

NATURE
MANITOBA

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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2024 MEETING MINUTES

Nature Manitoba (Manitoba Naturalists Society Inc.)

103rd Annual General Meeting Minutes

April 1, 2025, at 7:00 pm

1. Welcome

Sandy HayGlass offered a land acknowledgement and brought greetings as the President of the Board. About 30 members participated.

2. Minutes of the preceding Annual General Meeting March 2024

The minutes of the last AGM were approved at April 2024 Board meeting.

3. Annual Report of the President and Committee reports

Sandy reviewed the 2024 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 2024 Financial Report as written in the Annual Report. Andre proposed that the Treasurer's Report for 2024 be accepted as submitted.

Motion: Andre Laberge

Seconded and Passed by a member.

5. Appointment of Auditors for 2025

Andre proposed the appointment of Heartland Chartered Professional Accountants for year ending December 2025.

Motion: Andre Laberge

Seconded and passed by a member

6. Election of Board Members and Executive Members

Jack Dubois introduced the current Executive and Board Members as posted on the Nature Manitoba website.

Board Members were acclaimed to fill positions, and Jack introduced one new member, Gilliann Brennan. Jack invited any members interested in Board positions to contact him. Jack declared the Board Members and Executive Members as printed.

7. Announcement of Awards

Sandy announced that Tim Evans was the recipient of a Service Award. Tim's leadership, organization, hard work and expertise resulted in raising over \$11,000 for Nature Manitoba.

8. Adjournment

AGM Meeting adjourned at 7:24 PM. Feature speaker was Dr. Richard Westwood who spoke on "**Diversifying Winnipeg's Urban Forest – Challenges for the Future**".



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sandy HayGlass

Dear Members,

As I finish my five-year term as President, I am reflecting on what a great experience it was. I found out that there is no end to the passionate volunteers and members throughout the entire organization who want to strengthen our passion for Nature.

It has been so inspiring for me to work with many to modernize Nature Manitoba. From going paperless to upgrading antiquated information technology, from establishing new programs to revamping programs or enjoying the success of those running so smoothly, from enhancing communication and promotions to streamlining most of our processes, there were always dedicated leaders, volunteers, regular members and staff making it happen. Our competent and enthusiastic Board of Directors makes a huge difference.

2025 was a great year. Our finances are sound. All programs that are grant funded obtained grants—and stayed within their budget. We have funds for investing in existing and new programs.

I deeply thank our volunteers, Board of Directors, members and employees. Thanks to those of you who became a new member or renewed your membership. A warm thank you to all our donors—you play a critical role in supporting development and growth of Nature Manitoba. The time invested by our volunteers makes a huge difference.

Grey Hares are always busy, with more than one trip per week. The Garden Tour had an outstanding year, generating record breaking income. Over 600 participated. Outdoor hikes, Workshops and Discovery Evenings bring new perspectives. Beginner Birding, Birding trips, and the Important Bird Areas and Chimney Swift programs are very active. Bee City Brandon continues working to develop and care for the Eleanor Kidd pollinator garden.

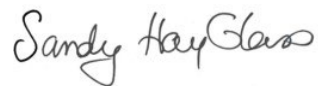
Fire fighters took special precautions to protect the Mantario cabin during the summer fires. Wonderful! Our summer programs were cancelled but rentals have now resumed.

You can read about The Bluebird Committee and Habitat Committee grant funding provided in this report, including funds to support initiatives such as the publication of Diana Bizecki Robson's new book, *Manitoba Flora*. Bridging the Gap, âniskômohcikan, inner-city school nature programming is very popular.

The Board held an Education and Discussion Day Retreat to increase global understanding of all areas of Nature Manitoba among members. We identified improvements to programs and administration to enhance Nature Manitoba's extensive programming.

Operationally, we completed a multi-year plan to modernize Nature Manitoba's administration. Finance processes went paperless and the electronic membership process was completed. The website was migrated to a new, more effective content management system.

I hope you take the time to read all about Nature Manitoba's successful programs in this annual report. I've really enjoyed being President.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandy HayGlass".

Sandy HayGlass
President Nature Manitoba

TREASURER'S REPORT

Andre Laberge

Nature Manitoba's general operations concluded the year 2025 with a surplus of revenue over expenses of \$46,220 (2024: \$60,023).

