

Red Deer River Naturalists Handbook



Updated May 2011

Red Deer River Naturalists

Contents

Constitution	4
<i>Objectives</i>	4
By-laws	4
2.2 <i>Board</i>	4
2.3 <i>President</i>	5
2.4 <i>Secretary</i>	5
2.5 <i>Treasurer</i>	6
2.6 <i>Vice-president</i>	6
2.7 <i>Second vice-president</i>	6
2.8 <i>Auditing</i>	6
2.9 <i>Meetings</i>	7
2.10 <i>Voting</i>	7
2.11 <i>Remuneration</i>	7
2.12 <i>Borrowing Powers</i>	7
2.13 <i>Amendment of the By-laws</i>	7
Bylaw changes	8
Board Organization and Management	9
Red Deer Community Foundation Designated Trust Fund	10
RDRN's \$50,000 Fund Anonymous Donation	12
Issues	13
Advocacy	13
Job Descriptions	15
NatureScape Alberta	17
Appointments to RDRN, Other Boards and Organizations	20
Focus Groups	21
Ellis Bird Farm	23
Acronyms	24
Code of Conduct (for Board Members)	26
Representing RDRN	27
History of the Red Deer River Naturalists	29

Red Deer River Naturalists Constitution

P.O. Box 785, Red Deer, Alberta, Canada, T4N 5H1 Answering Phone (403) 347-8200
Email: rd.rn@hotmail.com Website: www.rdrn.fanweb.ca

1. Objectives

- 1.1 To encourage Central Albertans to increase their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of natural history.
- 1.2 To work towards conservation of natural areas and of species native to Central Alberta.
- 1.3 To help prevent abuse of the natural resources.
- 1.4 To work with nature clubs within The Federation of Alberta Naturalists, and with other organizations having similar objectives, towards greater understanding, enjoyment and conservation of the natural heritage of Alberta.
- 1.5 To promote the study of natural history through varied channels of communication, field trips, and outdoor activities.
- 1.6 To co-operate with groups having related interests to promote the exchange of information, and to encourage the representation of the Society's views at Local, Provincial, National and International levels as appropriate.
- 1.7 To acquire lands, by purchase or otherwise, for the purposes of preserving natural features, or pursuing the objectives of the Society.

2. By-laws

2.1 Membership

- 2.1.1 Membership shall be open to all interested persons upon payment of the membership fee.
- 2.1.2 Fees for membership in the Society shall be determined from time to time by the members at the Annual General Meeting.
- 2.1.3 Any member wishing to withdraw from membership may do so by giving written notice to the treasurer.
- 2.1.4 If any member be in arrears for fees or assessments for any year, such member will be automatically suspended at the expiration of two months from the end of such year and shall thereafter be entitled to no membership privileges or powers in the Society until reinstated.
- 2.1.5 Any member may be expelled from membership for any cause which the Society may deem reasonable upon a two-thirds vote of all members of the Society in good standing.

2.2 Board

- 2.2.1 A board, consisting of an executive plus up to fourteen directors, shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.
- 2.2.2 The executive positions on the Board shall be the past president, president, vice-president, second vice-president, secretary, and treasurer.
- 2.2.3 The Board shall, subject to the By-laws or directions given to it by majority vote at any meeting of the membership properly called and constituted, have full control and management of the affairs of the Society.
- 2.2.4 Meetings of the Board shall be held as often as may be required,

but at least once every four months, and shall be called by the president. Meetings shall be called by giving not less than three days notice to each member of the Board.

- 2.2.5 The president shall call a special Board meeting on the joint request of two or more members of the Board, provided that the request is made in writing and states the business to be brought before the meeting.
- 2.2.6 Four members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for a Board meeting.
- 2.2.7 The Board may appoint committees as the need arises. The chairperson of a committee may be chosen from the directors or appointed by the Board.
- 2.2.8 If the society is a member of The Federation of Alberta Naturalists, the Executive shall appoint at least one Director to represent the Society at all meetings of The Federation, reporting the proceedings to the Society, and serving as director(s) of The Federation.
- 2.2.9 If a member of the Board is unable to carry out his/her duties, then the remaining members may appoint a replacement from the membership of the Society. The replacement will serve until the next Annual General Meeting.
- 2.2.10 Board members who do not conform to the objectives of the Society may be removed at a special board meeting at which no fewer than three-fourths of the Board members are present and when no fewer than three-fourths of those present vote in favour of the resolution.
- 2.2.11 The nominating committee shall consist of three members to include the past-president and/or the president and two persons from the membership of the Society.
- 2.2.12 The Board shall review the policy manual annually.

2.3 *President*

- 2.3.1 The president shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Board.
- 2.3.2 The president shall, when present, preside at any meetings of the Society and of the Board. In his/her absence the Vice-president shall chair the meeting and in the absence of both, a chair may be elected by the meeting to preside thereat.
- 2.3.3 The president shall be ex-officio member of all committees.
- 2.3.4 The president shall present a year-end report to the Annual General Meeting.

2.4 *Secretary*

- 2.4.1 It shall be the duty of the secretary to attend all meetings of the Society and of the Board, and to record and retain accurate minutes of the same.
- 2.4.2 The secretary shall have charge of the Seal of the Society, which whenever used, shall be authenticated by the signatures of the secretary and the president, or in the case of the death or inability to act of one those officers, the signature of the secretary or the president and the vice-president.
- 2.4.3 In the case of the absence of the secretary, his/her duties shall be discharged by such officer as may be appointed by the Board.
- 2.4.4 The secretary shall have charge of all correspondence of the

Society and be under the direction of the president and the Board. Writing of specific items or classes of correspondence may be done by a member of the Board appointed by the secretary.

2.4.5 The secretary shall send notices of the various meetings as required.

2.4.6 The secretary shall maintain a policy manual.

2.5 *Treasurer* Page 7

2.5.1 The treasurer shall receive all monies paid to the Society and shall be responsible for the prompt deposit of same in whatever bank the Board may order.

2.5.2 The treasurer shall properly account for the funds of the Society and keep such books as may be directed.

2.5.3 The treasurer shall present to the Board a full detailed account of receipts and disbursements whenever requested and shall present to the Annual General Meeting a statement duly audited of the financial position of the Society, with a copy presented to the secretary for the records of the Society.

2.5.4 The treasurer, or designate, shall keep a record of all members of the Society and their addresses.

2.5.5 The treasurer shall make himself/herself available to answer questions during the audit.

2.6 *Vice-president*

2.6.1 The vice-president shall carry out the duties of the president in the event of the president's absence and any other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Board.

2.7 *Second vice-president*

2.7.1 The second vice-president shall carry out the duties of the president in the event of the absence of the president and the vice-president, and any other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Board.

2.8 *Auditing*

2.8.1 The books, accounts, and records of the treasurer and secretary shall be audited at least once a year by a duly qualified accountant or by a committee of two or more members of the society. The treasurer may not serve as an auditor.

2.8.2 The fiscal year of the Society shall be January 1 to December 31 of each year.

2.8.3 The books and records of the Society may be inspected by any member of the Society at the Annual General Meeting, or upon giving reasonable notice and arranging a time satisfactory to the officer(s) having charge of them, at any other time.

2.8.4 Each member of the Board shall at all times have access to the books and records of the Society.

2.9 *Meetings*

2.9.1 The Society shall hold an Annual General Meeting in the first quarter of each year.

2.9.2 A quorum for the annual general meeting, a regular meeting and/or a special meeting of the Society shall consist of fifteen (15) members in good standing.

2.9.3 Any member in good standing shall be eligible for any office in the Society.

A special meeting shall be called by the president or the secretary upon receipt of a petition signed by one third of the members in good standing, setting forth the reasons for calling such a meeting.

2.9.4 Meetings of the Society may be called at any time by the secretary upon the instructions of the president or the Board by notice in writing to the last known address of each member, delivered three days previous to the date of such meeting. Page 8

2.10 *Voting*

2.10.1 Any member who has not withdrawn from membership nor been suspended nor expelled shall have the right to vote at any meeting of the Society. Such votes shall be made in person and not by proxy or otherwise.

