

A photograph of a yellow flower in a grassy field under a blue sky. The flower is in the foreground, slightly to the left of center. The background is a vast, flat landscape with a clear blue sky. The overall mood is bright and natural.

Nature
SASKATCHEWAN

ANNUAL
REPORT
2021-22

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nature Saskatchewan has completed yet another good year through the dedicated work of our staff and volunteers, and the continued support of our members and community of supporters.

The year was busy as usual for the organization.

Despite the public health situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and through some staff changes, we saw the continuation of our programs and field work. This resulted, among things, in adding **33** new landowners into the Stewards of Saskatchewan program, bringing participants in the program to more than **900** and the land conserved by the program to more than **800,000** acres. We accomplished some needed restoration work within our nature sanctuaries. And our educational programming reached over **1,100** young people through in-person and digital programs and over **400** people through in-person and digital public events.

We were fortunate to be able to hold an in-person meet in the fall, and we thank the Moose Jaw Nature Society for hosting the event. We also saw two new publications, *Backyard Bird Feeding: A Saskatchewan Guide* by Trevor Herriot and Myrna Pearman, and *Conserving the Legacy: Wildlife Conservation in Saskatchewan 1905-2005* by Wayne Pepper.

This past year, the board of directors developed, with the participation of our staff, a new strategic plan to guide our priorities for the next three years. And we dealt with a number of policy issues impacting upon the direction of the organization.

For those staff members who have moved on to other pursuits during the year, we would like to thank you for your service to Nature Saskatchewan and its work, and wish you well into the future. And we would like to welcome the new staff members who have joined us.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone – staff, volunteers, and board members – for their ongoing efforts to make our work for “Humanity in Harmony with Nature” a success.

We look forward to the coming year with its new challenges and opportunities to us.

Ken Ludwig, President



Jordan Ignatiuk, Executive Director



Report from the Conservation Director

Despite the pandemic, conservation issues don't take a break and 2021-22 continued to be busy for Nature Saskatchewan board and staff. Along with regular representation on several committees and programs (Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, Wildlife Advisory Committee, Habitat Advisory Committee, Chronic Wasting Disease Working Group, Breeding Bird Atlas Steering Committee, South of the Divide Conservation Action Program, Sask TIPS, Woodland Caribou Range Plan), I've highlighted some of the activities undertaken throughout the year.

Protected Places

Jordan Ignatiuk, our Executive Director, once again represented us in Nature Day on the Hill, including a small group meeting with Federal Environment Minister, Stephen Guilbeaut. Organized by Nature Canada, meetings take place with MP's from all parties to encourage ongoing support for the Nature Fund, Protected Places Initiatives and Biodiversity Targets. The call has now been increased to protecting 25% of terrestrial and inland waters and oceans by 2025 and 30% by 2030. Canada has signed onto the G7 2030 Nature Compact, committing to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and secure a full recovery of nature by 2050. The ambitious goal cannot be reached without public input and advocacy from nature organizations across the country imploring all politicians to create an action plan grounded in science, involving Indigenous peoples and local

communities and supporting permanent funding.

Crown Land

Nature Saskatchewan continues to monitor the sale of provincial Crown Lands. With a particular focus on native grasslands we have posted social media advertising around the importance of conserving this important and under-appreciated habitat. We have followed that up with an op-ed asking the government to halt all Crown Land sales.

Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Expansion

With a core group of nature organizations and sign on by several others, we helped lead the development of a Federal petition to the Minister of Environment asking for the Lake Diefenbaker project to be deemed a development and for the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada to conduct a full environmental assessment of the project before it has the go ahead for construction to proceed. The answer received was that the proponent (Water Security Agency) has not yet submitted a proposal for the work to be done and thus a decision determining it as a development cannot be made. We have had direct contact with IAA and will continue to closely monitor the situation as it evolves.

Chaplin Nature Centre

After being closed for two years due to the pandemic, the Chaplin Tourism Committee was keen to once again open and operate the Nature Centre this summer. Nature Saskatchewan was approached and agreed to assistance (administrative and funding) so that

this could be a reality. It is hoped that a successful year will lead to the ongoing operation of the Centre and will once again be self-sustaining.

Key Biodiversity Areas

Our commitment to assist in the identification of these important ecological areas has led to the formation of an adhoc committee of Nature Saskatchewan board, staff and members to work with the Prairie Coordinator employed with the Wildlife Conservation Society of Canada to acquire data or local knowledge in the effort to establish whether criteria can be met to qualify as KBA's.

Naturehood

Pandemic restrictions eased in schools, so field trips were back on this year. Thanks to our Get Outside Kids Club and school groups we did **35** in person field trips reaching **1118** youth. Out of the **35** field trips, **16** of them were to the Last Mountain National Wildlife Area and Migratory Bird Sanctuary. We also did **9** online presentations reaching **143** people. We did two online public events reaching **95** people. We hosted **2** in person public events: Christmas Bird Count for Kids (**80** people) and World Migratory Bird Day (**150** people). We continued to strengthen our relationship with Regina Open Door Society and City Kidz Regina. We developed a new relationship with the North Central Family Centre doing **4** field trips throughout the Spring and Summer.

Last Mountain Bird Observatory

Staff observed about **100** species and captured and/or banded **56** species (**588** new birds in the spring), and around **130** species were observed, and **70** species (**3128** new birds) were captured and/or banded in the fall. The banding station was open to the public by appointment only. We had a total of **222** visitors and **18** volunteers. We did four school and community group trips to the station and one virtual tour for a total of **91** people. The annual Black-and-white Warbler newsletter was completed and emailed to subscribers.