Compared to the year ending December 31, 2024, our membership revenue increased by \$985, and the administration fees decreased by \$1,884. Our interest-bearing investments earned \$2,592 more than in 2024, and the market value of our investment with The Winnipeg Foundation increased by \$13,255 (2024: \$9,983). Our general donations reported \$12,646 (2024: \$13,077) and the garden tour was another success, raising \$12,894 (2024: \$11,540). The general operations received an annual disbursement from the Manitoba Naturalists Endowment Fund, held at The Winnipeg Foundation, in the amount of \$7,105 (2024: \$7,158).

The wages and our professional fees for bookkeeping services increased by \$3,725 because we had services for the full year. We also invested in advertising \$2,506 (2024: \$2,580), office equipment and repairs \$804 (2024: \$1,786). With the new location for the Discovery Evenings, we continue to save on our rental expenses. Our special project this year was migrating our website to a new platform, at a cost of \$12,444.

With the Winnipeg Foundation, the Paul Guyot Endowment Fund for Habitat received a disbursement of \$5,184 (2024: \$5,493) and the account increased by \$10,344 (2024: \$9,488). The Manitoba Bluebird Endowment Fund received a disbursement of \$47,626 (2024: \$40,070), and the account decreased by \$236,065 (2024: increased by \$99,955) due to a \$311,304 overpayment returned to an Estate. All legal fees have been covered by the Estate on behalf of the organization.

During the year, the organization received donations totaling \$5,500 (2024: \$4,000), which the board allocated to the Nature Fund. The board also approved a \$20,000 transfer from the General Fund to the Nature Fund.

Although our financial planning involves maintaining a balanced budget each year, it is typical for our year-end position to fluctuate between surpluses and deficits. The board continues to explore ways to increase revenue, reduce costs, and enhance office efficiency through technology while also ensuring that the money we spend is effective and provides value to our members. I want to thank our volunteers, donors, and grantors for their support throughout the 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.

We began administration of Grey Hares 5 years ago. 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

Grey Hares had 97 activities in 2025. Every Wednesday had an activity scheduled, many weeks had two, and a few weeks had 3... plus the Tuesday Breakfast once a month, and a Potluck Supper on a Thursday evening in May. 4 activities were cancelled because of weather (including air quality). There were 2 multi-day activities. The number of activities increased 21% from 2024. 2024 (and 2023) had ~80 activities.

Attendance was very good at most activities. Many activities had a participation limit.

There were 33 activity leaders in 2025. 13 led 1 activity, 8 led 2, 3 led 3, 1 led 4, 2 led 5, 1 led 7, 2 led 8, and 3 led 14. A number of these were co-leaders.



Public media

Grey Hares was interviewed during a 3-minute segment on Radio Noon as part of our CBC Manitoba tour in January. In March, the Winnipeg Free Press published a full-page feature article about Grey Hares.

And in December, Radio-Canada Manitoba (CBC French) featured us in a website story and a 2-minute video story that appeared on their 6:00 PM newscast.

Communication

We post all activities on the Nature Manitoba website.

We also send weekly email messages to Grey Hares members. We sent 55 messages in 2025, usually on Wednesday evening. Topics include information about upcoming weeks' activities, requests for leaders/activities for upcoming weeks, photos from past weeks' activities, announcement of new members, and miscellaneous news.

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 2025 with 287 members and ended the year with 307. Each spring we reconcile the Grey Hares membership list with the Nature Manitoba membership list, contact Grey Hares members whose Nature Manitoba membership has lapsed, and a month later we remove Grey Hares members who have not re-joined Nature Manitoba. Typically, 20 to 30 members are removed from the Grey Hares membership list each year.

Financial

Grey Hares started 2025 with a balance of \$1225 and ended with \$1440. 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.

Gardens of Distinction

GARDEN TOUR

Tim Evans



2025 was the most successful garden tour to date! We sold out of tickets and could have sold more from the high demand that occurred.

There were 13 gardens in South Winnipeg and 1 community garden where we had our plant sale and last-minute ticket sales.