2.11 *Remuneration*

2.11.1 Unless authorized at any meeting, and after notice of same shall have been given, no member of the Society shall receive any remuneration for services to the Society.

2.12 *Borrowing Powers*

2.12.1 For the purposes of carrying out its objects, the Society may borrow or raise or otherwise secure the payment of money in such manner as it thinks fit, and in particular by the issue of debenture, but this power shall be exercised only under the authority of the Society, and in no case shall debentures be issued without sanction of an extraordinary resolution of the Society.

2.13 *Amendment of the By-laws*

2.13.1 The By-Laws may be rescinded, altered, or added to by an special resolution.

2.13.2 A special resolution, to be effective, must be passed by a majority of not fewer than three-fourths of such members entitled to vote as are present in person at a general meeting of which one month's written notice specifying the intention to propose the extraordinary resolution has been duly given.

Red Deer River Naturalists

Bylaw changes

The constitution consists of two parts: the objectives and the bylaws.

1. All changes to either the objectives or the bylaws must be registered with Municipal Affairs in Edmonton.
2. Advertise the changes in the newsletter one month before the changes are to be made.
3. Only paid up members may vote.
 - a. Persons attending the meeting at which the changes will be voted on must be checked against a list of paid up members.
 - b. It is possible for a challenge to be mounted if a non-member votes on a bylaw change.
4. Unless the changes are minor, the easiest way to get the changes accepted is to pass a motion incorporating the changes into a set of new bylaws and then pass a motion, which rescinds the old bylaws.
 - a. Send the only new bylaws to Edmonton.
 - b. Do not enclose the objectives or they will charge \$50 to make the change.
5. There is a special format in which the changes must be sent. Check with Municipal Affairs for the appropriate form.
6. There is a requirement in the policies that the executive (past president, president, vice-president, second vice-president, secretary, and treasurer) review the bylaws and policies in September of each year.

Red Deer River Naturalists

Board Organization and Management

1. The Board, by the Constitution, must establish a process to review its own Constitution, and policies on a regular basis.
 2. The duties of all Board members should be clearly specified.
 3. The mandate, authority and membership of each committee must be established by Terms of Reference approved by the Board as a whole.
 4. The Board should set in motion a process to seek out and recommend new Board members whose skills, knowledge and experience are needed by RDRN.
 5. Board members should participate in an annual orientation meeting.
 6. Board of Trustees should cooperate in a regular process of evaluation of their progress individually and as a group in achieving the objectives they have set.
 7. Each Board member should receive a copy of the RDRN manual.
- (November 23, 1998)

Red Deer River Naturalists

Red Deer Community Foundation Designated Trust Fund

Guidelines for the use of funds designated for use by RDRN from the Red Deer Community Foundation

A. General Information and Administration

1. Initial Total Principal in the fund held by the Red Deer Community Foundation is \$55,000.00
2. The net interest income earned to December 31, each year, will be paid to the RDRN by the Red Deer Community Foundation on the following April 1st unless otherwise arranged.
3. This is an open fund i.e. other donors may add to it.
4. The interest paid to RDRN from the total principal will henceforth be referred to as the Annual Principal for the purposes of RDRN accounting. The interest from the Annual Principal will, in RDRN accounts, be called the Annual Interest.
5. The interest from the Annual Principal will be managed by the treasurer in accordance with the bylaws of the Society.
6. Costs of administration of the fund will be paid from the fund.

B. Disposition of Annual Principal and Annual Interest

1. 25% of the Annual Principal will be paid into General Revenue. Suggestions for uses include member registration at conferences; donations to local, provincial, national and international causes; upgrading of the RDRN newsletter, production of the Central Alberta Naturalist.
2. The other 75% of the Annual Principal will be invested by the RDRN in the way deemed best by the Board to combine accessibility and a good interest rate. It will be kept separate from any other RDRN accounts.
3. The money as defined in B2 above may be spent:
 - a. for capital acquisitions
 - or
 - b. for specific projects proposed by RDRN members
4. In order to receive support from the fund the project must show promise of furthering the published objectives of the RDRN, i.e.
 1. to foster an increased knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of natural history;
 2. to support conservation measures dealing with our environment, our wildlife, and our natural resources;
 3. to cooperate with other clubs and organizations having similar views and objectives to our own;
 4. to support the work of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists
5. On receipt of an application for either a capital expenditure or financial support of a project, the Board will appoint an ad hoc committee to consider the application and advise the Board on its merits.
6. The Board will then:
 - a. in cases where the amount is \$1,000 or less, decide whether to support the application and, if so, in what amount. The Board may attach conditions to the granting of support as it deems appropriate; or
 - b. in cases where the amount is greater than \$1,000 or deemed by the Board to be appropriate for any other reason, The Board will decide whether or not to recommend to the society if an application should be supported. The recommendation will be presented to the RDRN for comment before a final

decision is made by the Board.

7. Application in writing may be delivered to the president or the secretary.

C. Accumulation of fund from the 75% portion of the Annual Principal

1. The money should not be allowed to be accumulated unless specific, long term goals are identified e.g. the acquisition of land.
1. Such long term goals must be presented to the membership as a resolution that, if passed, will be adhered to by successive Boards of Directors until the goal is achieved or a subsequent resolution repealing the first one is passed.

Red Deer River Naturalists

RDRN's \$50,000 Fund Anonymous Donation

It was the general agreement of the members of the committee that the RDRN should not have access to the \$50, 000 in its entirety. Rather, the Fund would be administered as follows:

- 1) The original fund of \$50, 000 shall be divided into Fund A (in the amount of \$10,000) and Fund B (in the amount of \$40,000).
- 2) Fund A will be placed in six-month Treasury Bills. Interest accumulated from this Fund will be added to the original \$10,000. All or part of Fund A may be used to finance ongoing projects of the RDRN or to finance needed acquisitions.
- 3) A committee shall be appointed annually to draw up a budget for uses for Fund A. This budget will be subject to approval by the Board as per the guidelines in Point 5) below.
- 4) Fund B shall consist of the remaining \$40, 000 and will also be invested in six month Treasury Bills. The principal of \$40, 000 will NEVER be directly used by the RDRN. Rather, the RDRN may use the contents of the Fund as collateral and borrow against it as necessary to finance any major purchases or projects as may arise. Of the interest produced every six months by Fund B, 40% shall be returned to the original \$40,000 and allowed to accumulate. The remaining 60% of the interest produced shall become part of the operating revenue of the RDRN.
- 5) The monies generated from Fund A may be spent on:
 1. Capital acquisitions to improve the image and/or function of the RDRN.
 2. Specific projects. Under 2) above, in order to receive financial support from the fund, a project must show promise of furthering the established objectives of the RDRN:
 - a. to foster an increased knowledge, understanding and appreciation of natural history.
 - b. to support conservation measures dealing with our environment, our wildlife and our natural resources.
 - c. to cooperate with other clubs and organizations having similar views and objectives to our own.
 - d. to support the work of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists.
- 6) Upon receipt of an application for either a capital expenditure or financial support of a project, the Board will appoint an appropriate ad hoc committee to consider the application and to advise the Board of its merits.
 1. If the amount of money involved with the application is \$1,000 or less, the Board may decide to support the application and, if so, in what amount. The Board may attach conditions to the granting of support as it deems appropriate.
 2. If the amount of money involved with the application is greater than \$1,000 or it is deemed necessary by the Board for some other reason, the Board will decide whether or not to recommend to the Society that the application should be supported. The recommendation will be presented at a meeting of the Society and in the RDRN Newsletter for comment from members before a final decision is made.
- 7) Applications may be delivered in writing to the President or to the Secretary of the Society.
- 8) Both Fund A and Fund B will be managed by the Treasurer in accordance with the bylaws of the Society.
- 9) Costs of these Funds administration will be paid by each Fund.

