

**Happy New Year from the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area!**

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**We have just finished a very successful 2006 and are looking forward to 2007. Thank you for your support and we hope to see you on the ASCCA trails or at one of our programs soon.**

## 2006 Celebration of Success

The 2006 Celebration of Success, held on December 8<sup>th</sup>, was one of the most resonating events ever held at Belvedere House as 40 volunteers and staff members enjoyed a drumming lesson by One World Drums.

Each participant followed the direction of an instructor from One World Drum and by the end of the afternoon the 'ASCCA Drum Orchestra' managed to beat out one enjoyable and entertaining drum melody. A pot-luck of appetizers followed the drumming circle and the ASCCA staff reported on 2006's highlights and gave a sneak preview of some of 2007 events.



The evening was capped by honoring several of our dedicated volunteers. Catherine Southwood was honored as the 2006 Volunteer of the Year. Kristian Hermann was recognized for his volunteer contribution to 'Special Projects' at the ASCCA. Kristian, as a staff person, spent several hours documenting native grass habitat for the ASCCA's Grassland and Grouse project last summer, and completed a report detailing methods of controlling smooth brome grass at the ASCCA. His report is on our website and is available [here](#).

Our 2006 Volunteer Survey reminds us that your interest and dedication to the ASCCA is inspiring and is responsible for the continued success of the Conservation Area. You told us that you volunteer because "it's important to protect the environment" and you are compelled by your "love of the land and spending time outside." One volunteer's wish for the new year was "to carve more time from my own schedule and spend more time volunteering." We continue to appreciate your efforts and will work to ensure your volunteer experience is rewarding.

Door prizes for the 2006 Celebration of Success were generously provided by: Bow Point Nursery; Pot's and Peppers Theater Junction; Enchanted Florist; Sunterra Market; Pies Plus; Author Wendy Dudley; Priddis View and Brew; Mac-Kay's Ice Cream; Sculptor Ray Rudiak; Fit Frog Adventures; Ball and Chain Crafts Sunterra Market; Route 40 Soup Company.

# Volunteer Update

## Recognition

**Congratulations** to Catherine Southwood, our Volunteer of the Year for 2006. Catherine is a gracious and telling conservation educator, who has probably taught over 5000 students during her career at the ASCCA. Thank you Catherine for sharing your time and many talents with us.

## Thank You Bouquets

- To our 63 active volunteers who contributed over 3200 hours to the Area in 2006.
- To our mail out crew, Myrna McKay, Anne French, Catherine Abbott, and Gordon Hunter who helped package and prepare over 4000 CE winter brochures for mailing.
- To all of the volunteers who brought us special treats in December. Thanks for thinking about us during the holidays.
- To our dedicated educators who worked hard this past year to educate over 5000 school visitors.
- To Dave Simpkins and Gordon McLure for becoming ASCCA volunteers this year.
- To our 31 Area Steward volunteers who contributed 97 Area Steward walks and 24 Boundary Patrols!
- To our Special Project volunteers who helped out on the land on 19 Special Project days.
- To Olga and her Wednesday hiking crew for completing 24 inventory walks on the land.



Along with our regular *grand* volunteer recognition we thought we would have even a little more fun motivating our volunteers! Since one of the greatest recognition gifts we offer volunteers, as indicated by the volunteer survey, were *smiles*, we came up with a few fun and motivational games, related to time and distance, to BOOST volunteer smiles, spirit and participation in 2007.

## Volunteers contributed 3221 hours last year.

Did you know this is equivalent to the time it takes for 19 Sharp-tailed grouse chicks to fledge? From my research it takes around 7-10 days or 168 hours for one Sharp tailed grouse to fledge from the nest

Why fledging grouse, you ask? In recognition of 2007/8 being the end of the Grassland and Grouse Project (phase one), and our efforts over the last 3 years to conserve native grassland habitat for grouse and other native bird species. So by participating in volunteer projects at the ASCCA in 2007 you also help fledge 25 'virtual' Sharp-tailed grouse chicks. Watch for a fledging station, and virtual chicks in the front entrance way. Results will be updated monthly.