The actual garden tour event along with the pre-tours went incredibly well. We had a potluck event a week after the garden tour where all my volunteers were present and about half of the gardeners. This was a great time for all to connect again after having met at the pre-tours for the first time.

We had a few surprise interviews with CBC and CTV this year and that produced quite a lot of interest and enthusiasm. During one of the interviews, I indicated that garden tours are valuable for many reasons, one of which is to see plants we would never see in garden centres. There is a vast assortment of plants we will only find in gardeners' gardens. Also, Mayor Gillingham's office had requested the contact information of our participating gardeners and sent letters of congratulations for enhancing the beauty of Winnipeg by participating in the tour! This was an unexpected perk for our gardeners, and we hope it continues this year and beyond!

Big thanks once again to Tami, our Nature Manitoba Program Coordinator for all her incredible work in the background and to our graphic artist / designer / photographer Darius, a gorgeous theme of cosmos flowers were on all our posters, tickets, signs and badges indicating 'gardener' or 'volunteer'. I am always excited with the yearly change of theme that continues to keep our entire event 'fresh'!!! The planning of new themes is a great way to kick off a new year's garden tour once all the gardens are selected.

This year the focus is on the Northeast quadrant of Winnipeg with 13 home gardens along with the community garden for all to enjoy.

DISCOVERY EVENING PROGRAM

Nelson Chubey & Sandy HayGlass



The 2025 Discovery Evening season was planned and executed with help from Sandy, Nelson, John, Katharine, and Tami. Sandy, and Nelson 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 with the marketing effort for Discovery Evenings.

There are typically 6 Discovery evenings per year (3 in the winter and 3 in the fall) along with a bonus presentation at the AGM each year (all are welcome to attend at no charge).

We saw an increase in attendance from the previous year, up 10% from an average attendance of 60 people to 66 people per discovery evening. 'An Arctic Voyage' on Oct 28th was our most popular event, bringing out 114 people. We invited a wide variety of speakers again this year covering travel, fish, mollusks, mammals, plants and ecosystems.

All Discovery Evenings were held once again at Westworth United Church, the venue continued to be great to work with at a reasonable cost. Eventbrite continued to be used in tandem with ticket sales at the door; Eventbrite accounted for 63% of tickets purchased and was a useful tool for estimating attendance and seating required.

2025 Discovery Evening Presentations:

1. **Jan 14th - Predator responses to changing prey abundance in a low Arctic marine ecosystem,** Dr. Gail Davoren
2. **Feb 4th - Manitoba's Endangered Bats,** Dr. Craig Willis
3. **Feb 25th - Prescribed Fire,** Laura Reeves
4. **Oct 28th - An Arctic Voyage,** Pierre Richard
5. **Nov 18th - Sichuan Spring,** Rudolf Koes
6. **Dec 9th - Zebra Mussels in Manitoba,** Dr. Caleb Hasler

WORKSHOP SERIES

Al and Cindy Louër



We were pleased to be offering our Nature Workshops once again in 2025.

The goal of the Workshop Series is to increase our understanding and appreciation of the wonders of the nature 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. Many of the workshops reached their capacity and were sold out.

We had around 189 registrants, with about 70 % of them being members. In 2025, we continued to offer our presenters an honorarium.

We had 8 workshops in total that ran from January through to mid April.

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 2025 workshops along with the presenters who we would like to thank for sharing their knowledge with us:

1. **Mushrooms** – Donna Kurt
2. **Sturgeons** – Patrick Nelson
3. **Sustainable Gardening** – Dave Hanson
4. **Aquatic Insects** – Jordan Bannerman
5. **Climate Change** – Curt Hull
6. **A Blooming Parade** – Choosing Perennials for your Garden – Marilyn Latta
7. **Migrants** – James Whitelaw
8. **Sparrows** – Ward Christianson & Marlene Waldron

Our 2026 Workshop series is currently in progress, and we will be working on the 2027 program in the fall. We are always open to suggestions for future workshops.



