

# NPSS Annual Field Tour to Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park

## “Botany Blitz in the Hills”

Join the NPSS on **Saturday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park** for a fun day of botanizing and socializing. This annual event is for people of all ages and abilities, and is always a favourite; last year's tour was our best attended ever and we're hoping to break the record again this year. We'll be visiting various parts of the park and doing short hikes (mostly on trails) through different habitats, such as riparian (wetlands, creeks and lakes), pine/spruce forests, fescue grassland and meadows. Along the way, we'll be trying to identify and record as many plant species as we can find which is where the “Botany Blitz in the Hills” comes into play. Here's your chance to be a citizen scientist, as all of our data is submitted to park managers to help them with their work in the park. Last year we found several rare plants, so it is always guaranteed to be interesting. Don't know much about plants? No problem! We'll have lots of experts around to teach you about them. You'll also learn about the unique geology and history of the area. Cypress Hills is a unique area in Saskatchewan and the highest point between the Rockies and the Labrador Peninsula. In fact, it is roughly as high as the town site of Banff! Because of this it is home to plants species found nowhere else in Saskatchewan and there are very few places where you can experience such a diversity of habitats in such a small area. If you've never been there, this is the perfect opportunity and for those of you who have you know that you can never visit this place too often.

As an added bonus, our events on Saturday tie in with a whole series of events hosted by other organizations that the NPSS has partnered with. On Friday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> The Nature Conservancy of Canada and Adopt-a-Plant Alberta are hosting its Botany Alberta Border Cross Event. This day is similar in format and focus to that of the NPSS' day, but will take place on the Alberta side of Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, and provides a little cross-cultural exchange with our friends from Alberta. If you think that the Alberta side is more or less the same as the Saskatchewan side, think again. There are a lot of different features and activities, so why not stay for both days?

In fact, why not stay until Sunday, July 4<sup>th</sup>? If you do, you'll be treated to one of the finest prairie areas anywhere in Saskatchewan, if not Canada. In cooperation with the NPSS, the Nature Conservancy of Canada – Saskatchewan will be hosting a day at “Old Man on His Back”. The former ranch of Peter and Sharon Butala, the area is a pristine prairie area that supports a population of bison. “Old Man on His Back “ is only a short drive from Cypress Hills and well worth the trip. The day will involve leisurely walks around the area, looking at the diverse plant life and recording everything that can be identified. The day will also involve a visit to the new on-site interpretive centre.

If you'd rather hang around Cypress for a while longer, Botany Alberta folk will be holding a ½ day excursion in the Park ending at noon on Sunday.

**IMPORTANT:** All events are free. However, please register ahead of time so that we can plan accordingly. **For each day you want to attend, please contact the appropriate organization (listed below).** Also, due to the timing of this event on the long week-end, it is suggested that you book a hotel

a.s.a.p. if you need to. Both the Saskatchewan and Alberta side have hotels, as does Maple Creek, SK. Medicine Hat is less than an hour's drive from the Alberta side and Swift Current is an hour and a half from the Saskatchewan side. These options are further, but have plenty of hotels. It is also highly recommended to reserve a campsite if you are not staying in the group camp site on the Alberta side, which has been reserved.

**What to bring:** sturdy footwear, binoculars, camera, rain gear, food and drinks. There is a grocery store in both sides of the park, and several restaurants. On Saturday (tour of the Saskatchewan side) we will make every effort to have lunch at the south end of Loch Leven, where the grocery store and restaurants are located, so that people may purchase food.

### **Hotels in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park:**

Elkwater Lake Lodge, Elkwater, AB

Reservations: 1-888-893-3811 or e-mail [info@elkwaterlakelodge.com](mailto:info@elkwaterlakelodge.com)

[www.elkwaterlakelodge.com](http://www.elkwaterlakelodge.com)

Cypress Park Resort Inn, Cypress town site, SK

Reservations: (306) 662-4477

<http://cpri.sasktelwebhosting.com/>

### **Event Details and Registration:**

Date: Friday, July 2 and 4, 2010

Time: 8:30am

Meeting Place: Elkwater, AB

Host: Botany Alberta (NCC-Alberta and Adopt-a-Plant Alberta)

Event Title: Botany Alberta Border Cross

Contact: Robin McLeod – (403) 444-3547 or [Robin.McLeod@natureconservancy.ca](mailto:Robin.McLeod@natureconservancy.ca)

Registration: Please go to:

[http://www.natureconservancy.ca/site/PageServer?pagename=vfn\\_events\\_AB](http://www.natureconservancy.ca/site/PageServer?pagename=vfn_events_AB)

Additional Information: NCC-Alberta has booked the Main Group Campsite at Elkwater arriving July 1<sup>st</sup> and departing July 4<sup>th</sup>. There are 13 tent sites and 6 RV sites available at cost. Please reserve your spot with Robin McLeod, [robin.mcleod@natureconservancy.ca](mailto:robin.mcleod@natureconservancy.ca) sooner than later! NCC will provide drinks and snacks during the day and after-dinner s'mores. If staying in Alberta, meet & greets will take place Thursday evening at 6:00pm and 8:30am on Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the fire pit located at the main group camp site.

**Date: Saturday, July 3, 2010**

**Time: 10:00am - 5:00pm**

**Meeting Place: Cypress Hills Provincial Park Visitor Centre, Cypress Hills town site, SK**

**Host: Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan**

**Event Title: Botany Blitz in the Hills**

**Contact: Chet Neufeld – (306) 668-3940 or [info@npss.sk.ca](mailto:info@npss.sk.ca)**

**Additional Information: Sights include Loch Leven, Bald Butte and the Lookout Point, where you can almost see forever. In the afternoon we will visit the West Block via a gap road tour (weather permitting) and see the Conglomerate Cliffs, Adams Lake, and other sights. Wildflowers will abound including orchids and lupine.**

Date: Sunday, July 4, 2010

Time: 10:00am - 4:00pm

Closest Town: Frontier, SK

Host: Nature Conservancy of Canada

Event Title: Plains Bison & Prairie Wildflowers

Contact: Jennipher Karst - (306) 347 0447 ext. 229 or [jennipher.karst@natureconservancy.ca](mailto:jennipher.karst@natureconservancy.ca)

Registration: Please go to

[http://www.natureconservancy.ca/site/PageServer?pagename=vfn\\_events\\_SK](http://www.natureconservancy.ca/site/PageServer?pagename=vfn_events_SK)

Additional Information: Botany enthusiasts of all levels unite! Come spend some time identifying plant species at OMB, the home of uncommon and rare plant and animal species. Then stay for the guided tour of the famous OMB ranch and enjoy the far-reaching, breathtaking grassland landscapes.