

Nature Manitoba Annual Report



March 23, 2020

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Nature Manitoba (Manitoba Naturalists Society Inc.)
98th Annual General Meeting
Monday, March 18, 2019
Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain
340 Provencher Blvd
Winnipeg, Manitoba

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by president, Jack Dubois. Fifty-six members were in attendance. (40 members are required for quorum). Jack Dubois welcomed members to the meeting.
2. The minutes of the last AGM of March 19, 2018 were circulated for information to the membership. The Board had previously approved these minutes.
3. The president's report was read by Jack Dubois. The report was circulated to the membership.
4. Treasurer's Report – André Laberge reviewed the financial statements of Nature Manitoba (Manitoba Naturalists Society Inc.). General operations reported an excess of revenue over expenses of \$1720. Fundraising revenue and administrative fees increased on the revenue side. Fundraising expenses, bank service charges and wages and salaries increased on the expenses side. In 2018 the Board approved the opening of a new account with the Winnipeg Foundation and invested \$20,000.

Moved by André Laberge and seconded by Karen Smith that the treasurer's report and financial statements be accepted. **Carried.**
5. Appointment of Auditors for 2019 - Moved by André Laberge and seconded by Sandy Hayglass that Heartland Chartered Accountants be appointed to provide a Review Engagement Report of Nature Manitoba (Manitoba Naturalists Society) financial statements for 2019. **Carried.**
6. Annual Reports of Nature Manitoba Committees: The following reports were circulated to the membership for information and filed with the secretary: Garden Tour, Discovery Evenings, Workshops, Mantario, Important Bird Areas, Chimney Swift Initiative, Manitoba Bluebird, Bridging the Gap, Communications, Habitat Conservation.

7. Election of Executive Members: All positions filled by acclamation.

President – Jack Dubois
Executive Vice President – Sandy Hayglass
Vice President - James Whitelaw
Treasurer – André Laberge
Secretary – Joe Leven
Past President – Don Himbeault

8. Election of Board Members: All positions filled by acclamation.

Christian Artuso (Term ending March 2020)
Rommel Molod (Term ending March 2021)
Les McCann (Term ending March 2021)
Karen Smith (Term ending March 2021)

Lesly Andrews (Term ending March 2022)
Michelle Kading (Term ending March 2022)
Alain Louer (Term ending March 2022)

Maria Mitousis (Term ending March 2022)

10. Award Presentations

Service Award was presented to Julia Schoen by Jack Dubois for her many contributions, particularly for running the Workshops for 23 years.

11. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Leven

Presentations following the meeting:

Alain and Cindy Louer: Travels in Ecuador

Laurie Ringaert – Save Our Seine – Making a Difference in Manitoba

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Jack Dubois)

Hello Everyone

It has been another successful year for Nature Manitoba. As you will see detailed in the committee reports in this 2019 Annual Report, we have run our usual myriad of programs and outings, bringing the mysteries and joys of nature to hundreds of participants from school kids to families and Gray Hares, over many parts of our province and as far away as India.

Our membership remains stable, at around 530 as of the end of the year. In doing some reading on the history of this organization it was interesting to see that membership did not reach over 500 until 1970, our 50th year.

Financially, we are in excellent shape, as our Treasurer, Andre Laberge will articulate. We are particularly grateful for the bequest of Ms. Ellen B. Hirst and the ongoing support of Manitoba Department of Health, Seniors and Active Living and other individual donors.

I would like to acknowledge the indispensable work of our office staff, Susan McLarty, Office Manager, Deanna Dodgson, Office Assistant and Lynsay Perkins, Web Communication Specialist, who has enthusiastically taken on extra work to make our centennial year a special one.

Sandy Hayglass, Chair of the Indoor Program Committee, marshalled a great series of talks this past season (thank you to the presenters!) and is also working with Lynsay and other volunteers putting together a variety of events for our 100th.

To Joe Leven, Co-ordinator of the Garden Tour, thanks for the excellent work on the past several Tours and as a Board Member. To the rest of the committee and program chairs, as well as the trip leaders, all of whom volunteer their time, thank you very much. You, and the others mentioned above make Nature Manitoba the wonderful organization it is.

Hopefully I will see some of you out on the lakes and trails in this beautiful province this summer.

TREASURER'S REPORT

(Andre Laberge)

Nature Manitoba's general operation finished the year 2019 with an excess of revenue over expenses in the amount of \$34,687.

The general operations biggest change from the previous year was a bequest in the amount of \$25,148 and increased investment income. The general operations received a disbursement from the Manitoba Naturalists Endowment Fund held at the Winnipeg Foundation in the amount of \$6,335, an increase of \$1,471 from 2018. Our membership fees stayed similar to 2018.

