

Cypress Hills 2010:

Biodiversity in South-western Saskatchewan Ecosystems

A National Biodiversity Education Field Workshop

Monday, May 10th to Friday, May 14th, 2010

From the knowledge of the First Nations Elders to the grandeur of the scenery in the Cypress Hills, this workshop will delight the senses and challenge the mind. Participants will experience biodiversity in Saskatchewan's south-west, at the landscape, species and in some examples, the genetic level, through extensive field study opportunities. The Canadian Wildlife Federation and their workshop partners are excited to present *Cypress Hills 2010: A National Biodiversity Field Education Workshop* for educators!

Beginning in Regina, Saskatchewan, you will visit the extensive native plant gardens at the *First Nations University of Canada*. Many plants have medicinal properties, long used by First Nations healers. You will be welcomed by an Elder and then the native gardens and some of the traditional uses of the plants will be explained on-site.

Following this event, you will enjoy a light lunch and a presentation on climate change and water regimes in the southwest, sponsored by the Canadian Water Resources Association - Saskatchewan Branch. Then on-board a fully equipped highway coach, you will have highlights of the mixed-grass and short-grass prairie landscape interpreted during the trip west, to *Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park*.

While staying at the Cypress Hills Resort Inn, you may enjoy leisure activities like canoeing, fly fishing, golfing, hiking - including a section of the Trans-Canada Trail- photography, and wildlife watching. You will tour the park, including the Lookout Point and Bald Butte, rising almost 700 metres over the surrounding prairie landscape. You will experience the unique lodge pole pine forest trails and have the opportunity to observe wildlife at close range, such as white tail and mule deer, coyotes, wild turkeys, hawks and eagles, moose, elk, and also herds of pronghorn antelope on the nearby plains.

Participation in mini-workshops during the conference will include an introduction to *Fish Ways*, and an overview of the new *Adopt-a-River* program. The Saskatchewan Outdoor and Environmental Education Association is offering an optional certification workshop in *Flying WILD*. Saskatchewan conference volunteers and park interpreters will offer on-site presentations on watersheds and riparian areas, traditional Indigenous knowledge, agricultural diversity and native plants and wildlife as we visit varied field study sites near the park.

As well, there will be special morning presentations on biodiversity, water and climate change by Fellows of the Canadian Wildlife Federation Learning Institute (CWFLI). Special events in the evening will include a closing banquet, an *Earth Songs* concert and work shopping of the *Temperature's Rising* climate change play, for those educators who would like to take it back to the classroom.

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During the half day west block field study, you will visit *Historic Fort Walsh*, the scenic *Conglomerate Hills*, with an optional hike to the hidden hills, and a luncheon stop the *Cypress Hills Winery and Bistro* en route. A second half day field study to Eastend and area will include a visit to the pure bred bison herd at the Nature Conservancy of Canada's *Old Man on His Back Prairie Heritage Conservation Area* and the *T-Rex Discovery Centre*.

These field studies will provide you with opportunities to learn about the landscapes as diverse wildlife habitat, the past use of the land, forest and wetlands for the survival of the First Nations people, as well as the pioneer farmers and ranchers. Recent gas and oil development in the area, wind farms and agricultural diversity are all part of the present and future stories of Saskatchewan's south-west.

On Friday's return trip, you will visit the *Chaplin Nature Centre*. On site, you will learn about the Old Wives' Lake salt water complex, the endangered Piping Plover monitoring and nesting program and the habitat features that make this Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) site critical to migrating shorebirds.

Also on your return trip, you will visit Moose Jaw's *Burrowing Owl Centre*, home to resident owls that have undergone rehabilitation and the largest extant wild nesting site in southern Saskatchewan. New interpretive displays and the native prairie flower garden will round out the visit.

The optional post-conference day in Moose Jaw will let you experience the pleasures of the geothermally heated mineral waters at the Temple Gardens Hotel and Spa. From here, you can take the historic trolley tour to view the murals throughout the downtown, walk the historic underground tunnels of Al Capone's infamy, or tour the Tunnels of Fortune, detailing the story of the immigrant Chinese workers who came to Canada in the last century.

For more information on the *Cypress Hills 2010* National Biodiversity Education Field Workshop, or to register, please visit the website at www.cwfEducation.ca or contact either

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