Adopted by the membership on Nov. 22, 1990 Meeting of March 26, 1991

Red Deer River Naturalists

Issues

Some items which have been issues for RDRN in the past:

Local:

1. Molly Banister Extension
2. City of Red Deer Master Plan
3. Gaetz Sanctuary Committee
4. Environmental Advisory Board
5. City planning
6. County planning
7. Tree cutting
8. Inappropriate escarpment development
9. Gravel mining in the river valley
10. Feedlot drainage
11. Logging on private land

Regional:

1. Questionable development such as hog farms near water courses
2. Buffalo Lake stabilization
3. River corridor hearings
4. Nova Plant and its CO2 production, emissions, and expansion plans
5. Habitat Steward Program
6. Lacombe LETS fight to save Cranna Lake
7. Sunpine Forestry

Provincial:

1. Forestry on public lands
2. Water caucus of the AEN
3. Water basin transfer
4. Water export
5. Standards and Guidelines for Wastewater and Stormwater Treatment Committee

Federal:

1. Constitution (Provincial or federal control of the environment)
2. National Parks

Red Deer River Naturalists

Advocacy

Advocacy: adopting a cause and taking a stand

Code: a system of rules and regulations for conduct

Methods of advocacy can include Letters, Media releases and interviews, Talks, Critiques and position papers, Discussion groups, and Public hearings and private conversations.

The Red Deer River Naturalists tries to be proactive in advocating responsible environmental action, but especially in those, which have a direct effect on the conservation of nature.

Advocating a position on behalf of the Society entails the following responsibilities:

1. **Be sure of your cause.** You are an ambassador of an organization with defined objectives. If you are in doubt, seek clarification from the president or directors before proceeding.
2. **Avoid presenting polarized views or simplistic answers.** You should inform, provoke, and challenge but leave the decision on position and action to your audience. Help your audience understand all facets of a debate then explain why you believe that facts support your stand.
3. **Work with and through others.** Forge partnerships with others that share your causes (local and provincial round tables, city councils, environment groups and other individuals) and work with them to advance your cause. Be prepared to work with possible opponents, recognizing where compromise may be possible but remaining firm where it is not.
4. **Get the facts straight.** Maintaining your and the Society's integrity and reputation for fairness and honesty is vital if your advocacy is to be taken seriously. Good advocates have their facts straight, do not exaggerate and readily admit limitations of their knowledge. Statements on environmental effects and ecosystem function must be based on science, not guesswork. Don't hesitate to outline uncertainties; the best ecologists would readily admit that we understand very little of ecosystem function. In fact, these uncertainties underscore the need for conservative approach in situations where environmental change is likely to result. Seek the advice of experts and encourage them to participate in the debate.
5. **Communicate with the Society.** You have a responsibility to keep the president and board informed. When you initiate and/or undertake an advocacy program, provide them with feedback in a timely and constructive manner. If you have undertaken to carry out an action and are unable to do so, let them know immediately so that an alternative may be considered.
6. **Be prepared for the consequences of advocacy.** Any advocacy program should anticipate the consequences of such advocacy and be prepared to deal with them. For example, you may receive heightened media attention. Again, it is vital to have your facts straight and admit the limitations of your knowledge. Keep your statements as clear and simple as possible and understand that the media will usually emphasize the controversial aspects of what you say.
7. **Personal advocacy.** When you are speaking or acting on your own behalf, make it clear that you are not working on behalf of the Society. However, be aware that it is very likely that in the media, and in the perception of the public, you will be identified as a member of the Society.
8. **Support from the Society.** Do not hesitate to request help finding sources for factual information and judging the appropriateness of your methods.
9. **Personal commitment.** Recognize that the strength of your advocacy for a cause is

greatly enhanced by your example or responsibility in you own lifestyle and values. This commitment should, of course, also be demonstrated by the Society for which you are working.

10. **Historical position of the Society.** Before beginning advocacy in the name of the Society, check to see if there has been a previous position taken by the Society regarding the issue.

By Dorothy Dickson from the proposed Code of Advocacy for the Canadian Parks Service. With kind permission.

Political Activity

Before enjoining political activity, check with the president. Organizations such as RDRN that have charity status with Revenue Canada are prohibited from certain activities.

Red Deer River Naturalists

Job Descriptions

1. The president:
 - a. sees that others know and do their jobs.
 - b. prepares meeting agendas on items pertaining to the functioning of the Society.
 - c. prepares agendas for general meetings.
 - d. sees that internal and external committee appointments are made.
 - e. sees that policy documents, bylaws and other associated items of business are applied as necessary.
 - f. endeavours to attend Society functions. Represent the Society at other functions when required.
2. The secretary
 - a. keeps accurate minutes of the proceedings of the Society.
 - b. writes specific items or classes of correspondence as directed by the Board or may assign same to be done by a member of the executive.
 - c. be in charge of collecting Society mail.
 - d. maintains the RDRN Handbook, including the bylaws and updating of policies.
 - e. writes thank you notes.
3. The treasurer
 - a. keeps accurate records of the Society's finances.
 - b. observes a fiscal year from January 1 to December 31 for each year.
 - c. once each year ensure that an audit is completed of the books, accounts, and records of the Society. This audit will be completed by two members in good standing of the Society in the presence of the treasurer.
 - d. makes the books and records of the Society available for inspection by any member of the Society at the Annual General Meeting, or upon giving reasonable notice and arranging a time satisfactory to the officer(s) having charge of them, at any other time.
4. The vice-president
 - a. acts in the absence of the president.
 - b. brings issues to the executive for action decisions.
 - c. implements decisions made for action on issues.
 - d. is the primary responder to media requests.
 - e. brings issues to the attention of the general meetings.
 - f. prepares and presents an annual issues report to the Society.
5. The second vice-president
 - a. acts in the absence of the vice-president.
 - b. assumes duties as assigned by the president.
 - c. maintains a quality check on papers and articles prepared by others on behalf of the RDRN.
 - d. fields requests or interviews and speakers.
6. The directors will carry out the following tasks by executive assignment and/or by mutual agreement:
 - a. arrange annual banquet.
 - b. arrange the monthly general meetings.
 - c. book meeting rooms.
 - d. check room before meetings (doors are open, AV materials are in place, coffee supplies have been purchased and are in place, receive cash in lieu of

the treasurer).

- e. prepare clipboards when required.
- f. arrange for displays/booths and workers to man same.
- g. send information as requested by individuals or groups and other tasks as they arise.
- h. serve on committees as required.
- i. attend conferences as required.

January, 1997

Red Deer River Naturalists

NatureScape Alberta

Caring for Wildlife Habitat at Home

NatureScape Alberta is a project whose vision is shared by a diverse group of Albertans. Based on a similar, very successful program in British Columbia, NatureScape Alberta is a grassroots driven project that combines the talents and resources of two active non-governmental organizations - the Red Deer River Naturalists and the Federation of Alberta Naturalists - with the logistical support of several provincial and federal agencies and organizations.

NatureScape Alberta fosters the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within Alberta's town and cities by increasing awareness and by encouraging direct public participation in habitat preservation and enhancement activities.

Through the production of a highly readable and interesting book and a complementary recognition/education program, NatureScape Alberta provides individual Albertans, as well as organizations and agencies, with the necessary tools to enhance the natural environment in backyards, school grounds, greenways, parks and community spaces. By engaging individuals and organizations in activities, which re-connect them to their environment and to their communities, NatureScape Alberta helps improve the quality of life in our urban centres.

NatureScape Alberta provides a useful framework within which people can appreciate the interconnectedness of the natural and human-made environment. It encourages individuals to become involved in decision-making processes, which affect the health and long-term viability of their neighbourhoods and communities, and it encourages the widespread recognition of how dependent humans are with the environment in which they live and upon whose health they ultimately depend.

In the face of looming and significant global environmental crises, NatureScape Alberta provides individuals with the knowledge and assurance that they, indeed, can make a difference. The project empowers people by providing them with the knowledge and inspiration to effect change in their backyards and neighbourhoods.

A. Vision

NatureScape Alberta holds the following as its vision: A Province with vibrant and healthy urban and backyard landscapes, where the majority of landowners, city apartment dwellers, politicians, land use planners, school administrators and teachers are:

- environmentally aware and informed,
- well versed in the fundamentals of sustainable land use, and
- actively involved in maintaining healthy yards, gardens, schoolyard and communities.