For the expenses of the general operation, the biggest changes from the previous year were a reduction to the professional fees because we changed accounting firm for the financial review and we invested into information technology maintenance and security. We also purchased an air conditioner and a printer for the office.

The Paul Guyot Endowment Fund for Habitat received a disbursement of \$8,060 and the Manitoba Bluebird Endowment Fund received a disbursement of \$13,221 from the Winnipeg Foundation. The two endowment funds earned 14.84% for the year. We invested the bequest that we received with the Winnipeg Foundation.

In 2019, the board approved transfers from the general fund in the amount of \$5,319 to the Riverbottom Forest Fund and \$5,859 to the Bridging the Gap Fund to eliminate the negative balance that had been existing for several years. The board also approved a \$5,000 transfer to the Reserve Fund to meet the objective of the fund and a \$5,000 transfer to the Nature Fund.

Although typically our financial planning is to have a balanced budget each year, it is typical for our year-end position to cycle between surpluses and deficits by some small fraction of our total budget, where for example, in 2012 and 2013 we had deficits, 2014 and 2015 we had surpluses, in 2016 and 2017 we had deficits and in 2018 and 2019 we have a surplus. The board continues to look at ways to increase revenue and reduce costs, while also wanting to make sure the money we are spending is being effective and providing value to the members.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

GARDEN TOUR

Report by Joe Leven

The 2019 Nature Manitoba Garden Tour took place on July 13th. It included gardens in St. Vital, Ft. Richmond and Richmond West. We had a nice mix of gardens of different styles, mostly quite close to each other. Feedback from tour-goers was very positive. We sold 372 tickets this year, a substantial decline from 2018, and more in line with previous years.

Our community garden this year was at Louis Riel House. We set up a refreshment station for tour-goers there as well as holding a plant sale. Sales at the plant sale were markedly higher than in 2018.

I would like to extend a big thank you to Lynsay Perkins for her work on promoting the tour and to Dianne Beaven for distributing tickets. We are extremely grateful to Judith Tougher for doing a great job marketing the tour. Thanks also to Gini King for organizing the refreshments and to Gail Thiessen and Jenny Kuchta for helping. Gail also helped scout out gardens and in other ways. Thanks to Marilyn Latta for organizing the very successful plant sale and to Donna Danyluk for helping.

Tim Evans has kindly taken over organizing the 2020 Garden Tour. It will showcase gardens in the north end of the city, in Riverbend and East Kildonan.

The community garden, refreshments and plant sale will be at Seven Oaks House Museum. It promises to be another great tour.

DISCOVERY EVENINGS

Report by Sandy HayGlass and Julia Schoen

Discovery Evening Program organized by Sandy HayGlass

The Indoor Program Committee (Donna Danyluk, Joe Leven, Les McCann, Julia Schoen, Martin Zeilig and Sandy HayGlass) would like to thank the volunteers that helped us out at the admission table - Katharine Schultz and John Schultz, Joe Leven, Jenny Kuchta, Julia Schoen, and all those that supplied goodies for the December program and the AGM.

We greatly appreciate the generous contribution of time and effort made by all of our speakers:

2019-2020 Presentations

- 1. Polar Bears of the Western Hudson Bay** – Daryll Hedman
- 2. Birding and Touring in West Africa** – Gene Walz, Author of Happiness is a Rare Bird
- 3. Orchids of Manitoba: 37 out of 26,567** – Rose Kuzina, Nature Manitoba Trip Leader
- 4. The Backyard is My World and The World is My Backyard** – Dennis Fast, Past President of Nature Manitoba, Birder and Photographer
- 5. The Flies that Bind – the Little Known Shared History of the Manitoba Museum and Nature Manitoba** – Randy Mooi, Curator of Zoology, Manitoba Museum
- 6. Imagining Manitoba's Future Climate** – Danny Blair, Co-Director, Prairie Climate Centre, Professor of Geography, University of Winnipeg

WORKSHOP SERIES

This was Julia Schoen's last year organizing workshops which she did for the last twenty-two years and retired from this position 1 May, 2019. She was the well-deserved recipient of the Nature Manitoba Service Award at the March 2019 AGM. Thank you Julia.

The goal of the Workshop Series is to increase our understanding and appreciation of the wonders of the natural world under the guidance of experts.

Some of the sessions include field trips, which greatly enrich our experience of the outdoors.

The fees charged to Workshop participants (\$5.00 for members; \$10.00 for non-members; \$3.00 for student members and \$5.00 for student non-members) bring in much needed funding for Nature Manitoba programs. Attendance remains high.

We would like to thank the Winnipeg #1 School Division for providing Nature Manitoba with a venue for the Workshops. Kelvin High School has continued to be a fine location with central access and a helpful and co-operative night staff.

