

# THE HOMeward WOLF

*Kevin Van Tighem*



**Thursday, October 24, 7:00pm  
Kerry Wood Nature Centre, Red Deer**

Wolves have become a complicated comeback story. Their tracks are once again making trails throughout western Alberta, southern British Columbia and the northwestern United States, and the lonesome howls of the legendary predator are no longer mere echoes from our frontier past; they are prophetic voices emerging from the hills of our contemporary reality.

Kevin Van Tighem explores the history of wolf eradication in western North America and the species' recent return to the places where humans live and play. Rich with personal anecdotes and the stories of individual wolves whose fates reflect the complexity of our relationship with these animals, *The Homeward Wolf* neither romanticizes nor demonizes this wide-ranging carnivore with whom we again share our Western spaces. Instead, it argues that wolves are coming back to stay, that conflicts will continue to arise, and that we will need to find new ways to manage our relationship with this formidable predator in our ever-changing world.



Kevin will have copies of his book for sale and will be available for a book signing before and after the presentation.

No Charge, Everyone Welcome

SPONSORED BY

# 2013 OWL AWARD

## Tony Blake

Presented by Bill Heinsen

Searching for adjectives to describe Tony is an interesting exercise. He is one of those people who can be seen as a sort of an enigma. He is very quiet spoken, very thoughtful, and seeks logic in his decisions. At the same time he is forceful, determined, and rigid in his defence of his beloved natural surroundings.

For many years Tony worked as a conductor for the CPR. While plying the rails between Red Deer and Edmonton, he would keep an eye peeled for plants that "shouldn't be there" along the right-of-way. Stands of invasive weeds were reported to the appropriate county officials and I suspect that if reasonably prompt action was not taken, follow-up calls were made until the offending weeds were removed.

Away from work, Tony found time to join the Red Deer River Naturalists. He took on the job of President for two years and is waiting in the wings to be reintroduced to that position.

He is an avid advocate for the parks in Red Deer and of the natural and protected areas of Alberta. He does not back down before engineers and politicians that would desecrate or give away even a small part of the parks. In fact, he is one of the few people I know who will look a planner, an engineer, or a politician straight in the eye and say, nicely but firmly, and I am paraphrasing, "You really haven't a clue what you are proposing or doing."

He has kept a watchful eye on the Maskapatoon Park and was a staunch critic of "stabilization" of the river bank undertaken a few years ago. He took a very critical look at the development proposals near the Lions' Campground. Tony has



actually read the City of Red Deer's Environmental Master Plan and other plans which lead the direction the city will move in the future. He is not adverse to appearing before City Council to voice the environmental perspective and to point out

where new initiatives do not meet even the basic requirements of the planning documents.

Tony has been an advocate for the establishment of a provincial database for the purpose of keeping track of where flora and fauna are resident now, so that there will be a benchmark in the future. To this end he has been a supporter of among others, the Weaselhead Foundation, the Alberta Native plant Council, the Alberta Wilderness Association, the Alberta Rare Plant List, and the Alberta Stewardship Organization. For several years, he acted as a "steward-at-large" for the Government of Alberta natural areas, creating inventories and erecting signage at a variety of sites. A few years ago under the sponsorship of RDRN, he created a weed map for the parks in Red Deer. He used a few environmental studies students to assist, thus allowing them to gain valuable field experience. Those maps are preserved on the old RDRN website.

Tony has worked with farmers along Highway 54, west of Innisfail, to protect the water running into the Red Deer River from further gravel pit development.



He advocates for support of the Environmental Law Centre, an organization that provides legal advice and action for environmental protection. He has in recent years been RDRN's representative on the Nature Alberta Board.

When he retired from the railway, Tony did what perhaps many of us should do, but never get around to it, that is go back to college and take some courses, specifically, botany and geography. Armed with his new knowledge and credentials, Tony has embarked on a second career working for and with the Nature Conservancy of Canada. He

is making more inventories of plants and checking on the progress, of more likely the lack of progress, in reclaiming abandoned oil well sites.

To go for a walk with Tony is an educational experience. Tony will tell you the names of plants, which ones are invasives and which are native species. If you not recognize a plant he will show you how to identify it. He will also explain who is responsible for controlling the different kinds of weeds. He has also been known to swear at some plants although it doesn't seem like it does much good.

Tony is a very valuable member of the Red Deer River Naturalists. Tony, we hope you will stick around for many more years and continue the good work you do. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to present Tony Blake with the 2013 Owl Award.

**CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE! [WWW.RDRN.CA](http://WWW.RDRN.CA)**

# RDRN FALL SOCIAL A SUCCESS

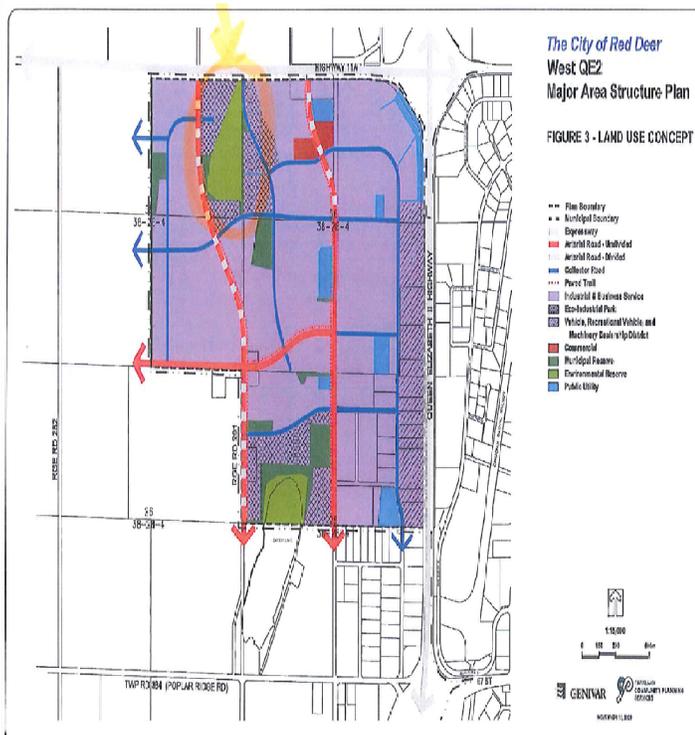


About 90 people gathered at Festival Hall on September 27th to enjoy a wine and cheese evening, catch up with old friends, and listen to an engaging presentation by Dr Jerry Haigh, a retired wildlife veterinarian who has travelled the world. His presentation was Of Moose and Men. Our thanks to Dorothy Dickson for donating several beautiful coffee table books as door prizes!

Anna Marie Ferguson had a booth set up in the hall and talked to people about the issues facing wolves in Alberta. She has started a petition calling for a more humane and responsible approach to wolf management in the province. For more information check out <http://www.guardiansofthewolves.com> or Say NO to Wolf Killings in Alberta on Facebook.

## QUEENS PARK WETLAND TO REMAIN AN ER

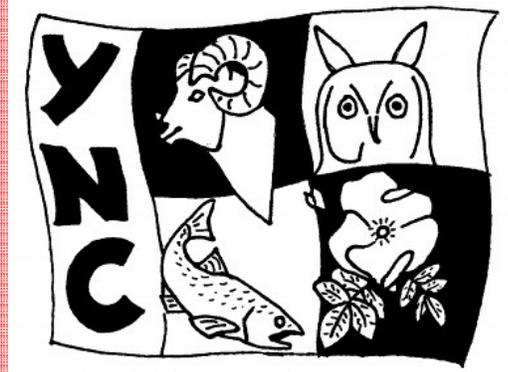
Birders in the Red Deer area have long enjoyed exploring RR 281 just west of Red Deer. The low road grade and high water level made it easy to watch terns, bitterns, ducks and especially sora rails. Judy Boyd and Dorothy Hazlett dubbed the area *Sora Central*. A pair of Eared Grebes nested in the area in 2012, which were sadly shot by drunken poachers.



This spring, an RDRN member advised us that the area was being drained as part of the new Queen's Park development. When we contacted the City of Red Deer, we were advised that the area to the west of the road will be kept as an Environmental Reserve. The road will be re-routed to the east, meaning that the area will be less accessible, but still preserved. We have this note from Andrew Phillips, Project Coordinator/Designer from the City's Engineering Services Department: *When the IASP (Industrial Area Structure Plan) is developed over the next year, it will be based on the approved MASP which allocates the area as an ER. As such this area will remain untouched.*

The next YNC Explorer Day will be held on October 20 at 1:00 PM. The theme will be trees. Activities will take place both inside and outdoors. Call Judy Boyd (403-342-4150) for more information.

*The Young Naturalist Club is for youth and families who like to learn about nature and have fun at the same time! We provide educational materials and organize field experiences to enhance nature appreciation and foster attitudes that benefit our natural world.*



<http://naturealberta.ca/alberta-natural-history/ync-young-naturalists-club>



Photo by Myrna Pearman

## FLOWER FOCUS

### My Favorite Weeds

By Don Wales

A look at the amazing adaptability of some of the common weeds and invasives in the Red Deer area.

**October 16**

**KWNC 10:00 AM**

For more information, contact Don Wales  
403-343-2937

The Red Deer River Naturalists, the first natural history organization to be established in Alberta, was incorporated as a society in 1906. The objectives of the society are to foster an increased knowledge, understanding and appreciation of natural history, and to support conservation measures dealing with our environment, wildlife and natural resources.

Annual membership is \$15.00 for individuals and \$20.00 for families.

Regular meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of most months at the Kerry Wood Nature Centre, 6300-45 Ave., Red Deer, AB. Non-members are welcome.

Members are encouraged to contribute to this newsletter. Deadline is the last Friday of the month.

## BIRD FOCUS

The Bird Focus group meets every Monday from September to May (except holidays) at noon at Kerry Wood Nature Centre. Be prepared to car-pool and bring your own snacks and beverages. Sometimes the group hikes although most birding is done from cars. Everyone is welcome.



Photo by Myrna Pearman

*Gail Hughes and Dr Charley Bird led the annual fall nature walk through JJ Collett Natural Area on September 29th. The walk was also RDRN's first Flower Focus meeting of the year.*

**Box 785 Red Deer, AB T4N 5H2**

**Phone/Fax: 403.347.8200**

**rd.rn@hotmail.com**

**www.rdrn.ca**

**<http://wearenaturalwise.blogspot.com>**

Our thanks to NOVA for underwriting the cost of newsletter printing



*Front cover designed by Doug Pederson*