B. Mission

- To produce and successfully market a practical, high quality, interesting, attractively priced book. This book provides practical information on caring for wildlife habitat in backyards and school grounds.
- To launch and administer a backyard/schoolyard habitat certificate/recognition program
- To develop and deliver an effective public education program promoting backyard/schoolyard stewardship

C. Purpose The purpose of NatureScape Alberta is to promote the involvement of individuals, groups, corporations, communities, municipalities and schools in urban and backyard/schoolyard biodiversity activities. It seeks to promote the protection, creation and enhancement of urban wildlife habitat through cooperation and partnerships.

NatureScape is a proactive, grassroots program, which involves non-governmental

organizations (spearheaded by the Red Deer River Naturalists), both the informal and formal education systems, private industry and government agencies. It is a project, which promotes sustainable urban land and resource use, and one, which encourages action to conserve habitat. NatureScape Alberta encompasses both landscape ecology and landscape management; it provides an innovative and effective avenue for public education and participation.

NatureScape Alberta provides individuals, schools, organizations and other interested parties with

- inspiration to take action,
- practical information on how to undertake projects in a responsible and effective manner, and
- recognition for their efforts and contribution. The end result is improved biodiversity, heightened public interest and involvement in habitat conservation and development activities, and healthier neighbourhoods and communities.

NatureScape Alberta is needed for several reasons:

- loss of biodiversity is an important issue;
- loss of biodiversity is an issue, which affects everyone;
- a recent heightened awareness about environmental issues has resulted in a greater public
- a percentage of landowners and school administrators will be motivated to apply the principals of biodiversity to their immediate surroundings if provided with relevant information and recognition; gardening is the fastest growing hobby in North America, and there is a growing interest in gardening with native plants.
- the Baby-boom generation is focusing more on home-based activities;
- Alberta's new elementary school curricula emphasize hands-on experiential learning for students;
- the certification and follow-up components of this project will provide vehicles for measuring public involvement and project success;
- British Columbia, through NatureScape BC, has demonstrated that there is a high level of interest in this topic;
- there is a trend towards the acceptance and desire to maintain natural areas in both urban and rural settings, and
- principles, which children learn at school, may carry over to home and vice versa.

D. Project Description /Implementation Plan

1. Book: The book contains 220 pages complete with colour and line illustrations. It has easy to use (coil binding, large print, pull-out sheets, how to sections) and provides Alberta-based, relevant and practical information on how to plan and develop an environmentally sensitive, wildlife-friendly backyard. Topics covered include: General Principals, Attracting Wildlife with Plantings, Attracting Wildlife With Water, Providing Wildlife with Shelter, Coexisting with Wildlife, Xeriscaping (and other alternatives to conventional turf), and a Resource Guide. The book has a tear out page containing six postcard sized observation cards. One side of the card has the return address of the Red Deer River Naturalists, the other side has a form for recording interesting or unusual backyard sightings and observations. These forms are collected and held by the RDRN, with the Federation of Alberta Naturalists (FAN) overseeing setting up and maintaining a database of information collected from these cards. When warranted, information collected from these cards will be forwarded to appropriate agencies, researchers, etc. Some of the information gathered will be included in a biannual newsletter.

2. Certification/Recognition Program: the certification program recognizes schools, landowners, businesses or corporations who strive to increase the biodiversity of their grounds, backyards and/or schoolyard. Qualifying landowners/schools are recognized with a

plaque. Certification applications are included in the book, and will also be distributed to naturalist clubs for inclusion in their newsletter, as well as through Nature Centres and Fish and Wildlife Offices. Each participant who applies to have their yard certified, or who returns a Backyard Card is be entitled to a free biannual newsletter for the two years following publication.

Writing Team:

Authors: Myrna Pearman, Ted Pike

Editor: Edrea Daniel

Artist: Gary Ross

Design: Judy Cook

Contributing Agencies: Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Ecotrust, Alberta Lotteries, Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, CAGE, Canada Trust, FAN, Red Deer Community Foundation, Red Deer River Naturalists Foundation, Environment Canada (Action 21), Shell Environmental Fund, Wildlife Habitat Canada,
January 2001

Red Deer River Naturalists

Appointments to RDRN, Other Boards and Organizations

Classifications:

1. Position appointed by Board to do work internal to RDRN.
2. Position appointed by Board to a committee/Board external to RDRN.
3. Position occupied by a member of RDRN but not appointed by the Board

Class	Board	Name
1	RDRN - Bird Focus Group	Judy Boyd, Dorothy Hazlett
1	RDRN - Butcher Creek Natural Area	Bill Heinsen
1	RDRN - Phone answering	Judy Boyd
1	RDRN - Speakers	Myrna Pearman
1	RDRN - Field Trips	Eileen Ford, Judy Boyd
1	RDRN - Finance Committee	Bill Heinsen, Keith Kline
1	RDRN - Innisfail Natural Area	Stuart and Grace Little
1	RDRN - Mail pick-up	Tony Blake
1	RDRN - Mountain Bluebird Project	Myrna Pearman
1	RDRN - NatureScape	Myrna Pearman
1	RDRN - Newsletter Editorial Committee	Judy Boyd, Myrna Pearman, Dorothy Dickson
1	RDRN - Plant Focus Group	Don Wales
1	RDRN - Sylvan Lake Natural Area	Myrna Pearman
1	RDRN -Membership	Lucienne Partridge
2	Ellis Bird Farm	Joanne Suset
2	Nature Alberta	Tony Blake
2	Gaetz Lakes Management Board	Eldon Neufeld
3	Invasive Plants of Canada	Eileen Ford
3	Alberta Native Plants Council	Ed Karpuk

Red Deer River Naturalists

Focus Groups

Rationale:

The Red Deer River Naturalist Society has a problem that is common in many groups; we depend on too few people to do the work of the organization. At this time it is a particularly serious problem because of the pressure on the natural environment in a very pro-development province. We have too few knowledgeable members with the necessary expertise to respond quickly to the rapid changes in government policies and problems arising from commercial development. By depending on a handful of people we leave the organization in a weak position if something happens to even one key person. We can't know when someone may become ill, move away, or just want relief from the pressure of responsibility in the organization. We may not have a knowledgeable person to fill the gap.

Method:

One way to help our members to expand their knowledge, and also increase their skills in reading, analyzing, writing, and speaking is in small, informal discussion groups. Because each group focuses on one issue, water or forests for example, each group is called a Focus Group. Although Focus Groups might become interested in political matters, the main purpose is to increase knowledge and skills and to be useful in developing policies and campaigns for RDRN activities related to environmental problems.

Meetings are informal and at the convenience of the members. A group can be as small as two or three people getting together over lunch to share ideas and information from books, journals, television, and newspapers. The telephone is also an extremely useful tool for the groups. The advent of the Internet offers the possibility of quick access to new material and ideas. There are opportunities for library research, interviewing "experts", and developing strategies and projects. There are opportunities to exchange ideas, to write, and most important, ways to learn more about the environment in a relaxed, informal group.

Groups are free to develop a project for public education, displays at fairs and conventions, etc. For such projects an ad hoc committee is required to accomplish the necessary tasks, so records of decisions and activities are needed to keep the project on track and to keep the Board informed of group activities.

Guidelines:

1. A Board member should be a member, or a contact person, for each group to facilitate communication. That person may also act as a distributor of books, magazines, articles, and other materials that might come to RDRN.
2. Each focus group should become an issues committee prepared to advise the Board on their area of specialty. Policy ideas must still be presented to the Board before being made public in the name of RDRN.
3. Differences of opinion are bound to occur. Politeness and courtesy are the keywords at all times.
4. Each group should decide who among them acts as a contact.

Starting a Focus Group:

1. Objectives:

a. Purpose of the Focus Group:

- i. Following from the RDRN Objectives, the purpose of the focus group is to educate and inform ourselves and the general public about environment concerns in order to promote awareness and activism in maintaining a healthy planet Earth.
- ii. To help individual RDRN members increase their knowledge, skills and understanding of the environment in order to become more effective in working within the Red Deer River Naturalist Society.