We would like to thank the following presenters for sharing their knowledge with us in 2019:

1. **TICKS** – Kateryn Rochon, Assistant Professor of Veterinary and Wildlife Entomology at the U of M
2. **MANITOBA HAWKS** – Rudolf Koes, Nature Manitoba Birder
3. **CREEPY-CRAWLIES OF MANITOBA** – James Whitelaw, Nature Manitoba Birder
4. **WATERBIRDS OF MANITOBA** - Christian Artuso, Manitoba Program Manager, Bird Studies Canada and Chair of Manitoba IBA Committee
5. **MANITOBA THRUSHES** – Ward Christianson and Marlene Waldron, Nature Manitoba Birders
6. **INTRO TO BACK COUNTRY CAMPING** – Sean Worden, Nature Manitoba Outdoor Enthusiast
7. **NEW INSIGHTS INTO THE NATURAL HISTORY AND ECOLOGY OF FRANKLIN’S GROUND SQUIRREL** – Dr. James Hare, Professor of Biological Science at the University of Manitoba
8. **WILD AND EDIBLE MEDICINAL PLANTS** - Tom Nagy, Manitoba Ecologist and Foraging Enthusiast
9. **SO YOU SAW A COUGAR** – Dr. Bill Watkins, Biodiversity Conservation Zoologist
10. **MORELS and OTHER FUNGI** - Dr. David Punter, Retired Professor of Botany, University of Manitoba
11. **DISCOVERING MUSHROOMS** – Donna Kurt, Nature Manitoba Outdoor Enthusiast
12. **THE BEES OF MANITOBA and HOW TO SUPPORT THEM** – Dr. Jason Gibbs, Assistant Professor in Department of Entomology at U of M
13. **BIRDS vs WINDOWS** – Dr. Emily McKinnon, Biologist and Science Educator

For more information or to get involved with some of Nature Manitoba’s most successful programs, please contact Al Louer for the Workshop program at alainlouer@hotmail.com or Sandy HayGlass for the Discovery Evening Program at sandyhayglass@gmail.com

MANTARIO

Report by Marc Leclair

MANTARIO CABIN

The cabin continues to be used regularly by members of Nature Manitoba, as well as many non-members. The cabin bookings come from newsletter-advertised trips, private individuals and schools. During the year a few work parties were held at which a lot of repairs and updating work was performed.

MANTARIO SUMMER PROGRAM

Once again, guides were not hired and all trips were guided by volunteers.

Special Note: Manitoba Conservation continues to help us by bringing dry goods, fuel and materials to the cabin by snowmobile. These goods and materials are used for the summer program and for cabin maintenance and repair. Conservation staff stayed at the cabin overnight to meet and patrol the area. We continue to have a good relationship with Manitoba Conservation staff.



Report by Amanda Shave and Tim Poole

We are extremely pleased by the ongoing support of our volunteers who contribute to the growing success of the Manitoba Important Bird Areas program. Thanks to support from Nature Manitoba, Birds Canada, Nature Canada, our volunteers and funders we are pleased to say that 2019 allowed us to build capacity and public awareness of our program. We would also like to say a fond farewell for Tim Poole and Christian Artuso, we wish them well in their new positions, and are

pleased they are still a part of our program as Steering Committee members. Below are some highlights from the past year for the Manitoba IBA Program.

- Funds were secured with the Winnipeg Foundation, TD Friends of the Environment, Patvin Foundation, the Baillie Fund, Nature Canada's IBA Action Fund, Tundra Gas and Oil, Enbridge and Nature Manitoba through the Bluebird Fund.
- Over 100 volunteers contributed to the IBA Program as steering committee members, shorebird surveyors, blitz volunteers and beach clean up volunteers.
- We had monitoring data submitted by volunteers for 19 of Manitoba's IBAs, namely Netley-Libau Marsh, Oak Hammock Marsh WMA, Riverton Sandy Bar, Whitewater Lake, Delta Marsh, Sandy Bay Marshes, Oak Lake/Plum Lakes, Shoal Lakes, Proven Lake, Kinosota/Leifur, Douglas Marsh, Southwestern Manitoba Mixed-Grass Prairie, Marshy Point, Nelson River Estuary and Marsh Point, Ellice-Archie and Spy Hill Community Pastures, Saskatchewan River Delta, Grant's Lake, Dog Lake, and Churchill IBAs.
- Some of the significant bird findings in our IBAs included:
 - 1,000 Ross's Geese seen just outside Oak Lake IBA near Deleau on the way to a shorebird identification workshop in Brandon this spring. This is a significant concentration for spring in southern Manitoba.
 - 19,000 Snow Geese seen during the birding portion of the Brandon shorebird identification workshop this spring.
 - Presence of Yellow Rails heard during the evening blitz at Douglas Marsh in July.
 - Two blitzes on the same day for Red-headed Woodpeckers yielded 6 breeding pairs at Oak Lakes/Plum Lakes and 23 individuals at Shoal Lakes.
- Despite a strange coincidence this year of poor weather on days with IBA scheduled events we were able to conduct six blitz events involving 95 volunteers. Blitzes took place at Whitewater Lake, Delta Marsh, Oak Lake/Plum Lakes, Douglas Marsh (hosted by NCC), and Shoal Lakes (twice).

