

14th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference

Tours and Workshops – May 5th, 2026

Tour: Exploring the Northeast Swale

Organizers: Meewasin Valley Authority and Swale Watchers

Location: Northeast Swale (Range Rd 3050, Saskatoon, SK)

Time: 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Description: Join Renny Grilz of Meewasin and members of the Swale Watchers as we explore 600+ hectares of native prairie and natural wetlands on the Northeast Swale. We will be honouring the land and its inhabitants with traditional Indigenous dancing and music, followed by a hiking tour through this precious natural area to experience an amazing diversity of life. Along the way, we will discuss techniques and strategies for managing and protecting this land in the context of planned urban expansion and other pressures.

Accessibility: a fairly easy walk on 2 km of mowed trails, with a slight rise and uneven ground. There will be a portapotty on site. Please dress for the weather and take precautions against ticks. In case of inclement weather, the dancers and drummers will perform indoors, courtesy of the Saskatoon Wildlife Federation, nearby.

Bus departure at TCU Place: 8:30 AM, return to TCU Place at 12:00 PM

Cost: \$60.00+taxes

Tour: Wanuskewin Guided Tours

Organizers: PCESC Logistics Committee and the Wanuskewin Heritage Park

Location: Wanuskewin Heritage Park (RR #4 Penner Road Saskatoon, SK)

Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Description: Learn from Wanuskewin's experienced interpreters on two guided tours with an immersive opportunity to interact with Northern Plains Indigenous cultures.

The two guided tours are:

Native Plant Walk: Learn about the medicinal and edible plants in the opimihāw Valley that Indigenous peoples use for sustenance, shelter, and tools. This program emphasizes the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land, our role as stewards of the ecosystems we live in, and past and present resource use and survival.

Bison Walk: Learn about bison as a keystone species to the grassland ecosystem, and as a cultural keystone to Northern Plains Indigenous peoples. Explore one of the methods of bison hunting through

the *nēwo asinīyak* Bison Jump. Participants will learn about the spiritual relationship between Northern Plains Indigenous peoples and bison, and how the Wanuskewin bison herd is revitalizing culture and the environment.

Bus departure at TCU Place: 9 AM, return to TCU Place at 12 PM. The bus ride is included in the cost of the tour, however there is parking available at Wanuskewin if you'd rather drive yourself. There will not be a discount for not taking the bus.

Cost: \$40.00+taxes

Tour: Bird-watching Tour

Organizers: Saskatoon Nature Society

Location: TBD

Time: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Description: Join bird guides from the Saskatoon Nature Society to visit a wetland in the Saskatoon area, where you may find prairie songbirds and water birds. Bring your binoculars.

Bus departure at TCU Place: 8 AM, return to TCU Place at 12 PM.

Cost: \$50.00+taxes

Workshop: Plant Species At Risk on the Canadian Prairies

Organizers: Sarah Vinge-Mazer, Eric Lamb

Location: WP Fraser Herbarium; University of Saskatchewan Campus, 51 Campus Drive, Saskatoon SK

Time: 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, there will be a break for lunch. Lunch is not included in cost of workshop but there are multiple locations on campus for lunch.

Description: The Canadian prairies are home to a suite of unique and imperiled plant Species At Risk. Accurate identification and documentation of these species is essential to determining their distribution and conducting long-term monitoring. In this workshop you will be introduced to the WP Fraser Herbarium and will have the opportunity to view specimens of some of the rare species in the collection. Sarah Vinge-Mazer will discuss how to identify these species, including the key features needed to differentiate them from look-alike species, using herbarium specimens. You will also learn the key habitat features, threats and optimal survey times for each.

In this workshop you will also learn how to prepare specimens. You will be guided through the process of preparing specimens including collection techniques, label data entry, and mounting. This skillset will be an invaluable asset to land managers, technicians, and students alike.

Public parking is available in the parkade at the back of the Agriculture Building.

Cost: \$110.00 + taxes

Workshop: Snakes on a Plain - Prairie snakes

Organizer: Sheri Monk, Snakes on a Plain

Location: TCU Place, Main Floor, Gallery A

Time: 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Description: Join a half-day workshop to learn about the natural history and ecology of Saskatchewan's native snake species. Become a better advocate for snake conservation and learn how to work and play safely around the beautiful prairie rattlesnake. Meet Carl Junior the bull snake, which is a native species, and learn how to handle him. We will also learn about our resident western black widows, and some of our other spicier invertebrates. This workshop will be full of myth-busting, interactivity and fun. Come for the snakes and stay for the prizes!

Cost: \$50.00 + taxes

Workshop: Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation

Organizers: Canadian Prairies Prescribed Fire Exchange (CPPFE) in collaboration with Meewasin Valley Authority, Canadian Wildlife Service, City of Saskatoon, SaskParks, Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Location: Wanuskewin Heritage Park or a Meewasin Valley Authority location. Workshop cost includes bus trip from TCU Place to workshop location and back to TCU Place.

Time: 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Description: Prescribed fire is an essential tool for managing and restoring prairie ecosystems, reducing invasive species, and maintaining ecological health. Learning how to plan and implement a prescribed fire safely requires careful preparation and scenario-based training.

In this workshop, you will be introduced to the fundamentals of prescribed fire planning and implementation through a hands-on scenario exercise. Guided by experienced fire practitioners, you will work through the steps of building a burn plan, reviewing equipment needs, and developing safety strategies.

Participants will take part in a mock prescribed fire scenario, where small groups will practice roles on an incident management team, respond to changing conditions, and discuss decision-making in a safe learning environment. This interactive approach will give you insight into the complexities of prescribed fire operations while strengthening collaboration and communication skills essential for fire management.

Workshop cost includes bus trip from TCU Place to workshop location and back to TCU Place.

Bus departure at TCU Place: 1 PM, return to TCU Place at 5 PM

Cost: \$60.00 + taxes