



north saskatchewan river valley
conservation society



Are illegal bike trails a growing problem

Wildflower News, the newsletter of the Edmonton Native Plant Society, has an article on the disrespectful and willful damage being done to our river valley called *Are We Entitled to Treat our River Valley as One Giant Gym?*

The piece states one problem that has become increasingly obvious over the last few years to those who frequent the river valley, especially people who visit different parks and areas, is the explosion of narrow, beaten earth side trails that has taken place. They emanate from the main trails and are especially abundant on the banks and escarpments of the ravines.

These trails are not sanctioned by the City and in fact contravene the parkland bylaw that forbids destruction of vegetation. Although some hikers may use them, the chief trail-makers are mountain bikers, who use these short-cuts with their steep slopes and root-knotted hazards, to give them their recreational thrills. These illegal trails are now so numerous that they form an extensive network throughout the entire river valley and ravine system.

Ecologically they are a disaster; they scar the landscape; they fragment habitat ensuring that there are few parts of the river valley where wildlife can be free of human influence, and they facilitate the spread of weeds. Read the complete article

at <http://cloud2.snappages.com/be296ab53ae397c57bac9e522bed2bb32a5a17f8/June%202020%20Wildflower%20News%20.pdf>



Indigenous landmarks and spaces in Edmonton

Amiskwaciy Waskahikan, also known as Edmonton, is home to many

breathtaking Indigenous landmarks and spaces. Connect with the city's past, present, and future while taking in everything from outdoor art installations to beautiful serene gardens.

One example, located to the west of the Edmonton Convention Centre and behind the old Edmonton Visitor Information Centre, is the Community Medicine Wheel Garden. This garden is located on the rooftop of the Riverview Room and provides stunning views of the gorgeous river valley.

The garden itself is in the shape of a medicine wheel, a symbol that honours all four directions, medicines, cycles of life and animals. The garden was created in guidance with local Cree Elder Francis Whiskeyjack. The garden is filled with dozens of plants indigenous to the area, and medicines that the Indigenous peoples often used in food, for healing, and for ceremony.

Complete information for all the landmarks and spaces at <https://exploreedmonton.com/articles/indigenous-landmarks>



High Level Bridge - Edmonton's most iconic structure

Construction began in 1910, but the project had its start in 1903, when the CPR decided to move forward with plans to extend its line from Strathcona to Edmonton. The federal government passed legislation requiring the crossing to be 150 feet above the water of the North Saskatchewan River, so that meant a high level rather than a low level bridge.

The deck at the top of the structure carried three tracks: the centre for trains, the two outside for electric streetcars. The road deck was located twenty feet

below, with two sidewalks eight feet wide supported on cantilever brackets.

With the final girder in place, on June 2, 1913 the first CPR passenger train with seven cars and 200 passengers steamed into Edmonton over the newly completed structure. August 11, the first streetcar made the journey across the upper deck. One passenger reported the trip this way: “From the streetcar, one looks down from a dizzy height into the murky waters of the Saskatchewan without so much as a handrail to break the gaze into the abysmal depths below.”

Streetcars ran across the bridge every day for the next 38 years until service was terminated on September 1, 1951 as part of the dismantling of the city’s streetcar service. After a few years, the streetcar tracks across the bridge were removed, while the railway track saw further use until the 1980s.

Luckily, it was never lifted and serves today as right-of-way for the High Level Bridge Streetcar service provided by the Edmonton Radial Railway Society. Learn more at <https://citymuseumedmonton.ca/2014/07/17/the-high-level-bridge-at-100/>



Recipes for White Spruce salt and sugar

White Spruce trees are one of the most widespread conifer trees in Alberta's boreal forest. They grow in well-drained, moist soils and can be found throughout western, central, and northern Alberta. This evergreen tree is a common winter food source for many birds and mammals, especially squirrels, who rely on their cones as a primary food source.

White Spruce trees also have a variety of uses for people. The branches have been used to make lean-to shelters and wind barriers, and larger wood pieces, once dried, act as good canoe frames, paddles, and snowshoes. The needles or tips are stiff and have a bright green colour and add a citrusy flavor to salt and sugar.

Indigenous peoples used white spruce for a wide variety of culinary and medicinal purposes. Spruce resin was used by many different nations across Canada and the U.S. as chewing gum. Add spruce tip salt to fish, eggs, vegetables, or anywhere else you'd like a natural, lemony flavour. Recipes for this and spruce tip sugar, which makes a wonderful shortbread, can be found at <https://www.ealt.ca/natures-nourishment-1/spruce-tip-salt>

Share river valley event, job posting, or news

If you have a river valley event, job posting, or news that you would like to see published in this newsletter, please send the info to nsrivervalley@gmail.com

Sincerely yours,

Harvey Voogd

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