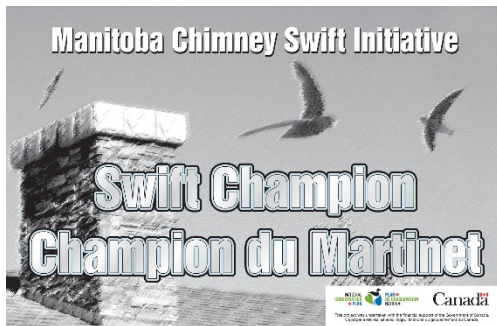
- We had one weed pull event at Riverton Sandy Bar this spring attended by 23 people. Unfortunately, another had to be cancelled this fall while we were between IBA Coordinators, but we look forward to continuing weed pulls in the upcoming year.
- The donation of time by the members of the IBA Steering Committee who provided support and guidance for both IBA Coordinators this year. We have two new Steering Committee members in 2019, Tim Poole and Marika Olynyk. We are excited to continue to work with them! Thank you as well to our long-time Steering Committee members: Christian Artuso, Paula Grief, Tim Sopuck and Bonnie Chartier.
- Delivery of IBA and bird identification workshops to community members, high school students and continuing education students at Sioux Valley Dakota Nation as we partner with the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) through the Aboriginal Fund for Species At Risk program.
- Delivery of presentations to a variety of schools, organizations and community groups across Manitoba.
- Promotion and delivering events at Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre as part of International Migratory Birds Day.
- Hiring of a green team employee, Kelsey Bell, to help with both birding programs during summer 2019.

Shorebird Initiatives

Shorebirds have been an important part of Manitoba IBA's programming in the last few years. Tim Poole and Paula Grief gave a shorebird identification workshop at Oak Hammock Marsh in July, followed by some shorebird outdoor identification practice. Tim also gave a shorebird identification presentation in Brandon followed the next day by an outing at Whitewater Lake to practice shorebird identification. The second year of the International Shorebird Survey was completed at Oak Lake and Whitewater Lake IBAs with help from many volunteers, notably Gillian Richards, Glennis Lewis, Colin Blyth, Ward Christianson and Marlene Waldron.

Grassland Bird Initiatives

Year three of Manitoba IBA's involvement in the 'Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Land (SARPAL)' wrapped up this year. Lynnea Parker monitored 28 properties in southwestern Manitoba for avian Species at Risk as part of this program, with occasional support from Kelsey Bell and Tim Poole. Project partners have worked with beef producers to improve habitat for avian species at risk and promote responsible grazing on native prairie to help both wildlife and producers thrive. Manitoba IBA are also delivering a Conservation Trust project on behalf of Birds Canada to help identify blocks of land in southwestern Manitoba which might be ideal for conservation. As part of this grant and with the help of an early professionals grant from the Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference in 2019 Lynnea is working to determine which incentives for land conservation are favoured by cattle producers. Look for this report becoming available in the near future.



Report by Amanda Shave,
Barb Stewart and Tim Poole

2019 was a very successful year for the Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative. We continue to be excited to work with a great and dedicated group of volunteers. Below are some highlights from the 2019 season.

Funding

MCSI successfully applied for another 3-year Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) grant. This grant, together with a significant donation from Nature Manitoba's Bluebird Fund will allow us to continue our programming to restore damaged chimneys in Manitoba.

Monitoring

Numbers of Communities with Active Monitoring: MCSI monitors were active across southern and central Manitoba this summer. We monitored Chimney Swifts in 25 communities across Manitoba.

Number of Sites Monitored: MCSI volunteers monitored an impressive 174 sites in 2019, up from 152 sites in 2018. We are thankful for all the hard work our volunteers put into the program this past summer! Of these sites 118 were occupied at one point during the season.

Number of New Sites Found: Our great rise in the number of sites monitored came from dedicated volunteers who scoped out previously unknown sites for us. We had a total of 60 new sites/ chimneys added to the database, over half being occupied by swifts. This includes confirmed breeding in a previously unknown chimney in St Adolphe and the first occasion of Chimney Swifts in Manitoba breeding in an artificial tower in Winnipeg.

