

Friends of the Living Prairie Museum

Annual Report 2021-22



Seasonal Snapshot

Despite another season impacted by a pandemic, the Friends of the Living Prairie Museum adapted and succeeded in supporting the museum through a number of events and initiatives.

The Friends received annual funding from Urban Green Team, as well as the Canada Summer Jobs programs. This created **two summer positions for students** who worked tirelessly removing invasive species from the preserve and weeding museum seed plots. They endured an extreme season of heat and smoke from forest fires, with museum staff being extremely conscious of their safety.

The museum was forced to close to the public during an increase in COVID risk, which meant that the **milkweed giveaway** had to take place at another location. The Board of Directors used a neighbouring property to set up a pickup location, and volunteered alongside Friends members to distribute 200 swamp milkweed plants to the community.

The Friends assisted the museum's **sheep grazing** project for another season. Goats were included in the flock to test their ability to reduce woody plants on the prairie. Funds were provided to support one week of grazing, allowing the sheep and goats to do their work for three weeks. Grazing can put invasive plants at a competitive disadvantage, allowing native plants an opportunity to regenerate. This last season, the sheep targeted an area of dense smooth brome on the east side of the prairie.

The **Winter Speaker Series** was made possible, and very successful, by the hard work of the Chair of the Friends. Guests were able to self-register through an Eventbrite account and had the opportunity to make donations during registration.

The Friends provided financial support to help the museum complete a **new entryway project**. The project was primarily supported through the Province of Manitoba's Building Sustainable Communities fund. The new entryway on the west side of the prairie directs pedestrians to stay on the trails, while including interpretive information and Indigenous translations of prairie species.

The Friends also purchased a new **water container** for the expansion of the museum's seed plots. This source of water will be extremely important for the propagation of prairie species for use in restorations throughout the city.



New water container to feed the seedlings!



Friends of Living Prairie Museum Mission Statement

The Friends of the Living Prairie Museum exists to provide the Living Prairie Museum monetary and volunteer support to fulfill its mission through fundraising, promotion and maintenance of the preserve.

Living Prairie Museum Mission Statement

Living Prairie Museum's goal is to promote awareness and conservation of natural areas, specifically tall grass prairie, through environmental education.



**FRIENDS OF THE
LIVING PRAIRIE
MUSEUM**

Board of Directors 2021-2022

Chair	Volunteer Coordinator
Ash Burkowski	Vacant
Treasurer	
Val Hammond	Members at Large
Secretary	Adele Weir
Ryan Maier	Catharine McIntyre
Staff Rep	Catherine Lee
Sarah Semmler	
Website	
Ash Burkowski	

Memberships

2021-2022 93

Individual 55

Family/Classroom 32

Honourary/Lifetime 6

Memberships 2020-21 87

Summer Staff

Green Team and Canada Summer Jobs

The Friends of the Living Prairie Museum continue to support public education and conservation by acquiring funding for seasonal student jobs. These positions help students develop their hireable skills and career goals.

The Friends were successfully awarded funding from both Green Team (Provincial) and Canada Summer Jobs (Federal) in order to hire two students. Rotary Club Assiniboine also contributed one Green Team position to work at the museum. The Friends generously agreed to extend the CSJ student, as the hours funded were limited. Students worked from June to late August.

The Friends provided funds to allow the students to receive basic first aid training. This is one of many ways the Friends contribute to the professional and personal development of these students.

Summer students gain valuable work experience related to biology, environmental science, and landscape horticulture. They learn plant identification, native plant propagation, invasive species control, prairie ecology, and how their work to conserve this site fits into the greater framework of habitat conservation.



Students helped install fencing to contain the museum's grazing animals.



Summer students are essential for reducing invasive species and maintaining biodiversity in the preserve.

Seasonal Events

Winter Speaker Series

The Friends worked to ensure that the Winter Speaker Series was able to continue on. The Chair created an Eventbrite account to allow for self-registration and the option to donate to the Friends. A YouTube channel was also established so that recordings of the presentations could be made available to members. The presentations took place on the Zoom account provided by the Friends, and members had the opportunity for advanced registration. This series was by far the most well attended and supported by donations in the history of this event.

The series returned to a full list of five presenters, and the Friends increased their honorariums to ensure that these wonderful speakers were shown appreciation for their expertise.

Dr. Jason Gibbs - The Wild Bees of Manitoba
Amanda Shave - Prairie Birds of Manitoba
Zach Loeks and Vera Baniyas - Modular Prairie Design
Nicki Ferland - Winnipeg is Indigenous Land
Rick Askinis - The Splendor of Manitoba's Orchids

Stats from the last five years:

2018 - 138 people, \$435 donations
2019 - 123 people, \$450 donations
2020 - 132 people, \$360 donations
2021 - 139 people, \$50 donations
2022 - 465 people, \$763 donations



Photo by R. Askinis

Seasonal Events

All About Plants

Milkweed Giveaway

This event allowed 200 swamp milkweed seedlings to find their forever homes in local gardens. Planting milkweed creates the habitat needed to help monarch butterflies complete their life cycle. Guests registered online for a time slot to ensure physical distancing. Volunteer support was provided by the Friends Board of Directors and Friends members.

Seed Plot Expansion

Museum staff have been working to expand on seed production activities. A new area in the northeast corner of the preserve has been dedicated to forb production, particularly species that require more diligent monitoring and care. The area selected was significantly disturbed in the past and was predominantly non-native, invasive species. Adding these seed plots actually improves this location by providing a source of escaped, native forb seeds.

The Friends agreed to purchase a new water container to help with this project. The container is a refurbished holding cube, diverting this material from the landfill and giving it a second life.

The Friends funded the establishment of seed plots in St. Norbert about 10 years ago, and those plots are still producing native prairie seeds today.



Free milkweed giveaway event.

Site Improvements

New Entryway

The Living Prairie Museum was successful in receiving the Province of Manitoba's Building Sustainable Communities Grant funding to construct a new entryway on the west side of the preserve. This entryway was a response to the considerable damage being done to the site by off-trail traffic, causing new desire paths, compaction, and habitat degradation.

In order for the application to be approved, the Friends agreed to support the project by providing 10% of the total funds to complete the entryway.

This new structure was completed in fall 2022, and the results are stunning. The steel features match those of the museum trail system and annex. There is an interpretive sign and map to help educate the public about the site, which includes the Friends logo in acknowledgement of support. The wood slats feature translations of the museum name, prairie crocus, savannah sparrow, and big bluestem in English, French, Oji-Cree, Ojibwe, Cree, and Dakota.



New entryway from Prairie View Rd.

