PARTNERS IN PRESERVATION

A VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



Issue #12 Winter 2005

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS....

by Cecilia Goncalves, Visitor Services Specialist, Camrose District Office

Twas the night before Christmas in Alberta's Parks,
Not a volunteer was stirring, not even at dark.
All the volunteers went home for a well-deserved rest,
After spending the summer giving their very best.
From painting, to mowing, to roving and such,
Without their help we'd all be in a rut.
They wore their hats with honour and pride,
And smile at all campers as they stride.

The staff are now getting ready for a long winter season, But without our volunteers, what's the reason? The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow, Looses its lustre when volunteers go.

Then, when out in the park there arose such a clatter, Staff sprang from their desks to see what was the matter. Away to the window they flew like a flash, Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash. When, what to their wondering eyes should appear, But a miniature Durango and eight mule deer. They knew in a moment this must be St. Nick, Donning a park uniform – he looked so slick!

Then from the truck this jolly fellow began to shout, Come one and all, come on out!

I bring a message from your volunteers so dear, They're coming back to parks next year.

Don't look so cheery for they have also sent, A few requests for next season's events.

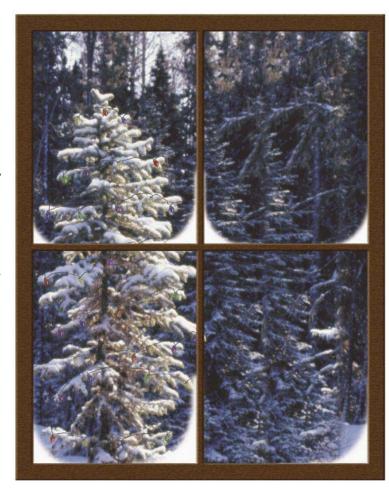
But, the list is too long to share tonight, I'll just read number one if that's alright.

For all the hard work, time, and dedication, A raise of 100% is their quotation.

The staff looked at him in awe and disbelief,
These terms and conditions the parks will meet.

For our volunteers are truly a treasure,
Treating them special would be our pleasure.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work, And filled out the contracts; then turned with a jerk, He sprang to his truck, to his teams gave a whistle, And away they all flew like the down of a thistle. But they heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,



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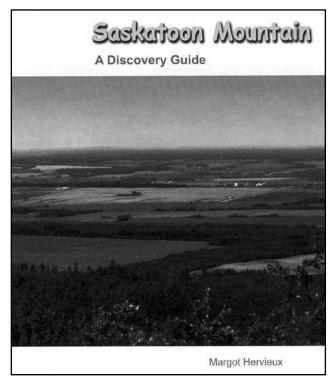
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To call any Alberta government agency toll-free from anywhere in Alberta, dial 310-0000, then the 10-digit number, or hold for operator assistance.

For more information on the volunteer program or to view past issues of this newsletter, visit the volunteer web site at: www.cd.gov.ab.ca/parks/volunteer.

NEW SASKATOON MOUNTAIN DISCOVERY GUIDE

Submitted by: Margot Hervieux, Volunteer Steward



New Discovery Guide Encourages Explorations

The Peace Parkland Naturalists
Club (Grande Prairie) is pleased
to announce the release of the
second in their series of natural area
discovery guides. The full-colour
guide, written by local naturalist and
volunteer steward, Margot Hervieux,
provides an enticing introduction to
the natural and cultural history of
Saskatoon Mountain Natural Area
and encourages visitors to explore
this unique site first-hand.

Saskatoon Mountain, located about 30 km west of Grande Prairie, rises over 150 metres above the surrounding land. The 860 hectare natural area covers a large portion of the mountain top which is an island of northern foothills forest within the Peace River Parkland natural region. It is also the site of both the oldest known human occupation in northern Alberta (dating to 9500 years) and

the remains of a major radar base that was part of the early warning Pinetree Line.

The Saskatoon Mountain Discovery Guide was produced with funds from the Alberta Community Initiatives Program and in-kind support from Parks and Protected Areas Division. Almost all of the photos were donated by private individuals and the Royal Alberta Museum. Revenue from the guide book project supports the ongoing efforts of the Peace Parkland Naturalists to increase natural history awareness and stewardship in the south Peace region.