Number of Volunteers: We are aware of at least 100 volunteers who have been monitoring chimneys in 2019. Special thanks this year to the Selkirk Birdwatchers club led by Gerald Manee, Gord Ogilvie in Portage la Prairie, Ken and Jan Wainwright in Dauphin, Barb and Rob Stewart in St. Adolphe, Margaret Yorke and Millie Reid in Brandon, staff at Assiniboine Park Zoo for monitoring the new Chimney Swift Tower, and staff at Riding Mountain National Park for monitoring in Wasagaming. Also a big thank you to Frank and Jacquie Machovec for doing the long drives for monitoring in towns without volunteers, and to Frank for also managing our website.

Largest Roost: The May peak at Assiniboine Park School was 163 on May 26, 2019. This was up from last year's peak of 114. We had five roosts with recorded counts of at least 10 swifts in 2019 in Manitoba.

Confirmed Breeding: We had confirmed breeding at 13 sites in Winnipeg, St Adolphe, Brandon, Dominion City, Portage la Prairie, and Selkirk.

Stewardship

Chimney repairs are a key part of our funding program and MCSI. We completed one chimney repair in 2019, with another agreement signed and ready to go at snow melt. Unfortunately, the early fall weather delayed the repair of an additional chimney in St Francois Xavier. We have also engaged many different owners across Manitoba and have two chimney cleanings lined up for the spring.

Outreach

Presentations: Tim Poole presented to school children at Carman Elementary School, Manitoba and St Paul's United Church in Souris.

Swift Champions: Plaques were presented to St Paul's United Church in Souris, Carman Elementary School, Margaret Yorke and Millie Reid, Christian Artuso and Paroisse Saint Joachim in La Broquerie.

Swift Watch Nights: We had our annual Assiniboine School roost watch in mid June and our first ever public swift watch in Souris, attended by over 20 people.

Media: An article was published in the Wolesley Leaf.

Steering Committee

Bridging the 2019 and 2020 seasons, we had some local redistributions and migrations of our Steering Committee. We have also welcomed new members to the MCSI flock. In August, Christian Artuso moved to Ottawa to join Environment and Climate Change Canada but remains on the Steering Committee as chair for the time being. Ken De Smet retired from Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development and Tim Poole left the MCSI Coordinator job to fill that provincial Species at Risk Biologist position. We welcomed new coordinator, Amanda Shave, and Jack Dubois from Nature Manitoba to our committee. Continuing on are Frank Machovec (our all-important webmaster), Nicole Firlotte (Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development), Lewis Cocks and Neil Butchard (master birders both), Ron Bazin (Canadian Wildlife Service) plus Rob and Barb Stewart (Sila Consultants). Fortunately, everyone involved in the shifts 'n' shuffles remain committed to MCSI, so our work will continue with a full roster of active people.

For more information on the Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative please contact Amanda Shave (MCSI Coordinator) at mcsi.outreach@gmail.com.

MANITOBA BLUEBIRD FUND

Report by Don Himbeault

The Manitoba Bluebird Fund (MBF) was established in 2011 by Nature Manitoba and was made possible by the donations of a generous benefactor whose vision was to stop, and more importantly reverse, the continuing decline in the numbers songbirds in Manitoba. Since its inception, the fund has encouraged the planting of trees and shrubs that provide food and habitat for Manitoba songbirds, by both subsidizing the purchase of trees by private land owners, and by the purchase of trees and shrubs for other planting campaigns on public land, which in the past has included places such as Henteliff Park and the S.O.S. Rain Garden.

In 2019, the MBF private landowner tree campaign continues to be popular, and has funded the planting of approximately 100 new trees. This campaign subsidizes up to \$50 towards the purchase of specific trees or shrubs, and as an added incentive to owner to ensure the survival of the tree, provides a further equivalent subsidy in the third year if the tree survives.

The MBF committee meets formally every spring to review ongoing programs and to decide future spending initiatives. A decision was made in 2019 to transfer \$12,500 to the Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative, and \$12,500 to the Important Bird Area Program to be used for its ongoing habitat restoration activities, where the funds provide a base amount that can be matched with other funding requests to provide and even greater impact.

Also in 2019, the MBF provided a sum of \$1500 to the Friends of the Bluebirds (FOTB), a conservation organization devoted to providing nest boxes for and monitoring of cavity nesting birds, specifically, Eastern and Mountain Bluebirds and Tree Swallows in Manitoba. The main use of the funds was for the purchase of materials to construct nest boxes, maintain the Friends of the Bluebirds website and for meeting room expenses related to volunteer activities. At a cost per box for materials of about \$7.00, the FOTB leverages this with volunteer labour from its volunteers to make 68 boxes, and the Westbran Training Centre who supplied the labour to construct 49 boxes. These boxes add to the many already deployed, where according to FOTB monitoring data, approximately 1500 nesting boxes fledged 6,000 birds in **2019** with a success rate over 77%. There are an estimated 1000 to 1500 nest boxes not reported on that would yield similar production.

