

Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society,
December 2017 to November 2018

President's Report

Yves Dansereau

The winter months are a good time for us to look at what we are doing and reflect on what we will be doing in the future. We did this at a January special Go-Forward meeting where all contractors and directors of the Society were invited. All ideas were welcomed and some decisions were taken on many fronts such as website improvements, more Weaselhead events, walks, classroom facility, etc. This will help us to set our path for the future. Another similar meeting will be held in 2019.

Now summarizing the Society 2018 activities has been energizing.

In January, we were nominated by our MLA, the Honourable Anam Kazim, for the Emerald Awards. I must thank all who worked on our submission and the many hours they spent in preparation. We were amongst the 3 finalists invited to the banquet hosted in June. We did not win, but being amongst the 3 finalists was a great honour.

In February, Gary Haerle and myself were invited to the Alberta Legislature for the opening of the 4th session of the 29th Legislature and the Speech from the Throne. Lots of handshaking and introductions; it was quite the experience. This spurred meetings with our MLA, the Honourable Anam Kazim, and Honourable Irfan Sabir, Minister of Community and Social Services. Our concerns about the Ring Road and our desire for minimizing the impact were front and forward.

Another February highlight was a foray into the Arts scene with our very successful Soundscapes presentation of poetry, dance, music, sights and sounds from the Weaselhead and a guest speaker/artist from the First Nations. This was an updated version of the Beakerhead 2017 presentation and was held at a local art gallery.

In March we had meetings with KGL Engineers and Alberta Transportation. We shared some of our research in respect to the storm water ponds, sound walls, water quality monitoring and possible spills. The ponds being built are designed to remove 97.5% of solids bigger than 50 microns. This exceeds provincial and city requirements and is adequate. We were also asked to



submit a proposal for a Sound Wall, which we did 2 weeks later. We have not heard any replies yet. These are only highlights and much more was discussed.

Our booth was present at many city events throughout the year. This has been the case for many years. It's one way we can inform and educate the public on the importance of the Weaselhead.

Rebecca Schwab hosted 2 very well attended Owl Walks in the Weaselhead in March.

April is the beginning of our of Education Program in the Weaselhead. The programs are well respected and they are always booked solid. This important program really puts us on the map. Thousands of school kids have participated and some of the first young participants in 2000 are now adults. They know about the Weaselhead.

In May, we had our annual river clean-up. Many thanks to Paul Finkleman for organizing this event. Close to 100 people participated, and the amount of garbage collected seems to be diminishing year to year. That is probably due to people learning to respect wild places, and also to special individuals who pick-up other people's garbage all year long. Thanks to all and keep it up.

During the summer, we had a Bioblitz focusing on birds, flowers and terrestrial beetles. This was a well attended one-day count in a given area. This is now an annual event, we plan to keep track of these numbers they are important data indicating whether species populations are stable or not.

Our invasive plants eradication program is scaling down a notch, victim of its own success. Many of the targeted plants are now in full retreat, except for the pesky Caragana bush. This Russian invader is indestructible. Don't ever plant it, trust me.

On the more somber side, spring melt and our usual summer sudden downpours caused 2 breaches in the erosion control constructs near the Beaver Pond resulting in mud flows. According to the Ministerial Order, these were not supposed to happen. The Beaver Pond was to be protected from these events. We contacted KGL and Alberta Transportation and got somewhat evasive responses to our concerns. We plan to get in contact again with KGL and Alberta Transportation to get more assertive answers to this issue and stronger control installations in place near the Beaver Pond to avoid a repeat in 2019. Our "South West Calgary Ring Road" impact study is on-going. Lots of data is being collected on the impact of the Project. Some numbers



show a rise in the concentration of chlorides. KGL does use some calcium chloride for dust abatement. It is a common practice and is a possible problem for the Beaver Pond. We intend to discuss this issue with KGL.

We are also in the ongoing process of documenting the progress of the Ring Road with regular aerial photography, we flew 5 times in the last 2 years. We take overall pictures of the project and also images of trouble spots and changes to the river as it stabilizes after the diversion. Spring flood events will cause changes in the stream bed, all of the above needs to be documented. I must thank John Mader our pilot for making this a simple endeavour. And I must also thank the photographers Susan Ryan, Stewart Rood, Jay Lawrence of Two Words Production, I also contributed. Note: Susan took many pictures in prior flights over many years. All of these are on our photography website.

In September we participated in 2018 Beakerhead events with our full immersion. In September, we participated in 2018 Beakerhead events with our full 360 degree visual presentation. It was hosted in the “Visualization room” at MRU, some of which has been shown tonight in a repeat performance prior to the AGM.

We are currently filming ‘Wild Constructs’. Please stay tuned, we have great talented people working on 5 short film of the Weaselhead.

On the September long weekend, we held our annual picnic as a thank you to all who volunteer throughout the year. Despite the rain, it was well attended. Thanks again Paul Finkleman, for organizing the event.

The Society submitted a proposal to City Hall asking for better trail access for dog owners. Paul Stastny spearheaded that initiative. The submission still required that all dogs were to be on leashes in the Weaselhead and still kept the Delta off limits to dogs. Its goal was to extend access to certain trails currently off limits. The City’s reply stated it wants to maintain the status quo so there will be no changes.

There was Spooky Halloween night walk again led by Rebecah Schwab on October 31st. Rebecah’s walks are a great way to appreciate the Weaselhead, the experience of our naturalists adds a new dimension to your walk.



We are aware that a “Bicycle Skills Park” is to be built in South Glenmore Park near the Polo field, south of the regional pathway. I enquired with Friends of Fish Creek, and asked them what was the impact of their Skills Park had in their area. They said that they noticed less abuse of their trail system since the Park was built. We will be asking the city to put more signage in the Weaselhead directing them to the Skills Park instead of using trails not meant for cycling.

At the beginning of year, we had a goal of keeping an eye on events that jeopardize the integrity of the Weaselhead. This was to be done in a cooperative way with all players. We met and discussed issues with engineers and politicians. We made submissions to them. Since the end of these meetings in March, communication has been sparse, as if we were an item on their checklist that is now crossed off as done. In the 2019 Go-Forward meeting, we will discuss this issue and see how we can make sure our concerns are dealt with. Suggestions are welcome.

Quite often even well intentioned acts by the City or the Province can have unwanted results. Errors do happen For example, the planting of crabapple trees in North Glenmore Park attract bears. We have been told they will be replaced. This has not been done yet.

The construction of the Ring Road has a big effect on the Weaselhead. The Weaselhead is now fully surrounded; it is now an urban park. To keep it as wild as possible under this type of pressure we need to be vigilant. If you see anything of concern, let us know. Be our eyes on the environment. Let’s catch mistakes and concerns before they become a major issues.

Yves Dansereau

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