



NATURE MANITOBA

People passionate about nature



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7pm Tuesday, MARCH 26th, 2024

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Minutes of the preceding AGM March 2023
3. Annual Report of the President and Committee Reports
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Appointment of Auditors for 2024
6. Annual Reports of Nature Manitoba Committees
7. Election of Board Members
8. Election of Executive Members
9. Announcement of Awards
10. Adjournment
11. Presentation:
Migration Monitoring Through Bird Banding
Presented by Paula Grief from Oak Hammock Marsh

INDEX

Page 1 - 2	2023 AGM Minutes
Page 3	President's Report
Page 4	Treasurer's Report
Page 5 - 6	Gray Hares Report
Page 7	Garden Tour Report
Page 8	Discovery Evenings Report
Page 9	Workshop Series
Page 10 -11	Mantario
Page 12 - 13	Important Bird Area Report
Page 14 - 15	Chimney Swift Report
Page 16 - 17	Manitoba Bluebird Report
Page 18 - 19	Bridging the Gap Report
Page 20 - 21	Bee City Brandon
Page 22	Operations Report
Page 23	Habitat Conservation Report
Page 24	Proposed Slate of Officers
Page 25 - 26	Donors

Nature Manitoba (Manitoba Naturists Society Inc.)
101st Annual General Meeting
March 27, 2023, at 7:00 pm

Minutes:

1. Welcome

Sandy HayGlass offered a land acknowledgement and brought greetings as the President of the Board. About 30 members participated online and 30 in person. This exceeded the quorum required.

2. Minutes of the preceding Annual General Meeting March 2022

The minutes of the last AGM were approved at April 2022 Board meeting.

Motion: Gordon Austin

Seconded: Rudolf Koes

3. Annual Report of the President and Committee reports

Sandy reviewed the 2022 Nature Manitoba annual report which was made publicly available in advance of the meeting. For more information, see the President's letter and the details in the Annual Report

4. Treasurer's Report

Andre Laberge, Treasurer, reviewed the 2022 Financial Report as written in the Annual Report.

- Andre proposed that the Treasurers Report for 2022 be accepted as submitted.

Motion: Andre Laberge

Seconded: Jack Dubois

Passed

5. Appointment of Auditors for 2023

- Andre proposed the appointment of Heartland Chartered Professional Accountants for year ending December 2023.

Motion: Andre Laberge

Seconded: Ward Christianson

Passed

6. Resolutions

No resolutions were made.

7. Election of Board Members and Executive Members

- Sandy introduced the current Board Members.
- Sandy requested any nominations from the floor for Board members. None were offered.
- Sandy declared the Board Members and Executive Members as printed and elected by acclamation.

8. Announcement of Awards

No nominations for awards were made for 2022. Sandy asked those attending to consider nominating members for awards in 2023.

9. Adjournment

AGM Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM. Feature speaker Hike Manitoba.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sandy HayGlass

The year 2023 was another great year for Nature Manitoba! I thank all our volunteers, board members, donors, and employees. We all share our passion for nature in Nature Manitoba's recreation, education, and citizen focused science programs.

Our finances are healthy. We thank everyone who become a member or renewed their membership. Thank you to all our donors. The time spent by all our volunteers and the funds contributed by donors is very much appreciated!

The Mantario Committee ran a successful summer program and cabin rental continued to be popular. General hikes and Grey Hares activities abounded.

Discovery Evenings and Workshops engaged members in understanding and appreciating the natural world.

Bridging the Gap completed their strategic planning and hired a new coordinator, Jamie Vann. New programs for inner city children will start in 2024.

The Habitat Committee initiated and implemented an annual grant process, awarding six grants to valuable habitat related projects. The Bluebird Committee adopted the Habitat Committee's grant process and will start giving out grants in 2024.

The Beginning Birders program and the birding outings were busy. The Manitoba Important Bird Area (IBA) program highlights included International Shorebird Surveys and Red-headed Woodpecker bird blitzes. The Chimney Swift volunteers monitored sites in 19 communities across Manitoba and protected swift habitat by repairing two swift chimneys.

Gardeners flocked to the Gardens of Distinction in St. James and Charleswood. Bee City Brandon focused on rejuvenating the 2011 flooded Eleanor Kid Park.

Operational staff and volunteers focused on administrative and financial operations continued to re-assess, streamline, automate and re-organize processes.

Please take the time to read all the individual reports where you can read about what happened this year. Wishing you all an enjoyable spring and summer.

Sandy HayGlass

Sandy HayGlass
President Nature Manitoba

TREASURER'S REPORT

Andre Laberge

Nature Manitoba's general operation finished the year 2023 with an excess of revenue over expenses of \$47,952 (2022 - \$8,817).

