

# Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society Annual Report 2020

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## Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society 2020

# President's Report

Yves Dansereau

Members and Guests;

Welcome to AGM 2020 , thanks for "Zooming-in". This report is an overview of this year's highlights....

### 2020 "Go Forward" Goal Setting Meeting Highlights

- Update vision statement and mission.
- Enhance our Communication endeavours; A bulletin board now is in existence for you to consult. It is at the shed in the parking lot of 37th St. and 66th Ave.
- Redefine board member roles.
- Rejuvenate the Board.
- Add workshops to the webpage.

There will be a 2021 Zoom "Go Forward" meeting early next year. Any member that has suggestions for the agenda can e-mail [president@theweaselhead.com](mailto:president@theweaselhead.com).

### Major Event of the Year: "Barry Erskine Bridge" Initiative

Starting In February, we got all the pieces together to undertake re-naming the Elbow River pedestrian Green Bridge to "The Barry Erskine Bridge". Steps involved gaining support and approval from the Erskine family; City Hall representatives; surrounding communities of Oakridge, Lakeview and the TsuuT'ina Nation; stewardship groups of River Valleys Committee and, Bow River Basin Council and finally City Council. The plaque unveiling was September 7, 2020, during the Volunteer Appreciation Event. Speeches were presented by Hal Eagletail (Tsu-ut'ina Nation), Mayor Naheed Nenshi, Councillor Druh Farrell, and James Erskine (Barry's son). Barry was instrumental in the creation of the Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society and we owe him much gratitude. The Bridge dedication came to fruition due to the work of Susan Ryan. It was a lot of work over a few years.... many thanks!



## COVID-19 Impact

In March, the COVID-19 pandemic had a major effect, resulting in cancellation of nearly all of our program activities; as a result since April, our Board meetings and planning sessions were primarily held via Zoom internet and telephone discussions. After a few stops and starts, we now have routines of re-adjusting programs, planning, and communicating events. I am happy to report no COVID-19 incidents were evident in our activities this year. Thanks to everyone, for practicing due diligence.

## The Education Program

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our education field trips were cancelled in the spring 2020, however we did hold several outings with small cohorts in the fall. Our Education Program activities added free, printable online curriculum materials and videos for schools, parents and viewers in English, French, and Mandarin (donations are always welcome).

We also redesigned customize outdoor curriculum-based programs for small group bookings such as home-schooled students, families, and community groups. We added new winter programs, including snowshoe outings, for children and parents.

## The Invasive Plant Program

- In November 2019 sheep were used to graze in the North side of the Park hoping to encourage native grass regeneration. This is in the area the Society has been working on for 6 years with the City to try and increase amount of native grasses and decrease amount of thistle and invasive grasses
- Our weeding workshops were mostly cancelled.
  - Individual volunteers removed spotted knapweed in July and August. This is a priority species due to its ability to spread very quickly.
  - Youth Central volunteers continued with the clearing of invasive honeysuckles in September and October. One of our 2018/19 volunteers Cole Dewis was nominated for and received a 'Youth of Distinction Award'.
- Partnering with Miistakis Institute - monitoring wildlife use of park using motion activated cameras: two of which have been placed to monitor use of wildlife corridors under Tsuut'ina Trail (no evidence of use so far).



## The Invasive Plant Program (Continued)

- Two conferences we would have presented at or submitted a poster to about this project 'Calgary Captured' , were cancelled/postponed (COVID-19). Posters were created and distributed
- Thanks to volunteers re: breeding bird survey, amphibian monitoring, aquatic invert. ID, water sampling.
- We are also monitoring changes and erosion patterns in accelerated erosion in the North East corner of the park.
  - Tanis Onespot of the Tsuut'ina Nation is following this dossier as it may in time having affect on the Weaselhead secondary road.
  - We also had the city engineers visit the site and they also agree that there is a definite concern with the erosion in the North-East corner.
  - The trails in the area are compromised (slumped into the river); what remains of the trails is dangerous due to under cutting.