**“As I was finishing up volunteer statistics and reporting for 2007, I thought about how far the Area Stewards walked this year and how many hours all of the volunteers have contributed. I wanted to do something fun with the numbers this year and equate time and distance to a virtual project that would make people smile, above and beyond a job well done. So I thought while you volunteer, you would not only be helping us with Area projects, but you could hatch chicks and walk to Toronto.”**

*Sue, Hayduk, ASCCA Support and Development Manager*

## Volunteer BOOSTER Challenge

**In 2007 ASCCA volunteers are asked to virtually fledge 25 Sharp-tailed grouse chicks and walk to Toronto.**

**Watch for your individual Booster Challenges in this newsletter**

## Special Projects Volunteers Will Be Swinging Hammers For Grasslands And Grouse This Spring!



Dust off your hammers and find your measuring tapes! Special Projects volunteers will soon be called upon to construct a kiosk at the entrance of the lower parking lot. This will replace our existing signs and be a new welcome center for visitors. Based on the design concept of a 'covered bridge' we will begin construction in February and have the kiosk in place by mid-March. We also anticipate doing some landscaping with native plants around the kiosk to add to it's appeal. Please contact Reg at 931-3111, or [email](#), if you would like to participate, or watch your email for more information. ***We would like to thank the Alberta Ecotrust Foundation for their support in making this project possible.***

## Special Projects BOOSTER Challenge

In 2006, special projects volunteers participated in 19 special project days for a total of 667 hours. Your time equates to fledging almost four Sharp-tailed grouse chicks. I would like to challenge the special projects team to fledge four more chicks in 2007.

## Area Steward BOOSTER Challenge

I would like to challenge our Area Steward group to walk to Toronto, a distance of 3434 kms. To help motivate you, we will be adding a distance section to the steward reports, so you can tell us how far you traveled on your walk, I will also post a pin up map in the Steward Area to keep track of your progress. <http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/learningresources/facts/tabledistances.html>



## Area Steward Training and Scheduling

Steward walks will continue informally until April, 2007.

**Please attend the spring Area Steward Training on March 14 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.** to update your safety training and to complete your shift request forms. Shift requests will be available at the training session. Please RSVP for the training session with Roger at 931-1042 or [email](#).



**Area Stewards walks are needed on weekends: 9 am -12 pm, 1-3 pm, 4-6 pm, 6-8 pm, weekdays 4-6 pm, 6-8 pm and holidays.** We are still asking Stewards to commit to 8 hikes this year. Remember missed hikes can be made up by offering volunteer time at the Area: we would appreciate your help in the office on the weekdays or to help with special Area events, as CE Ambassadors, on Special Project days, etc.

*Please attend the training session to complete your schedule.*

## Conservation Educators and Ambassadors (CE)

### Conservation Educators

It has been a busy fall season in the education department. We were booked solid for fall school programs and are quickly filling up for our winter programs. These programs are much more fun when there's snow so please do a little snow dance for us! Speaking of winter, we are looking for a couple things for our winter program including:

- Approximately 20 clear, empty film canisters with tight fitting lids – hard to come by in this digital age.
- Used children's and adult's winter clothing, especially mitts, toques, and boots.
- Five large hula hoops (3/4 meter to 1 meter diameter)
- **A white, round parachute if you know of any place we can buy one or have one donated, please let us know.**

Please call 931-2042 before dropping anything off as we have limited storage space.  
Thanks!

### CE Ambassadors Needed

Conservation Education Ambassadors are needed to help with weekend and evening Conservation Education Programs, Jan 23, 27 - Feb 6 - March 10, 24. You always get free admission to the program! Contact Catriona at [claird@crossconservation.org](mailto:claird@crossconservation.org) or call 931-2042 for details.

### CE BOOSTER challenge

Conservation Educators are some of our most dedicated volunteers, and collectively contribute over 1100 hours to the Area. As some of our hardest working volunteers, your continued participation will help us fledge those 25 Sharp-tailed grouse chicks!