Compared to the year ending December 31, 2022, our membership revenue increased by \$4,275, and the administration fees increased by \$6,484. Because of the interest rate increases, our interest-bearing investments earned \$7,449 more and the market value of our investment with The Winnipeg Foundation increased by \$6,565. Our general donations reported \$8,770 and the garden tour was another success, raising \$7,960. The general operations received an annual disbursement from the Manitoba Naturalists Endowment Fund held at The Winnipeg Foundation for \$6,798 (2022- \$6,945).

The expenses saw a temporary reduction to wages of \$13,055 as we evaluated our office staff requirements, but our insurance cost increased by \$2,398.

The Paul Guyot Endowment Fund for Habitat received a disbursement of \$6,517 (2022 - \$7,542) and the Manitoba Bluebird Endowment Fund received a disbursement of \$29,221 (2022 - \$17,257) from The Winnipeg Foundation.

During the year, the organization received donations and grants of \$36,000 that the board allocated to the Nature Fund. The board also approved the transfer of the fund balances of the Manitoba Avian Research Committee (\$6,938) and the Birds of Manitoba Book Fund (\$8,632) to the Nature Fund along with a \$30,000 transfer from the General Fund.

Although 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. The board continues to look at ways to increase revenue, reduce costs, and improve office efficiency with technology while also wanting to make sure the money we are spending is effective and provides value to our members. I would like to thank our volunteers, those who have donated, and our grantors for their support during this past year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

GREY HARES

Kevin & Anita Miller

Grey Hares is a group of retired, partly retired, and flexible-work-hours people within Nature Manitoba who enjoy nature, new experiences, making friends, being physically active, doing meaningful things, and sharing time with like-minded people. Grey Hares has an activity every Wednesday during the day.

It has been slightly over three years since we took over administration of Grey Hares. 2023 was another “normal” year -- unlike pandemic-affected 2020 and 2021 -- with a full slate of weekly activities and the monthly Tuesday Breakfast. Grey Hares’ administrative tasks fall into five categories:

- Coordinating the weekly activities.
- Communication.
- Membership.
- Financial.
- Liaison with Nature Manitoba’s staff, Board, and other volunteers.

Activity statistics for 2023

Grey Hares had 81 activities in 2023. Every Wednesday had an activity scheduled; 17 weeks had two, plus the Tuesday Breakfast once a month. Weather cancelled 4 activities in 2023. There were 3 multi-day activities.

We set new attendance records for Grey Hares multi-day activities when 43 people attended the *Ski / Snowshoe / Walk Hecla* 4-day activity in January and 31 people attended the *Caddy Lake Camping/Paddling/Hiking* 4-day activity in mid June.

There were 35 leaders in 2023. 14 led 1 activity, 6 led 2, 3 led 3, 2 led 4, 1 led 6, 1 led 8, and 1 led 13. A number of these were co-leaders.

Communication

We use MailChimp to send weekly email messages to Grey Hares members. We sent 58 messages in 2023, usually on Wednesday evening. Topics include information about upcoming weeks’ activities, requests for leaders/activities for upcoming weeks, photos from past weeks’ activities, and misc. news.

All activities were also posted on the Nature Manitoba website, usually prior to being announced in the weekly email message.

Membership

Grey Hares members must be current members of Nature Manitoba, and they must pay a one-time lifetime \$5 fee to join our membership list and email list.

We started 2023 with 246 members and ended the year with 271. During the past two years there has been a net gain of 54 members.

Financial

Grey Hares started 2023 with a balance of \$786.39 and ended with \$1087.39. Most income was from \$5 membership fees.

Liaison with Nature Manitoba

We continue to have a good working relationship with Nature Manitoba's staff, Board, and other volunteers.

2024

The year has started well for Grey Hares.

GARDENS OF DISTINCTION GARDEN TOUR

Tim Evans

2023 was another successful garden tour! The tour went very well, 8 gardens were selected from St. James and 2 from Charleswood. Each garden varied from one another, but all were selected because of their degree of 'distinction'. 8 gardens had never been on a garden tour in the past which was a great selling feature and fun to learn how well those gardeners enjoyed the entire experience.

The change of name to "*Gardens of Distinction Garden Tour*" has also been met with many positive comments. That change was made to be competitive with the other two main garden tours.

Following tradition, the two evenings of pre-tours happened the Tuesday and Wednesday prior to the July 8th event. We toured 5 gardens one evening followed by the other 5 gardens the next evening.

Further tradition was the potluck a week after the garden tour in my garden. Most gardeners and volunteers attended and brought food galore!

We did better than last year financially, increasing from \$7,200 to \$7,700. We also received excellent accolades from the individuals who run the MMGA and the Urban Retreat Garden tour for the selection and great quality of gardens and how all ran very smoothly.

We added the QR code to the ticket which many indicated was a great help to finding the various gardens. The various gardens were marked as handicapped accessible for the first time.

In 2024, the garden tour will focus on St. Vital, St. Boniface and one garden in Osborne Village. 12 gardens have been selected for 2024 which is an increase from 2023. Once again, this year's gardens are spectacular!