MANTARIO

Katrina Froese

Mantario Wilderness Zone Forest Fire

In Spring 2025, a significant wildfire, initially springing up near Ingolf, Ontario on May 12, quickly expanded to cover a large area of boreal forest. The island where the Mantario Cabin is located, near the Manitoba and Ontario border, was at risk. Manitoba Wildfire Department and local Conservation Officers took all necessary steps to fight the fire and protect the cabin, including installing and monitoring a sprinkler system on the cabin and outbuildings. Their efforts, some rain and spring greenup and natural fire breaks allowed the fire to be held by June 11, and under control by June 23, at its maximum size of 5,410 hectares in Manitoba. The fire also burned over 36,000 hectares in Ontario. We are extremely grateful for the difficult and dangerous efforts of the skilled personnel in the fire zone.

Two essential portages to Mantario Lake, from Two Lake to Three Lake to Mantario have burned, as well as the Circle Hike and major sections of the Mantario Trail. The fire impact led to Manitoba Parks closing the Mantario Wilderness Zone to all access. The Parks updated their restrictions and opened the canoe portages to Mantario Lake in late September. The Mantario Hiking Trail remains closed to current date.

The fire-related closures had a major impact on Mantario Cabin rentals and programming in 2025. There were no visitors to the cabin from late March 2025 onward, and spring and fall work parties and summer programming were cancelled. The reopening of the area by fall, however, means that if all is well with the conditions this spring, we will be able to complete necessary portage work and maintenance and run the Summer Program in 2026.

Mantario Summer Program

The Mantario Summer Program opened for registration on May 1, 2025. Five different trips were planned for July and August. Summer Program trips are by canoe and consist of 4 or 5 days in length at the cabin. The experience is marketed and targeted at adults and promoted on the Nature Manitoba website. In 2025, Nature Manitoba staff also utilized paid social media posts and newspaper ads. Trips filled within days of registration opening.

All Summer Program trips were eventually cancelled because of the park closure, and all participants were fully refunded. Participants will be given priority registration for 2026 Summer Program ahead of the public registration opening date.

Fees for programming include meals, canoe equipment, and programming, and a T-shirt, remained at \$390/week for Nature Manitoba members and were increased slightly to \$420/week for non-members. The Mantario Living week welcomes children/youth under 17 with parents at a cost of \$145/week. The

automated online registration form and electronic payment process using PayPal or e-transfer reduced admin needs from the Office and made it possible for Mantario Committee volunteers to assist in monitoring registrations, including payment reminders and sharing information with trip leaders.

Summer Program trips and activities continue to be guided by experienced volunteer trip leaders – 2 leaders per trip, a total of 10 leaders for 5 trips throughout the summer. Trip leaders receive financial support to receive Remote Wilderness First Aid training as a perk for volunteering as well as supporting the need for risk management and emergency preparedness for the wilderness. Trips are set to fill at a group size of 10 participants, with flexibility to trip leader preferences.

Mantario Summer Program 2025 (cancelled)

Trip	Dates	Participants (registered)	Change from 2024
Mantari-Yoga Weekend	July 25-28	11	+3
Mantario Living	Aug 4-8	16	+8
Astronomy	Aug 11-15	13	+2
Mantario Mushrooms and Plants	Aug 18-22	9	0
Boreal Explorations	Aug 25-29	5	-1

The Mantario Committee held the Mantario Potluck on November 2. Many trip participants and volunteers shared food and memories of their trips to the cabin.

Mantario Cabin Rentals and Usage

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. Individuals pay a nightly rental fee via PayPal or cheque. Rental fees are \$25/night for Nature Manitoba members, \$40/night for non-members, and \$15/night for students and youth. An additional option on PayPal allows 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 individuals who are trained in cabin upkeep and have wilderness leadership skills. In 2025, 5 new winter cabin users were approved.

Overall, 2025 saw a total of 116 people on private rentals, public trips, or attending work parties and 47 nights of use at the Mantario Cabin. This was reduced significantly as the cabin was inaccessible for 5 peak months due to the forest fire closure. Of cabin visitors, 67 were Nature Manitoba members, 29 non-members and 21 were students/children/youth.

- We offered 2 public ski trips led by Mantario volunteers in winter 2025 which were advertised in the newsletter and posted on the Nature Manitoba website (21 people)
- Two Westgate Collegiate teacher-led trips for high school students on snowshoes involving 16 youth (23 participants) were completed in 2025.