Bridging the Gap

Engaging Inner-City Youth in Stewardship

Report by Taja Hanine

Field Trips

The field trips to the Living Prairie Museum and Assiniboine Forest continue to be popular amongst classrooms. Field trips were available in spring and fall. Students visited the Living Prairie Museum in the morning, where they were shown a PowerPoint slide on prairie-land habitat followed by stories and drumming by Métis storyteller Joe McLellan. Students then explored the prairie grass habitat. Following lunch, students were brought by bus to Assiniboine Forest where they explored Parkland Forest and a wetland. Bridging the Gap continues to reimburse schools for transportation expenses. Volunteers guided hikes, including Nature Manitoba board member, Les McCann, biologist, Monica Reid, long-time Bridging the Gap volunteer Beth McDonald-Funk and Bridging the Gap's assistant for 2019, Thiané Diop. In spring and fall 2019, over 300 students participated in field trip programming. Participating schools in spring were Mulvey, Wellington and John M. King. In fall, the participating schools were Pinkham, King Edward, Machray and Lord Selkirk. We also had the opportunity to work with a new school this year, Princess Margaret. Field trips continue to be an integral component to our programming. Bridging the Gap would like to extend a huge thank you to The Living Prairie Museum and the City of Winnipeg's Naturalist Services Branch for their ongoing support of our programming by providing us with the use of the Interpretive Centre. Field trips will continue in spring 2020.

Storytelling

Joe continued to story tell in 2019. He was requested for several classes including Wellington school, Pinkham school and Luxton. Joe also participated in the field-trips in 2019. He is a large part of the field-trips where he continues to story tell after the prairie-land presentation and is very well loved by students and teachers.

Seed Starting

For a sixth year in a row, Bridging the Gap offered in-class seed starting. Throughout the months of March, April and May, BTG visited several classrooms to start seeds that would be transplanted into the various school gardens. Wellington, Pinkham, Lord Selkirk, King Edward and Mulvey all participated. We

also went to help out Earl Grey school, which was to help guide them throughout the process. As it is out of our demographic, we did not give funding. Some trays were left in sunny areas of the classrooms, and students were left with spray bottles and instructions on how to maintain the trays until the seedlings would be transplanted. Students experimented with different seeds to see which seeds benefited the most from starting indoors and which seeds had the highest success rates. Trays from the previous year were reused. A Nature Manitoba supporter donated plant trays, growing lights and shelves in 2015. The Program Manager could then take home any trays that didn't have a spot in the classroom so the students would still get to see their seedlings being transplanted into their garden. Extra seeds were planted under the grow lights in case the students' seedlings did not come up. Several plants were also started at the Program Manager's home to ensure a successfully grown garden for the students. Seed starting classes were available thanks to Mackenzie Seeds donations and Prairie Originals donations, as several indigenous plants were started this year.

Gardening

Program Manager, Taja Hanine, and our Green Team spring/summer employee taught all spring gardening sessions and maintained gardens in the summer with the help of BTG volunteers. We still had over 500 students participate in our gardening programming in 2019.

Lord Selkirk:

Lord Selkirk participated in the gardening program again to continue to build up their butterfly garden in the school's back yard. It is a garden that will take a few years to establish as it is in a dry and very used area. Because of this, we have focused on planting indigenous plants as they can withstand the most extreme conditions. The students worked extremely hard on this garden and even helped over summer to maintain while participating in CSI.

Pinkham:

Pinkham participated in gardening again in 2019. Their plants grew very well inside their classroom and the students enjoyed transplanting the plants into their garden beds. We also worked on the medicine wheel to get it at its best. Pinkham had a celebration called Indigenous Day where they did several activities. Bridging

the Gap was invited to come down and talk about Indigenous plants and help plant an indigenous garden in the back. All the students hard work paid off and the gardens at Pinkham were amazing.

Mulvey:

We continue to work with the West Broadway Community Association to plant and maintain the gardens located on Westminster with Mulvey School. Two grade 4 classes from Mulvey School plant and maintain the garden beds in Spring and the West Broadway's drop-in program maintain the gardens in the summer. Unfortunately, due to a large number of vagrants, the conditions are becoming too dangerous for students to keep working in the gardens. The water was being emptied continuously and so there was never any to water the gardens. The gardens were also dug up so there were no more than 4 plants that survived. Mulvey is looking to see if it is possible to get garden beds in their school yard to avoid these issues.

King Edward:

Six new garden beds were built in fall 2019 to eliminate the tree roots growing in the garden beds, which is one of the reasons the beds were too dry. The students refilled the garden beds with the soil that had been removed from the garden beds and new soil that was brought down. The gardens had a much higher success rate this year and the students planted several types of gardens, including a Three-sisters garden and an herb garden.