For more information on the Saskatoon Mountain or Kleskun Hill Discovery Guides visit www.peacenaturalists.fanweb.ca or phone (780) 539-6102.

A CENTENNIAL PARKS DAY QUILT

Submitted by: Penny Whittaker, Campground Host



Parks Day Centennial Quilt Created At Miquelon Lake Provincial Park

With the upcoming Parks Day on July 16th, 2005 and being Alberta's Centennial Year, we wanted to do something special, possibly that no other park has ever done. After some brainstorming the interpretive staff and I came up with the idea of making a Centennial Quilt. Being an addictive quilter, I thought it was a wonderful idea, and immediately began searching for material within the park's budget. Since the interpretive staff had other plans for themselves for that weekend they left it up to me to get this project going.

That week I picked up a pale blue and a green cotton fabric and cut them into 6 ½ inch squares. I had only a few weeks prior noticed that a store in Camrose sold fabric pens like the markers that kids just love. So I picked up 15 of them in various colours. Then I remembered from the last craft we had done that the picnic tables were not really very good for drawing on. I thought placing cardboard underneath would be a good idea. Also I picked up stick pins to stick the squares onto

the cardboard, to keep the fabric from blowing away, in case it was going to be windy. So now I was all set for Parks Day.

It was July 16th and pouring rain so I quickly made sure the shelter was going to be vacant and set up in there hoping that the kids would find me and turn out for the special craft. To my surprise 35 people showed up and had a great time drawing something about camping, the park or Alberta. The pictures that were done were just amazing. Even the

35 people showed up and had a great time drawing something about camping, the park or Alberta

local newspaper from Camrose came out and took a picture of the kids

drawing on their contributions to the quilt. Even some of the Moms came out to draw a square and told us what a great idea and wanted to know when they could see the end result, the quilt.

After Parks Day was over the fun was just beginning for me. First I drew out my finished design a few times until I came up with one I thought would work. Then I was very lucky to see a fabric on sale that had all the right colours and seagulls on it and I donated some of my green fabric. I sewed up all of the top side and then went out and got the batting and some backing and finished off the quilt. Finally, I made a label for the back so everyone could see who did the artwork, where, when and the author of the quilt.

I was very proud of our accomplishment and we hung it up several times during our shows at the amphitheatre. Also I brought it to the volunteer conference, where we hung it up for all to see. Many people commented on what a nice quilt it was.

I think that being able to do this project is one of the many reasons why it gives me a lot of pleasure to be a host at Miquelon Lake Provincial Park.

THE FRINGE BENEFITS OF STEWARDSHIP - WILDCAT ISLAND

Submitted by: Derry White, Volunteer Steward



Stewardship Gives Volunteers A Little Piece of Paradise

My wife and I loaded up the canoe to spend four peaceful days on Wildcat Island Natural Area, where we are stewards. The island is located on the Bow River between Cochrane and Ghost Dam. The float to the island takes about an hour, depending on Mr. Wind and how the fish are biting.

We had a beautiful sunny day with a favouring wind. I caught a couple of small rainbow on the float down but I wasn't fishing too seriously, since we had nothing but time. We arrived on Wildcat Island and noticed deer tracks in the wet sand. Deer have been observed on the island in the past, so it was not a surprise, but nice to see they still found the island a safe haven.

We set up camp and then choweddown on spaghetti and meat sauce a traditional first night supper on the river, since you can make it under any circumstances. ... Even if your wife forgets to pack the propane bottle.

The Bow River, on this stretch, drops 3 to 4 feet overnight and rises back up by 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning. This makes for some pretty nifty fishing holes early in the morning. I have one, which anglers call a "Honey Hole". Given the right conditions you could take a nice trout out of this stretch of water on a safety pin.

I was walking down stream to fish the hole when I spooked a whitetail buck. He didn't venture far into the bush and I wondered about that. Then I saw two fawns behind a shrub between me and the river. I stood perfectly still not wanting to pose more of a threat than I already was. The next thing I saw were four whitetail teenagers bounding towards me out of the bush. I still stood my ground, not knowing if they were in a fawn protection program or just curious. As it turned out, they were just curious.

