

The Trumpeter

A Publication of the Friends of Elk Island Society
Summer, 2003

Website: <http://www.elkisland.ca>

E-mail: membership@elkisland.ca



Aboriginal Day Celebrations: A First for FEIS

Story and photos by Georgina Campbell

The Friends of Elk Island Society (FEIS) held their first Aboriginal Day Celebration at the Astotin Lake Recreation Area in Elk Island National Park (EINP) June 21, 2003.

The Drum Song, by the Prancing Pony Drum Group, set the tone for the Grand Entry. The opening ceremony was lead by the Honourable Pearl Calahasen, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development; Heather Poitras, Chairperson for National Aboriginal Day Committee, Alberta; and Laurie Guyot – Acting Superintendent for EINP. Representatives of all participating drummers, dancers and volunteers joined the Grand Entry.

“The celebration being held here is really important to showcase the Aboriginal People’s cultural tradition,” said the Honourable Pearl Calahasen. “These are good times for us to showcase the culture of our people.”

Master of Ceremonies, Keith Lapatak, of Saddle Lake, introduced the White Buffalo

Hoop dancer Anthony Whiskeyjack performed the intricate hoop dance for the Aboriginal Day Celebrations.



The White Buffalo dancers and their colorful costumes were a definite hit at the Aboriginal Day Celebrations.

dancers and the members of the “Prancing Pony” group.

The unscheduled rain dampened the enthusiasm of neither the dancers or drummers. Anthony Whiskeyjack, a master hoop dancer, delighted the crowd, as did the White Buffalo dancers in their colorful costumes. Craft and hand game demonstrations followed the soul-stirring entertainment of the day.

The beat of the Prancing Pony group drew participants and visitors into the traditional Aboriginal Round Dance that ended the celebration.

Throughout the day the tantalizing odour of roasting bison whetted appetites for the barbeque on a bun, served by members of the FEIS. Jerry Pohling, of Drayton Valley, had brought the entire bison to the Park, placed it in his barbeque and started the fire during the previous evening. His timing was perfect and the meat was cooked to perfection, just as the final Round Dance was over.

It was a fitting conclusion to the Aboriginal Day Celebrations!



Chef Jerry Pohling attends to the bison he barbequed for the Aboriginal Day Celebration at Elk Island National Park.

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Annual General Meeting 2003

Story and photo by Georgina Campbell

The Friends of Elk Island Society (FEIS) held its 19th Annual General Meeting at Astotin Lake Theatre on Saturday May 24, 2003 with approximately 30 members in attendance. Rick Watts gave the Chairman's Report outlining changes over the past 12 months. Copies of the report were distributed to members and are included in this issue of *The Trumpeter* (see page 3).

Rick then introduced the Society's auditor, Carol Russ. Carol reported on the finances of the FEIS for the past year and distributed copies of her report to the members. The report was accepted as read and Carol was appointed Auditor for the coming fiscal year.

Following the report, members recognized Trudy Harrold and the

very significant contributions she makes in the production of *The Trumpeter*.

Mark Degner, Pierre Cardon, Tina Hunt, Les Campbell and Georgina Campbell were elected to the Board of Directors.

A motion put forward by Rick Watts and seconded by Georgina Campbell read as follows: "That the Friends of Elk Island Society pass on their best wishes and support to the Canadian cattle producers in this time of difficulty." The motion was carried unanimously.

Amy Leach, past president of FEIS, was presented with a plaque and a framed photograph in recognition of her long and valued assistance to the FEIS. Amy's dedication to the Society, and to Elk Island National Park, laid the basis for the Society as it exists today.



Amy Leach, past Chairperson of the FEIS, accepts a plaque and a framed photograph from Chairman Rick Watts.

The official meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m. Members then met outside the Theatre to enjoy the excellent barbeque prepared, as usual, by Liz and Rick Watts. The relaxing atmosphere, and delicious food, set the tone for a very successful coming year for the FEIS.

A Dedicated Lot – Our Members

by Glynnis Hood

Memberships in the Friends of Elk Island Society have been increasing steadily since spring 2002. Currently there are 118 members in the Society, of which 6 are corporate memberships, 51 are family memberships, and 61 are individual memberships. Included in this number are 4 lifetime/honorary memberships for individuals or families who have made significant contributions of time and effort in the establishment and promotion of the FEIS.