1. Start with two or three people in a group if that's all who will come at first.

- a. Provide reading materials, arrange speakers, share ideas.
- b. Have a Board member present at meetings when possible.
- c. Group members should practice public speaking within the group
2. To increase public awareness of environmental concerns.
 - a. Present a public symposium once a year.
 - b. Use newspapers, TV interviews, letters to the editor.
 - c. Supply speakers for service clubs, churches, schools.
 - d. Prepare displays to use at fairs, exhibitions, schools.
 - e. Take advantage of special weeks and events. Be proactive.
3. Meetings
 - a. Meetings to be held in any place safe and convenient to RDRN members.
 - b. Expect and respect differences of opinion.
 - c. Begin and end each meeting with handshakes.
 - d. Focus on facts not just opinions and be willing to change your mind.
 - e. Be willing to work at learning and researching.
 - f. Be willing to enjoy yourself and the company of others.
 - g. Be willing to actively search out interesting materials to be passed on to other members of your groups.

January, 1997

Red Deer River Naturalists

Ellis Bird Farm

The Board of Directors is in two parts: Representative Members and Directors, and Members at Large.

1. Representative Members and Directors (two years)
 - a. Union Carbide Canada Limited,
 - b. County of Lacombe No. 14,
 - c. Federation of Alberta Naturalists and,
 - d. The Red Deer River Naturalists Society

These may be removed by the appointed and replaced by another person for the duration of the term.

2. There are two to four two-year positions on the Board of Directors designated for Members and Directors at Large.
 - a. Shall be appointed by the Board of Directors.
 - b. One of these shall be a professional biologist possessing at least one university degree in biology.
3. The Board of Directors may at any time remove any of the Members and Directors at Large and appoint a replacement for the duration of the term.
4. No Member or Director at Large shall vote on any replacement.

Red Deer River Naturalists

Acronyms

AEN: Alberta Environment Network - This body receives some provincial funding and is considered a provincial environmental umbrella network. There is also a Canada wide group called the Canadian Environmental Network. Within each is a Forestry Caucus Group and a Water Caucus Group among others.

Alberta Trail Net Society: developing trails throughout the province.

ALMS: Alberta Lakes Management Society - deals with lakes and watersheds

AMPPE: The Association for Mountain Parks People Enjoyment advocates commercial development in the National Parks.

ANPC: Alberta Natural Plant Council - for identification of natural plants which may be in trouble and attempts to restore them. They do plant counts in the spring and maintain a database of dates plants bloom. This is with the cooperation of some schools.

AWA: Alberta Wilderness Society - a strong and vital provincial organization which puts out a valuable news paper for its members on wilderness issues.

CAGE: Citizen's Action Group on the Environment encourages the citizens of Red Deer to lead an environmentally friendly lifestyle. Some activities include tree planting, the Greenline, and a speakers bureau. This group ceased to exist on Jun 30, 2000.

CARMEN: Central Alberta Regional Museums Educational Network

CCWS: Castle Crown Wilderness Society - Based in Southwest Alberta and devoted to preservation in the Castle River area.

CEN: Canadian Environmental Network

CHRS: Canadian Heritage Rivers Society

CPAWS: Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

CPP: Canadian Parks Partnership

CWF: Canadian Wildlife Federation - have been questioned in terms of the use they put for their money. They are a hunting based organization.

DU: Ducks Unlimited

EAB: Environmental Advisory Board - local group, see note above.

EBF: Ellis Bird Farm - a legacy of Charlie Ellis devoted to education and research. Extensive program of cavity nesting sites.

ECA: Environmental Council of Alberta

EUB: Energy and Utilities Board

FAN: Federation of Alberta Naturalists. An umbrella group for environmentally oriented organizations within the province.

FPPC: Federal and Provincial Parks Council

Friends of the West Country: action group stationed in Rocky Mountain House devoted to preservation of the forests in the West Country, and to enforcement of existing environmental laws.

KWNC: Kerry Wood Nature Centre

Jasper Institute:

MAWMP: North American Waterfowl Management Plan

NALMS: North American Lakes Management Society

Nature Canada - A Federal umbrella network organization. It publishes Nature Canada. It holds an annual conference in a location where a local organization hosts the event. RDRN has hosted the conference in the past.

NRCB: Natural Resources Conservation Board

PAGE: Parks Action Group on the Environment

PAL: Preserve Agricultural Land - agriculture group based in the Prentis Area

Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development: - does research and produces position papers. Based in Devon P a g e | 64

RDRN: Red Deer River Naturalists. Nearly 100 (founded in 1906) years old, RDRN is Alberta's original environment group. They hold public meetings on the fourth Monday of each month, January to May, and September to November. They are active participants in FAN, the Normandeau Board and many other community groups.

TRN: Taiga Rescue Network - a international environmental organization to protect the boreal forest.

WCWC: Western Canada Wilderness Committee

WWF: World Wildlife Fund

February 2007

Red Deer River Naturalists

Code of Conduct (for Board Members)

1. Attendance at meetings: Attendance at Board meetings is a primary responsibility of Board members
2. Attendance at RDRN Functions: Board members should endeavor to understand the purpose and programs of RDRN and its relations with members, visitors and supporters, For this reason, Board members should endeavor as much as possible to attend the functions and events hosted by RDRN.
3. Indemnification and Insurance: Members of the Board should be aware of their legal responsibilities and liabilities in fulfilling their role as Board members. The Board should seek legal advise and obtain insurance as required.
4. Adoption of a Code of Ethics: The Board should familiarize itself with RDRN's Code of Ethics (called Code of Conduct in this Handbook).
5. Avoidance of Conflict of Interest: Objectivity is essential for guiding RDRN and for public confidence in RDRN and both real and apparent conflicts of interest must be scrupulously avoided.
6. Collegiality and Confidentiality: Broad members owe positive loyalty to the Board which is responsible for governing RDRN and should never divulge its deliberations and decisions to any outside body or person before they are made known through agreed-upon channels of communication.
7. Board Relations: The Board establishes and periodically reviews the policies of RDRN. The President implements policy and the policy committee advises on future policy. It is the duty of the Board and the President to respect each other and to be appropriately supportive.

(November 23, 1998)

Red Deer River Naturalists

Representing RDRN

Representatives of RDRN are expected to act on their own initiative and judgment and only refer to the RDRN executive for guidance when they feel it is necessary to do so or if directed to do so by either board.

For a temporary committee set up to deal with a special issue, it may be desirable for the representative to be given more specific direction by the RDRN board.

Representatives should abide by the rules of the committees to which they are appointed. Representatives are encouraged to take a full and active part in the committees and boards to which we appoint them.

Representatives are required to give reports on their work at each executive meeting in as much detail as they and the executive agree on.

Representatives are required to submit an annual written report to the membership at large (normally the Annual General Meeting).

Should a representative find him/herself in a conflict of interest situation on the external committee to which he/she was appointed, such conflict should immediately be reported to the RDRN executive (or the president or the Vice president). The executive may then change representatives if they feel it necessary or send a temporary replacement if that is agreeable to the external committee concerned.

Conflict of Interest - A conflict of interest is generally considered to have occurred when an executive member might find it difficult to give an unbiased opinion because he/she or his/her relatives or friends may benefit or lose by a decision of the board. Therefore a nominee for membership of the executive should declare any known present or foreseeable future conflicts of interest before accepting nomination. An elected member of the board should declare a conflict of interest as soon as it arises and should not 1) vote on the subject, 2) not comment on the subject unless requested to by the Chair, and 3) leave the meeting while the subject is under discussion if he/she or other executive members deem it advisable.

Confidentiality - executive members are encouraged to keep the general membership informed and to seek out opinions on matters from the executive. They should, however, never impart confidential information to anyone outside the executive or make use of such information for their own benefit or to anyone else's benefit.

Representation on External Committees (including other Boards of directors) - Our representatives are appointed to outside committees to express the concerns and viewpoints of naturalists and to press to actions which take our concerns into consideration.