Cabin Maintenance

Volunteer maintenance groups visit the cabin in spring and fall to ensure the cabin and its amenities were well kept, and repairs are made when needed. Volunteers do not pay cabin fees.

Manitoba Conservation was able to access the cabin to drop off supplies for cabin maintenance and Summer Program in March 2025. These supplies were not utilized due to the fire closure but were stored and will be in good condition for 2026 season.

The Mantario Committee coordinated a float plane shipment for 18 new mattresses for the cabin along with a futon for the seating area. This was a larger expense that the Committee deemed was necessary considering the age and condition of the mattresses.

A work party skied to the cabin in December 2025 and worked to ensure the route was clear and cabin was stocked with firewood for the 2026 winter season. More work will need to be done on burned portages in spring 2026 to ensure they are accessible for Summer Program.



MANITOBA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

Mackenzie Glover

The Manitoba Important Bird Areas (IBAs) Program was led by program coordinator, Marissa Berard until November 2025, when she moved on from the program. The new program coordinator is Mackenzie Glover. The IBA Steering Committee in 2025 was comprised of Tim Poole (Chair), Christian Artuso, Paula Grief, Bonnie Chartier, Gillian Richards, Marika Olynyk and Meredith Stoesz. In November 2025, Marika Olynyk made the decision to step back from the Steering Committee, and we added two new members: Matt Gasner with Nature Conservancy of Canada and IBA volunteer Emily McIntosh.

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

Events and Activities

We continued our work of connecting people and nature to protect essential bird habitat in Manitoba through a combination of monitoring, habitat stewardship, and outreach activities.

We held several community birding and outreach events, including a presentation in Brunkild on February 10, a presentation at Living Prairie Museum as part of their Winter Speaker Series on March 11, an information booth at Fort Whyte Alive on Earth Day (April 22), and a CTV interview on June 2. Marissa also hosted a birding walk in Assiniboine Park on June 20, presented for the Charleswood Rotary Club on September 8, and had a tradeshow booth at the Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association Regenerative Agriculture Conference from November 12-13 in Brandon. We also held a volunteer appreciation event combined with the Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative Program on December 2 in Winnipeg that doubled as a Farewell to Marissa.

We organized a variety of citizen science bird counts (“blitzes”), including a shorebird count at the Whitewater Lake IBA with the Westman Naturalists on May 24, a grassland bird count in the Southwestern Manitoba Mixed Grass Prairie IBA on June 7, and two Red-headed Woodpecker counts. The first was in the Oak Lake/Plum Lakes IBA on July 5, and the second was at the North, East and West Shoal Lakes IBA on July 19. The Shoal Lakes Red-headed Woodpecker Blitz set a new program record for the IBA with 40 individuals counted! We also organized two general bird blitzes, one on August 6 at the Delta Marsh IBA, and one on August 28 at the Oak Hammock Marsh IBA.

IBA program staff conducted a variety of targeted bird surveys. Our RHWO Blitzes in the Oak Lake/Plum Lakes IBA and the North, East and West Shoal Lakes followed pre-established survey routes. Program staff also conducted breeding bird surveys on different properties for the Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association. 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 also expanded our shorebird data collection this year beyond the pre-set ISS routes, asking volunteers to share shorebird observations with us made anywhere in the province.

We held two habitat stewardship events in 2025. Our first event was a weed pull to restore Piping Plover habitat at the Riverton Sandy Bar on August 20. We also organized a shoreline cleanup at Lockport on September 10.

We've continued to develop our Conservation Champions program, which is a voluntary habitat stewardship program geared towards landowners with suitable habitat for species at risk. The original program focused on Eastern Whip-poor-will and Red-headed Woodpecker habitat. This year, we expanded that program to focus on grassland species at risk. Marissa signed non-legally binding Volunteer Stewardship Agreements with 5 landowners in Manitoba, each with significant grassland bird habitat on their property. Each landowner received a bird survey and a Conservation Champions gate sign for their property.

Funding

Our main source of funding this year was Environment and Climate Change Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program grant. We also received funding from the Province of Manitoba's Green Team grant and Nature Manitoba's Bluebird Fund. We received donations from several 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 2025.



