**Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society**

President’s Report 2021

Yves Dansereau

Members and Guests;

Welcome to AGM 2021 , thanks for “Zooming-in”. This report is an overview of this year’s highlights….

**2021 “Go Forward” Goal Setting Meeting Highlights**

* Look into alternative sources of income as our school programs are affected by the pandemic, the Casinos being delayed and possibly generating less income
* Continue enhancing our communications endeavours
* Redefine board member roles.
* Sarah Nevill announced officially her retirement, and we decided on dates to start recruiting for her replacement and also search for a new treasurer as Heather Shepard has been voicing her intentions to let go of the financial reins.
* More guided visits in the Weaselhead

. Any member that has suggestions for the 2022 agenda can e-mail president@theweaselhead.com.

**COVID-19 Impact**

Since March 2020 , the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an impact on our activities. But thanks to vaccinations and adherence to the mandates we have been able to restart our field classes this fall and conduct organized events in the Weaselhead



**Personnel and Board members**

* Sarah Nevill announced officially her retirement, and we decided on dates to start recruiting for her replacement and a new treasurer as Heather Shepard also had been voicing her intentions to let go of the financial reins.
* Please welcome
* **Maureen Luchsinger** our new **Executive Director** (Sarah’s Replacement)
* **Nicole Krawczyk** our new board Member in the position of **Treasurer**

**Sarah Nevill**

**Heather Shepard**

**Rosemarie Foley**

You have all left an indelible contribution to the Society we are in your debt Thank You for the long hours of service and volunteering .

**The Education Program**

We've had a combination of school classes, homeschool groups and Brownie's/Girl Guide groups book with us.

# of Schools/Groups booked: 30

# of students through the park: ~1500 students + teachers and parent volunteers

We currently have 16 schools booked for Winter/Spring

**The Invasive Plant Program**

Our workshops have resumed and the program is resuming some level of activity. Still focusing on knapweed

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**Wildlife**

Partnering with Miistakis Institute We are monitoring wildlife use of the park by wildlife using motion activated cameras:

We have had a Park Closure in October 2021 due to a very rare visit by a grizzly and her cub.

* Please be vigilant even though the grizzlies have left the Weaselhead Park, there is constant evidence of black bears frequenting the park, there are also rare sightings of cougar tracks and pictures taken by the wildlife cameras.
* Be aware that large herbivores (moose, deer) can also be dangerous
* Note that bird feeders and food left in the park by well intentioned visitors have been removed. They disturb the ecological balance of the area and are attractants for bears. For further information please contact us on this subject.
* Excessive interactions with birders wanting a perfect photo has led in all probability to the death of an Saw-Whet Owl in the Weaselhead (spring 2021)
* Racoons have been recorded in the Weaselhead by wildlife cameras
* Tree wiring was done to protect selected trees from the beavers south of the Beaver Pond

**High 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. City waterworks engineering indicated that an assessment was done and the damage caused by this was deemed acceptable. We were never consulted. Remediation of affected trails is in the works (as per city hall) and a contractor has yet to be chosen to do the work. The impact is quite serious and will need attention as water levels are above the protective rocks on the shoreline.

**2021 SWCRR Impact**

The Ring Road Impact Study is ongoing. The Calgary Southwest Ring Road was opened October 01, 2020. Monitoring and contacting Alberta Transportations and Alberta Environment Protection 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 2020 are available on our website, and the report on the 2021 data will be posted in early 2022.
	+ 2021 another major spill of sediment spill (7th since 2018) into the Beaver Pond, City hall has lodged an official complaint, some re-engineering will need to be done.
	+ Fencing has started hopefully the Weaselhead will be done before freeze-up and will be adequate

**November 8, 2021 SWCRR Impact study report**

Construction of the South West Calgary Ring Road (SWCRR) started in fall 2016. The project’s EIA, Environmental Impact Assessment; carried out by AMEC in 2006 and updated in 2014, predicted alteration to habitats, and impacts on the environment of the adjacent Weaselhead Natural Environment Park both during construction and later at the operational phase of the SWCRR. In this context the Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society embarked upon a seven-year study, the SWCRR Impact Study, that would span the years from initiation to completion of the road and quantify the SWCRR’s impacts on biophysical components of the park and on park-users. The objective of the biophysical part of the Study is not to attempt a comprehensive survey of habitats and ecosystem components and their change over the period of the Study, but to assess the impacts of the SWCRR on selected environmental indicators, and compare these with those predicted in the EIA.

One mitigation measure required by KGL’s contract with Alberta Transport is to ‘install and maintain appropriate erosion and sediment control methods to prevent sediments from disturbed areas from being transported into watercourses.’ (p. 124, 9Schedule 18 of DBFO agreement). So far the measures adopted during the construction phase of the project have proved inadequate: two separate spills of sediment into the Beaver Pond occurred in 2018, one directly from the adjacent construction site and one via a creek, ‘Spring Brook’ that feeds into the wetland. A further spill of ‘coarse infill’ directly into the Beaver Pond in August of 2019, and again in July 2020 sediment entered the Beaver Pond via a feeder creek as a result of a failure of erosion control in the SWCRR construction zone following heavy rain. Another incident happened during a heavy rain event July 24, 2021 where water overwhelmed the systems in place. We are hopeful that the short term and long term mitigation recommendations made to KGL by Hemmera will provide better results in future rain events.

