



## 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



*Ruffed Grouse are already nesting at Wagner Natural Area as photographed recently by our new Executive Director—see story inside.*

*Photo courtesy of: Tristan Folinsbee*

All stories and articles by Dave Ealey, President WNAS, unless otherwise attributed.

## WAGNER NATURAL AREA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

### Spring Cleanup Day

**When:** Saturday, May 10.

From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Where:** Meet at Wagner parking lot.

**Who:** Anyone to help tidy natural area after our dynamic winter.

**What:** Litter pickup, trail maintenance, wire rollup, fence maintenance and weed management.

**Gloves/boots suggested. Dress for the weather.**

**Training, tools, snacks and water provided.**

RSVP by sending an email to  
[info@wagnerfen.ca](mailto:info@wagnerfen.ca)

### WEED THERAPY

Announcing the introduction of a program for physical and mental health entitled **“Wagner Weed Therapy.”** You, too, can improve your mental and physical state through exercising outdoors and exorcising inner demons by digging, pulling, deflowering, and generally accosting our invasive enemies.

Join us for a two- or four-hour therapy session on any of the following Weed Whack Weekends: May 24/25, June 7/8, July 19/20, August 9/10. Times are from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., to avoid the heat. We meet at the Wagner parking lot and carpool to get to work sites. Please RSVP by sending email to [info@wagnerfen.ca](mailto:info@wagnerfen.ca)

## Executive Director Found!

Hi everyone. My name is **Tristan Folinsbee** and I've just started as the new Executive Director of the Wagner Natural Area. My wife and I live with our two-year-old son and two Labrador retrievers on Wabamun Lake, 30 minutes west of Wagner Natural Area.

I grew up in Edmonton and at our family property on Wabamun Lake, where we now live. My father, John—who some of you might know—was a long-time wildlife biologist with Alberta Fish and Wildlife, and I spent my childhood wandering the woods and wetlands of Alberta where I started a life-long fascination with wild animals and wild places that has led me here.

My career might be charitably described as varied; I received my degree in Political Science from the University of Alberta and I have worked as a fry cook, a dog sled guide, in sporting goods sales, as a tree planter with around 1.5 million trees planted throughout Western Canada and as a big game hunting guide in Northern B.C. and Yukon, among some other less illustrious jobs.

My current full-time job is with Ducks Unlimited Canada as the Habitat Manager for the Edmonton area. Many of you are likely familiar with projects I manage for DUC such as Clifford E. Lee or the Big Lake Purchase just ten minutes from Wagner.

I'm excited to be part of the Wagner family and look forward to meeting everyone at the Spring Clean up on May 10 or at the Weed Pull on May 24 and 25, or just out on the Marl Pond Trail. I hope to provide a real benefit to the sustained preservation of our wonderful Natural Area. I have some ideas about how to move the WNAS's mission forward, which I hope to discuss with the Board.

See you out there,

Tristan



## Support Us!



New complex of trees uplifting --  
Marl Pond Trail January 2025

Photo courtesy of

Dave Ealey

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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](mailto: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 ongoing research studies and surveys.

Visit our website for  
donation/member form.

## Two Summer Students Hired

Following posting of our summer term positions—Natural Area Specialist & Environmental Project Specialist—at various universities in the Edmonton area, we interviewed several candidates in late March. The successful candidates, **Nathan Hempler** and **Zen Hanrahan**, have been hired and you will get to meet them onsite at the Wagner Natural Area, at various display events in the Capital Region, and through their work in coming newsletters.

We are very grateful for the funding support through Canada Summer Jobs, Parkland County, and Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.

In addition, some funding for the projects the students are undertaking will be contributed by our casino funding through Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis.

Nature Alberta assists us with office space for the summer students on bad weather days and for computer-based or archival projects.

The students will be supervised by me (Dave Ealey) and Chris Saunders, along with some involvement of our new Executive Director, Tristan Folinsbee. The WNAS Board of Directors also serves as oversight of our students' activities.

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## Report on Annual General Meeting

The March 15<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held at the Percy Page Centre in north-central Edmonton to report on 2024 finances and business activities of the Wagner Natural Area Society, to conduct elections of Board members for the new year, to vote on new bylaws and objectives for the Society, and to hear from Derek Johnson about the Wagner vegetation community monitoring project. Without hesitation, I cheerfully admit that Derek's presentation was the most interesting and enjoyable part of the meeting for me.

### “From Field, to Fen, to Forest, to Fountain...Monitoring Foliage for Management at Wagner Natural Area”



Alas, despite the enthusiasm of the (temporarily) standing-room-only crowd who filled our assigned meeting room and who had a number of questions about Derek's findings (stay tuned for a future article), we did have to conduct some business to meet our obligations under the Societies Act and to document the activities of our Board, members and volunteers for the past year.

## Annual Report for 2024

By Dave Ealey, President

First, I want to thank all of my fellow members of the Board of Directors: without their efforts, it would not be possible to accomplish all the things that need to be done to protect Wagner Natural Area. Beth Jenkins was a long-time Board member, who passed away in January 2025; she will be sorely missed.