Wellington:

Two grade 4 classes participated in Bridging the Gap's gardening program in 2019. The garden beds were built higher and the students of Wellington, who had participated in seed starting, helped transplant their plants to fill the gardens. Each class had 2 different gardening classes, one to move and mix soil, and another to plant the garden. The gardens had been vandalized and most of the plants were destroyed but all the garden beds were refilled by Bridging the Gap.

William Whyte:

Bridging the Gap began working with William Whyte again in 2019. A new project was started to reconstruct the butterfly gardens in the back of the school and classes were taught to help fill the vegetable garden beds.

David Livingstone:

David Livingstone participated in gardening again in 2019. The beds were shared with the gardening program at their school and so in 2 classes, four beds were turned up, weeded and planted by the grade 4 class.

Earl Grey:

Earl Grey had requested special help from Bridging the Gap to help them with their gardens. A class was taught so the teachers and students would be able to work on their own for the remainder of the year. Because Earl Grey is out of our demographic, Bridging the Gap did not provide any materials to their school, but they had well-built garden beds and healthy soil to work with.

Construction projects

King Edward:

The construction project at King Edward was successfully completed in the spring of 2019. Five new garden beds were built for a better success rate with the gardens. Funding for this project was provided by Bridging the Gap. The students at King Edward helped sift through old soil to put back in the garden beds and they helped moved new, fresh soil to finish filling the beds.

Wellington:

Wellington's garden beds were built up in spring of 2019 to help with plant growth. More hardware was used as Wellington school has a high rate of vandalism, in the hopes that the garden beds will be more sustainable.

Harvesting

Harvesting was offered again in the fall of 2019. Classes were scheduled with King Edward, Luxton and Wellington. The classes consisted of teaching the students about how to harvest vegetables, fruits and herbs, and how to preserve them over winter, prep garden beds for the following year and to explain to them how perennials survive the winter.

Fort Whyte Alive

Bridging the Gap was asked to give presentations over the summer at Fort Whyte Alive! for their summer camps. Presentations were given about pollinators and the importance they have in our world and then we brought the children outside where they explored a butterfly garden. Different plants and pollinators were identified and the children used their senses to observe the outdoor environment.

Grantors

At this time, Bridging the Gap extends a big thank you to grantors; The Winnipeg Foundation, TD Friends of the Environment, Province of Manitoba's Urban Green Team Program, Manitoba's Heritage Grant and Red-River Co-op whose grants enabled us to offer programming throughout 2019; as well as our in-kind donations from the City of Winnipeg Naturalist Services Branch, McKenzie Seeds, Prairie Originals and the City of Winnipeg.

We have received grants from The Winnipeg Foundation and Manitoba Hydro for 2020. We are also awaiting a response from Urban Green Team, Red-River Co-op and Canada Life. We will also be sending out grant applications to TD FEF, Cambrian Credit Union, Manitoba's Heritage Grant, WBCO and The Home Depot for 2020 funding.

Volunteers and Students

BTG would also like to give another huge thank you to all our volunteers. Our team of volunteers consist of Les McCann, Monica Reid, Karen San Filippo, Mouad Hanine, Beth McDonald Funk and Amanda San Filippo. Without your devotion to our program, it would not be as much of a success as it is.

We would also like to show our appreciation to the students that participate in our program. Some of them, being in split classes, have worked with us for 3 years helping keep their school gardens healthy and prosperous. Their strength and determination are very inspiring!





Photos –

Top – page 20 – Construction Project at King Edward School

Center left – Students from Wellington observing the wetlands at Assiniboine Forest

Center right – Students at Wellington transporting soil into new garden bed

Top – page 21– Joe - story telling during a field trip with Pinkham in the fall

For more information about our program, please visit our website at:
btgwinnipeg.ca

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

Report by Lynsay Perkins & Sandy HayGlass

2019 has been a busy year for Communications & Promotion! One of the major items we have worked on this past year is tackling behind-the-scenes technical improvements to our website. We have enlisted the support of tech support company, On-Call Solutions, to help us manage some small upgrades and repairs to our site, change some structural details of our site for future plans, and most importantly, to ensure the ongoing security of our site. Many of these are minor changes to functionality as well as changes to the back-end of our site. Although these likely will go unnoticed by most of our site users these represent major steps for the future of our site, and we are really excited to be able to make some more long-term plans for our site.

One of the major functions of Communications & Promotion is to put together our Nature Manitoba News every month. The purpose of the NM News has historically been to communicate about our activities and Manitoba's natural history with members, however our list of subscribers continues to climb each year. In 2019 we had about 300 additional people subscribe to our online newsletter, bringing our total to more than 2200. This is encouraging because it reflects positively on our programming. People are interested in what we are doing. We also believe it reflects positively on credibility as an organization. People want to hear what we are saying.