Although most of our members come from Alberta (51% are from Edmonton), there are members from as far away as British Columbia (Saanichton), Saskatchewan (Saskatoon and Regina), Ontario (Ottawa), the Yukon (Whitehorse), Nova Scotia (Wolfville) and the USA (Spokane, Washington and Niles, Michigan). Many members also come from Sherwood Park (13%) and Fort Saskatchewan (10%). Other Albertan supporters of the Friends of Elk Island hail from Calgary, Lamont, Leduc, Medicine Hat, Riley, St. Albert, Sedgewick, Spruce Grove, St. Michael, and Tofield.

With the establishment of a new board of directors in June 2002, a concerted effort was made to contact

long-time members of FEIS to encourage them to renew their memberships. These efforts have paid off. The 39 long-time members now comprise 33% of the current membership base. In addition, we have attracted 79 new members (now 67% of the membership), 42 of whom have joined since January 2003. With the establishment of our new website (www.elkisland.ca), we have attracted 6 corporate memberships and continue to get inquiries regarding corporate/county sponsorship for a webpage on this site.

Various activities have helped to boost membership numbers. Events such as our guided hikes, the opening of our gift shop, special events, and a daylong information table at the University of Alberta have helped raise the awareness of the Society and its support of research and public events in the park. Membership fees contribute to research initiatives, special events, and other projects in Elk Island National Park. In turn, members receive our quarterly publication of *The Trumpeter* and 10% off on all merchandise in the FEIS gift shop (please have your card with you). So, here's to the members (yes you!) and to an active and vibrant organization that has Elk Island at its very heart!

Our sincere thanks to STAPLES, Sherwood Park, for their support of The Trumpeter

Chairman's Report 2003

by Rick Watts

This current Friends Board was elected at a difficult time for the Society and there was much to learn for all of us. The first few meetings were spent getting to know each other, learning some of the history of the society and straightening out the Society's affairs. The Board has worked hard over the last year and the meetings took their toll with the resignation part way through the year of the then Chair and Newsletter Directors Les and Georgina Campbell. Both Les and Georgina remain committed members and continue to be of great assistance, at events and editing *The Trumpeter* newsletter. Sandy Nakashima has done a great job as Treasurer and is stepping down at this AGM. We will miss her persistent attention to detail!

The Society hosted a number of events, all of which were well received by the Park, the members and the public. Our first event was the Summer Finale in September. The Finale involved aboriginal dancers, a live band and a craft market. It was followed by a series of interpretive events held through the fall and winter. All events, including Family Ski Day in February, received a respectable turnout. The primary objective for these events was to promote awareness of the Park and all either made a small profit or broke even on the day.

Despite the events being profitable, the society has a number of overheads that need to be covered. In order to continue the work that previous boards have started the Society desperately needs a source of income. Following discussions with the Park's management and with Kalyna Country, we obtained the Park's approval to operate an information centre and gift shop from the Information Centre building by the South Gate. Kalyna Country provides tourist information and the Friends operate the retail outlet. While this venue is not perhaps perfect from the point of view of its location, it is well suited to its purpose and is larger than many other Friends groups enjoy. The centre opened for the season on the 10th of May and is already gener-



FEIS Chairman,
Rick Watts

ating a small income and new memberships.

The Friends have always supported graduate research within the Park and this Board, like its predecessors, considers this to be of vital importance. No funding was granted last year, but at April's Board meeting it was voted to repurpose two GIC accounts to support 'conservation, research and education' in Elk Island National Park. The GICs in question were originally allocated to vegetation restoration projects that are no longer a priority. This money will allow the Friends to continue to offer assistance to Graduate Researchers independently of the organisation's revenue stream. The Friends Conservation, Research and Education Committee, chaired by Neil Darlow, has subsequently documented a grant application and funding policy and is anticipating starting the approval process during the coming weeks.

Finally, I would like to remind you that this Society exists not just to support and promote the Park but also to provide a service to you, the members. Through *The Trumpeter* newsletter and, more recently the web site, we provide you with news and stories relating to the Park and we publicise our events. We provide you the opportunity to become involved as volunteers at our special events and as assistants to graduate researchers. We value your feedback but you are very quiet! Please take some time over the coming weeks and consider what it is that you do and don't like about the Friends. Think about what we should be doing to fulfill our mandate to support and promote Elk Island National Park. Then let us know! I can be reached at the email address below or why not leave a message on the web site's bulletin board.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Rick

Rick Watts, Chairman
e-mail: chair@elkisland.ca

Beaver Hills Region Cuboree Returns to Elk Island Park

Story and photo by Murray Heap

On May 23-25, 2003, Elk Island National Park hosted the annual Beaver Hills Region Cuboree for the second year in a row, and it was a huge success. About 350 people were camped in and around the group camping area in the Astotin Lake Area, including Cubs (aged 8-10), their leaders, and older Scouts who helped out.