Thanks to Tami Bradford (Program Coordinator) for her incredible work in getting the brochures, posters and all signage done! I look forward to working with her again this year. Tami was a delight to work with!

Tickets and posters are already printed and have been distributed to numerous businesses and greenhouses. A sneak peak is available on the Nature Manitoba's website of the 2024 gardens with descriptions and more information on purchasing tickets online.

DISCOVERY EVENING PROGRAM

Simone Faucher & Sandy HayGlass

The 2023 Discovery Evening season was planned and executed with help from Sandy, John, Katharine, Simone (Discovery Evening Coordinator), Christa (Discovery Evening Organizer), and Tami. Sandy, Simone, and Christa found and scheduled presenters in addition to hosting events. Once again, John was invaluable as an IT and audio/visual technician. Katharine managed admittance with help from Christa, and Tami assisted the group by increasing the marketing effort towards Discovery Evenings.

In October 2023, we switched hosting Discovery Evenings at CCFM to a new venue at the Westworth United Church. It is a smaller venue, but functional and comes with improved communication between NM and venue leads. Also in October 2023, we removed the option of hybrid meetings as there was less demand for virtual attendance than we expected. However, we have kept the option to purchase in-person tickets online through Eventbrite. This option has proved to be successful and is clearly convenient to members as there is always more Eventbrite tickets purchased in advance than there are purchased at the door. Occasionally, some online ticket holders will no-show to the event, but that just means we keep their donation and have an extra seat open for walk-ups.

2023 Discovery Evening Presentations:

1. **Foxy Food Webs at the Arctic's Edge**, Dr. Jim Roth (University of Manitoba)
2. **Developing sustainable co-culture of wild rice and fish farming with indigenous communities**, Dr. Vince Palace (IISD-Experimental Lakes Area)
3. **The Galapagos: Darwin's Inspiration - A Place That Time Left Behind**, Jerry Ameis (NM member)
4. **Ice adapted marine mammals in a melting Arctic**, Dr. Colin Garroway (University of Manitoba)
5. **Hidden Gems of MB**, Christine Chilton (Nature Conservancy of Canada)
6. **Migration in the time of climate change**, Dr. Kevin Fraser (University of Manitoba)

WORKSHOP SERIES

Al and Cindy Louër

We were pleased to be offering our Nature Workshops once again in 2023!

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.

The fees charged to workshop participants are: \$10 for Nature Manitoba members (or students), \$15 for non-members.) bringing in much needed funding for Nature Manitoba programs. Attendance continues to be high and response to the workshops remains enthusiastic. We had around 261 registrants, with the majority of them being members. In 2023 we began offering an honorarium to our presenters.

We had 9 workshops in total that ran from January through to May. Many of the workshops reached their capacity and were sold out. There were approximately 261 participants in the workshops with the majority being members.

We would like to thank the Earl Grey Community Centre for providing Nature Manitoba with a venue for the workshops.

The following is a list of the 2023 workshops along with the presenters who we would like to thank for sharing their knowledge with us:

1. **Winter Birds** – James Whitelaw
2. **Mushrooms** – Donna Kurt
3. **Science and Majesty of Solar Eclipses** – Jay Anderson
4. **Monarchs** – Yan Cong
5. **Albrim Park** – Stu and Deb Innes
6. **Thrushes** - Ward Christianson and Marlene Waldron
7. **Beetles** – Robert Wrigley
8. **What's That Wildflower** - Marilyn Latta
9. **Raptors** - Rudolf Koes

Our 2024 Workshop series is currently in progress, and we will be working on the 2025 program in the fall. We are always open to suggestions for future workshops.

Mantario Summer Program

The Mantario Summer Program was offered in July and August. The Committee prepared for the program with a purchase of food supplies which were shipped for the cabin in late winter 2023. The Committee worked with Nature Manitoba to promote the trip with an updated website, social media posts, and an updated automated online registration form and payment process using PayPal. Mantario Committee volunteers were able to administer registrations, including payment reminders and sharing information with trip leaders, requiring less admin support from the Office.

Our Program featured themed trips led by experienced volunteer trip leaders. All trip leader volunteers are provided with a subsidy to cover their Remote Wilderness First Aid training. This provided a value-added perk to volunteering as well as supporting the need for risk management and emergency preparedness for operating programming at a wilderness facility.

Trips were generally planned for Monday - Fridays, with one trip from Friday-Monday. We promoted 5 weeks including Boreal Explorations, Family Week, Mantario Mushroom Week, Mantari-Yoga and Astronomy Week. We had to cancel one trip (Boreal) due to a gap in insurance coverage, but all other trips ran with full or near-full capacity. Overall, the Summer Program trips had a total of 34 participants, seven of whom were children or youth accompanied by a parent. There were 8 volunteer co-leaders involved in leading the trips.

