

GN Field Trips, Nature Walks and Activities in 2022

Even though various events had to be adjusted or cancelled again in 2022 due to continued COVID-19 conditions and the cold weather, the GN Club had a successful year with a variety of outdoor activities and events throughout the year.

For the first month and half, the winter conditions were ideal for **Cross-Country Skiing** on Spring Creek Trail in Elkwater. Ten outings were enjoyed by 12 different GN members. Likewise, two days after Halloween, a good dump of snow allowed for XC Skiing in Police Point Park as well as Elkwater.

By mid-February, we were able to commence our **Nature Walks** on various trails in Medicine Hat. Throughout the year, a total of 37 walks were enjoyed by as many as 25 different GN members. In late fall due to cool, snowy weather, the participants met at the Nature Centre for warm-up and then Bird Identification activities.

For celebrating **World Water Week** in March, Martha Munz Gue commenced the second year of the joint GN and SEAWA project **Adopted-a-Pond** with litter cleanup and invasive weed ID'ing at the ponds behind Masterpiece and Canadian Tire. Within a few weeks, all 20 ponds in Medicine Hat were adopted and cared for by members of the two organizations as well as the public. This activity continued successfully throughout the year, and was reported in the GN and SEAWA meetings and Newsletters.

On April 22, **International Earth Day**, cleanup was conducted at Ranchlands riparian area, as well as along SE Hill Trail; and then at other Parks over the following two weeks. The annual fall **Litter Cleanup** of Strathcona Island Park was conducted in September.

Four **Birding Field Trips** were conducted; April 2nd to Manyberries area (Birding Trail Guide #4) led by Milt Spitzer; on June 4th to Empress (Trail #9) on June 4th led by Milt and Rob Gardner; June 25th to Cypress Hills (Trail #7) by Phil Horch; and lastly on Oct 15th to Sauder Reservoir and Rattlesnake and Murray Lakes (Trail #2 area) by Phil Horch. And on Sept 24th, Milt led a group of ten GN members on a field Trip to **Sandy Point**, the **Great Sandhills** and **McLaren Lake** to view the fall migration of several thousand Sandhill Cranes.

On May 28th, a special outing and picnic lunch to tour Paul von Huene's ranch along **Ross Creek Coulee** south of Irvine was enjoyed by 12 members. His collection of antlers, rocks, fossils and bones was very impressive.

Other special events involved the **Community Spirit Awards** on May 19th; **SEAWA Weed Pull** in Saamis Coulee on June 11th, and at Connaught Pond riparian on June 29th; and a tour of Brent Smith's **Garden and Water Conservation System** on Aug 20th.

The Medicine Hat Interpretive Program organized and ran a great variety of activities during 2022 either at the Nature Centre or outdoors in Police Point and other Parks. In addition, the **Spring Bird and Wildflower Counts** as well as the **Christmas Bird Count** were organized by Ian Langill. A summary of the MHIP activities is given in the Chief Interpreter annual report as well as on the MHIP and GN Websites, and reported in the GN monthly Sagebrush Chronicle.

Submitted by John Slater