The Beaver Hills Region for Scouts Canada covers pretty much the same territory as the Beaver Hills Partnership being developed by Elk Island National Park and the surrounding Counties. As a result, there were groups from East Edmonton, Sherwood Park, Beaumont, New Norway, Camrose, Tofield, and



Cuboree participants checked out the warden's horses, under the watchful eye of Park Warden, Wes Olson.

Ardrossan.

The theme of this year's camp was "exploring", and activities contributed towards the Cub's work on their World Conservation, Naturalist, Observers, Hiking, and Trailcraft badges. Activities included: an interpretive hike on the Lakeview Trail, a pond program on the Living Waters Board

walk, a no-trace camping display, a leather craft (lanyard with a whistle), a knot tying event, a predator-prey wide game, a campfire complete with songs and skits, a "Scouts Own" religious observance, and the "Hug a Tree and Survive" presentation. The nature hike and pond program were run by Park Interpreters Saska Vanhalla and Jennelle Carlier, and the Hug a Tree program was run by Park Warden Murray Heap.

Elk Island National Park proved to be an ideal setting for the camp, and all groups that attended are looking forward to returning next year. The programs run by the Park proved to be very popular, and it was a great opportunity to spread the Park message to the next generation of park users.

Elk Island Gift Shop and Information Centre Now Open

by Tina Hunt

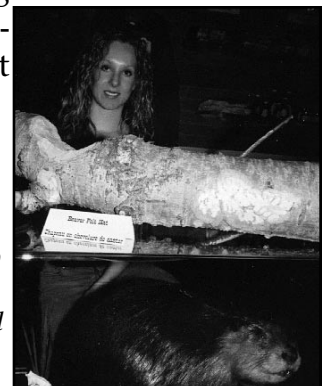
HOORAY! The Elk Island Gift Shop and Visitor Information Centre is up and running. The Friends have partnered with Kalyna Country to provide visitors with a complete package of tourism information and gift/souvenir shopping.

Kalyna Country is the world's largest eco-museum and covers a huge area in east central Alberta, so we are able to supply visitors with a comprehensive information package on all area attractions. The Friends and Kalyna Country have jointly hired Renee Lipa as our summer student; Renee has been working weekends in the shop since the beginning of May, and will see her hours greatly increased when we open six days a week for the busy summer months of July and August.

Come and see our great supply of gifts - we have something to suit everyone - from tamarack walking sticks, to wildlife prints, "quacking" ducks, china moose, books and shirts for all occasions. Gift shop hours are 10-6, closed Wednesdays (starting June 24).

Many thanks to Renee for doing such a great job and to the Gift Shop Committee for all their hard work. We have worked our way through a few opening "glitches" and have certainly learned a lot about running a gift shop!

Renee Lipa (right) has worked weekends in the gift shop since it opened in early May. She will work full-time now that the shop is open six days a week for the busy summer months of July and August.



Georgina Campbell

Photo Tips – Best Photo Opportunities in Elk Island Park

Story and photos by Bob Scott

“Where are the best photo opportunities in Elk Island National Park?” Georgina Campell asked me this question in an e-mail. My immediate response is “Everywhere!” Here are some ideas:

Postcards: I’ve often looked for the postcard location that jumps out and says, “This is Elk Island!” Let’s face it: our park does not have a Spirit Island, a Mt. Rundle, or a Prince Albert Hotel. Maybe High Island, but it is kind of boring. The eight foot fence is unique. Be creative.

Sunsets: Obviously the east side of Astotin Lake is an easy location to get to. I’ve also taken shots from wherever I was standing when the sun was going down, and got some really interesting sunset photos. Remember, you don’t have a lot of time to get into position, unless you’ve planned far ahead.

Sunrise: See above, but use the west side of Astotin Lake.

People and animals: I group these together, because I think a key requirement is, “Have the camera ready.” Kids and moose seldom hold that perfect *Kodak Moment* very long. It’s usually too late if you have to ask, “Where’s the camera?”



A moment in time – always have the camera ready!

Flowers: I like these because they don’t run away. They may blow around, but they don’t run! Think of lighting and angle, for example, using back lighting, and an unusual angle like lying on your belly. And don’t be afraid to get close.