The Mantario Committee held the Mantario Potluck on October 1 for the first time since pre-pandemic. A turnout of 35 people shared food and memories of their trips. Some donations and T-shirt sales were made with an easy-to-use QR code for online transactions through PayPal.

Mantario Cabin Usage and Communication

The Mantario Cabin is available for booking throughout the year by approved cabin users. The Mantario Committee chair administers the cabin bookings calendar and communicates with renters. The method of payment for groups continued the per night rental fee paid via PayPal or cheque. New in 2023, a PayPal link was created to allow for Mantario Cabin Donations outside of the regular nightly fee.

Approved cabin users are Nature Manitoba members who have been led to the cabin by experienced users and trained on cabin upkeep and wilderness safety. In 2023, 6 new cabin users were approved.

Volunteer work maintenance groups visited the cabin in spring and fall to ensure the cabin and its amenities were well kept. Multiple work trips in fall ensured the cabin was stocked with firewood for the winter season. Firewood gathering continued as a focus as the cabin requires wood heat in winter, and sauna is used year-round.

Mantario Cabin Bookings

Overall, 2023 saw a total of 172 people visiting the Mantario Cabin (excluding the Summer Program, which would total 214).

Winter bookings were steady, with 12 trips overall to the cabin, a total of 88 people visiting the cabin between January and April.

Westgate Collegiate led two trips with high school students on snowshoes. Two winter public ski trips were organized, filled, and completed.

College Louis Riel returned for the first time since pre-pandemic with a high school canoe trip in June, with 12 participants.

Spring work party: 8 volunteers.

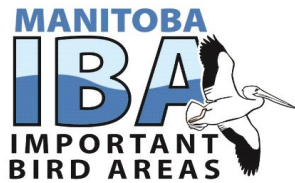
In summer, 17 people visited the cabin on 4 separate private bookings, as well as with the Summer Program.

The fall season saw 14 people on 4 private trips, as well as the two fall work trips and a filming trip (total 30 people). December saw 3 people make it in for an early season ski.

Cabin Maintenance

The spring work party ensured the cabin was ready for the Summer Program. In fall, two work parties, each with volunteers, ensured the cabin was stocked with firewood and all necessary tasks were completed ahead of winter.

Volunteers do not pay cabin fees and access Summer Program food stores that are nearing expiry.



MANITOBA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

Marissa Berard

General

The Manitoba Important Bird Areas (IBAs) Program was led by program coordinator, Marissa Berard. The IBA Steering Committee was comprised of Tim Poole (Chair), Christian Artuso, Paula Grief, Bonnie Chartier, Gillian Richards, and Marika Olynyk.

A big thank you to our incredible volunteers, who are a key part of everything we do!!!

Events and Activities

We organized several shorebird focused activities. On August 19th, we supported the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) in the delivery of 'Shore birding the Prairies', a workshop focused on shorebird identification in the Oak Lake/Plum Lakes IBA. We held a shorebird blitz at Whitewater Lake IBA, on August 27th. With the help of dedicated volunteers, we conducted International Shorebird Surveys (ISS) in the spring and in the fall, at Oak Lake/Plum Lakes IBA, Whitewater Lake IBA, Oak Hammock Marsh IBA, and North, East and West Shoal Lakes IBA.

We held two habitat stewardship events. Our first event focused on removing Purple Loosestrife, an invasive plant, from Oak Hammock Marsh IBA on August 5th. Our second stewardship event was a weed pull to restore Piping Plover habitat at the Riverton Sandy Bar on August 12th.

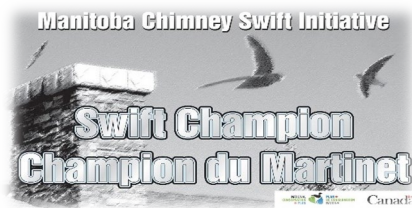
We continued work on our Conservation Champions program focused on Red-headed Woodpecker and Eastern Whip-poor-will, which included a mix of outreach to landowners and monitoring. We conducted landowner outreach and presentations in Selkirk, Inwood, St. Laurent, Langruth, and Pipestone. We successfully signed five non-legally binding stewardship agreements with landowners to protect Red-headed Woodpecker and/or Eastern Whip-poor-will habitat. We held two Red-headed Woodpecker blitzes, both of which included survey routes. The first one took place in Oak Lake/Plum Lakes IBA on July 15th and the second blitz, which was originally scheduled for July 2nd, was rescheduled to September 9th and took place in North, East, and West Shoal Lakes IBA. We also conducted Eastern Whip-poor-will survey routes in Delta Marsh IBA, and North, East, and West Shoal Lakes IBA.

Our program held two events in the Southwestern Manitoba Mixed Grass Prairie IBA, including a community bird walk in Melita on June 10th and a grassland bird blitz on June 11th. Program staff also conducted grassland bird surveys for the Souris River Watershed District.