So there I was on a small island surrounded by seven whitetail deer all of us just checking each other out. Quite amazing! They quietly ambled off to graze and I continued downstream to my fishing hole.

I caught a nice brown trout, released it, and walked back to camp to rouse the chef for 2 eggs, sunnyside, ham, hash browns, tea and toast.

Life is sweet for this fisherman!



Join us in Lac La Biche For the 2006 Volunteer Conference September 15, 16 & 17

McArthur Place Located along the shore of Lac La Biche Lake, beside McArthur Park





Be part of the 800th anniversary of the legend of the Birkebeiner, February 10 & 11, 2006. The coordinators are always looking for new people to help, so why not come out and enjoy the event as a volunteer.

The success of this festival relies on the enthusiasm and hard work of more than 600 volunteers. Join the fun and sign up today!

For more information about volunteering for the 20th Canadian Berkebeiner, please contact the Birkie office at (780) 430-7153.

We'll see you there!

CALLING ALL SUBMISSIONS!

Partners in Preservation is always looking for great articles and photos. To streamline our administration, please follow these guidelines.

Articles should be no longer than 500 words, and include title and author.

If including a photograph, please provide a brief description of the image, including names, activities, location and photographer by full name. We prefer having the original photo or slide, and will return them to you if you provide a return address. Here are the requirements if you are submitting in digital format:

- Do not send photos as a GIF or in PowerPoint or MS Word. Send photos as a TIF or a JPG.
- Ensure all slides/photos are scanned at 300 dpi resolution.
- If scanning a slide, please enlarge by at least 500%.

NOTE: The Editor retains the right to edit or refuse submissions (article or photo).

If you require assistance regarding the photo requirements, please contact Michael McCready at (780) 427-7526.

To submit an article, to contact us regarding changes to the mailing list, or to receive a free subscription please contact:

Lori at (780) 427-3805 or e-mail at Lori.Ruzycki@gov.ab.ca

or write to:

Partners in Preservation, Visitor Services Branch Parks & Protected Areas Division 2nd Floor, Oxbridge Place 9820 - 106 Street Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J6

Deadline for submissions for the next issue is March 31, 2006.

A TIME TO REMEMBER

Submitted by: Brad Marshall, Volunteer Services Coordinator

So there I was, holding a flashlight for Sid Marty as he finished off his evening performance acoustically and thinking to myself "this is truly a conference to remember!"

For those who missed this memorable experience, it went something like

this...

Activities kicked off on Friday with the popular Whaleback Hike in **Bob Creek** Wildland Park. Other tours that day included the Allison Creek **Brood Trout** Station and naturalist walk around Chinook Lake, a Resource Management Bus Tour and a visit to both the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre and Bellevue Mine.

Back at the Crowsnest Centre,

attendees engaged in hands-on exploration of life in the wetlands. It was amazing to see a group of adults consume two whole hours sitting around in a circle playing with all

the creatures in a "bucket of swamp water" from the nearby river.

> The evening performance by the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Dance Troupe was well received. We were entertained, educated and even involved in a large round dance everyone participated in, through this unique cultural

Things picked up the next morning with various presentations including one on

experience.

Windpower Generation and another on the monitoring of Turtle Mountain (Frank Slide). The afternoon saw most of the sessions venture outside in the mountain valley until, yup, you guessed it, the snow showed up.

With a nice fire blazing in the Centre's fireplace, everyone filled up on the wonderful meal, settling in for the award presentations and evening entertainment. Sid Marty captivated the audience with his stories and songs about the great outdoors. Just as Sid commenced to deliver the last song of the night, the power went out. That's where I came into the act with my flashlight.

As we watched power transformers arc a brilliant blue colour one at a time throughout the valley, we knew the power wasn't coming back on that night, but with the warmth of a strong fire and good company, everyone settled into the tranquility such occurrences bring.

The power was still off as everyone awoke the next morning, so attendees ate breakfast, packed up, said goodbyes to old and new friends alike, expressed their sincere interest to attend next year's conference in Lac La Biche and ventured down the highway to home. Clearly demonstrated in the evaluations received, a good time was had by all!



Whaleback Tour Participants Lunch "Al Fresco With a View" Boy! What A View!