A drop in aquatic invertebrate diversity has been observed in the Beaver Pond with a previously suspected local extirpation of caddisfly larvae in the wetland. Caddisfly larvae are a pollution intolerant bio indicator species. While they were not detected in the August and October 2021 aquatic invertebrate study, we are thrilled to announce that one was caught by students in a pond dip at Beaver Pond survey site 3 in the fall.

**Lisa Dahlseide, B.Sc.**

**Conservation Biologist**



**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. Here is a summary of our citizen science activities over the past year.

* You may recall our last AGM we discussed the Calgary Christmas Bird Count with presentations from Phil Cram and Yousif Attia from Birds Canada. The 2020 CBC had more participation than any previous year in its 69 year history. The upcoming Calgary Christmas Bird Count will happen December 19. Please contact Matt Wallace at citynatureyyc@gmail.com if you would like to participate.
* WGPPS was a sponsor of the annual Calgary City Nature Challenge April 30 to May 3, 2021. Calgary made the most observations of all Canadian cities.
* Our iNaturalist project to monitor biodiversity through the year received an additional 2465 observations added from 159 people visiting the parks. 408 people from around the world helped us to identify the posts. 538 species were documented from January 1 to November 7.
* Calgary birders really took to the parks this year and uploaded an immense amount of eBird Checklists from January 1-November 7:
	+ Weaselhead: 966 checklists covering 172 species of birds
	+ North Glenmore Park: 501 Checklists documenting 159 species of birds
	+ South Glenmore Park: 464 Checklists with 157 bird species documented
	+ Glenmore Reservoir (General): 173 checklists of 173 bird species documented.
	+ One of the highlights from this year was a Boreal Owl seen in the Weaselhead. This was the 2nd record for Calgary ever.
* WGPPS staff participated in the annual May Plant Count hosted by Nature Alberta.
* WGPPS in partnership with Nature Calgary promoted National Moth Week with the only public event held in Western Canada for the 2nd year in a row. Two events were held on July 17. During the day we conducted the first ever Weaselhead Butterfly Count over 50 butterflies counted making up 13 species. The evening was even more impressive with A nocturnal nothing event led by David Lawrie of the Alberta Lepidopterists’ Guild who helped participants document over 50 species of moths. Bothe events were sold out with 33 people participating in these two events.
* WGPPS joined forces with Creek Watch Alberta to conduct water testing in the Elbow River and Beaver ponds. 7 weeks of data was gathered this season despite the pandemic. We have also added our historical data to their database. This project will continue next spring.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to these projects and made them such a success. Please contact Matt Wallace (CityNatureYYC@gmail.com) for more information on our citizen science activities in the upcoming year.

**Matt Wallace**

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**Nocturnal Preserve Progress Report**

The Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society began work on the Nocturnal Preserve initiative in 2019. We have recorded night sky measurements of sky glow at various points in Weaselhead Park. In early 2021 we initiated a project with St. Mary University students to research the effects of light pollution on nocturnal ecosystems. Furthermore, their fieldwork consisted of identifying buildings with higher levels of Artificial light at night in Lakeview and Oakridge. Our team researched night friendly lighting options for future education and outreach.

The Weaselhead Society has run successful lunar hikes in the park throughout the 2021 year sharing our Nocturnal Preserve initiative with the guided hikers. We published articles on our initiative and an article on bats in local publications. We also hosted a fireside chat about migratory birds with the City of Calgary parks in North Glenmore Park as well as a webinar called Nocturnal Preserve: Benefits of Dark Skies, which is now on our YouTube channel.

**Zachary Mager**

**Weaselhead Event Outings**

Events held in 2020/2021

* Christmas Bird Count Presentation with Guest Speakers Yousif Attia (Birds Canada CBC Coordinator) and Phil Cram (Calgary CBC Coordinator)
* Confound Coyotes Webinar with guest speaker Shelley Alexander
* Confound Coyotes Hike in the Weaselhead
* Winter Owl Hike in the Weaselhead
* Earth Hour Full Moon Hike in the Weaselhead
* iNaturalists How-to Webinar with guest speaker Matt Wallace
* City Nature Challenge
* Power of Flowers: Plant ID and nature sketch webinar
* Darken the Night - Paint Night webinar
* Fly By Night - Moth Lighting with guest Dave Lawrie President of the Alberta Lepidopterists' Guild
* Butterfly Count with guest Dave Lawrie President of the Alberta Lepidopterists' Guild
* Forest Bathing with Experience Journeys
* Fireside Chat with City of Calgary on Migratory Birds
* Annual River Cleanup
* Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic



**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 a year ago but since then there has been little movement. Communications with various players at City Hall have much improved but are still in need. Hopefully we can restart the work with our new Councillor and Mayor.

**Casino**

The much delayed Casino will be February 8th and 9th 2022

Casinos are one of our main sources of income

This is where your volunteer time will have a great impact on the success of the Society!

Please visit our website for sign-up and detail

**In Closing**

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

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 2022 (on a monthly basis).

.We hope to complete our Nocturnal Preserve application. We also look forward to a new partnership with the City and with the new council.

Yves Dansereau

President, The Weaselhead / Glenmore Park Preservation Society.