We were also able to conduct a wide variety of other outreach activities, including birding workshops at Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective's land-based winter youth camp on February 27th and with Canadian Wildlife Federation's Wild Outside program on July 13th. We delivered a two-part land-based learning event planned in collaboration with University of Manitoba's Land and Water program in March. We also continued outreach at Oak Hammock Marsh, including a bird walk on June 17th and a presentation at their annual Migration Festival on September 24th.

Funding

Our main sources of funding this year came from the Environment and Climate Change Canada's EcoAction and Habitat Stewardship Program grants. March 31, 2023, marked the end of two three-year federal Environment and Climate Change Canada grants (EcoAction and Habitat Stewardship Program). We successfully received a new five-year Habitat Stewardship Program grant that went into effect on April 1, 2023. We also had funding from the TD Friends of the Environment Fund, the Conservation Trust, and the Manitoba Green Team. We received a sizable donation from the Patvin Foundation, along with several smaller donations from individuals. Nature Manitoba's in-kind support has also been invaluable for us. A big thank you goes out to our funders and donors in 2023.



MANITOBA CHIMNEY SWIFT INITIATIVE

Marissa Berard

General

The Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative (MCSI) was led by program coordinator, Marissa Berard.

The MCSI Steering Committee in 2023 was comprised of Christian Artuso (co-chair), Tim Poole (co-chair), Rob and Barb Stewart, Ron Bazin, Nicole Firlotte, Frank Machovec, Joanne Tuckwell, Laura Burns, Ken de Smet, Jack Dubois, Lewis Cocks and Neil Butchard. Pauline Bloom also joined the steering committee in December 2023. Once again, a big thank you to Frank Machovec for his continued work on managing our website and keeping our blog readers informed online.

Thank you also to our wonderful volunteers - we could not do any of this without them!

Events and Activities

This year, we tried a slightly different approach to our monitoring season, with the goal of allowing more flexibility for volunteers. We held four official monitoring nights on May 24th, May 28th, June 2nd, and June 6th, based on dates set by the National Roost Monitoring Program (NRMP) so that we could continue to contribute data to this national effort. Other than those four dates, volunteers could monitor whenever worked for them.

In addition to our usual chimneys, we also focused on 'priority sites': sites that were priority for confirming/reaffirming 'residence' status. Based on the federal Chimney Swift Recovery Strategy, a site is considered a 'residence' if it has been used by Chimney Swifts at least once in the last three years. Sites that qualify as 'residences' are legally protected. Our priority site category referred to sites that were in danger of losing their 'residence' status if use by swifts was not confirmed this year. These sites were monitored whenever possible, and we released an updated weekly list of which sites had been 'confirmed' and thus, checked off our list.

Overall, we monitored 115 sites, in 20 communities across Manitoba. Out of the 42 sites on our priority list, we were able to confirm the presence of swifts at 19 of them. We also confirmed 6 new swift sites. Over 75 volunteers were involved in this monitoring.

Habitat stewardship remained an important part of our program. In 2023, we organized and funded the repair of two swift chimneys: St. Adolphe Childcare Centre (formerly Brodeur Bros), and Lagasse's Studio of Fine Art in Souris.

We also named our five Swift Champions, based on contributions to swift conservation. Our 2023 Swift Champions are: Westman Naturalists, Assiniboine Park Conservancy, Lagasse's Studio of Fine Art, The Orange Block, and Maryland Foodfare.

Funding

Our main source of funding this year came from Environment and Climate Change Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) grant. Our previous three-year HSP grant finished on March 31, 2023. Our new five-year HSP grant went into effect on April 1, 2023. We also had funding from Nature Manitoba's Bluebird Fund and from Enbridge. We received several donations from individuals. Nature Manitoba's in-kind support has also been invaluable for us. A big thank you goes out to our funders and donors in 2023.



MANITOBA BLUEBIRD FUND

Jack Dubois

The Manitoba Bluebird Fund (MBF) was established at the Winnipeg Foundation in 2011 by Nature Manitoba in partnership with the late Elva and Guent Salzman through their generous donation. They derived great delight from the birds encountered on their property in south Winnipeg.

Their vision was to stop, and hopefully reverse, the alarming decline in songbird numbers occurring across North America which they also saw happening locally. The Salzman's wished to do this by funding concrete projects through Nature Manitoba and thus the MBF Committee was created.

In 2022 Mr. Salzman bequeathed a significant additional contribution to the capital fund of the MBF for which we are very grateful. It has effectively tripled the yearly spending budget of the MBF Committee starting in 2024.

From the start the MBF Committee has encouraged the planting of trees and shrubs that provide food and habitat for Manitoba songbirds, by both subsidizing the purchase of select varieties of trees by private landowners, and by the purchase of trees and shrubs for other planting campaigns on public land, including Henteleff Park and the Save Our Seine Rain Garden in Winnipeg.

Other initiatives the Committee has supported are the Important Bird Area program, Manitoba Chimney Swift program, and the Friends of the Bluebirds in Brandon.