Volunteer Awards



Steward Service Excellence Award
Dan Stoker Of Big Lake Environmental Support Society



Partnership Appreciation Award
Clara Wakeford Accepting For The Friends of Saskatoon Island



Volunteer Host Hospitality AwardAnnie and Harry Wit



Outstanding Steward Group Award Suzanne Benoit Accepts On Behalf Of The Fort Saskatchewan Field Naturalists Society



Volunteer Leadership Award

Don Cockerton Accepts Award From Fred Moffatt



Volunteer Host Hospitality AwardFred and Yvonne Holowack



Outstanding Indiviual Steward Award
Bertha Ford Accepts Award From Assistant Deputy
Minister John Kristensen

FRIENDS OF PEACEFUL VALLEY DAY 2005

Submitted by: Coral Grove, Volunteer Steward Coordinator

On June 18th I attended a celebration at the Peaceful Valley Provincial Recreation Area and Day Use Lodge. It was a 25th Anniversary celebration of a dream that came to life and also a celebration of Kathleen Wark's life. Kathleen passed away in March 2005.

Kathleen and her brother Robert are the founding donors for this site and facility. One summer day in 1980, Kathleen and Robert were out driving and noticed the property for sale. Once they viewed the property, they realized the beauty and the potential for this site. With their hard work, determination and persistence they made their dream of creating a place to provide opportunities for the elderly, disabled and terminally ill to come out and enjoy nature come true.

It was in 1991 that Kathleen and Robert donated the lands and funds by signing an agreement in partnership with the Province of Alberta.

The Friends of Peaceful Valley, Alberta Sport Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation and Alberta Community Development hosted the celebration. Many in attendance, and even those who were unable to attend, shared their memories of Kathleen and the creation of this site. Doris Moonie spoke on behalf of Robert Wark, as his health kept him from attending. Tony Abbott, MLA Drayton Valley Calmar, brought greetings from the Honorable Gary Mar, Minister of Community Development, and the Honorable Ralph Klein and presented the Friends of Peaceful Valley with a book and a framed certificate on



View From The Day Lodge Of Peaceful Valley Provincial Recreation Area

behalf of the Legislative Assembly, recognizing their 25 years. The Battle River Ladies Group also spoke and made a donation to the Friends of Peaceful Valley.

With the beautiful views and the calming singing of the birds, Peaceful Valley Recreation Area and Day Use Lodge, truly suits its name.



Doug Plikington, Harry and Annie Wit

Doug Pilkington, Conservation
Officer, made an award presentation
to Harry and Annie Wit to recognize
them for their 10 years of dedicated
volunteering at this site. They
received a beautifully framed print.
Congratulations Harry and Annie,
keep up the great work! At the end
of the formal presentation there was
a beautiful and touching PowerPoint
presentation in remembrance of
Kathleen Wark's life.

Even with the rainy weather I could see why Kathleen and Bob had fallen in love with this site, pursued their dream and created a legacy and a memorial to their parents. With the beautiful views and the calming singing of the birds, Peaceful Valley Recreation Area and Day Use Lodge, truly suits its name.

ORDINARY HEROES - BETH AND DERRYL METCALF

Submitted by: Paul Avery, Conservation Officer



New Volunteer Hosts Valuable Addition To Cypress Hills Team

When Beth and Derryl Metcalf signed up to be campground hosts they were eagerly looking forward to relaxing, doing a little fishing and greeting their fellow campers. After all, it was their first experience at hosting in our park.

On May 30th, 2005 the Metcalf's decided to try some fishing at the Reesor Lake Dock. The lake was virtually empty of any people except for an older gentleman, his daughter and a 14yr old girl who ventured out from the dock to do some canoeing despite the raging whitecaps. The canoeists were about half way across the lake when the man's hat blew off. As two of them reached to retrieve it they instantly capsized into the choppy water. It quickly became apparent they were in serious trouble. The man's daughter was tangled up in fishing line while the girl struggled to swim towards shore. With no other boaters around the Metcalf's had limited options for rescue. Beth

made the short drive back to the main campground to phone the Conservation Officers. Derryl was able to enlist the help of a couple of belly boaters who had just arrived at the dock.