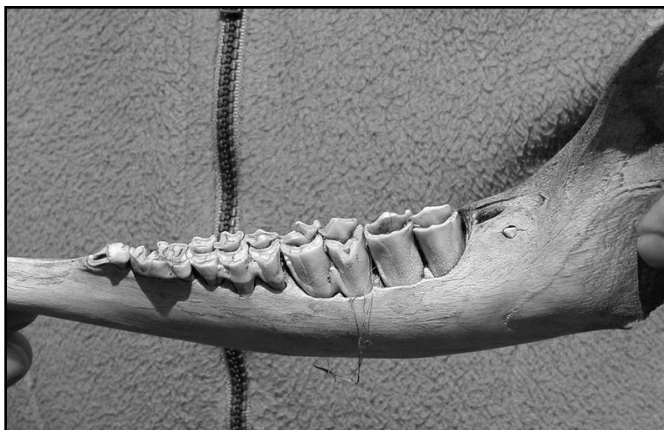
Seasons: It is surprising how much things change between the seasons. With a set of photos of the same location, during the course of the year, you will be able to easily see the differences. Try a pond, a meadow, a beaver lodge, a tree, even a culvert.

Anything else?

- A buffalo chip (don’t forget the belly angle),
- A rock, with a shadow,
- The sand on the beach,
- A skull bone, or antler (remember to leave it there),
- A feather
- A crack in the ice.

When I’m in Elk Island, anywhere I happen to be is a good place for a photograph. And here’s a plug for digital cameras. Take as many photos as your card can hold. Why go home with a memory card that’s not full?

Happy shooting. And please, send some in for our web page. <http://elkisland.com>



Remember, you can take a closer look with your camera at things you find in the Park, while leaving things where you find them.

Trumpeter Swan Successes

by Kane Weeks,
 Park Warden – Elk Island Nat. Park
 Photos courtesy of Parks Canada

The Trumpeter Swan reintroduction program is now reaping the benefits of almost 15 years of hard work and dedication from the staff of Elk Island National Park, the Canadian Wildlife Service, Friends of Elk Island Society and a host of other partners. The number of swans returned has undergone a series of highs and lows since its inception in 1987 but has reached a high in the last two successive years of 27 swans.

The continuation of the reintroduction program is still



Cygnets with eggs

crucial and will ensure that the current population remains sustainable. Such efforts will see Elk Island National Park and Cooking Lake – Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area becoming a vital sanctuary for the future survival of the trumpeter swan in the Beaverhills area.

A total of 21 trumpeter swans returned to Elk Island National Park and Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area in 2003, con-



Swan with two cygnets.

sisting of fourteen adults and seven cygnets. The table below illustrates the increase of Trumpeter Swans from 1997 to 2003.

Trumpeter Swans will again be captured during the molt and color-marked in 2003, to ensure the migrating routes and winter locations are identified. The number of swans that returned in 2003 to Elk Island National Park and the level of local cygnet production over the past 2 years has reduced the need to conduct production surveys as well as future transplants of cygnets

from Grande Prairie.

The success of the Trumpeter Swan reintroduction program to Elk Island National Park has occurred from the continued support and dedication of the members of the “Friends of Elk Island Society.” The strong partnership between Parks Canada and Friends of Elk Island Society will also ensure the future survival of the Trumpeter Swan in Elk Island National Park, and surrounding areas of the Beaverhills.

Year	Returned	Cygnets Hatched	Cygnets Fledged	Adults	Total # Migrated
1997	7	0	0	6	6
1998	6	4	4	6	10
1999	8	9	3	8	11
2000	8	7	4	8	12
2001	9	10	7	9	16
2002	18	12	10	17	27
2003	21				

Trumpeter Swan Numbers in Elk Island National Park (1997-2003)

FEIS Calendar of Events- 2003

New Interpretive Programs this Summer at Elk Island National Park!

Here is the schedule of interpretive programs for June and July. All programs are free of charge. You may also spot the interpreters roving around the Astotin Lake Area during the week. Watch for the August interpretive schedule at the gates, or on our website.

Saturday, June 28, July 5, July 12, July 19, July 26,

6:30 AM - Morning Hike Is "birding" a sport? Birdwatching for beginners. This is for all of you early birds out there! Did you know that there are over 200 species of birds to be seen in Elk Island National Park? Come join an interpreter first thing on Saturday morning for a refreshing start to your day. Enjoy a pleasant hike along the Lakeview Trail while learning the finer points of bird watching. Meet at the boat launch and remember to bring your binoculars and ears along for this 1.5 hour-long walk.