Three of our Board members stepped down over the year: Cheryl Johnson-Dempsey, Claudia Palylyk, and Melissa Chisholm contributed greatly to running of the organization, notably secretarial, financial, wildfire planning and research. They also played a big role in modernizing our internal communications...much of that included dragging me kicking and screaming into the world of Google Drive!

Carolyn Vanderveen and Eagle Willier have provided excellent liaison between Wagner Natural Area Society and the Osborne Acres residents and Nature Conservancy of Canada, respectively.

Larissa Clayton, our Secretary, and Chris Saunders, also known as the Weed Wrangler, have put in long hours of effort to help our Executive function better and ensure our weed management strategy is, indeed, strategic.

Last, but not least, of our Board members are Megan Edgar and David Fielder; Megan's a former summer student on the natural area and David has seen and photographed orchids throughout the natural area.

Thank you to all the volunteers who came out to our cleanups, workbees and weed pulls!

Also thanks to all of the donors who have contributed their hard-earned money to help us manage Wagner Natural Area, enable us to guide tours and talk to groups, and help us undertake research and citizen science projects so we can better understand how special our Wagner Fen is.

### Highlights and Activities 2024 for Wagner Natural Area Society

Jan. 16—Board meeting

Feb. 20—Board meeting

Feb. 22—WNAS display, Tri-Municipal

Region Spring Info. Fair, Stony Plain

Mar. 19—Board meeting

Mar. 24—WNAS display, Seedy Sunday

Mar. 22 to 24—WNAS display, Orchid Show, St. Albert.

Apr. 13—WNAS AGM, Percy Page Ctr

Apr. 18—Project Forest Partner Celebration, Calgary

May 4—spring clean-up

May 11—WNAS display at Lois Hole P.P., Migratory Bird Day

May 13—Girl Guide MPT tour

May 18—Volunteer work bee; fenceline rehab.

May 21—Board meeting

May 25/26—May species count (birds)(plants)

May 25—IACC (camera club) guided field tour

- May 25 –WNAS display at Central Park, Spruce Grove
- May 28—Girl Guide MPT tour
- June 1—apply to Alberta Lands for weed mgmt
- June 8/9—Volunteer weed pull
- June 15—Orchid Society guided MPT walk
- June 16—Orchid Walk
- June 22/23—Volunteer weed pull
- June 24—first Tree Swallow young banded
- June 24—RA museum staff MPT walk
- July 1—WNAS display, Edmonton Valley Zoo
- July 8—NCC-sponsored weed pull
- July 13/14—Volunteer weed pull
- July 19—Volunteer weed pull
- July 26—ARAC toad walk
- July 30—Project Forest site visit at WNA
- July 30—Great Gray Owl release at WNA
- July 31—Board meeting
- Aug. 3/4—Volunteer weed pull
- Aug. 18—Soc. Vintage Characters MPT walk
- Aug. 20—Telus work bee on invasives
- Aug. 21—WNAS display, Lois Hole P.P., NatureKids event, Nature Alberta
- Aug. 22—WNAS display, Tri-Municipal Region Fall Info. Fair, Sp. Grove
- Aug. 24—WNAS display, Ed. Horticul. Festival
- Aug. 27—Board meeting
- Sept. 17—Board meeting
- Sept. 21—fall clean-up
- Sept. 25—Champion Pet Foods community volunteers weed pull
- Oct. 8—Board meeting
- Oct. 19—WNAS Open House, Pioneer Centre, Spruce Grove
- Nov. 2—attend Tri-Region charity conference
- Nov. 11—Project Forest committee meeting
- Nov. 16/17—WNAS display at Muttart with Orchid Species Preservation Foundation
- Nov. 19—Board meeting
- Dec. 17—Board meeting

**Volunteer Hours by Wagner Natural Area Society**

- Meetings, admin. -- 636.75 person-hrs
- Site management -- 646 person-hrs
- Research & monitor --92.5 person-hrs
- Wildlife camera proj.—49.5 person-hrs
- Education/outreach-- 195 person-hrs
- Updated mgmt plan -- 37 person-hrs
- Total Volunteer Time -- 1656.75 person-hrs**

**Summer Student Time**

- Site management -- 319 person-hrs
- Weed strategy -- 355.5 person-hrs
- Research & monitor -- 133 person-hrs
- Wildlife camera proj.—143 person-hrs
- Education/outreach -- 277 person-hrs
- Admin. and travel -- 52.5 person-hrs
- Total Employee Time -- 1280 person-hrs**

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**Legend for Activities**

- Displays—Public Education & Outreach
- Work Bees—Site Management
- Field Tours--Public Education & Outreach
- Weed Pulls—Site Management
- Flora & Fauna—Research & Monitoring

**Results of the Election**

Megan Edgar and David Fielder were elected to the Board for positions that expire in 2028. Continuing elected Board members include the following: Larissa Clayton, Dave Ealey, and Chris Saunders.

**Results of the Bylaw Motion**

New Objectives and Bylaws were approved by Voting Members and were since submitted to Alberta Registry. They will be published on our website soon.