## The Ring Road Impact Study

The impact study is ongoing, the Calgary Southwest Ring Road is ~~built~~ opened Oct 01, 2020, monitoring will continue:

- The WGPPS is continuing to collect data from the Weaselhead as part of a 7-year study into the impact of the ring road. Reports from 2016 to 2019 are available on our website, and the report on the 2020 data will be posted in early 2020.
  - 2020 another major spill of sediment spill (4th since 2018) into the Beaver Pond, We are engaged as a witness representation for AEP investigation.
  - October 1 2020 the The Tsuut'ina Trail opened without the promised wildlife required fencing to keep wildlife off the Ring Road as a guide toward the highway underpass (It is expected to be installed next year). There already have been incidents with wildlife crossing the Ring Road.

## Weaselhead Event Outings

- Canoe Kayak mornings.
- Oakridge Seniors walks.
- February 9th and Halloween Owl Walk with our Naturalists.
- Evening pollinators. Citizen Science.
- May flower count. Citizen Science.
- Breeding Bird Survey. Citizen Science.
- Moth Identification, Citizen Science.
- Annual volunteer appreciation event.
- Annual River Clean-up (note: September date was due to COVID-19).
- Halloween Walks (5 groups).

If you wish to participate in some of our Citizen Science outings and events please get in contact with Matt Wallace (e-mail [president@theweaselhead.com](mailto:president@theweaselhead.com) ). I will forward the email to him. Matt is also spearheading our work with I-NATURALIST

## City Hall and Neighbouring Communities

We are now in official negotiations with the City to form a recognized partnership to manage the Weaselhead/Glenmore Parks. We had a fruitful meeting with Provincial MLA Whitney Issik, the Mayor's Office, Ward 11 representative, City Park administrators, and Tanis Onespot of the Tsuut'ina Nation. (The Meeting was via Zoom)

The discussion may lead to a memorandum of understanding. We offered the City our expertise and volunteer hours to help with issues in the Parks. The presentation and discussion was very well received, we were well prepared, and we distributed preamble documents to the different parties prior to the meeting. images of illegal bicycle ramps in a park that made participants very aghast with how blatant damage was done to the South forest reserve.

And thanks to Gary Haerle, we are now interfacing with the Oakridge Seniors Group, and we are looking forward to developing an increasing partnership of activities and workshops.

## Wild Constructs

- (debuted at Plaza Theatre Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019, and were shown at the 2019 AGM).
- Had good interest for showings in schools and other venues but COVID brought this to a standstill for now.
- One video accepted for Zebra Poetry Film festival, Berlin Nov 2020.

## Staff and Board

- A huge appreciation to Sarah Nevill, our Executive Director, and all of our diligent, dedicated naturalists.
- Zachary Mager and Dylann Golbeck joined in April as Field Naturalists.
- Rachel Nadler (leading a team to develop a communications strategy for Society), Liz Arich (input advising), and Dawn Fark (secretary) joined in July.
- Pat Prevey and Lindal Heppner have left the Board of Directors. We are grateful for their valued input over the past number of years.

A note about “Pat”, Patricia Prevey has left the Board, but wishes to remain active on some of our committees. Pat has been an exemplary Secretary on our Board for many years.

## Gus Yaki Remembered

Our Society lost a great friend of Nature this year. Gus Yaki passed away peacefully this summer. His love of Nature and his work has had a great influence on what we do and what we know about the flora and fauna of the Weaselhead; Gus will be missed.

## In Closing

This has been a difficult year for all of us. The impact of the pandemic has reached into just about all that we do: individually, our relationships, our work, the businesses that serve us and all volunteer groups. The WGPPS is blessed by a group of people that persevered in maintaining the organization to the best of their capabilities, all within the COVID-19 restrictions. Our group effort makes me extremely proud of this organization.

We will continue to offer our programs and more “outings” in 2021 (on a monthly basis). We also look forward to the completion of our vision statement and expanded communications strategy. We hope to complete our Nocturnal Preserve application. We also look forward to a new partnership with the City.

Yves Dansereau

President, The Weaselhead / Glenmore Park Preservation Society.