

2021 OWL AWARD: DOUG PEDERSEN

By Tony Blake

Each fall, RDRN presents the Owl Award to a member of the organization who has shown a long-time commitment to the objectives of the society. Whether it's for education, conservation or the day to day operation of our organization, the efforts of these dedicated members are vital to our success. The Owl Award is intended to recognize and celebrate their hard work and dedication.

Doug Pedersen is that kind of member. Originally from the magnificent mountains, forests and rivers of Oregon, he learned to hunt and fish at an early age. As a young man, he came north to do mission work with native communities in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Doug grew to appreciate their culture and connection to the land and he eventually decided to become a permanent resident.

Doug made his home in Lac la Biche and for many years worked as a timber cruiser in the vast boreal forest. It was a great opportunity to develop his powers of observation and to plug into the local naturalist community.

Doug moved to Central Alberta in 2005 to pursue a new career as a graphic artist. Before long he was helping Judy Boyd with RDRN species counts and acting as a principal observer for the Rocky Mountain Eagle Watch. When he joined the RDRN board of directors in 2007, he began using his artistic flair and computer skills by designing the RDRN newsletter header and creating meeting posters. Since then his striking designs have added a beautiful touch to almost everything RDRN does.

Doug's digital art has few limits, combining photography and painting to interpret nature. Some of his recent creations can be viewed on his website (featherededge.ca).



Photo by Judy Pedersen

RDRN'S ENDOWMENT FUND FOR NATURE

By Kirstin Bouwsema

Using funds received from a recent generous bequest, the Red Deer River Naturalists (RDRN) has established a \$500,000 **Red Deer River Naturalists Endowment Fund For Nature** with the Red Deer and District Community Foundation (RDDCF). This endowment fund will ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization and enable it to engage in important conservation projects throughout Central Alberta.

RDRN Interim President Rick Tallas comments, "Endowments like this will bring together community to protect and enhance our environment for the betterment of all future generations."

Going forward, RDRN will be seeking out creative, forward-thinking and timely ways to invest these funds. The organization has created a matrix to assess future potential projects and funding opportunities

will be announced as they are developed.

The Red Deer and District Community Foundation is an independent, community-based organization that focuses on philanthropy, grants and leadership. "RDRN is grateful to the Red Deer and District Community Foundation for its guidance in this process," says Interim President Rick Tallas. "The Red Deer River Naturalists trust that with the money invested with the Red Deer and District Community Foundation, the long-term sustainability of our organization and its conservation goals will be ensured alongside fiscal responsibility."



Photo by Peggy Birse

MERCI BEAUCOUP, TONY BLAKE: A TRIBUTE BY ROD TRENTHAM

Tony Blake resigned as President of RDRN effective November 1, 2021. Rick Tallas has assumed the role of Interim President until the AGM on January 27, 2022.

You and I met outside City Council Chambers when you were president of Trout Unlimited, Alberta Chapter. You were ecstatic at the time because, after years of lobbying, you and your colleagues were able to get the Bull Trout proclaimed as Alberta's provincial fish.

Your "wow moment" with RDRN was when the late Michael O'Brien presented his constructed wetland proposals to the City of Red Deer. You told me that you were honoured to be invited to his house, where he passed along a fly-fishing book. A few years later you made a brilliant presentation to the city, comparing percolation to the rooftop (pavement, cement, lawns and roof top) storm trunk gush after a major rain event.

This was just one of the many presentations you delivered: Molly Banister (at least twice); the Oriole Park West, Rip Rap wreck; Queen Elizabeth Industrial Park; North of Highway 11A; RDC Bower Woods etc.

You have been on the RDRN Board for 17 years, with eight of those being President. After you retired as a CPR conductor in 2009, you promptly took courses from Athabasca University and Red Deer College. You have been RDRN's rep on Nature Alberta for 12 years, served on the Alberta Native Plants Council for 10 years, and served as Nature Alberta's Rep on the Ellis Bird Farm for 12 years. All of this in addition to working for six months of the year. I find it interesting that your son Adam (now Dr. Blake) joined RDRN as a High School International Baccalaureate student two years before you!

I would venture to say that the last three years have been the most interesting for RDRN. In 2018, we received an unexpected and anonymous bequest. The settlement of this gift involved research, leg work and legal assistance. A committee of three—you, Bob Kruchten and I were instructed by the board to make decisions on RDRN's behalf.