MANITOBA CHIMNEY SWIFT INITIATIVE

Mackenzie Glover

General

The Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative (MCSI) was led by program coordinator, Marissa Berard until November 2025, when she moved on from the program. The new program coordinator is Mackenzie Glover. The MCSI Steering Committee in 2025 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, Meredith Stoesz, Lewis Cocks, and Kristin Mozel. Stephen Peterson filled in for Laura Burns until she returned from parental leave in December. 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 organized a range of monitoring, habitat stewardship, and outreach activities. On May 14, we held our second annual Season Kick-Off/Volunteer Appreciation Event. The event, which took place at the Assiniboine Park Zoo, was an opportunity to meet and visit with volunteers, share resources, distribute supplies, get excited for the upcoming season, and do a group swift watch. Once again, this event was a great success, and we hope to continue to host similar kick-off events in the future!

We continued to coordinate our Chimney Swift monitoring program, which aims to collect important data on roosting and nesting swifts across Manitoba. We continued our participation in the National Chimney Swift Roost Survey Protocol (generally referred to as NRMP), which is a nationwide effort to monitor roosting swifts. This year, the four official NRMP monitoring nights were on May 21, May 25, May 29, and June 2. This year, we also held monthly MCSI "blitz" nights, which took place on June 18, July 16, and August 19. The point of these monthly monitoring nights was to get a snapshot idea of swift activity at different times throughout the summer. Volunteers were also free to monitor whenever worked for them throughout the season. Some volunteers regularly monitored the same site, while others visited a variety of sites to check for swift presence.

In addition to our usual chimneys, we also focused on 'priority sites'. 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. In 2025, we reconfirmed the use of 14 priority sites.

Overall, we monitored 129 sites in 19 communities across Manitoba. We also confirmed 5 new swift sites. Over 95 volunteers were involved in our monitoring efforts this year!

Habitat stewardship remained an important part of our program. In 2025, we organized and funded the cleaning of the two chimneys at the St Joachim Parish in La Broquerie.

We continued to conduct outreach activities including presentations and workshops. In 2025, Marissa conducted a presentation on Chimney Swift natural habitat in Dauphin, and a training workshop focused on monitoring with the Manitoba Metis Federation on May 1. We also held a volunteer appreciation event combined with the Important Bird Areas Program on December 2 in Winnipeg that doubled as a Farewell to Marissa.

We named five Swift Champions in 2025 based on their contributions to swift conservation. Four of our Swift Champions are dedicated volunteers who have made huge contributions of time and energy to monitoring Chimney Swifts. These individuals were Garry Budyk, Luc Blanchette, Barbara Barnett, and Phil Barnett. Our fifth award was presented to the Providence University College and Theological Seminary in Otterburne and accepted by Providence's Director of Facilities, Darrell Friesen. A huge thank you to Garry, Luc, Barbara, Phil and Darrell at Providence College for their contributions to the Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative!

Funding

Our main source of funding this year came from Environment and Climate Change Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) grant. We also had funding from Nature Manitoba's Bluebird Fund and the TD Friends of the Environment Fund. 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 2025.



MANITOBA BLUEBIRD FUND

Jack Dubois

The objective of the Manitoba Bluebird Fund Committee (MBFC) is to stop and reverse the decline in Manitoba songbird populations. It encourages the efforts to do so of individuals and other non-profit organizations by subsidizing the purchase of fruit trees, bird-friendly shrubs and perennials, as well as window-strike prevention materials.

The Committee also supports the efforts of non-profit organizations with congruent objectives through the Salzmänn Songbird Grant Program. For more information on the origin of the MBFC and details of its subsidy and grant programs visit the Nature Manitoba website at www.naturemanitoba.ca/grants-and-subsidies

In 2025 the MBFC subsidized the purchase of 70 bird-friendly fruit trees and 100 packages of shrubs and perennials by individual households. It also subsidized the purchase of 150 window-strike prevention materials packages to address a major source of bird mortality.

Salzmänn Songbird Grants were awarded to The Friends of the Bluebirds, Brandon; The Churchill Northern Studies Centre, Churchill; The Assiniboine Park Conservancy, Winnipeg; Friends of the Living Prairie Museum, Winnipeg; The Delta Marsh Bird Observatory, Oak Hammock; The Important Bird Areas Program, Winnipeg and The Manitoba Chimney Swift Inventory Project, Winnipeg.