The young girl was the first to arrive on shore followed by the man's daughter. Both were suffering from the effects of hypothermia but were otherwise going to be OK. The canoe had now sunk below the water and the older man was struggling to stay afloat. He was yelling for help as he dropped below the surface

of the water. From shore Derryl observed him go under a couple more times before the belly boater was able to get hold of him.

Once on shore the man was barely conscious, blue in color and was not breathing well at all. He had been in the water for close to 30 minutes. Beth and Derryl provided blankets, first aid and the use of their vehicle as they aided the man, his daughter and their young friend. Other help began to arrive a short time later. The man was transported to hospital by paramedics. It was learned some time later that he had suffered a heart attack during the accident. He is now in good condition and apparently back fishing again.

Normally Reesor Lake is busy with plenty of fisherman and boaters. In this case it was only our campground hosts who happened to be there when the canoe capsized on a very windy Reesor Lake. Without a doubt, if not for their quick thinking and response, this man would not have survived.

We extend our thanks to Beth and Derryl Metcalf and hope they will return to do some more hosting in 2006.

CALLING ALL HOSTS!!!

You may be hearing tall tales about this year's season kick-off host campout at Miquelon Lake Provincial Park. As you have probably already figured out, you missed a great weekend.



So get your calendars out and mark May 5-8, 2006 for next year's Host Campout at Miquelon Lake.

This is a casual weekend with a Saturday night pot-luck supper, open to all current, new and retired hosts.

FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK 2005 SPRING FLOOD CLEANUP

Reprinted with permission from the Friends of Fish Creek September newsletter



Special "Sky Crane" From Canadian Air Crane Helps Move Bridges Out Of Fish Creek Provincial Park

This spring Fish Creek Provincial Park suffered one of the worst floods in its history. Seven of the park's 18 pedestrian bridges were destroyed along with over 40% of trails. Flood waters left debris throughout the park.

While floods are a normal part of any river ecosystem, Fish Creek Provincial Park is unique. Proximity to industrial and residential areas meant that much of the debris left by waters was man-made, creating both aesthetic and safety concerns. Friends' volunteers cleared debris ranging from plastic packaging, styrofoam and footwear to cement-mixer tires and parts of an Environment Canada quonset hut. Trails blocked by natural and man-made debris created further safety and environmental concerns as users broke new trails, often through dangerous or sensitive areas. In some places, asphalt trails were blocked by high waters along with almost-whole trees.

The Friends are proud to have taken a leadership role in the park's cleanup efforts. Over the summer we have hosted hundreds of volunteers who have made incredible progress in the park's clean-up. Volunteers were instrumental in clearing manmade debris from the trails running from Mallard Point to the Sikome Lake area, the Hull's Wood Picnic Area, Shannon Terrace and the Environmental Learning Centre. Where natural debris was blocking repairable trails, volunteers scattered the debris through the forest to encourage decomposition. The park's many 'unofficial' trails will not be cleared of debris. It is hoped that this will force users to abandon these trails, allowing these lost habitat areas to recover.

There are some things that even hundreds of volunteers cannot accomplish. Each of the destroyed pedestrian bridges—even stripped of their decks—weighs about 14,000

pounds. Removing these bridges required a joint operation involving park staff, Canadian Air Crane, Calgary Police Services, Calgary Search and Rescue, the Calgary Fire Department and the Friends of Fish Creek. Calgary Search and Rescue donated their time to clear the park of all visitors while the Calgary Police—using their helicopter—searched for people in the park from the air. Park staff, along with the Friends of Fish Creek staff and police secured entrances to the park and answered the public's questions.

When the park was secured, Canadian Air Crane used the powerful Sikorsky Sky Crane (capable of lifting about 20,000 pounds at sea level) to move each of the seven bridges out of the park.

The next step in the park's recovery will be to re-plan areas of the park that have been changed by the flood. This will mean revising trail routes to avoid sensitive areas and moving trails away from land eroded by flood waters. The primary concern will be balancing increasing human use of the park with the needs of a fragile ecosystem. The Friends of Fish Creek will continue to play a leadership role in the park by encouraging responsible use through educational programs and monitoring the health of the park through wildlife and plant surveys. For information on how you can help with the ongoing flood clean-up, or for information on other volunteer opportunities with the Friends, please contact Bonnie at (403) 238-3841.