November, 1987

Red Deer River Naturalists

History of the Red Deer River Naturalists

Before there was an Alberta Natural History Society (later Red Deer River Naturalists) there was, in Red Deer, the Northwest Entomological Society. For a number of years this Society operated under a Provincial charter and, during the years of its active life, it produced three entomological publications, with the aid of Government grants. The Society ceased to actively function in the early 20's. It appears that many members of that organization became members of the Alberta Natural History Society (ANHS) in 1906. The ANHS counted among its members many renowned amateur natural historians, many of who went one to fame within their specialties. Some of note are:

F. H. Wooley-Dod: noted, at the time, as one of the two leading lepidopterists on the North American Continent. Published in *The Canadian Entomologist* and other Journals these were not simply lists of species. His writings went far beyond the simple creation lists and included critical analyses of taxonomic concepts. His notes are still considered to be of biological importance. He was obviously a person of means as it is recorded that he frequently visited the London Museum and the Smithsonian Museum. The Dod collection was eventually shipped to Ottawa to become a part of the permanent collections there.

Kenneth Bowman came to Alberta in 1904 and developed a keen interest in natural history, especially in butterflies and moths (Lepidoptera). His collection was been said to be "magnificent". He arrived in Alberta in 1904, already an expert in the Macrolepidoptera of England. His first Alberta collections were in 1904 and 1905 at Blackfalds. By 1919, under the auspices of the Alberta Natural History Society, he published a list of over 900 species of insects from that group. This updated the Wooley-Dod list and published an *Annotated Checklist of the Macrolepidoptera of Alberta*. Additions and corrections were regularly made to this, from 1921 to 1944. Not only did collecting and mounting these moths, many of which are "exasperatingly minute and delicate", present its own problems but he was additionally faced with the difficulty that "practically no one on the continent possesses the requisite knowledge to appraise them taxonomically". In time and with tenacity, Bowman located specialists in various groups and by 1951 was in a position to publish a completely revised list of all of the named Lepidoptera known to occur in Alberta. Though this list and collection comprised more than 1,800 entries, in 1951 there still remained nearly 100 species in the Bowman collection that no one would attempt to name. The reason given by one specialist was that "many are new to science". The only new species he discovered was *Colias eurytheme alberta*. The collection was deposited at the University of Alberta and are today in the Strickland Museum at the University of Alberta.

Donald Mackie was another early lepidopterist. He donated his extensive collection to the University of Alberta.

Norman B. Samson was an all-round naturalist. His activities were more varied and more colourful than were those of his fellow enthusiasts. While he collected everything, his main interest was insects.

Percy Gregson was definitely unusual in his interest, fleas (Siphonaptera). Gregson gathered specimens for the famous entomologist Baron Charles Rothschild in England. From as early as 1895 there are records that he was collecting Albertan fleas in the vicinity of his farm at Blackfalds. From that time onward, till his death, he continued to collect them for Rothschild. One of Gregson's techniques was to wrap newly dead animals in a white sheet and then extract those fleas which had left the cooling body of the host animal and attached themselves to the sheet. He farmed, practiced law and published Blackfald's first and only newspaper. As he was an ardent entomologist, his newspaper, the *Mercury*, was full of articles on native plants, noxious weeds, and insects. The first meeting of the North West

Entomological Society was held in his home in 1899. He was the first president of the Territorial Natural History Society in 1902. He established one of Western Canada's first natural history museums in Blackfalds in 1903. Percy Gregson moved back to England at the start of the First World War.

For the record: It is unfortunate that other early collectors have little, if any record of their work. Their names include: Mr. Bean (Lepidoptera), Mr. A. Hudson (Lepidoptera), C. G. Carretto (Didsbury), T. N. Willing (Olds), Mr. Baird (High River) collected all orders, but appears to have been particularly interested flies and their relatives (Dipteral), and Mrs. Nicholl (collected for the British Museum in Alberta, apparently near the Columbia Icefields).

Following the creation of the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905, the Alberta Natural History Society (ANHS) was formed in Innisfail in the spring of 1906 and was followed within a few months by a branch of the Society at Red Deer. Additional branches were later formed at Erskine, Stettler, and Medicine Hat. The Edmonton Natural History Club became an affiliate in 1910.

The ANHS, and its other branches in the Province, encouraged its members to produce scientific papers and check lists on a variety of subjects. An ambitious publication program was launched, with three booklets eventually being printed.

Some of Alberta's most prominent naturalists were among the early members of the ANHS. **Dr. Henry George**, a central Alberta physician, served as both the last president of the Territorial Natural History Society and the first president of the Alberta Natural History Society in 1906. An avid student and collector of natural history, he established, for the use of local residents and Western Canadian naturalists, a museum and library in his Innisfail home. When he and his family moved to Red Deer in 1907, the library and museum were relocated to that community. Dr. George is considered to have aborted the smallpox epidemic in 1892 and quarantined himself with the Chinese community for over two months. A riot followed the release of the first Chinese contacts. Henry George's wife, Barbara Mary Bernard, learned the basics of drawing during childhood and went on to paint with watercolours the wildflowers she collected near their home in Innisfail. She shared Henry's interest in natural history and together they assembled a private museum displaying rocks, insects, birds and mammals. At the time of its creation, the George Museum was the only museum in Alberta and remained as such until 1923 when a museum opened in Banff.

F. S. Carr began his career as a boy, with an extensive study of the beetles of Ontario. The knowledge he gained there proved to be of extreme value when he moved to Alberta in 1909 and while teaching school in Edmonton, began to amass a list of the beetles of Alberta. Once again, the Northwest Entomological Society assisted a member to publish. His list included over 500 species. Each year until his death in 1933, he published supplementary lists in *The Canadian Entomological Record* and *The Canadian Entomologist*. Eventually he totaled over 1400 species. Upon his death, the family donated his extensive collection of over 100,000 specimens to the University of Alberta.

F. C. Whitehouse was to live in Alberta for only a short time, but during that time he made a valuable contribution to the knowledge of dragonflies (Odonata) of this province. The ANHS published the 18 page: **Whitehouse, F.C. Dragonflies (Odonata) of Alberta, Alberta Natural History Society, Red Deer, 1918**. He produced a key all species, which he knew to occur in Alberta, and hypothesized others that had not yet been found.

Other publications by Whitehouse include:

- Whitehouse, F. C. 1918a. A week's collecting on Coliseum Mountain, Nordegg, Alta. Can. Ent. 50: 1-7.
- Whitehouse, F. C. 1941. British Columbia dragonflies (Odonata), with notes on distribution and habits. Amer. Midl. Naturalist 26: 488-557.

The land where the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary is located was in 1923 owned by the **J. J. Gaetz** family. The ANHS made the Gaetz land a favourite area for excursions. In the spring of 1922, the Society asked Mr. Gaetz to consider designating the west half of Section 22

(with exception of the five acres used by the Cemetery) as a bird sanctuary, and on March 22nd, Mr. Gaetz signed an agreement to do so. On May 23rd, 1923, ANHS made a formal application to the Commissioner of Canadian National Parks to have the land designated as a Federal Bird Sanctuary under the Migratory Birds Convention Act and placed under the supervision of the Department of Interior. On June 27th, 1924, Order-in-Council No. 1080 formally established the "Red Deer Bird Sanctuary" with the "killing, hunting, capturing, injury, taking or molesting of migratory game, migratory insectivorous, or migratory non game birds, or the taking, injuring, destruction or molestation of their nests or eggs" being prohibited. The Order-in-Council also stated the "the use of this area as a Sanctuary shall be secondary to its use for agricultural purposes". So was created the only Federal Bird Sanctuary within the limits of a Canadian city. J. J. Gaetz had turned away timber interests and kept the 230 acres free of development from 1885 until his death in 1938. He chose to preserve and protect the area for wildlife and the enjoyment of his fellow citizens. When he died, the area was left to the province. Over the years, the members of the local Alberta Natural History Society had fought everything from major roads to theme parks within the city. The province had, at one time, even proposed using the Gaetz Lake Sanctuary for a sewage lagoon.