**Rediscover the joy of Nature - Volunteer at the ASCCA**

## ASCCA Volunteers Open House

We will be hosting a Volunteer Open House Wednesday, **April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007 from 7:00-9:00 pm**. This is an event for current Area volunteers to meet and mingle, enjoy some wine and cheese, and to discover New Area initiatives they can participate in this year. Please plan to attend. Contact Roger Kelley to RSVP at [info@crossconservation.org](mailto:info@crossconservation.org) or call 931-1042.

## Conservation Education Program: Home Series

This winter our Conservation Education programs will help discover the convenience of saving energy and money at home, introduce you to your winter backyard visitors, and remind you how you can co-exist safely with bears. Our winter programs begin on January 23<sup>rd</sup> with a discussion on Renewable Energy Options for your home. Here's a link to our winter/spring CE schedule:  
<http://www.crossconservation.org/main/>

## Hoodies and Vests for Sale

Our ASCCA vests and hoodies are available to purchase. Proceeds from this fundraising effort will help the Grassland and Grouse Project. Please phone 931-1042 to order. The cost is \$55 for a vest and \$40 for a hoodie; any donation offered above the selling price will go directly towards the Grassland and Grouse Project, and you will be eligible for a charitable tax

## ASCCA Staff Update

We are sad to say goodbye to Lisa Flaman, but pleased to introduce Catriona Laird (pronounced Katrina), who will be taking over as Conservation Education Coordinator from Lisa (**story page 5**). Make sure to stop by our EDHQ (Education Head Quarters) and introduce yourself. Happy trails!

## ASCCA Gala Event

In order to help preserve this pristine area of land and all its inhabitants, 2.5 million dollars is needed to replenish the endowment for perpetuity. This amount will be doubled through a matching bequest by Sandy Cross through the Calgary Foundation. To reach this goal, the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area Board of Directors has initiated the planning of an inaugural fundraising gala event to raise awareness and increase funding for the Cross Conservation Area. The primary goal of this event is to raise awareness of the Cross Conservation Area with the long term benefits being increased funds raised. Over 100% of the 300 tickets available have been sold at a cost of \$500 per ticket. The gala will be held Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at the Hyatt Regency. [We ask volunteers to please send us any information or coverage of the event seen in their local papers.](#)

# Area Happenings!

## Grassland and Grouse Project Update



It will soon be construction season for the Grassland and Grouse Project as plans are being finalized for a kiosk at the Area's entrance.

The kiosk will feature interpretive signs about the GG and serve as a welcoming center to the area. Construction is expected to begin in February and the kiosk should be complete by the end of March. 2007 will also see the continuance of grasslands research at the area and more hands-on land activities. Volunteers will continue to become walking weed eradicators by removing seed heads and hand pulling invasive species such as Burdock and Goat's Beard. We estimate that over a ton of Burdock was removed off of the land.

Last summer native grass patches were identified by GPS coordinates to provide more accurate study of these areas. Three research plots were mowed extensively to determine the effect of mowing as a grass suppressant. In 2007 the effectiveness of mowing and cattle grazing will continue to be evaluated as tools to slow the advancement of brome into the native grass prairie. The results of these studies will be used in the design of a long-term grass management strategy for the area. The restoration of the native grass prairie is a critical component of the Grassland and Grouse Project as the native fescue prairie provides the required habitat for Sharp-tailed grouse. A primary activity for the grouse component will be a second survey of birds on the Area. The surveys are providing information on bird use and will help us determine if the return of Sharp-tailed grouse is possible.

Conserving and protecting native grasses depends on educating the general public and the Grassland and Grouse Project is the perfect opportunity to teach the importance of grasslands to youth and adults. Our student education program combines several grassland related activities and will be strengthened in 2007 by updating and revising the Area's 'Rescue the Fescue' self-guided education program.

For adults we will take the show on the road by speaking to community groups and continuing to submit articles to the local media, offering GG related programming through conservation education programs, as well as updating and improving our web site.