This year, we re-established the Communications and Promotion Committee which serves to provide advice and assist in the implementation of Communications and Promotion plans. We received some very enthusiastic responses, and we had a first meeting of our new Committee at the end of November, 2019. We are pleased to have Brian Hydesmith and Marielle Gervais join us (Lynsay Perkins and Sandy HayGlass). We look forward to working with our new Committee members in 2020!

2019 has also been a major planning year for Communications as we headed into our centennial year in 2020! Communications & Promotion has taken a leadership role with regard to these plans, and we have engaged the support of many of our committees, membership and volunteers to put together historical articles and celebratory events for the year. It has been a pleasure for us to work closely with

NM's committee members, as well as some new and some seasoned volunteers! We appreciate everyone who has taken additional time to help us put these items together.

HABITAT CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Report by Marilyn Latta

The focus of the Habitat Conservation Committee has been mainly on the conservation of tall grass prairie and management of the 880 acres of prairie owned by Nature Manitoba.

However, it has become apparent over the past few years that some of our prairie lands were becoming increasingly grown in with woody species. Although part of this problem can be attributed to weather conditions making burns impossible, other issues are involved. Legislation to protect Species at Risk (threatened and endangered species) has made the formulation and implementation of management plans a complex business requiring considerable expertise and manpower. As Nature Manitoba cannot provide this level of management, it was felt that the lands should be transferred to an organization that had the capability to do so.

Although not a partner when the Manitoba Tall Grass Prairie Preserve was first started in 1989, The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has been a formal partner for many years and is the major landowner at the Preserve. Their expertise has grown in land management and they have the staff to carry out management activities. Additionally, they provided financial assistance for some of the land purchases made by Nature Manitoba. For these reasons, it was felt that NCC would be the ideal organization to entrust with the care and management of these prairie lands in the future.

Therefore, the Habitat Committee made a recommendation to the board that all NM lands at the Manitoba Tall Grass Prairie Preserve be donated to NCC. A resolution will be submitted for the March 2020 AGM for approval by the membership.

It is anticipated that Marilyn Latta will continue to represent NM on the Manitoba Tall Grass Prairie Preserve Steering Committee.

NOMINATIONS

2020/2021 Proposed Slate of Officers

EXECUTIVE (1year term)

President	Jack Dubois
Executive Vice President	Sandy Hayglass
Vice President	James Whitelaw
Treasurer	Andre Laberge
Secretary	
Past President	Don Himbeault

BOARD MEMBERS (3 year terms)

Term ending Mar/2023	Term ending Mar/2022	Term ending Mar/2021
Christian Artuso Marika Olynyk	Maria Mitousis Lesly Andrews Alain Louer	Rommel Molod Les McCann Karen Smith

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Donors 2019

Aljen Aguilar
Jerry Ameis
Mervyn Anderson
Gayle Andrews
Everet Anema
Olive Arendt
Dianne Beaven
John Bourbonnais
Penny & Sheldon Bowles
Bryon Burvill
Linda Cameron
Shirley Carson
Edith Chapman
Shirley Comber
Gary & Fiona Crow
Linda Curtis
Zofia Cwikla
Donna Danyluk
Catherine Dewar
Julie Diakiw
Peter Douglas
Jack Dubois
Alfred Dyck
Howard Engel
Gary Franzmann
Ralph Frith
John & Pat Gray
Miriam Greene
Patricia Grunwald
Tony Hawrychko
Marilyn Hearn
Don Henry
Ellen Hirst
Carol Hitchon
Jeremy & Linda Hull
Phyllis Hunter
Loretta Kampeas
Peggy Kasuba
Gini King
Ken Kingdon
John & Joy Knudson
André Laberge

Evelyn Labun
Emery Lajtai
Robert & Patricia Lamb
Helen Leeds
William Legge
Marsha Leith
Robert Laurie Logan
Frank Machovec
Donna MacKinnon
Peter Miller
J. Gary Mills
Liz Morash
Sandra Mott-James
Ted Muir
Bernice Munroe
Doug Nichol
Doris Orchyk
E. Helen Orr
Diether Peschken
Ryan Porteous
Ann Quinn
Gerald Recksiedler
Amelia Reid
Mile & Janet Rendulic
Norma Ross
Julia Schoen
Carol Scott
Kelvin Seifert
Karen E. Smith
Robert & Valerie Stark
Shelley Tallin
Susan Tamblyn
Peter Taylor
Andy & Ruby Tekauz
Betsy Thorsteinson
Roger Turenne
Brigitta & Albert Voth
K. May Wady
Shelley Walker
Ian Ward
Doris Wiebe