Important Bird Areas

The Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) caretaker program received monitoring forms for **12** IBAs. Jordan Rustad, the IBA caretaker assistant, updated all the site summaries, and assisted Birds Canada with information regarding Saskatchewan Key Biodiversity Areas.



World Migratory Bird Day 2022

Nature Quest

Three interviews were conducted with Indigenous elders. Jesse Thistle is Métis, was born at Dumble, and he now teaches at York university and has published a book, *From the Ashes*, which is partly set at Dumble and which was on the Canada reads list last year. Maria Campbell, Metis Elder from Dumble and Kurtis Saysewahum, the hereditary chief of the band at Whitefish Lake. Each interview was recorded and video is now being edited to post on our Nature Saskatchewan Youtube channel which can be accessed by educators across the Province.

Numerous videos and photos have been taken of the Dumble forest site including drone footage, which will be used to create presentations for school and community groups.

Two videos have been produced showcasing singer/songwriter Kevin Mitchell's song *Out of Sight Out of Mind* in collaboration with photographer and Silviculture Contractor, John Murray.

Several meetings with Principals at Big River School and Big River First Nation School have occurred to plan field trips to the Dumble site. Due to Covid, field trips were put on hold. We are scheduled to do our first field trip in the Fall.



Margaret Skeel Graduate Student Scholarship

Each year Nature Saskatchewan awards a scholarship to assist a graduate student attending a post-secondary institution in Saskatchewan in the fields of biology, ecology, wildlife management, environmental education and environmental studies.

In 2021-22 the scholarship was awarded to Victoria Hartley-Cox. Her research project is titled "Habitat Selection, Hunting Behaviour, and Diet of the Great Horned Owl (*Bubo Virginianus*) In Northern Grasslands"



Get Outside! Kids club and World Migratory Bird Day 2022

Stewards of Saskatchewan

Our voluntary Stewards of Saskatchewan (SOS) suite of programs is designed to conserve habitat for prairie species at risk. The SOS staff work in cooperation with over 900 rural landowners and managers, as well as other organizations, volunteers, and professionals. The main program activities include encouraging and facilitating stewardship, education and awareness (e.g., to prevent the inadvertent destruction of habitat), and population surveys and monitoring (e.g., through census reports). Operation Burrowing Owl (OBO), active since 1987, is currently working with **346** participants to conserve over **213,000** acres of prairie habitat for Burrowing Owls. Launched in 2003, there are currently **287** Shrubs for Shrikes participants conserving over **146,000** acres of grassland and shrub habitat for the threatened Prairie Loggerhead Shrike. Plovers on Shore focuses on conserving and enhancing shoreline habitat for the endangered Piping Plover. Starting in 2009, there are currently **57** participants conserving **216 km (134 miles)** of shoreline habitat for Piping Plovers. The Stewards of Saskatchewan banner program, works with **210** participants conserving over **235,000** acres of habitat supporting a number of nationally and/or provincially listed SAR. Initiated in 2002, Rare Plant Rescue (RPR), celebrating its 20th anniversary, focuses on nine nationally listed plant species at risk in Saskatchewan and seven species that are provincially rare. RPR currently has **86** participants conserving over **251,000** acres of habitat. In 2021-22, SOS staff conducted **222** visits with current and potential program participants to discuss the stewardship programs, species at risk, management options, and conservation. Site-specific SAR Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) plans are created to encourage land stewardship practices that are beneficial to the SAR and other wildlife in the area while allowing for the specific operations at that location to run efficiently. In 2020-21, SOS staff distributed **75** plans to interested participants. The SOS staff work with the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Center (SK CDC) and Environment and Climate Change Canada's Species at Risk (SAR) Recovery Teams to document and verify SAR sightings, and to monitor populations. SOS staff monitor species' trends with the help of participating landowners through the annual program census. The census collects population data on target SAR and locational data are shared with the SK CDC each year. SOS staff also held three Conservation Awareness and Appreciation Day virtual events bringing 375 local participants, their families, and members of the general public together to discuss conservation and new SAR management tools, and to share SOS and a number of partner program/project updates.



2021-22 Board of Directors

President	Ken Ludwig
Past President	Ed Rodger
Vice President	
Secretary	Jamie Sparrow
Treasurer	Brian Johnson
Conservation Director	Lorne Scott
Director	Morley Maier
Director	Joe Schmutz
Director	Diego Steinaker
Director	John Patterson
Director	David Weiman
Director	Jacque Bolton



Rare Plant Rescue team 2021

2021-22 Staff

Executive Director	Jordan Ignatiuk
Species at Risk Manager	Melissa Ranalli (until October 2021) Rebecca Magnus (October 2021-present)
Conservation and Education Manager	Lacey Weekes
Communications Manager	Ellen Bouvier
Office Coordinator	Rebecca Quist (until September 2021) Jennifer Moser-Aikman (October 2021-present)
Rare Plant Rescue Coordinator	Emily Putz
Operation Burrowing Owl Coordinator	Kaytlyn Burrows
Plovers on Shore/ Shrubs for Shrikes Coordinator	Rebecca Magnus (until September 2021) Rachel Ward (September 2021-present)

Thank you to our partners and supporters for your contributions in 2021-22



TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



City of Regina



Support for this project was provided through a grant by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act



RESOURCES LEGACY FUND®
CREATIVE SOLUTIONS. LASTING RESULTS.



Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act



R. Howard Webster Foundation
Fondation R. Howard Webster



The Elsa Wild Animal Appeal of Canada

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and Climate Change Canada

Environnement et Changement climatique



THE SCHAD FOUNDATION