

# Station Manager's Report - 1997

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## Thanks

This year will be remembered for the completion and opening of the station's newest building, Kipichiwin, which will make possible a range of new and expanded opportunities. I wish to thank the personnel from Physical Plant who supervised the construction, and the skilled tradespersons who built it under the guidance of Les Garnham. I also acknowledge the continuing dedication and contributions of Doreen, Shirley, Heidi and Donna for their culinary skills and attention to the increasing demands of the domestic upkeep at the station. Neil Mochnac and Shane Roersma attended to the maintenance and biological duties over the summer; many thanks. Jeff Gowler ably provided all the necessary maintenance and snow clearing over the winter months. I especially thank Jeff for his invaluable assistance and company during the spring flood at the station. Finally, I thank Pat Gutoski for her work in keeping the station administration in order. Thanks too to Gord Goldsborough who oversees our overall operation. It was a good year.

## Meteorological station and spring flooding

Environment Canada upgraded the weather instruments in late fall. Weather data are now monitored automatically and accessed remotely at hourly intervals via a separate phone line. Any user with appropriate software can access this information too. The instruments that measure air temperature, solar irradiance, and wind were converted to automated data-collection and the precipitation instruments will be converted in 1998.

The second annual (?) flood arrived on April 20<sup>th</sup> when an ice dam developed during the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup>. The Festival du Voyageur group occupying the station at the time made a hasty retreat to safety. Fortunately, Jeff and I were able to stay and monitor events to ensure that most of the equipment and buildings were secure. The high water level was approximately 15 cm lower than in 1996 and lasted for three days. The field station was "cut-off" for about 10 days due to the fact that the summer road was snowed in (snow cleared around June 12<sup>th</sup>) and the culvert on the winter road at the Blind Channel crossing washed out (again). Damage was restricted primarily to the winter road on its approach to Kipichiwin due to erosion by water that flowed over it during the flood peak. The bridge over the Diversion at Highway 227 was reduced to a single lane for many

weeks due to damage by ice floes, and the diversion was impassable for about two weeks.

## Conferences, Workshops and Elderhostel

Two winter workshops were held: "Winter Survival/Arctic Lifestyles" and "Skin Preparation: Traditional Methods". Many thanks to Rick Riewe and Jill Oakes for providing the instruction; both offerings continue to be very well attended and received. The spring Bird Migration Workshop took place immediately following the clean up of the spring flood. Although the enrollment was lower than in past years, probably due to uncertainty surrounding the flooding, those in attendance had a very productive and enjoyable weekend. The Annual Family Canoe Day took place on the marsh and lake on August 2<sup>nd</sup> followed by the Friends of the Field Station Annual Pignic on the next weekend. One of the most delightful and successful Elderhostels took place the week of August 31<sup>st</sup>. The Canadian Environmental Network mini-conference, organized by Laurie Ham of Ottawa, visited at the end of October.

## Improvements to the facilities and property

- Two 1-meter diameter culverts were installed at the crossing over Blind Channel on the winter road, in addition to the one existing culvert, to minimize future erosion during flood years.
- New flooring was installed in the men's bathroom in Criddle.
- The barn exterior was painted, along with the interior of Murray's kitchen and several rooms in Criddle and Wardle.
- The rotting wooden canopies over the southeastern and northeastern entrances to Agassiz were removed and new canopies were installed.
- Landscaping was done around the Kipichiwin building.

## Equipment acquired

With the anticipation of severe winters ahead, the station purchased a ten-horsepower snowblower which will be useful for clearing the met station walkway and Kipichiwin's porches. Two computers, a color inkjet printer, ten pairs of chest waders, and a polycarbonate water sampler were all valuable additions to the scientific equipment. Domestic equipment that was purchased this

year included box springs and mattresses to replace those on several beds around the station, and a canister vacuum cleaner.

**Summer Seminars**

Seven summer seminars were presented at the station, as follows:

- June 25     **Dr. Bill Rannie**  
*Department of Geography, University of Winnipeg*  
“Portage la Prairie alluvial fan and the paleochannels of the Assiniboine River”
  
- July 3       **Corrine Goldrup**  
*Restoration Technician, Winnipeg Parks and Recreation*  
“Prairie restoration”
  
- July 9       **Harry Harris**  
*Manager, Alonsa Conservation District*  
“Conservation district approach to habitat retention and environmental education - the Alonsa experience”
  
- July 16      **Dr. Norman Treloar**  
*Atmospheric Chemist, Environment Canada*  
“Climate trends for the western provinces and associated ecosystem impacts”
  
- August 12   **Dr. Todd Arnold**  
*Scientific Director, Delta Waterfowl & Wetlands Research Station*  
“Adaptive significance of clutch size in American Coots”

August 20   **Dr. Gordon Goldsborough**  
*Director, University Field Station (Delta Marsh)*  
“Impact of inorganic nutrients and waterfowl feces on wetland plant and algal communities”

August 27   **Dr. Dale Wrubleski**  
*Research Associate, Institute of Wetland and Waterfowl Research*  
“Stable carbon, nitrogen and sulfur isotope determinations of trophic relationships in prairie pothole wetlands”

**Footnotes**

- The winning T-shirt design this year was submitted by Heather Hinam.
- Thank you to Mary Robinson for the wonderful collection of arrowhead points; they are being enjoyed by all visiting the new Kipichiwin building.
- Thanks to Ray Pettinger for suggesting the name of the new building.
- A bronze sculpture of a Great Horned Owllet by Peter Sawatzky was presented to Gordon Robinson from the staff and friends at the field station to commemorate his service to the station.

Russ Mead