We would like to thank our keen local business partners Ron Paul Garden Centre, Wild Birds Unlimited Winnipeg, The Preferred Perch and Prairie Originals for their participation in 2025 and we look forward to working with them again in 2026.

I would also like to thank my fellow committee members for their enthusiastic participation – Meredith Stoesz, Tim Poole, Don Himbeault, Paula Grief and Christian Artuso.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone and every organization who participated in the above programs in 2025. We cannot fulfill our objective without you.

ANISKOMOHCIKAN (BRIDGING THE GAP)

Marika Olynyk



Âniskômohcikan (formerly Bridging the Gap) provides low-barrier, experiential nature-based and land-based education for youth ages 8-10 from Winnipeg's inner city. In a non-formal, exploratory setting, BtG offers students complementary ways to view, appreciate, connect with and root themselves in the land they are a part of. We aim to develop not only increased environmental awareness but also a sense of empowerment in our learners.

2025 was a steady year for âniskômohcikan, with our co-coordinators Jamie Vann and Britt Ross continuing with the programming initiated in 2024. Britt and Jamie delivered child-led learning to over 700 children at a variety of locations, including Fort Whyte, Living Prairie Museum, Hinterland Co-op, and Assiniboine Forest, with bussing provided by the programs various funders. Programs also took place on school grounds and local greenspaces, allowing participants to connect with nature in their own neighbourhoods.

In 2025, all our programs continued to approach education through a two-eyed seeing approach, where Indigenous worldviews of relationality are paired with Western science using Forest and Nature School philosophy. Sessions were non-formal, exploratory, and co-facilitated by Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. Each session was inspired by Forest and Nature School philosophy that centres First Nation and Métis ways of knowing and being on the land. Elders and Knowledge Keepers shared their lived experiences, songs, stories and teachings.

In 2025 we fully embraced our new name which was gifted to the program by Britt and comes from nehiyawewin (Cree). It means connecting, strengthening our connection to this land, to our ancestral teachings and traditions, to our community and each other. Our volunteer steering committee is still going strong and provides general guidance and advice to the coordinators. This group includes an Elder, Alison Cox, educator Carmelle Kozak, researcher and professor Dan Henhawk, former program coordinator Taja Henine, grant guide Natalie James, and Nature MB board member Marika Olynyk.

Funders:

We are very grateful for the various donors and grantors that allow this program to offer cost-free programming over the past year: The Winnipeg Foundation, Telus Community Boards Grant, Assiniboine Credit Union, Place2Give Foundation, TD Friends of the Environment, Webster Lyon Fund, and various individual donors.

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 in 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.

As usual, our little committee have been busy. 2025 we planted more plugs and seeds at Eleanor Kidd Park with funding from Brandon Area Community Foundation. Our plantings from 2024 surprised us with beautiful blooms and even a lone Prairie Crocus peaked up through the ground. Great hard work was done at Eleanor Kidd Park by our faithful volunteers. We finalized our signate for Eleanor Kidd Park, and they were installed in the fall and are ready to provide education information about pollinators, plants and people to our visitors.

We did have some heartbreak though, with some vandalism that occurred at the park, but when we posted about it on Facebook, the Community response made our hearts full. Brandonites were very supportive and wanted to help in any way they could. It was heart-warming to see that Brandon citizens were in support of our pollinator project.

We participated in a few activities around Brandon in 2025. We had a booth at Arbor Day, Seedy Saturday and Garden Days as well as at a local Greenhouse. We had a lot of fun educating people about pollinators and native plants in Manitoba. We also did a bunch of presentations in places such as local greenhouse, Riverbank Discovery Centre summer camps, Art Gallery of Southwest Manitoba, and Senior Day to name a few. We were also able to provide University of Manitoba Landscape Design program with an opportunity to give them a tour of Spruce Woods Provincial Park and show them firsthand some of our native species in the province.

2025 also saw us put a call out for artists to make a mural for the Brandon Downtown Biz. We found an artist, Savannah Knopp, who will paint 30 different species of Bumble Bees throughout our downtown to create a scavenger like hunt for the 30 species of bees in Manitoba. We are very excited about this project!!