2:00 PM - Junior Naturalist Program What do water boatman, water striders and whirligig beetles have in common? How can dragonflies and damselflies live in the water? If your curiosity is peaked and you are between the ages of 5 - 12, join an interpreter for an hour-long interactive program that includes activities, education and fun. Please bring a parent or guardian and meet at the Astotin Lake Interpretive Theatre.

8:00 PM Evening Programing "Singin' in the...Drought?" What is a normal water level? Can drought be good? Join an interpreter for an hour-long interpretive program that focuses on the importance of water, what it means to us and how fluctuations are the norm in Elk Island National Park. Get ready for a sing along and have some fun! Astotin Lake Interpretive Theatre.

Sunday, June 29, July 6, July 13, July 20, July 27

2:00 PM - Junior Naturalist Program What happens when a tick, a moose and a fire all meet in the forest? If you are between the ages of 5-12, come and join an interpreter for an hour-long interactive program full of neat things to see and do. Learn how a little tick can make a moose lose its hair...or how fire can make things grow again. If you want, just come along to make a neat craft that you can take home! Please bring a parent or guardian and meet at the Astotin Lake Interpretive Theatre.

Friday, July 4, July 11, July 18, July 25

8:00 PM - Evening Program What goes around comes around, it's a nature of cycles! Have you ever seen a "ghost" moose? What effects does a forest fire have on the landscape? Cycles are everywhere in nature, come out and join Mopey the moose for an exciting and interactive interpretive show to learn more about ghost moose, forest fires and other fascinating natural cycles happening in an around Elk Island National Park. Meet at the lakeside viewing platform at the Astotin Lake Interpretive theatre. Please bring a chair. 1 hr.

Events calendar courtesy of Leanne Martin

A letter from two new members:

Lynne and I have just become members of the "Friends of Elk Island Society", and I just wanted to say hello, and to say how much we have both enjoyed the Park. We moved to Edmonton last July, from back East (New Brunswick), and have enjoyed our Sunday morning hikes through the trails of the Park. We have only missed one weekend since the first of August/ 02, and that was because we were in Jasper and Banff that weekend. There have been a few cold mornings during Jan. and Feb. but we just bundled up a bit more, and carried on.

We have seen many animals on the hikes, and enjoy sharing nature with the animals. I feel that some of the moose seem to look for us each Sunday, as they are so used to seeing us on the trails. This morning (June 22nd) it was raining hard, but that also added an interesting sound and look to the woods. The deer were out enjoying the rain, as well as a few elk near Beaver Pond. Never knowing just when or where we will encounter wildlife makes it an enjoyable hike each week.

If you come across two people cooking breakfast some Sunday morning, back in the woods, that will be us, as we both enjoy the hot tea, eggs, bacon, and toasted raisin bread each Sunday morning, cooked on the small stove we carry in our back pack..

January 12/03 was my birthday, and we enjoyed a nice warm breakfast together, with our son. It was -35 that morning, back along Shirley Lake trail.

We have seen as many as 21 moose on one hike, 12 bull moose on another trip last November, and 26 elk on another hike. Each trip is a new adventure, and we look forward to Sunday morning each week. We live in Sherwood Park, so its a short trip to the Park; we have come out on a number of evenings, as well as on the weekends. We counted 26 deer one evening a few weeks ago.

We look forward to being members of the Friends of Elk Island Society, and joining in on some of the activities.

Jim Scott and Lynne Forrest

Stories for the Trumpeter

Do you have an interesting story about Elk Island National Park to share? The Trumpeter always needs new material on all aspects of the Park. If you have a story, or an idea, please contact Georgina at 780-895-7399. We ask only that stories relate to the Park and be not more than 400- 450 words. They may be edited for spelling, grammar, clarity and length.

Photos are also welcome. Please send original prints (4 x 6) if possible, or if sent electronically, please scan in greyscale at 150 dpi in a 4 x 6 size. Prints will be returned, if you include your address.

Mission Statement — Friends of Elk Island Society The Friends of Elk Island Society is a non-profit, charitable organization that co-operates with Parks Canada to promote understanding, appreciation and respect for Elk Island National Park. The FEIS fulfills this mission by participating in conservation, science-based research, the operation of a sales outlet, special events and providing services to its members. The FEIS raises funds and administers donations to further the objectives of the Society.

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____ Fax number: _____ E-mail: _____

Individual membership (\$10.00): _____ Family membership (\$15.00): _____

Donation: _____

If you are donating \$25.00 or more, please indicate whether or not you would like us to send you a tax receipt. Send your Membership Form and payment to: Friends of Elk Island Society Box 70, 9920-63 Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T6E 0G9 (780) 988-4842