

Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society

President's Report 2023

Yves Dansereau

Our vision is that individuals, communities, and governments recognize the Weaselhead as an important natural area that connects people with nature, and work collaboratively to embrace and protect it.

The goal of the Society is to protect and maintain the rich biodiversity of the Weaselhead/Glenmore area for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone in Calgary, now and into the future.

Members and Guests;

Welcome to AGM 2023, Finally we can meet in person, and for those on ZOOM thanks for "Zooming-in". This report is an overview of this year's highlights....

2023 "Go Forward" Goal Setting Meeting Highlights

One of the main topic of discussion is our future 1.0 to 1.5 million dollar education building. It is high on our wish list. We need an "anchor donor" to spearhead the funding. There is a possibility of partnerships also. We must also demonstrate to the City the we have the financial backbone to support it.

We also talked about our partnership with the city and bylaw enforcement. We will set goals when we get involved with the City's Habitat management plan. See further in this document for details on progress with this endeavour.

We would like to enhance the management of our volunteers. A Volunteer coordinator could be a dossier held by one of our board members. Note we are currently (Nov 2023) seeking such a person.

We believe that we should focus Go Forward 2024 on our partnership with the City. The final document has not been signed, it sits with City Hall for the legal department to be fine tuned. One of the requirements was for us to increase our insurance coverage which has been done. Nevertheless the functionality of the agreement is in place and we meet with officials once a month.

Personnel and Board Members

- I would like to thank Judi Vandenbrink For her work with Creek Watch and volunteering on our board of directors. She has chosen to relinquish her position on the Board but wishes to continue helping out. Judi's position is now vacant.
- I would also like to thank Nicole Krawczyk for her incredible amount of work she has performed this year:
 - * We changed our banking Institution for a more secure and businesslike system at Scotiabank, it was not without hiccups (one which I caused during account setup).
 - * Nicole also revamped our internal accounting spreadsheets and procedures to simplify our daily accounting work.
 - * Managed our new swag offerings
 - * Helped with the casino
- For this a special thanks is in order.

Our Board this year consisted of the following volunteers

Yves Dansereau : President

Gary Haerle Vice-president

Dawn Fark: Secretary: Casino Chair

Nicole Krawczyk: Treasurer, Casino Chair backup

Susan Ryan: Director, Physical environment, geomorphology, water resources

Judi Vandenbrink: Director, Creek Watch

Matt Wallace: Director, citizen science

Paul Finkleman: Past President

Thanks...

Contractors for the Board

Maureen Luchsinger Executive Director

Rebeccah Schwab: Communications officer

The Education Program



Spencer Smith is now our Education Coordinator.

- We are now back to normal business, COVID restrictions are now a thing of the past.
- We have had a normal year with our fall and spring days mostly fully booked.
- We had few weather days cancellations.
- 4000+ students were in our programs.

This is a very important part of the Society's endeavour, much time and effort is directed to this program. It is our belief that the most important first step in preservation is Education. A population that knows how important a natural area such as the Weaselhead is, will be more likely to respect it and help us in its preservation.

Our contractor Naturalists

All perform duties with our Education program delivery, leading community events in the Weaselhead, managing invasive plants and the SWCRR Impact Study.

Dylann Golbeck: Invasive Plants Program

Spencer Smith: Education Coordinator

Lisa Dahlseide: SWCRR Impact Study and spokesperson

Laurie Dolph

Jocelyn Grosse

Kaya Konopnicki

Georgia Blum

Zachary Mager

Sara Jordan-McLachlan

Shaylene Taylor

Thank you to a dedicated team of experts.

Note quite often our contractors will put in volunteer hours... **cheers to that !**

The Invasive Plant Program



The Invasive Plant Program was back in full swing this summer with the results listed below. Black Henbane is a newcomer; it is a noxious weed and needs special attention. “All parts of the plant are poisonous to humans and animals when ingested – tissues contain several toxic alkaloids. Symptoms of poisoning include impaired vision, convulsions, coma, and death from heart or respiratory failure.”

INVASIVE PLANTS PROGRAM 2023	
25	Workshops
87	Workshop hours
229	Volunteers
19,923	Volunteer hours
26	Contractor workshop hours
259 lbs	Knapweed
3	Sites were entirely cleared of all knapweed, lots of rosettes targeted, this is a first in the entire history of our program!
1026 lbs	Black henbane removed, this was an incredible effort!
647	Cotoneaster shrubs removed
525	Tatarian shrubs removed
7	Siberian pea shrubs removed
other plants removed include:	yellow clematis, goatsbeard, canada thistle, buckthorn, scentless chamomile

Wildlife

Partnering with Miistakis Institute and Calgary Connect Program, we are monitoring wildlife use of the park using motion activated cameras:

- Please be vigilant.
- There is constant evidence of black bears, cougars, coyotes constantly frequenting the park. This year there were also frequent sightings of moose and other ungulates. Please be aware that ungulates can be more of a threat than bears. I personally went to a “BearAware” course a few weeks ago, and the instructor was adamant that in certain defensive situations a moose will make sure you are no longer a threat before leaving the encounter site.
- There was a complaint about a deer carcass showing signs that the cause of its demise was getting stuck on the fencing. City Parks will look into the matter and possibly install animal friendly modifications to the Weaselhead Border fencing. It may be expensive but the fact that these events could be a scavenger attractant and cause trouble may weigh heavily in the decision making.