Frank LaGrange Farley was born in St. Thomas, Ontario. He came to Red Deer in 1892 when the community was just a fledging hamlet. He selected a homestead in the district to the southeast, and then walked to Innisfail to buy himself a horse. Within weeks of his arrival, Farley started exploring the region. His first trip was to the coalfields near present day Ardley. In three days of travel, he did not meet a single person. Later excursions took him to the Buffalo Lake country and to the foothills west of Rocky Mountain House, where he discovered unusual caves. In 1902, Farley entered the real estate and insurance business in Red Deer. Later he became the local agent for the Bell Telephone Company. In 1907, he decided to move to Camrose where he became active in the community and served on both the town council and the school board. Despite his extensive business and community involvements, Farley continued his annual expeditions. In 1919, he traveled down the Christina River in Northern Alberta. A few years later, he journeyed to the Hudson Bay. Farley became a prolific writer. His book, *Birds of the Battle River* (1932), is still an important reference. He wrote regular reports for the U. S. Bureau of Agriculture and started a conservation program for hawks. Farley passed away in October 1949. The *Camrose Canadian* wrote, "He was a prime example of how to grow old gracefully." His name continues on, however, with his famous nephew, Farley Mowat.

Elsie Cassels was born in Scotland. Because her family disapproval of her marriage to William Cassels in 1889, the couple moved to Red Deer. They had a homestead south of Red Deer, but it proved prone to frost. They eventually moved into Red Deer, building a small brick house in the Robinwald district north of 56th Street. Their new home on the banks of the river proved to be a haven for wildlife. Later, the Cassels built a log cabin at Sylvan Lake where they could enjoy summer seclusion and their beloved birds. Elsie Cassels kept careful records on migration patterns as well as feeding and nesting habits. She quickly became widely known as a respected ornithologist. She also studied wild flowers and plants. She became an active member of the Red Deer branch of the Alberta Natural History Society in 1909. She later held many executive positions. She passed away in Red Deer after a stroke in 1938.

Unfortunately, in the late 1920's and during the 1930's, as the early stalwarts of Alberta's naturalist movement moved away or died, the ANHS branches began to decline. By the time of the Second World War, the organization was left with Red Deer as its only active branch. Nevertheless, the remaining members, including the award winning Red Deer Naturalist and author, Kerry Wood, continued work on a great many conservation, advocacy and educational projects.

Charlie Snell, a keen bird watcher, a member of the Alberta Natural History Society and amongst the first to recognise the need for a provincial museum in Alberta.

Resurgence occurred in the early 1970's. A renewed interest in the natural environment, as well as a number of continuing issues such as opposition to preservation of the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary, the construction of the Dickson Dam, and proposed developments in the national parks and support of new policies on the Eastern Slopes helped to rejuvenate the Red Deer organization.

In 1970, representatives from the ANHS attended the meeting in Calgary that resulted in the formation of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists. The Red Deer-based group worked closely with the provincial association on many of its projects and initiatives. Several ANHS members held executive and lay committee positions with FAN. In 1976, because of increasing confusion over the two societies' names, the Alberta Natural History Society was renamed the Red Deer River Naturalists. Fred Schutz proposed the new name.

In the early 1980's after the Province of Alberta offered the City of Red Deer Heritage Savings and Trust money for a river valley park, the Red Deer River Naturalists made sure they were intrinsically involved in the planning process. The organization wanted as much of the park as possible to be left in a natural state. After more than forty years of provincial indifference following the death of J. J. Gaetz in 1938, the proposed park offered the opportunity to once and for all officially protect the Dominion Bird Sanctuary established in 1924.

During the Waskasoo Park planning process, RDRN invited the park planners, City Recreation and Parks Managers and staff, the Mayor, Councillors, and the public on outings so they could see and experience the natural wonders of the Gaetz Lake Sanctuary and other natural areas along the river valley for themselves. Many accepted the offer. This proved to be an excellent opportunity to educate decision makers. At the time the City of Red Deer Recreation and Parks Department was very pro-recreation; their vision of parks was an Edwardian one: manicured lawns with carefully arranged trees. RDRN members had a different vision. The group helped identify special ecological areas and pushed for connected natural wildlife corridors throughout the proposed park. In ecologically sensitive areas the "onion skin" approach was proposed: a highly protected inner core, a partially protected outer core, a buffer zone, and then developed areas.

Where the interest of some groups and organizations waned during the Waskasoo Park planning process, RDRN members on the various planning committees and at public hearings relentlessly hammered away at the need to preserve as much natural habitat as possible. For instance, the group vociferously opposed a golf course proposed for the Heritage Ranch area. When the golf course was moved to an abandoned gravel mining area at the other end of the Park, RDRN convinced the City to leave the trees along the Red Deer River rather than build the golf course to the river's edge. The City didn't think bike paths would be popular. RDRN pushed for bike paths and walking trails and helped design them to be as environmentally sensitive as possible, meandering around trees rather than removing them. Members worked and educated the City staff on the need to leave tree snags and stumps for cavity nesters and their prey. The City was very cool toward the idea of a Nature Centre; they proposed an information kiosk and bathroom. The City felt RDRN members were grossly exaggerating the popularity and the need for such a facility where, for instance, 80 people could meet. Members continued to push at every turn for the Nature Centre.

The Kerry Wood Nature Centre opened in 1986. It was a very proud event for the group who, with the leadership of Kerry Wood, had served as the stewards of the Gaetz Lake Sanctuary since J. J. Gaetz's death, officially since 1950. Today the Kerry Wood Nature Centre, welcoming as many as 75,000 visitors per year, stands for education and the preservation of the Sanctuary. Many received a tour from the dedicated core of interpreters and even if they didn't it would be a safe bet that each visitor left a little different person than when they arrived: more curious, more in awe, more committed. The Kerry Wood Nature Centre serves as a home for RDRN.

The 2500-acre Waskasoo Park is one of the most extraordinary parks any city could

hope to have. The planning process employed serves as an example of how planning should be done. The public was involved from the beginning and as a result citizens of Central Alberta are very proud and express a strong emotional attachment to this park in the city. The Red Deer Regional Planning Commission and City of Red Deer deserve a great deal of credit.

Although some politicians who had opposed the idea initially were quick to jump up and take credit a few years after the fact, the very successful Biological Mosquito control program in Red Deer was the result of five years of RDRN lobbying the City to try a new approach, and eliminate the increasingly futile chemical spray applications. Michael O'Brien and others spearheaded the idea by prodding the City bureaucracy in 1982 to try the biological approach using *Bacillus thuriniensis israelensis* (Bti) which selectively kills mosquitoes not their predators. RDRN targeted those City Councillors they felt could be swayed with background information and an educational campaign. When D-Day finally arrived, the RDRN president made a presentation to City Council encouraging them to try the biological approach. Council decided to experiment with the Biological program. Fortunately, during the first two years of the program, Red Deer's summers were unusually dry which helped biologists get the program rolling successfully. Conditions allowed them to add additional fresh water predators, gather research on local conditions and tinker with the methodology.

The biological mosquito control program has since attracted international attention for Red Deer. The program allows citizens of Central Alberta to enjoy and use the extraordinary Waskasoo Park to its fullest. Another benefit of the program is the scientific data that is collected in the treatment zone. Because of the program, Red Deer has extremely accurate maps of every wetland and pool in the treatment area and detailed species inventories including microbiotic life. This kind of data will be extremely useful for local planning as people once again come to realize the need for creative approaches to preserving habitat in the urban setting.

In 1978, Charlie Ellis, a local farmer, approached members of the RDRN executive about negotiating a deal with Union Carbide to protect the sanctuary he and his sister had established on their farm for the mountain blue bird (*Sialia sialis*) and other native cavity nesters. Three members of the executive, with the help of a Red Deer lawyer, entered into legal negotiations with Union Carbide that lasted a year and a half. The agreement worked out with the farmer was one of the stipulations included in the Energy Resources Conservation Board approval hearings for the plant and it ensured the extraordinary accomplishments with the mountain blue birds would continue well into the future.

