



MARSH HAPPENINGS

2009 Minister's Dinner

Another great attendance of 184 of Manitoba's corporate leaders joined the Honourable Stan Struthers, Minister of Conservation in February to celebrate the 13th Annual Minister's Dinner raising over \$120,000 in support of Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre.

Over the last 12 years, the Minister's Dinner has raised \$1.1 million for educational programming at the Centre.

In his welcome address to guests as Event Patron, Minister Struthers emphasized the Centre's critical role in educating the community: "By raising the level of wetland awareness and knowledge in the people who live, work and play in this vast watershed, the Interpretive Centre paves the way for stronger publicly supported wetland policies."

Thank you to all who attended and supported this successful corporate event.



Representing the 2009 Minister's Dinner Blue Ribbon Committee, Mauri Rutherford (Chair) and the partners of the Interpretive Centre: Mr. Neil Downey, President, Ducks Unlimited Canada and Hon. Stan Struthers, Minister of Conservation

OHMIC Receives National Carvers' Award

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre (OHMIC) received the *Carver's Award of Excellence* for its achievement in promoting the art of wildlife carving in North America. The award was presented at the Prairie Canada Carvers' Association's (PCCA) 23rd competition banquet in March.

"The Centre's service to the carving community in prairie Canada is exemplary and worthy of national recognition," said Ted Muir, president of PCCA. The one of a kind bronze sculpture was accepted by Ross Gage on behalf of the Centre was crafted by acclaimed wildlife artist Peter Sawatzky of Glenboro, Manitoba.



Since its inception, the Centre has played a pivotal role in fostering public understanding and appreciation of the history and value of waterfowl decoys. OHMIC supports the operation of a carving guild and through Dr. Frank Baldwin and other instructors, decoy carving classes are offered at the Centre and carving supplies are available through its gift shop.

OHMIC collects working waterfowl decoys to display and sponsors an annual award through the Prairie Canada Carving Championship. Award winning pieces of wetland wildlife art are exhibited at the Centre.

Astronomy Night: Astrophotography – May 21

Astrophotography is a fast growing hobby. It was once reserved for professionals as vast amounts of money and equipment were needed in order to take pictures.

Now, beautiful, high quality pictures of the night sky can be made by almost anyone using readily available, inexpensive digital cameras, or off-the-shelf webcams.

Learn how you can take amazing pictures of astronomical objects such as the moon, the sun, planets, the stars and other celestial objects such as star clusters and galaxies using your own equipment.

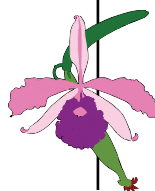
Join the Centre's monthly astronomy session featuring guest speakers from the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada on Thursday, May 21 at 8 p.m.

This session will feature an indoor presentation on how to use your photography equipment followed by an outdoor observation session where participants will have the opportunity to practice what they have just learned.



MARSHY QUIZ

1. Manitoba's provincial flower is the:
 - a. Three-flowered Avens
 - b. Prairie Crocus
 - c. Black-eyed Susan
 - d. Wood Rose
2. All orchids need special fungi (mycorrhizae) to:
 - a. Help them get nutrients from the soil
 - b. Complete the photosynthesis process
 - c. Give them their beautiful colours
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above



3. Which of the following plants do birds use to keep fleas and other insects away?
 - a. Canada Thistle
 - b. Common Silverweed
 - c. Wild Bergamot
 - d. Common Yarrow



4. Which of the following wetland plants consume insects to supplement their diet?
 - a. Pitcher Plant
 - b. Greater Bladderwort
 - c. Narrow-leaved Sundew
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above

5. Which of the following plants is highly poisonous?
 - a. Spotted Water-Hemlock
 - b. Water Smartweed
 - c. Common Water-Parsnip
 - d. Purple Loosestrife

6. True or False? The pollen from Canada Goldenrod is too heavy to be carried on the wind, therefore this plant must attract insects.



Answers: 1. b, 2. a, 3. d, 4. d, 5. a, 6. true

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For More Information

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Hours of Operation

July to October
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
November to June
10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

*Call ahead for Café hours.

Extended hours during the fall.

The Interpretive Centre is open beyond its public hours for group bookings and meetings.

ASK THE NATURALIST

What's that bird?

It is that time of the year when the birds return and some of you may be curious about what species they might be. The key is to start simply by putting your bird in a category such as songbird (perching), shorebird (long feet and long bill), waterbird (webbed feet), or bird of prey (sharp talons and curved beak). Once it is in a category, try to compare the size to something you know (is it smaller or larger than a robin?). What

shape is it? Are the wings pointed or rounded? Do you see any distinct colour patterns (i.e. dark wings with white stripes)? Only once you have gathered this information you are ready to look the bird up in a book. If you are still struggling, feel free to join one of the birding workshops offered at the Centre or simply call to ask for assistance. We will try our best!



Y.E.S. WORKSHOPS

Working with Y.E.S. (Youth Encouraging Sustainability), an initiative of the Science Council Manitoba, the Centre will hold two field workshops for students wishing to present a project at the annual showcase held in May.

The first workshop, "Sustaining Native Plants: Important Uses Yesterday and Today and connection to Soils" will be held in June. Students will learn about the science, as well as traditional history and uses of wetland and upland plants.

The second workshop "Active

Citizenship: GIS, GPS, Water Testing" to be held in October will focus on monitoring programs including GPS and Riverwatch Water Quality Monitoring programs.

Following the workshop at the Centre, students will be encouraged to use the skills from the workshop to build a science-fair style project for the annual showcase.

These field trips will permit students to participate in hands-on learning while building a project on the theme of sustainability.