



# PRAIRIE BREEZE

THE LIVING PRAIRIE MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2016

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## SPRING INTERPRETIVE CENTRE HOURS

Sundays  
May - June, 10 - 5 pm

Open daily starting  
July 1st, 10 - 5 pm

## SPECIAL TICK LECTURE

We're hosting a special  
lecture on ticks and  
Lyme disease in April.

See p. 4

Get the latest news here:



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Museum



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## Our Snowshoe Sundays Were a Hit!

Snowshoe Sundays were a success! During these events, guests could rent snowshoes for free on the first and last Sunday of the month from January into March. Our relatively forgiving winter definitely provided some beautiful conditions for enjoying the outdoors.

We had a number of people who were new visitors to the museum. Guests travelled from all corners of Winnipeg, many stating that they had been meaning to visit but just hadn't had the chance. We're glad we could coax them out!

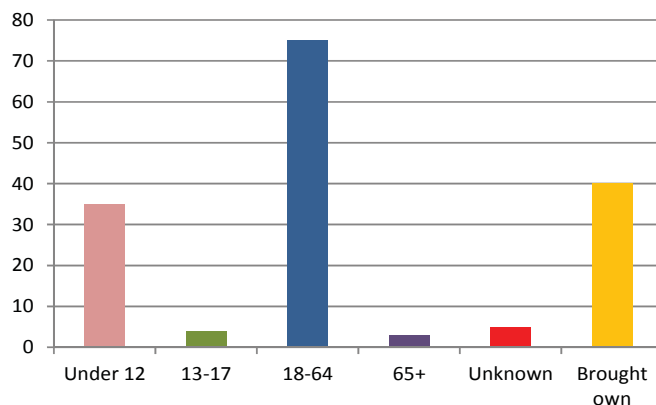
Snowshoe Sundays were a great opportunity for people to try snowshoeing for the first time. Some of our visitors told us they hadn't been able to try the sport due to cost. Our free rentals meant a number of families could enjoy a new winter activity.

We also had a number of visitors that brought their own snowshoes. Some had received them as gifts but were unsure of their use. We were able to provide quick lessons on how to walk, what to do if you fall, and how snowshoes are fitted.

We made sure to keep some stats on attendance. It was really interesting to see the ages of people that took part. We've provided some tallies from our busiest day as an example.

Snowshoe Sundays wouldn't have been possible without your help. We had a number of volunteer Friends who helped us with rental forms, tracking returns, fitting snowshoes, and even speaking to the media! Thank you for making these events a memorable experience for so many.

Our snowshoes were  
purchased using a  
grant from Mountain  
Equipment Co-op.  
Thank you!



January 31st was a busy day, with 162 people attending.

## What Spring Will Bring at LPM: Habitat Management

Controlling invasive species and increasing biodiversity will be front and center in 2016.

Prairie habitat requires consistent management. This ecosystem is never static, and in absence of natural processes such as wildfire and grazing, falls victim to encroaching forest, invasive species, and a loss of diversity. Fire burns away deadfall and encourages the re-growth of native perennial species, while also suppressing the spread of aspen and non-native weeds. Bison historically grazed the prairie, spreading seeds through their manure and chewing away young trees before they could become established. Fire and grazing created a mosaic of soil conditions, plant communities, and site ages within the ecosystem, allowing a great array of species to radiate within different niches.

The LPM is unique in that it is located within an urban environment, but this location provides its own host of management challenges. A lack of wildfires, large grazing animals, changes to site hydrology, and movement of invasive species through human activity must all be addressed when ensuring the health of the preserve.

We will continue to use prescribed burns as a management tool. However, with the lack of bison moving seeds to recently burned areas, this duty will fall on us. Over the years we've collected and produced seeds for a number of prairie species that will be sown on burned sections. This will help augment the seed bank in the soil, as well as allow more delicate, early-blooming species to take advantage of the open soil and sunlight.

Staff will also be planting seedling plugs in specified areas. Vegetation survey data and photographs from previous years have allowed us to determine where on the property diversity

has diminished. Plants such as prairie crocus (*Anemone patens*) and upland white aster (*Solidago ptarmicoides*) have decreased, while other species like low prairie rose (*Rosa arkansana*) and wild licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*) have become quite abundant. Plugs will allow us to target certain areas that we know require remediation, and hopefully return some balance to the density of species on the site.



Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) is just one forb we're busy growing for transplant on the prairie. Photo: LPM

Lastly, we will work to continue to remove invasive weeds. This involves a combination of methods including hand-weeding, rotational burns, and seeding with native species that might outcompete invasives over time. As a last resort, we may use herbicides when dealing with species that withstand other means of control. These species are a serious threat to site diversity and require a rapid and extremely effective response.

All of this takes a lot of time and a great deal of work, and we have passionate staff ready to do their part. But we are stronger with your support. If you're interested in helping us manage this rare habitat, keep an eye on our website and social media for opportunities to pull weeds and spread seeds in various prairie sites within Winnipeg.



## Riverbank Stabilization in King's Park

*Cameron Ruml has been a Technical Assistant at the City of Winnipeg Naturalist Services Branch for the past five years. His work focuses on various habitat and naturalization projects throughout Winnipeg. He's been assisting us at the museum this winter, and agreed to share the story of one of his restorations in the Breeze.*

If you have ever walked along the river path at King's Park, you may have noticed warning signs telling you to stay away from the unstable riverbank. About 850 meters of riverbank have been severely slumping into the river. It was estimated that erosion has caused the loss of about an acre of the park over the last 15 years. We had to do something to halt the erosion or risk losing more land.

Work began during the winter of 2014-2015. Contractors first re-graded the riverbank to a gentler slope. Riprap was then installed, which is a layer of limestone rock used to armour the soil against the flowing water.

Wood cuttings were planted the following spring, including riparian species such as sandbar willow, Virginia creeper, riverbank grape, and dogwood. Cuttings were planted into the riprap in small "notches" of soil that were left by the contractors. The cuttings, especially sandbar willow, will eventually grow extensive root systems that hold the riverbank soil together and slow the rate of erosion.

In summer, we planted trees, shrubs and vines. The species selected were naturally present within the park, such as bur oak, green ash, basswood, Manitoba maple, Saskatoon, chokecherry, pin cherry, wild plum, hawthorne, dogwood, Virginia creeper, and American elm.

Areas that were most prone to erosion were

covered with biodegradable erosion control blankets, and seeded with a native grass mix of Bebb's sedge, streambank wheatgrass, fowl bluegrass and Canada wild rye. This provided a quick growing cover of plants whose roots would further prevent erosion of the bank.

In 2016, more sections of the riverbank will be stabilized and the forest restored.



Above: 1) A ramp allowed access to machinery that re-graded the slope. Riprap was applied. Existing trees were protected. 2) The ramp was covered in compost and prepared for planting. 3) Trees were planted, with room for existing vegetation to repopulate the bank.

Photos: P. Mutch

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Spring Clean-up

Our annual clean-up will take place in early May. Volunteers help remove litter and brush from the prairie. Appreciation BBQ to follow.

### Help Control Invasive Species

Canada thistle, leafy spurge, and tufted vetch threaten to take over our prairies. Weed pull parties will take place in various locations. Dates TBA.

Details and registration will be announced by email, twitter, and facebook.

### MUSEUM STAFF

Danielle Trudel  
Sarah Semmler  
Lois Grieger



Thank you for receiving your newsletter electronically.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Prairie Planting Workshops

Instructor John Morgan of Prairie Habitats Inc. will teach you how to successfully grow native prairie plants at home. Find out how native species can be included in your landscape designs, and why using native plant material is important for biodiversity and conservation.

Workshops include a presentation, discussion, and seed planting demonstration. Prairie seeds will be available onsite.

Call to register for one of the following sessions:

Sunday, April 3rd	1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Saturday, April 16th	9:30 - 12:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 19th	6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 24th	1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 30th	9:30 - 12:30 p.m.

Fee: \$35 plus GST. Friends of Living Prairie Museum receive a \$10 discount.

### Special Lecture on Ticks and Lyme Disease

Learn how to identify ticks, how to protect yourself from exposure, and how to spot the symptoms of Lyme disease. Dr. Richard Baydack from Manitoba Health will tell you what you need to know to stay safe this summer.



**Tuesday, April 26th, 7:00-8:30 pm**

**Please call to reserve your seats.**



### LIVING PRAIRIE MUSEUM

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