VOLUNTEER STEWARD UPDATE

Submitted by: Coral Grove, Volunteer Steward Coordinator

Hello! For those of you who don't already know me, my name is Coral Grove and I am the new Volunteer Steward Coordinator. I stepped into this position when Sandra accepted a new position as the Senior Program/Policy Advisor, within the Parks and Protected Areas Division. I have been fortunate enough to have met and talked to some of the stewards since I have started with the program just over a year and a half ago and look forward to meeting more stewards in the future.

I would like to bring to your attention, the addition of four new sites available for steward placement. There is one provincial park: Greene Valley and three wildland provincial parks: Grizzly Ridge, Lesser Slave Lake and Peace River. All are located in the northwest part of the province.

Greene Valley Provincial Park is 2 km east of Peace River and is located in the Heart River valley. This park serves as a wildlife corridor and also contains a monument to Henry "12 Ft." Davis, a prospector who mined \$15,000 in gold from a twelve foot plot between two larger claims in 1862.

Grizzly Ridge Wildland Provincial Park is 15 km southwest of Slave Lake. It has forests of white spruce, balsam fir, jack pine, balsam poplar and white birch as well as wetlands springs and a small lake.

The north shore of Lesser Slave Lake is where you can find Lesser Slave Lake Wildland Park. Within the park there is habitat for both the spawning and rearing of fish, staging areas for waterfowl and important habitat for the winter range of moose.



Grizzly Ridge Wildland Provincial Park Southwest of Slave Lake

Peace River Wildland Provincial Park is near Peace River and has forests of spruce and aspen along with grassland and shrubland communities.

More information on these sites is posted on the Volunteer website http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/involved/parks/volunteer/stewardlistings.asp and the Gateway to Alberta's Parks website http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/enjoying_alberta/parks/planning/gateway/alphasearch.asp

When going out to a site, please remember to take along a cell phone for emergency communications. Also, if possible, take along a friend - not only for safety reasons, but to share the experience of being outdoors and always, please remember to inform someone of where you are going and when you are expected back. If there is an individual that regularly accompanies you on your site visits, we encourage you to have them sign up as a roving steward. In doing so, not only will they be covered by the Government

of Alberta's insurance policy, but they will qualify for recognition items available to stewards.

Last, but not least, a quick reminder to those of you who visited your site this year, please remember to fill out those inspection report forms and send them in. If there has been no change to the site condition, even that is valuable information. Also, receiving your reports lets us know that you are still active as a steward and have been out to the site. You can send your reports via Canada Post or submit them online at the following web address http:// www.cd.gov.ab.ca/involved/parks/ volunteer/stewardreport.asp or you can just give me a call.

If you submit your reports online, send an e-mail to me at coral. grove@gov.ab.ca to notify me that a report was sent, as we are still having a few technical difficulties.

I am looking forward to reading your inspection reports and hearing about your outings this year.

Put on your warm woolies and heat up your binoculars, its time for the annual

Christmas Bird Counts take place throughout Alberta. This year at:

Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park - December 18

Meet at the Sawridge Truck Stop at 7:15am. Contact: Jeff Manchak (780) 849-7101

Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park - January 7

Sign up at 10:00am at Elkwater Lake Visitor Centre. Count concludes about 2 or 3 pm. Contact: park (403) 893-3833

Here are some other locations:

December 17	Banff/Canmore	(403) 762-4160	Mike McIvor
December 17	Bow/Kananaskis/Exshaw	(403) 673-2422	Cliff Hansen
December 27	Coyote Lake	(780) 848-2428	Doris Hopkins
January 2	Tofield	(780) 662-4100	Joyce Kelly-Sinclair
January 2	Wabamun Lake	(780) 439-6043	Pat Marklevitz



Find out about others by contacting:

John Janzen Nature Centre in Edmonton (780) 496-2915 Kerry Wood Nature Centre in Red Deer (403) 346-2010 Calgary Field Naturalists in Calgary (403) 228-4142

or check the Federation of Alberta Naturalists web site www.fanweb.ca