In 2023 the private landowner tree campaign resulted in the planting of about 75 new trees through the one-time subsidy of up to \$100 per homeowner at the time of purchase.

A new initiative in 2023 was a program to subsidize the purchase of window-strike-prevention materials, with the co-operation of The Preferred Perch and Wild Birds Unlimited stores. Through this program we subsidized 100 households to prevent one of the top killers of songbirds.

The MBF Committee will fund two new initiatives in 2024, one of which is the Salzman Songbird Grant program, announced in February and the other is an expansion of the tree-planting program to include selected bird-friendly shrubs and herbaceous plants.

Details on how to access all the programs of the MBF Committee are available on Nature Manitoba's website www.naturemanitoba.ca or by phoning the office at 204-943-9029.

Many thanks to Committee members Christian Artuso, Don Himbeault, Paula Grief, Tim Poole and Meredith Stoesz for their efforts in the past year, and to Tami, John and Andre who make it all happen in the office.

Thanks also to all of you, members of Nature Manitoba and the general public who worked with us to benefit Manitoba songbirds in 2023.

We hope you will participate again in 2024 and encourage your family and friends to do so also.

Finally, we thank our partner vendors, Ron Paul Garden Centre, The Preferred Perch and Wild Birds Unlimited Winnipeg for their enthusiastic participation in our programs.



Bridging the Gap

BRIDGING THE GAP

Marika Olynyk

2023 was a year of renewal for Bridging the Gap, as our long-time coordinator Taja Henine moved on from her role in managing the program. As Bridging the Gap entered its 18th year, we took the opportunity to reset and rebuild the program and the team supporting it.

Strategic Review and Rebuilding the Steering Committee

Using funding through the Winnipeg Foundation's Organizational Development grants program, Bridging the Gap conducted a strategic review process in spring and summer 2023, led by consultant Lee Mae Spence. Lee reviewed past programming, and conducted interviews with past coordinators, as well as with educators and Elders. Lee also led strategic visioning and planning sessions with the Bridging the Gap Steering Committee. This process resulted in a report and set of recommendations that identified the program's unique strengths, areas to build on, and ideas for future approaches.

In part supported by the outreach conducted as part of the review process, Bridging the Gap is now led and supported by a robust steering committee. We are very grateful for the many volunteer hours this team has put in over 2023 to do everything from grant applications to program planning to running a hiring process. Much thanks to the wonderful team: Karen Cook, Ally Stonepoint/Cox, Dan Henhawk, Taja Henine, Natalie James, Carmelle Kozak, and Marika Olynyk!

Hiring New Coordinator and 1-Year PATH Planning

Building on the recommendations and renewed vision for the program, the Steering Committee embarked on a hiring process in late 2023 and is thrilled to have hired Jamie Vann as our new program coordinator.

Jamie brings a wealth of experience, with his main focus on connecting people with nature and with community, through nature. He is committed to developing child-centered education and relationship building across cultures, outdoors, and to contributing to the process of Truth and Reconciliation as people learn together on Indigenous Land. Jamie is a founding member of Hinterland Nature Cooperative, where he is the Board President, Nature Camp Programs and Site Development Coordinator and Ice Maker. He is also a facilitator of the Forest and Nature School Practitioners Course through Child and Nature Alliance of Canada and has over 15 years' experience managing and facilitating programs with youth and families in Winnipeg's inner city.

Jamie will work with other educators, Elders, and knowledge-keepers to offer programming that provides a “two-eyed seeing” lens which brings forward both Indigenous worldviews and western science approaches to hands-on interactions with the natural world.

Along with hiring Jamie, the Steering Committee, led by Ally Stonepoint/Cox, completed a one-year strategic planning process to guide our work and the future direction of the program. Everyone is very excited to enter our next phase of the Bridging the Gap program in 2024!

Funders:

At this time, BTG extends a big thank you to our donors and grantors: The Winnipeg Foundation, Province of Manitoba’s Heritage Grant, Canada Post Foundation, Webster/Lyons Garden Fund, and The Red River Co-op.

For more information about our program and what we offer, please visit our website at:

www.btgwinnipeg.ca



BEE CITY BRANDON

Sherry Punak-Murphy

Bee City Brandon was established in May 2018 in the City of Brandon with unanimous backing from the City Council. We currently are still the only Bee City in Manitoba designated by Bee City Canada and Pollinators Partnership.

Our mandate, as an Official Bee City, has three pillars:

1. To educate the public on the importance of native pollinators and plants to our ecosystem.
2. To promote the creation of native prairie gardens.
3. To celebrate our native pollinators in all their beauty during Pollinator Week which runs the third week of June.

We, however, try to celebrate native pollinators and plants all year round, through our educational posts on Facebook and Instagram. Follow us @beecitybrandon and learn about Manitoba's pollinators and what you, individually can do to help these little creatures and provide them with food in our urban areas.