*Thanks to our current GG sponsors: The Calgary Foundation, Alberta Lotteries, Alberta Environment, EcoAction and the Alberta Ecotrust Foundation..*

# Staff Update

## Meet Catriona Laird

Conservation Education Coordinator

As a new member of The Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area team, I'd like to say how happy I am to work in such a beautiful area with people so committed to conservation.

I graduated in June, 2005, from Mount Royal College with an Applied Bachelor Degree in Ecotourism and Outdoor Leadership. These four years of school, of what now seems like playing in mountains, were what fuelled my passion for conservation and experiential education. During my time at college I took part in a field-school in Belize and Mexico. Between sharing a camp site in the jungle with a group of Howler Monkeys, sea kayaking, and caving to reach ancient Mayan ruin, I came to the conclusion that mosquitoes in Canada are much friendlier and writing a final paper in my pyjamas in a hammock is definitely the way to go.

My parents are from Scotland so I've spent many summers there developing a taste for fish and chips and the bitter wind that blows from the sea. My desire to experience the world has taken me to parts of Asia, Europe, Central America and North America. My next travel goal is an overland tour in West Africa. Hmm, more mosquitoes.



CE Coordinator  
Catriona Laird

## This New Education Volunteer is Very Familiar with the Cross

Welcome back Lisa Flaman – ASCCA volunteer

I came to the Cross Conservation Area in October 2005 as the Grassland and Grouse Education and Communications Coordinator. What a long title! I remember telling people about my position and to say my title in conjunction with the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area came out as an extremely long winded new job! I really enjoyed the position, but always gazed out my office window at the kids learning and playing games outside wishing I was an educator.

Then my opportunity came. In July 2006 I switched offices and became the new Conservation Education Coordinator. It was a much shorter job title and suited me well. Finally I got to join the kids, lead education programs and plan family and adult programs. I have had a wonderful time working in this position; however, there was some clash with my part-time job as a city park education coordinator and things had to come to an end, but not to an end with the Cross Conservation Area.

My new position's title is the shortest and easiest to remember, volunteer. I will be joining the rest of the hard working dedicated volunteers continuing to lead education programs and acting as an ambassador for the Conservation Education Program. I am truly excited about my new position at the Cross and I look forward to coming to the Celebration of Success next year as a participant and not an organizer! Thanks to all the staff and volunteers who have supported me throughout my period as an employee! This is a very special Area, with very special people taking care of it.

## Notes from The Executive Director

### Notes from the Executive Director

#### Musings on the Wind and the Year

##### Past and Present

Jacquie Gilson, Executive Director

The wind is the topic of conversation these days. It has recently broken our flag pole cord, stolen our BBQ cover (returned by a Good Samaritan) and has caused me more than one migraine headache. This incessant wind has me pondering how we view the wind as a metaphor of change.

In the Percy Shelley (1792-1822) poem *Ode to the West Wind* he laments on the negative powers of wind and our lack of control

in our lives, but in the end he considers the wind as a harbinger of new life and hope:

“O, Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?”

I like his concluding lines since they suggest that despite the negatives there is always hope. I prefer to think of this last year and the present year as being positive and hopeful times, despite the issues we face.

As the Chinook winds howl around me I am reminded that the winds of change can be positive winds. Here are the highlights of my windful musings about 2006:

See Musings, p. 6

## Musings, cont.

•The winter winds continue to howl as I now think about the new year of 2007. This year marks my 16th one here at the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area and this impresses upon me the changes I have seen over the years. I think the winds of change are upon us and that 2007 promises to be even better than the previous year. Here's why:

•Our Gala event will be held in 2 weeks and the majority of tickets to this 'by invitation only' event are already sold. Thanks to the generous Gala sponsors the event has already generated enough money to cover the costs. Many exciting live auction items have been donated and a \$20,000 piece of jewelry has also been gifted for a raffle.

•The Foothills Land Trust is alive and growing and I am thrilled to be part of this group of dedicated and enthusiastic people who seek to offer conservation options for land-owners concerned about protecting the conservation values of their land.