We currently have over 1000 Facebook followers and 1100 Instagram followers which we try to provide informative social media posts. We also encourage participation with the iNaturalist application to record native pollinators within the city limits.

As we are planning for 2026 summer season, we are excited about what the future holds for our small, committed group of volunteers. We were again successful with a grant to Brandon Area Community Foundation and are planning to create a water capture system at Eleanor Kidd Park as well as fixing some of the infrastructure there. We also will be creating some educational materials. We are hoping to continue our partnerships with Bee Better Manitoba, Riverbank Discovery Centre and John Howard Society and hope to create more in 2026. With education and enthusiasm, our little committee will teach our community members all about the ‘little ones that rule the world’, our pollinators.

OPERATIONS: Information Technology, Communications and Administration

Tami Bradford, Gillian Brennan, Zach Laberge and John Schulz

Operations continued to focus on modernization to streamline processes, improve service to members and support Nature Manitoba and its programs.

Fully paperless reporting of financial transactions was implemented including banking approvals, expense reimbursement, donations, and honoraria.

In 2025, Nature Manitoba completed a yearlong project which migrated the Nature Manitoba website to an updated Content Management System. Volunteers worked with the selected website vendor to communicate, plan, and complete the change in the fall of 2025. The new system provides enhanced functionality on a secure and robust platform. All historical information for Nature Manitoba programs was migrated to the new system along with the implementation of new functionality.

Membership information and communications continued to be managed by Communal - a cloud-based platform for non-profits developed and supported in Canada. Most memberships were purchased and renewed directly by members using the new system. New modules for program management facility membership and fundraising were investigated for 2026 consideration.

All office computers were moved to Windows 11 with Microsoft 365 continuing to provide reliable email services with a central, easily searchable information store of Nature Manitoba information.

Eventbrite continues to be used for Discovery Evening, Workshops, and Birding for Beginners registration. It provides a familiar and fully featured ticket purchasing system.

Communications expanded promotions and developed a marketing plan which resulted in increased visibility and member engagement. The marketing plan supported the increase in membership to 600 members.

A partnership with Quest Travel and Wilderness Supply provided added benefits (discounts) for our members.

A video of the garden tour was produced and will be used for future promotion throughout the next year.

A Bird of the month calendar was produced as a fundraiser and included photos taken by some of our members. All were sold, raising funds and awareness of Nature Manitoba.

The behind-the-scenes work of IT, Communications, Administration and Finance facilitates all our programs and activities.

HABITAT CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Marilyn Latta

The third set of recipients for the Native Habitat Grants was announced in 2025. 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 \$4500 in interest to the Habitat Committee each year.

2025 saw the completion of the Regeneration display produced by Tracy Peters for the Living Prairie Museum as well as the publication of the first volume of the Flora of Manitoba spearheaded by Diana Bizecki Robson at the Manitoba Museum. In addition, Diana presented a Discovery Evenings presentation about the project.

Eleven applications were received in 2025, and the following three projects were awarded funding. Total funding was awarded \$9000.

- **The Stuartburn Prescribed Burn Association (SPBA)** – to assist a new community-led organization that will provide education, training, tools and resources to landowners in the RM of Stuartburn so they can conduct prescribed burns in a safe and effective manner.
- **Beverly Rapinda** – to help purchase a flail mower that she and her neighbours can use to help restore native prairie areas by removing encroaching trees and preparing for prescribed burns.
- **Friends of the Living Prairie Museum** - to assist in hiring a “native seed plant technician” to carry out new planting and maintenance work on the seed plots previously created to ensure a high level of seed production for future years.

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

NOMINATIONS

2025/2026 Proposed Slate of Officers

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President	Gillian Brennan
Executive Vice President	Don Himbeault
Vice President	James Whitelaw
Treasurer	Andre Laberge
Secretary	Katrina Froese
Past President	Sandy HayGlass

BOARD MEMBERS (3-year term)	
Term ending Mar/2027	
George Derwin	
Nelson Chubey	
Term ending Mar/2028	
Jack Dubois	
Term ending Mar/2029	
Meredith Stoesz	
Marika Olynyk	
John Schulz	

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Email: info@naturemanitoba.ca

Website: www.naturemanitoba.ca

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