 8—build bench on Marl Pond Trail
Mar. 10—board meeting	Sept. 20—board meeting
Mar. 26—WNAS AGM on Zoom	Sept. 24—fall clean-up
Apr. 19—board meeting	Sept. 27—Parkland County video at Wagner
May 7—spring clean-up	Oct. 16—40 th Anniversary Open House
May 17—board meeting	Oct. 29—fenceline rehabilitation
May 28/29—May species count (birds)(plants)	Nov. 15—board mtg
June 11—Wild Bird Unlimited trail walk	Nov. 29—Land and Property Rights Tribunal
June 18—first Tree Swallow young banded	

Volunteer Hours by Wagner Natural Area Society

Society meetings and administration—	250 person-hours
▪ <i>Admin./governance – 250 person-hours</i>	
Site Management	
▪ Clean-ups and monthly monitors—	200 person-hours
▪ Weed pulls—	150 person-hours
▪ <i>Site Management – 350 person-hours</i>	
Research—	
▪ nest box banding & maint./ bird surveys —	50 person-hours
▪ May Species counts—	30 person-hours
▪ Weed management strategy	50 person-hours
▪ <i>Research – 130 person-hours</i>	
Public Education and Outreach	
▪ Talks/Booths/field tours/AGM—	100 person-hours
▪ Signage/website and e-newsletter—	50 person-hours
▪ Public Outreach –	150 person-hours

Total **880 person-hours**

Summer Student hours

Site Management:	100 hrs	Education & Outreach:	270 hrs
Research/Monitoring:	60 hrs	Administration:	50 hrs
BIPOC research:	40 hrs	Weed Strategy:	90 hrs
Travel:	30 hrs		

BOARD BULLETIN:

Following the Annual General Meeting in March, the Wagner Natural Area Society board held a couple meetings to attend to executive elections and appointment of Directors, with the following result:

President: Dave Ealey

Vice-President: Robert Holt

Treasurer: Melissa Chisholm

Secretary: Cheryl Johnson-Dempsey

Remaining elected Directors: Beth Jenkins, Chris Saunders, Claudia Palylyk, Larissa Clayton.

Appointed Directors: Carolyn Vanderveen (liaison with Osborne Acres Residents Association), Eagle Willier (liaison with Nature Conservancy of Canada).

Anybody with questions, concerns, comments, or kudos for the Board, please send an email to info@wagnerfen.ca.

See you on the trail!



More delightful art from Skye Midgley. Thanks so much for your incredible art.

MEMBERSHIP – WAGNER NATURAL AREA SOCIETY

Support / Donate / Volunteer

For more Information about Wagner Natural Area or the Society and about field trips and other activities, go to wagnerfen.ca.

Wagner Natural Area is a Registered Charity. Donations will help maintain this very special area; \$20 or more are receipted for Income Tax purposes, CRA B/N119287522 RR 0001

Society's annual fee is \$10 for Supporting Members and \$15 for Voting Members. Voting Members are key to run WNAS; must qualify through nomination. See website. The Society's fiscal year is January 1 to December 31.

Annual fee (Supporting \$10/Voting 15): \$ _____

Donation: \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

May the Society CONTACT you by: **EMAIL: Yes /No**

PHONE: Yes / No

Email Address: _____

Phone: _____

If you can VOLUNTEER to help with the Society with maintenance of the Natural Area (circle): **Yes**

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Mail this form with cheque/money order, payable to Wagner Natural Area Society, to:
Treasurer, Wagner Natural Area Society, 30531-118 Ave., Acheson, AB T7X 6M5

Or scan the completed form and pay online. Submit your membership/donation by Interac bank transfer to treasurer@wagnerfen.ca [June 2022]

SITE MANAGEMENT



During routine monitoring of the natural area in late March of this year, tracks from a quad entering the natural area were recorded. Thanks to input from Osborne Acres residents and other observations, we have documented illegal logging on site. We hope to be able to provide further information to members and associates about this flagrant violation of the sensitive landscapes that we have been guarding for 40+ years.

Visitors may see additional signage that we have posted to try to reinforce the signage that is already in place and to prevent further incursions.