You worked tirelessly during the three years it took to finally settle the agreement. Walking over to the Courthouse on that sunny September 12, 2019 morning was a memorable moment. Thanks to the good work of our counsel, Nancy Bergstrom, LLP and the wisdom of Justice Jones, RDRN received a total of \$750,000.00. Thank you for shepherding us through that process, and for your role in turning some of this bequest into a \$500,000.00 Red Deer River Naturalists Endowment Fund for Nature with the Red Deer and District Community Foundation.

Holding meetings and conducting strategic planning by Zoom was always a challenge but you hung in there through it all.

Thanks for all your astonishing volunteer energy over 17 years! Enjoy some fly fishing with your grandchildren.



RDRN PROGRAMS UPDATE

By Myrna Pearman

NATURE CENTRAL: The RDRN is continuing to celebrate the success of Nature Central by keeping the program active over the winter months. I have been hired on a small contract to write articles, post to the Nature Central and RDRN social media platforms, and to visit properties.

HABITAT STEWARD PROGRAM: The Habitat Steward Program, which recognizes landowners who conserve habitat on their own property, was first launched by RDRN in 1987. Thanks to the volunteer efforts of Murray Mackay, Judy and Larry Boyd, Joanne Susut, Janet Walter, Bertha Ford, Kim Good and Grant Moir, about 300 landowners were signed up, representing over 13,000 acres of conserved habitat. The program eventually lost momentum, so I have been hired, again on a small contract, to relaunch the program with the goals of raising awareness about the importance of habitat conservation and getting more landowners signed up. If any RDRN member have old Habitat Steward signs and would like to continue with the program, please contact me at myrnapearman.nature@gmail.com. I will have more information as well as application forms available in January, 2022.

Photo of Janet Walter presenting a sign in 1992. Red Deer County News.



THE ELLENWOOD PLACE west of Red Deer, Joan Ellenwood and Janet Walter fix the habitat stewardship marker.

By Peggy Birse, Managing Director

Board Notes

- As 2021 comes to a close, we look back on the year's milestones for the Red Deer River Naturalists – the partnership with the Red Deer & District Community Foundation on the RDRN Endowment Fund for Nature; the Nature Central summer project documenting protected areas and guiding public events; our very successful Speaker Nights reaching over 150 viewers across Alberta, Canada and into the US and Australia, and the addition of contracted human resources to support the dedicated volunteers who have built RDRN for over 115 years.
- Membership renewals for 2022 and beyond are in progress – welcome to renewing and new members.
- RDRN invites new members to its active Committees: Issues and Projects; Finance and Planning; Communications, Human Resources, and Policy. We appreciate new members with a passion for nature and skills in these areas, which, thanks to Zoom technology, are available to anyone in Central Alberta without the need to travel.
- Thanks to the volunteers who have already offered to work at our first casino in several years on Monday, Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, 2022. We still need to fill a few positions.

For more details on becoming a member of Red Deer River Naturalists or volunteer opportunities: board, committee or casino, please contact us (see below for contact details)!

DID YOU KNOW: BY SUSAN VAN DER HOEK

Owls as a group have many collective nouns such as a *parliament*, a *wisdom*, a *sagaciousness*, a *stare*, a *study*, a *stoop* and a *bazaar*. A *parliament* is the most often used collective noun. Some owls have their own collective nouns, such as a *stable* of Barn Owls or a *blizzard* or a *drift* of Snowy Owls.

Snowy Owls are diurnal hunters, hunting mostly by day. Most owls that have yellow eyes are diurnal while owls with orange eyes are mostly nocturnal. Snowy Owls are native to the Arctic and can live in the Arctic regions of North America and Eurasia year-round. Some, however, only stay during breeding and nesting season. When winter comes, they migrate to southern Canada and even to the United States. Some Snowy Owls also cross the Atlantic Ocean, migrating between Russia and Canada. Snowy Owls hunt by finding a perch with a view and then glide on their silent wings very low to the ground to snatch their prey. The cool thing about Snowy Owls is that they can also fly 80 kph (50 mph) when they have to.



**Please join us for our
AGM on Thursday,
January 27, 2022 on
Zoom.**



We are looking for new board members. If you are interested in joining us, please email rdrn.nature@gmail.com

Social Media stats: 568 Facebook Members, 264 Twitter Followers and 273 Instagram Followers

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 PM on the fourth Thursday of most months by Zoom. Non-members are welcome.

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

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