Earlier, RDRN had opposed construction of a Novacor Plant in the area, feeling the already industrialized Fort Saskatchewan was a more appropriate location. When the second plant, Union Carbide was proposed, the RDRN members who chose not to oppose it felt that once the ethane pipeline was constructed from Empress to Joffre there was little question about a second plant coming on stream. The decision to not oppose the second plant and make a deal with Union Carbide was not unanimously endorsed by the Executive and RDRN lost three very dedicated members over the decision. The Ellis Bird Farm was created in 1980.

In 1987 and 1988, RDRN was instrumental in reviving an Alberta Fish and Game program used since the 1960's, the Habitat Steward Program. Alberta Government Telephones kindly agreed to co-sponsor the program. Under this voluntary stewardship program any landowner who leaves at least 5 acres in a natural state receives a Habitat Steward sign to publicly acknowledge their effort and recognize the intrinsic value of natural habitat. The program has grown to where more than 120 landowners and some 12, 000 acres from Elk Point to Turner Valley and from Brownfield to Rocky Mountain House are part of the program. In the year 2000, Canada Trust (now TD Canada Trust) became the primary sponsor of the program.

RDRN serves as steward for three provincial natural areas: the Innisfail Natural Area,

the Sylvan Lake Natural Area, and the Butcher Creek Natural Area.

In 1989 and 1990, RDRN again fought proposals to push a highway through the Howse Pass in Banff National Park. The project had the full support of the 25 Alberta Federal Conservative caucus members and Central Alberta Chambers of Commerce. Fortunately the Federal Government did not see fit to allow the road. The issue is again being raised with a recent study partly paid for by the Alberta Government.

To close the decade of the 1980's, RDRN received an anonymous donation of \$55,000 to be held by the Red Deer Community Foundation with annual earnings going to the organization. A second \$50,000 bequest was paid directly to RDRN. The principal has remained untouched while the interest is used for the activities of the organization and to support other environmental groups and their activities.

In 1991, RDRN hosted the successful Canadian Nature Federation Conference in Red Deer in celebration of the host organization's 85th anniversary. The executive and the conference committee did an incredible amount of work. Registration was \$40.00. The conference featured tours to all parts of the Province and made a \$10, 000 profit. Some 266 delegates from all parts of Canada attended and were impressed by Red Deer and its extraordinary Waskasoo Park system. It was a fitting way to celebrate such an anniversary. At the 1991 Canadian Nature Federation Conference, RDRN presented a resolution calling for the protection of the Rumsey Parkland, an issue we continue to support.

During the 1990's, RDRN was directly involved in Vision 2020 hearings, the Red Deer Community Services Master Plan, the Joint General Municipal Plan for the City and County of Red Deer, Red Deer River Corridor Hearings, and the Heritage Rivers project and was trying to convince the City to experiment with constructed wetlands technology. RDRN has been involved in pro-active planning with Parkland Community Planning Services for the Michener Centre lands that surround the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary in the event that the province decides to sell them. Through this land once flowed and now trickles the main tributary that feeds the sanctuary, Gaetz Creek.

Regionally, we have been involved with discussions about Buffalo Lake, Burnstick Lake, Special Places 2000 and help where we can with the battle the Friends of the West Country have waged with Louisiana Pacific/Sunpine. We responded to the Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy and followed the discussions and participated in Parks Canada hearings. The organization was active with the Rumsey Ecological Area, opposed development in the Big Horn, and served on committees addressing water needs in the South Saskatchewan and Red Deer River Basins. We have supported by letter, the Federal Government in its environmental legislation and opposed the "harmonization" push for Provincial Department of the Environment with that of the Federal Government.

During the 1990's, RDRN was revamped and time was spent working on policies and directions for the future.

In the late 1990's, several members undertook revitalize the Habitat Stewardship program. With the donations of Canada Trust (now TD Canada Trust), that task was realized and saw the distribution of new signs for all participants and the establishment of a bi-yearly newsletter.

In 1997, the very successful NatureScape Alberta program was started. Reviewers praised the book and sales were gratifying. Since then, RDRN continues the naturescape concept by purchasing and planting plants and creating habitat in various venues. RDRN has also supported a small project in which seeds from various commercial "wild flower" packages are planted to see what will grow. The results are proving interesting. Most packages seem to contain species that are foreign to Alberta and some packages contain only invasive weeds. No package tested to date has proven to be acceptable.

In 1999 RDRN was nominated for and received an Emerald Award.

In 2001, RDRN was honoured by the Canadian Nature Federation with an affiliate award.

In 2002, RDRN again entered into publishing when Mountain Bluebird Trail

Monitoring Guide was offered for sale.

RDRN published the Young Naturalists Club of Alberta in 2003.

During 2003 and 2004, the Red Deer River Naturalists raised the necessary money and installed solar electric panels at the Kerry Wood Nature Centre.

Continuing its commitment to education and stewardship, RDRN takes part in the Christmas Bird Count, the May Species Count, hosts seven educational speakers each year, supports the annual Red Deer River Clean-up, has representation on the Alberta Eco-Trust selection committee, the City of Red Deer Environmental Advisory

Board, the Ellis Bird Farm Board, the Federation of Alberta Naturalists Board, and the Normandeau Society Board. RDRN also serves on many ad hoc committees.

Appendixes

Form 1
Request to use RDRN's name:

=====
Name of organization: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Province: _____ P.C. _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

=====
Contact person: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

=====
Purpose of request to use RDRN logo (please be very specific):

=====
Approved/Not approved Date: _____ For RDRN: _____

**Form 2:
Request for Funding from Red Deer River Naturalists**

Name of organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ P.C. _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Date of Incorporation: _____

Alberta Society Number: _____

Revenue Canada Charity Number: BN- _____

Project Location: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

=====

- a. Project Summary & Objective(s). On the back of this page, please state exactly what the request is for. If this project will include funding from other organizations, please supply a list of those organizations and the amount they are supplying. You should attach your budget for the project.

=====

- b. Please provide a brief description of the activities your organization does:

=====

- c. Deliverables (What will be the outcome of the program? How will it be evaluated?):

=====Please do not write below this line=====

Approved/Not approved Date: _____ For RDRN _____

Form 3:

Tender for Contract Between RDRN and Other Organization for Deliverables

Red Deer River Naturalists

Box 785, Red Deer, AB, T4N 0A1

Phone/Fax (403) 347-8200 rd.rm@hotmail.com rdrn.fanweb.ca

Date: _____

To: (Name of Organization)

From: Red Deer River Naturalists Society

Re: (Purpose of contract)

The Red Deer River Naturalists Society (RDRN) invites **(Name of other Society)** to act as a contractor to set up and administer our program, **(Name of RDRN Program)**.

Purpose: **(Purpose of RDRN project)**

Format: **(Brief description of project)**.

Budget: **(Cash value of contract and duration..)**

Your duty: **(Duty of other organization)**.

If you are interested in contracting such a program, please contact us at any of the above addresses.

Yours truly,

(Name of RDRN President), President

Red Deer River Naturalists
103 years of education and environmental protection

Form 4
Acceptance of offer to carry out a contract for RDRN

Date: _____

To: Red Deer River Naturalists

From (**Name of Contractor**)

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ P.C. _____

Re: (Name of project)

The (**Name of Contractor**) is interested in acting as a contractor for The Red Deer River Naturalists Society to (**Name of Project**) under the terms set out in your letter of (**Date of offer**) and to that end are prepared to sign your enclosed contract.

Yours truly,
(**Name of Contractor**)

Form 5

**Contract between
Red Deer River Naturalists Society
and (Name of Contractor)**

By this document **(Name of Contractor)** agrees to act under contract to Red Deer River Naturalists for the following: **(Name of Project)**

Start date for this project: _____.

Budget: **(Cash amount and duration)** to be paid by Red Deer River Naturalists to **(Name of Contractor)** at the time of signing.

In the event that **(Name of Contractor)** is unable to fulfill this contract, all remaining funds pro-rated from the date of failure will be returned to Red Deer River Naturalists within one month.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20__ at Red Deer, Alberta.

For Red Deer River Naturalists

For **(Name of Contractor)**