Many activities happened in 2023 even though we are a small committee. This year we were very busy working with the City of Brandon and local partners to come up with a plan for the old Eleanor Kidd Park (EKP) that was destroyed by floods in 2011. 2023 saw the City of Brandon Works department clean up the site, provide soil and rototill the flower beds. Our amazing EKP subcommittee put out a call for volunteers to help weed and plant native plants at the park and Brandonites enthusiastically signed up. A couple of weeding parties occurred, and the flower beds are ready to be planted in 2024.

We obtained a grant from the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation and was able to purchase materials for these weeding parties. We are working closely with John Skinner of Skinner Native Seeds in Roblin, MB. He will be providing plugs and seeds for us to plant at EKP. With his knowledge, and Brandon's spirit we are going to make Eleanor Kidd Park a place for pollinators, plants, and people! We are also starting our own native plant plugs in Brandon University's Greenhouse. These plants are sold at local farmer's markets as a fundraiser for EKP.

In 2023, we participated in a few activities around Brandon. We had a booth at Arbor Day, Riverbank Discovery Centre, Stanley Park for Year of Garden and Brandon Shopper's Mall. We find that most people do not realize that Manitoba has more than 390 different species of bees. They think there are only two types of bees, honey, and

bumble. It is great to see their faces when they are presented with the diversity of bee species in the province. Of course, we also mention other insects that pollinate our plants, because all pollinators are important to our native plants.

We were asked to give presentations to various organizations during 2023. We participated in the City of Brandon Enviro-Expo held at Brandon University. This expo provides hands-on learning for grades 3-6. Bee City Brandon had the students make seed bombs with native plant seeds. The students also had to answer 10 true/false questions about pollinators. It was great to see how enthusiastically they wanted to learn about diversity of pollinators.

During the year we did various presentations to different organizations in Brandon. They all were eager to learn about what they could do to help pollinators. We were able to present to 4H Club, Rotary Villas, Open Garden Tours, and Manitoba Metis Federation. We also presented to City Council to update them and the new counsellors on our plans for EKP.

We currently have over 840 Facebook followers and over 1000 Instagram followers. We asked for poetry submissions on our social media about native pollinators and Brandon did not disappoint with so many great poems! We are hoping to be able to put all these poems in a booklet for the poets.

A local photographer, Cynthia Korman, and EKP sub-committee member used some of her photos to create a Bee City Brandon calendar fundraiser. This calendar is unique in that it highlights native plants and pollinators as well as providing information on special days in the year, such as Don't step on a Bee Day, which occurs on 10th of July.

We are very fortunate to have Eugene Ross, a Wipazoka Oyate/Sioux Valley Dakota Nations Knowledge Keeper provide us with his vast knowledge of native prairies from an Indigenous perspective. We are planning on incorporating his knowledge in the educational signage we plan to have placed in EKP.

As we plan for the 2024 year, we are excited about what the future holds for our small, committed group of volunteers and what Brandonites can do to make a difference in terms of biodiversity. With a lot of education, enthusiasm and help from Community members, businesses, and government, we know we will be successful for the little ones that rule the world.

Sherry Punak-Murphy
Chairperson Bee City Brandon

OPERATIONS

Sandy HayGlass

The office, information technology and committee leads are the heart of operations supporting Nature Manitoba programs. Operations continued to focus on business modernization activities to streamline processes, use more Information Technology and prioritize excellent services to members. A new finance and Admin officer for 2024 will be a critical addition.

Thanks especially to Andre Laberge, John Schulz, and Tami Bradford for all their contributions.

We moved to Eventbrite for all Discovery Evenings and Workshops. Hybrid meetings were eliminated due to the large amount of additional work to set up and not many members participated.

Expansion of Microsoft 365 use included migration of all office documents, moving many board members over, creating program workspaces and records.

Membership and donor processes were reviewed to develop requirements for a membership and donor management system. Investigation into applications that are cloud based are underway.

Automation of Mantario processes was developed for website information, registration forms, and workflow. A new web-based application process was implemented for the Bluebird Fund.

Many board members and program leads provided information to facilitate insurance renewal which was difficult to obtain. There was a delay in renewing our insurance due to a change in risk tolerance in the insurance industry. Thank you to everyone who contributed to effective renewal. Thank you to members who were patient about program cancellations due to the insurance renewal delay.

Social media promotion of activities increased and partially contributed to increased participation in various activities. The Annual Report format was improved to make it more professional.

All financial processes and activities were reviewed resulting in efficiencies and savings.

Moving forward we will continue to modernize operations to ensure effective program support.

HABITAT CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Marilyn Latta

The first recipients of the recently established Native Habitat Grants were announced this year. The Habitat Conservation Committee had spearheaded development of this grant as a way to recognize and support the work being done to conserve native habitat in Manitoba. This builds on the many years of effort by Nature Manitoba to identify and preserve native tall grass prairie.