High Water - Low Water

During the summer months since the upgrade to the Glenmore Dam, the City’s Waterworks division has kept the water level in the Reservoir at a level that is causing issues to riparian vegetation, nesting birds and shoreline erosion.

- This year the drought has brought forth the importance to the city of the proper management of its water supply. Had they miscalculated, the restrictions would have been much more severe as the annual flow of the Elbow River has been dismally low. If this trend continues as we are in a strong El Niño cycle (dry warm winter 2023-2024) this situation will continue.
- **The Boardwalk:** The boardwalk sections are being built in a factory environment over the winter. Plan is to install the piles before breakup and then install the fabricated sections.
- **Often asked question “What’s up with the beaver pond?”** The Beaver Pond dried up at the end of summer 2022 and is still dry, the City is investigating with the help of a contractor: At the moment the results point to the culprits, the beavers themselves. **(still speculative)**

SWCRR Impact Study



The Ring Road Impact Study data collection is complete.
The Calgary Southwest Ring Road was opened October 01, 2020.

A compilation of the whole study will be undertaken in 2023 and made available for future use.
Another Summary document that will highlight the findings and conclusions will also be made available.

Refer to Lisa's presentation of preliminary data and results featured at the 2023 AGM.

Citizen Science



WGPPS had a great year for its involvement in citizen science (also known as Community Science) events throughout Calgary in the parks we steward.

- WGPPS staff participated in many Citizen Science events (mentioned in events Outline below)

Creek Watch 2023 (Citizen Science)

The CreekWatch water testing in the Weaselhead at the Barry Erskine Bridge started on June 19 and ended on October 18. There were 8 active volunteers who used the portable labs on 20 different occasions. One of our volunteers (Bill) created a water capturing device that could be lowered from the bridge into the current of the Elbow River. It was determined that this would provide more accurate readings.

This year's volunteers had a few challenges with people having to step away from their commitments due to various injuries outside of this project. The smoky skies were also a barrier, and one of testing days was cancelled due to poor air quality. The water from the Elbow River coming into the reservoir is clean with:

- Good concentration of dissolved oxygen.
- Trace amounts of ammonia nitrogen & phosphorous.
- Average pH of 8
- Chloride levels were from 10mg/L to 25mg/L.
- The water temperature ranged from 10.5 C to 20.6 C.

For most of our testing period the water levels were very high, especially from August to October. We noticed young people using the bridge as a diving board, people swimming near the bridge, lots of people fishing, and a noticeable amount of trash being left around the bench in the area. In our observation of the wildlife we saw: Cliff Swallows, Mergansers, Mallards, Beaver, Muskrats, Mink, and possibly a River Otter. There were many kayaks, canoes, dragon boats, and in October sailboats.

Judi Vandenbrink

Nocturnal Preserve Progress Report

Our work towards the designation for a Nocturnal Preserve has continued by providing programs educating the public on the nocturnal environment and light pollution mitigation. Programs and outreach booths were hosted at a number of community events outlined in the Community Events section of this report. Presentations/interactive sessions were delivered at the Mayor's Environmental Expo, Migratory Bird Day, Ellis Bird Farm, Free Play Art Show and Lakeview Fun Day. Guided hikes featuring the nocturnal environment included our Bat hike, Moth hike, and Halloween hike. We have also continued our data collection of light levels in the Weaselhead.

Calgary Connect is a 3-year project, funded by the Calgary Foundation, that will monitor wildlife, support and maintain a greater ecological network and work to mitigate light pollution from surrounding areas to help preserve healthy nocturnal habitats. The project is led by Miistakis Institute in partnership with Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society, City of Calgary, Alberta Environment and Parks, and the Friends of Fish Creek.

We will pursue this designation to a positive conclusion in 2024.

Weaselhead Event Outings

Events held in 2023

Total Events	26
Total Participants	257

Break down of Events:

Guided Hikes	9
Webinars	2
Citizen Science	3
Public Event Booths	5
In Person Talk	3

Partnership events:

<u>Partnership Events</u>
Outdoor Adventure and Travel Show
City Nature Challenge
Lakeview Fun Day
World Migratory Bird Day at Inglewood Bird Sanctuary
Mayor's Expo
Family Nature Nights with Nature Alberta
Dark Skies Talk at Ellis Bird Farm
Bat Hike with Alberta Community Bat Program
Alberta Biodiversity Festival at Bow Habitat Station
Free Play Art Show

Keep an eye on our website and subscribe to our newsletter (or become a member) to find out what will be happening in 2024.

