

Manager's Report



Station use

Some of the university groups that used the facilities of the field station in 1995 included the following:

- **Faculty of Science** (Administrative Council, Departments of Botany, Zoology, Environmental Science Program)
- **Faculty of Graduate Studies** (Natural Resources Institute)
- **Faculty of Arts** (Department of Economics)
- **Faculty of Architecture** (Department of Landscape Architecture)
- **Faculty of Engineering**
- **University College**

Research use included students and professors from McMaster University and Brandon University. This was the first year of operation of the Delta Marsh Bird Observatory (DMBO) under the direction of Heidi den Haan and Paula Grief.

External groups using the station in chronological order of use were as follows: Kelvin High School, Arthur Meighan High School, Morden Collegiate, St. James Collegiate Biology Club, St. Johns High School, Trinity United Church, Kelvin High School, Manitoba Physical Education Teacher's Association, Girl Guides of Canada, St. John's High School, Major Pratt Collegiate, Canada World Youth, Friends of the Field Station, McKenzie United Church, St. Adolphe School (Grades 7 and 8), Dakota Tipi, Fairholme Hutterite Colony, College Louis Riel, Fort Richmond Collegiate, Crescentview School (2 times), Pilot Mound Horticultural Society, Grace Hospital, Portage Day Camp, Cub Scouts (Winnipeg), Young Scholars, Camp Jubilee, Portage Home Schools, Laura Secord School, Portage Women's Shelter, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, Laverndrye School, Crescentview School, Fort Richmond Collegiate, Vincent Massey, Elm Creek, Students for Sustainability, Arthur Meighan High School, St. Rose High School, Kelvin High School, Girl Guides, Dauphin Collegiate, Freshwater Institute, Manitoba Wildlife Federation, and Plum Lake Technical Committee.

Programs offered by the schools at the station have included such topics as peer counseling, biology, outdoor education, student match, professional development workshops, and Shakespearean drama. Many of these schools return to the station year after year and all have found us to offer an ideal location for their needs.

Workshops and Elderhostel

Two workshops were held during the winter: Winter Survival/Arctic Lifestyles and Skin Preparation: Traditional Methods. Many thanks to Rick Riewe and Jill Oakes for providing the instruction and initiation of the second workshop. Both of these offerings were rare opportunities for participants to access this information and both were well attended and received. On August 12th the second annual canoeing day in the marsh and supper was held; it was also very popular with the public. Elderhostels were held in May and again in September. The May topics were: Horticulture, Birding and Native history. The September program offered Birding, Hunting lodges of the Marsh and Portage History. Both Elderhostels had around 30 participants. The Elderhostels are now offered with the Portage Elderhostel Committee rather than through the Chamber of Commerce. No birding workshops were offered because of a shortage of weekends available.

Staff Developments and Appointments

The summer biological technician position was filled by Ken Sandilands and Curt Code was our summer maintenance assistant. Curt stayed on from September to November to help out while Dick Convery was on sick leave (from May through mid-October). Job descriptions for the positions of Resident Maintenance Person and Second Cook/Housekeeper were reviewed and updated in 1995.

Improvements to the facilities

Thanks to the continuing support of Ray Goetz and his staff in University Physical Plant, some of the infrastructure projects done in 1995 included reroofing the Interior Design Building, replacement of two water heaters in Mallard Lodge, and installation of a new water pressure tank in Criddle. Metal sign posts and supports for the meteorological station were painted and the boardwalk to the station was reinforced. All entrance gates to the station were repainted, along with trim in Tyrrell and Wardle, and the porch entrance to Mallard Lodge. Bedroom doors in the upstairs of the lodge were revarnished. Grease traps were installed in the Murrays kitchen. New flooring was installed in the bathroom and sitting room of Private. Both Tyrrell bathrooms were

renovated. Finally, the summer road through the marsh was graded and new limestone and grading was done in the station parking area.

Seminars

The twenty eighth annual student seminar was held at the station instead of on campus. In addition to this, seven more seminars were presented throughout the summer. The speakers and their topics were as follows:

Janet Moore

Critical Wildlife Habitat Program, Department of Natural Resources, Province of Manitoba

"Manitoba tall grass prairie and the efforts to preserve it"

Dr. Jennifer Shay

Department of Botany, University of Manitoba

"The rise and fall of the Delta Marsh"

Gail Whelan Enns

Manitoba Naturalists Society

"Ecological integration and gap analysis to reach endangered species objectives"

Dr. Bill Preston

Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature

"Amphibians in Manitoba"

Tim Sopuck

Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation

"Waterfowl Habitat in the '90s"

Tom Balzer

Fish Futures, Lockport Heritage Park

"The sport fishery in Manitoba"

Dr. Jim Hare

Department of Zoology, Brandon University

"Social discrimination in Columbian Ground Squirrels"

Station Publicity

An advertisement for the facilities of the field station was placed in the University phone book again this year; several new bookings resulted from the ad. A home page was established for the station and placed on the Internet by Gordon Goldsborough. The annual course pamphlet and research pamphlet were printed and distributed. In February I gave a seminar on station research and activities to the Portage Rotary. Various newspaper articles appeared in the Portage Daily Graphic and the Winnipeg Free Press relating to the Delta Marsh Bird Observatory, the Prairie Wetland Ecology Team, and the winter survival workshop. Jill Oakes, Rick Riewe and I were guests on the Jim Rae CBC afternoon show to talk about the winter survival workshop.

Weather

This year will be remembered for the many challenges that the elements of weather presented. Spring flooding was the most extensive since 1979 and the sill road across the diversion was closed to traffic for many weeks. This did not cause any cancellations but seriously impeded research and road access to the station. November brought numerous snowfalls, extreme temperatures and very hazardous travel for groups arriving and departing; one group had to be rescheduled at the last minute due to poor travel conditions.

No major changes or additions were made to collection equipment or the nature of measurements at our meteorological station. Lake water samples from a site about 1 kilometer offshore from the station were taken at monthly intervals on behalf of the provincial government. The first full year of data from our new weather stations in Oxbow Woods and at the met station were collected.

Notable highlights and happenings

- The second annual Delta Marsh "fashion" show was held.
- Summer Solstice was celebrated in style with canoe races, other events and great food.
- The Friends of the Field Station barbeque was a very memorable night with great folks, music and food!
- The T-shirt design was won by Ken Sandilands.
- Winter arrived on November 1st and lasted a good 6 months. Many deer perished due to the cold and early arrival of snow in the marsh.
- Infrared photos of the station property were taken on 3 August.

Acknowledgements

The Field Station has grown over the past few years and this year was no exception. The requests for use has increased in all areas. I sincerely thank Pat Gutoski and Gordon Robinson for their efforts and expertise both on campus and at the station to make sure the big events went well. Throughout the summer months Curt Code and Ken Sandilands capably looked after the maintenance and biological responsibilities. As always, Doreen Greening, Shirley Dinwoodie provided all the users of the station with the greatest of care and comfort. Heidi Mead and Ardith Hamilton filled in the vacant domestic spots during courses and large groups—thank you. Dick Convery worked during the beginning of the year; thanks for his many handyman talents and continuing wit.