Funding for the grants is provided by the Paul Guyot Endowment Fund for Habitat Conservation, a fund which is managed by The Winnipeg Foundation for Nature Manitoba and provides about \$6500 interest to the Habitat Committee each year.

Eleven applications were received. While the Committee's intention had been to award three grants of up to \$3,000 each, due to the number of deserving applications the Committee received, the decision was made to fund more projects at a lesser amount. Funding awarded totaled \$10,675 to the following:

- **Friends of Living Prairie Museum** to contribute to a multi-year project to establish a native prairie seed propagation site at the Living Prairie Museum.
- **Gerhard E. Dekker Regenerative Education Center** to support the Center's Seasons on the Prairie educational events series at the Tall Grass Prairie Preserve near Tolstoi, Manitoba.
- **Manitoba Burrowing Owl Recovery Program** to contribute to the program to re-establish the endangered Burrowing Owl population in southwestern Manitoba.
- **Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) - Manitoba Region** to help secure and develop a management plan for the 63 ha Routledge Sandhills property in southwestern Manitoba to conserve its biodiversity.
- **Pranav Sadana, Dr. Craig K. R. Willis, Dept. of Biology, University of Winnipeg** to support Pranav's Masters thesis **work on** fall roosting habitat selection by endangered Little Brown Bats.
- **St. James Horticultural Society** to help establish a Pollinator Berm, which would transform a 4000 sq. ft. area of fill next to their St. James community garden into a tall grass prairie wildflower garden.

Habitat Conservation Committee members are Lewis Cocks, Donna Danyluk, Diane Kunec, John Morgan, Linda Pearn and Marilyn Latta (chair)

NOMINATIONS

2023/2024 Proposed Slate of Officers

EXECUTIVE (1 year term)	
President	Sandy HayGlass
Executive Vice President	Don Himbeault
Vice President	James Whitelaw
Treasurer	Andre Laberge
Secretary	Katrina Froese
Past President	Jack Dubois

BOARD MEMBERS (3 year term)	
Term ending Mar/2026	
	Meredith Stoesz
	Marika Olynyk
	John Schulz
Term ending Mar/2027	
	Nelson Chubey
	George Derwin

THANK YOU

TO OUR 2023 DONORS

Darlene Ferreira-Abreu	Macdonald/Cageorge Fund
Mervyn Anderson	(The Winnipeg Foundation)
Niklaus Anthonisen	Frank Machovec
Peggy Bainard Acheson	Donna MacKinnon
Shelley Blanco	Jaqueline Mertler
John and Marilyn Bourbonnais	Michelle Mico
Gillian Brennan/Larry Cherlet	Ron & Sandra Mielitz
Dale & Carol Brown	Peter Miller/Carolyn Garlich
Louise Carpenter	Gary J. Mills
Shirley Carson	Grant Mohr
Gary & Fiona Crow	Raymond Nielsen
Leigh Cullen	Bruce Piercy
Linda Curtis	Arlette Plessis
Donna Danyluk	Puchniak Family Fund
Catherine & Malcome Dewar	(The Winnipeg Foundation)
Peter Douglas	Stanley Reimer
Glen & Doris Duncan –	Mile & Janet Rendulic
(In memory of Harry Simpson,	Willow River
Don Shan & Andy Lockery)	Villas Rotary
Estate of Nicole Riese	John Schulz
Davilyn Eyolfson	Katharine Schulz
Linda & James Feasby –	Ken Schykulski & Danielle Papin
(In memory of Kevin Hall)	Jon Seguire
Denzil Feinberg	Kelvin Seifert
Katrina Froese/Drew Sippell	Ovcharenko Serhii
Phil & Vera Froese	Michel Sevigny
Patricia Grunwald	Trzah Sharpe
Peter & Herta Gudauskas	John Shearer
Arthur & Ellen Habson	Brian Simmons
Tony Hawrychko	Douglas Smith & Peggy Stubbs
Clare Hodgetts	Robert Stewart
Loretta Homeniuk	Ruby Tekauz
Howard R. Engel & Esther G. Juce	Joanne Tuckwell
Brian Hydesmith	Roger Turenne
Harry Ingleby	Albert & Brigitta Voth
John Kim	Marlene Waldron
Charlene Koniak	Shelley and Arnold Walker
Andre Laberge	Ian Ward
Evelyn Labun	Webster/Lyons Garden Fund
Helen Leeds	(The Winnipeg Foundation)
William Legge	Jaeson Wheeler

THANK YOU

TO OUR 2023 GOVERNMENT AND CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

Access Credit Union
Canada Post Community Foundation
Environment and Climate Change Canada
Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corp
New Orlando Y2K Corp
Province of Manitoba
TD Friends of the Environment
The Patvin Foundation,
The Winnipeg Foundation

We would also like to thank everyone who has donated through All Charities, Gifts Funds Canada and the United Way.