•The strategic planning efforts of staff and the board should pay off in 2007 as we are guided by the new Charter. We are in the midst of finalizing the strategic planning for 2007 to make the best use of the resources we have. We will share these plans once they are finalized.

•I am excited about taking a more team-oriented approach and focusing more on leadership development. I would like to take better advantage of all the hidden talents my staff members possess as together we seek to deal with all the ins and outs of caring for this beautiful gift of land.

•The regular staff crew has returned. I am thrilled to have Sue, Reg and Kelly still in place as the Leadership Team and to welcome Cat to our Education Team. Chris continues to do an amazing job with our accounts and I look forward to making even better use of her myriad skills and knowledge in 2007. I am pleased to note that Roger Kelley will be with us at least until the end of March, working on the parking lot kiosk and other important projects.

My musing time has come to an end and yes, the wind is still howling; I can see that the flags are still flapping madly in the breeze. I leave you with another wind related thought, immortalized by Bob Dylan, "The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind; the answer is blowin' in the wind." He suggested that the first thing people need to do is find the wind, and then answer the questions in the song by asking the questions. I seek to ask the questions and find the answers that are blowin' in the wind.

## Open Minds for Managers

By Jacquie Gilson, Executive Director, Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area

As Executive Director of the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area, I am very familiar with the Chevron Open Minds Program, since we have offered this amazing week long educational opportunity to Calgary school children since 1999. I am pleased to say that I was a student in a similar 'mind opening' experience this September when I participated in the four day Chevron Management Institute in San Ramon, California. I like to refer to the program as 'Open Minds for Managers', since I truly gained a tremendous amount of knowledge and insight through the program. I can truthfully say that I came away from it with a more open mind.

The Chevron Management Institute has been offered for the last 10 years through a partnership with the Leader to Leader Institute. It consists of intensive leadership and management skills training for nonprofit leaders from around the world. I was pleased to be one of the first two Canadians ever to attend. It was an amazing experience for me to make friends with other nonprofit leaders from across the United States, as well as leaders from Nigeria, Angola, Thailand and the Dominican Republic. I will not forget these people and I plan to make good use of the knowledge these new friends are willing to share with me. I was interested to learn that I was the only person from a conservation education-oriented group while the rest of the participants were from social justice organizations.

This did not diminish the usefulness of the course for me at all since we all face the same issues as nonprofits. I was able to learn from each and every other person as we shared knowledge and experiences about critical nonprofit issues such as fund raising, board development, strategic planning, partnerships, volunteers and staff.

This four day schooling opportunity gave me a chance to delve into my leadership strengths and weaknesses in more detail. As a nonprofit manager, funding for personal training is limited; therefore the opportunity to participate in 360 degree feedback was a significant component of the course. I found the follow up coaching session with Bryan Truman, a certified coach and Chevron employee, to be very useful and insightful. I am pleased to say that I have been able to incorporate learning's into my work immediately and to encourage my staff to grow and develop as well.

One of the hallmarks of the Chevron Open Minds school program is taking time for reflection, as well as journaling and sketching. I was able to take the time for reflection and I filled up many pages in my own learning journal that week. Since my sketching skills are limited, I took lots of pictures to help me remember the fantastic people and the various learning activities. The sessions were lead by first rate facilitators and amazing guest speakers. They provided many different perspectives and much food for thought; all in a comfortable and safe, yet fun atmosphere.

**See Open Minds, p. 7**

## **Open Minds, cont.**

As a corporation Chevron deserves major kudos for providing this kind of capacity building support for nonprofit organizations around the world. As I participant I know that I have come away with a more open mind and renewed commitment to our cause.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Lorelei Piotto of Chevron Canada Resources for nominating me to attend this 'Open Minds for Managers' experience and to all the organizers and faculty for putting on such an amazing learning experience.

# **FINAL NOTES**

Thank you for continuing to support the ASCCA. We will report to you again in April with more news and exciting Area happenings. Please call at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

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