Event Detail : Annual River Cleanup and pathway Cleanup

This event is a keystone in the stewardship of the Park. It is run annually by Paul Finkleman and this year we have seen an uptick in the quantity of garbage found in the park.

For 2024 we may consider having a few keeners walk the smaller trails and document (geo-located images) large items, encampments, kids' forts, bike jumps, and other items that should not be in the park.

Eventually we may utilize an app from the city that will help send this information directly to the Parks management staff. Instruction on use of the app will be required.

Casino

Casinos are our main source of funding outside of the educational programs.

- The two-day casino was held on August 27/28 this year.
- We had enough volunteers for each day. A minimum of 19 volunteers per day is needed and we had just enough.
- It's always nice to have a roster of backup volunteers for last minute changes as well.
- We were lucky to have a few volunteers gracious enough to volunteer for both days, which we are grateful for.
- The casino seemed slow but we haven't received the funds yet. We expect the funds in mid to late November (6-8 weeks after the end of the quarter the casino was held in). We should also find out when our next casino is slotted for at the end of November as well.

Dawn Fark

The turnout was stellar and all volunteers showed up on time, with no last minute panic calls to bring in backup. Cheers to a dedicated group of Volunteers. Thank you Dawn as this Casino was managed very well.

Yves....

Update: We received the final results of the Casino 1 day after the AGM. The total amount of funds received by our Society is \$82,277.79 ! Awesome !

Yves...



Cooperation with City Hall

Habitat Management Plan for the Weaselhead/Glenmore Area Park

Purpose of Habitat Management Plan:

Provide a clear strategy and timeline for managing the ecological health and function of the park to achieve biodiversity outcomes. Focuses on habitat conservation and restoration. Prioritizes resource protection while balancing nature based recreation. Identifies collaboration opportunities.

- The City recently finalized an internal framework for how management plans are developed for natural environment parks.
- The WGPPS is now a stakeholder and one of the players in the decision making chain that governs the parks under our tutelage.
- We participate at the monthly meetings where items that come up for discussion and decision making are front and centre.
- **Below is an example of discussions with Jason Weiler, John Merriman, Vanessa Carney and mark Murias.**

Excerpt of Minutes October 2023 meeting

7	Yves	<p>Deer Carcass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deer died and got caught in chain-link fence along Tsuut’ina boundary – might it be possible to retrofit shared fence to more wildlife friendly top? • Process for dealing with wildlife carcasses (wildlife attractant). • Both topics to be discussed in upcoming habitat management plan discussions.
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Action Items				
No.	Action Item	Owner(s)	Status	Target Date
1	Send summary text from consultant about beaver pond dryness to WPS	Jason	Complete.	Oct 18.
2	Ask Permit team about overlapping permitted uses/conflict between permit holders – upcoming HMP discussions.	Jason, Vanessa	<i>In progress</i>	Nov. 30 th



What can you do as a user of the parks reporting problems:

- Phone 311 - this is important; it adds to the statistics and aids in determining what resources are needed. Repeated problems add to the importance index in the database.
- Take geo-located pictures of the issue and send them to 311.
- —>**DO NOT** interact with people at the scene breaking bylaws or causing problems. (**Personal Safety Concern**)

You now have another avenue to elevate the importance of your complaint.

- Send all the information you have to:
- Maureen Luchsinger (weasel@theweaselhead.com)
and/or
- Yves Dansereau (president@theweaselhead.com)

What happens with the information sent to us ?

- Problems you report will be mentioned at the monthly meetings and added to a data collection space City parks management shares with us.
- In the long run this information will help Jason Weiler and the people managing the parks attract funds and resources needed to deal with these issues.
- For example:
 - Funding regular visits by Bylaw Officers is currently not a priority and adds costs.
 - If it is determined that funding such visits is less expensive than the remedial work needed to repair damage in the parks and the negative effect on wildlife; budgetary justification will exist to have a Bylaw Officer visit the parks to warn and/or ticket people transgressing the existing bylaws.
 - The issue of education and enforcement of the bylaws governing the parks is an important issue to the Society, as we foresee an increase of park usage (and abuse) by Calgarians with the densification of the city.

In Closing

A big Thank You to all our Naturalists, Board of Directors, Members, Volunteers and friends for making the society what it is: ...filled with talent, enthusiasm and dedication.



**The Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society
is an inclusive organization**

Yves Dansereau

President, The Weaselhead / Glenmore Park Preservation Society.