

Saskatoon Nature Society

Newsletter

February 2026

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Relocating the Overwintering Sites of Monarch Butterflies Threatened by Climate Change by Moving Oyamel Sacred Fir Forests to Higher Elevations

Dr. Cuauhtémoc Sáenz-Romero
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Michoacan University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo
Morelia, Michoacan, Mexico

On Line Only

7:30 PM Thursday February 19, 2026

The climatic habitat of oyamel sacred fir inside the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve (MBBR), in central México, is projected to disappear entirely by the end of the century because of climate change. Rising temperatures, with consequent drought, disease and pests threaten these forests where millions of monarch butterflies spend their winters after migrating thousands of kilometers from Canada and the United States.

Forests move naturally in response to climatic changes, but at much slower rates than current climate change is happening. Over a decade ago Dr. Sáenz-Romero began developing a technique called “assisted migration” to move the Sacred fir trees to areas that will have a climate sustainable for them in the future. Working with the local indigenous community, he planted nursery raised seedlings under native pre-existing nurse shrubs to provide protective shade to help them adjust to the higher altitudes of the extinct Nevado de Toluca volcano outside the MBBR. He tested at four different elevations and found that the transplanted sacred fir trees had an acceptable survival rate even at the highest elevations. There are now signs that monarch butterflies are finding sacred fir forests at higher elevations. In addition to this management strategy, it will be important to continue existing efforts of reforestation within the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve. The success of these research trials is encouraging but needs to be investigated

at larger scales and for potential unintended ecological effects.

Dr. Cuauhtémoc Sáenz-Romero was born in México City, México. He earned a Bachelor degree in Biology from the Metropolitan Autonomous University–Xochimilco, Mexico City and a Master in Forestry Sciences from the Autonomous University of Chapingo, Chapingo, State of Mexico. He holds a Ph.D. with a major in Forestry and minor in Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin, USA. He is currently a professor-researcher, at the Michoacan University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo, Morelia, Michoacán, México.

Dr. Saenz Romero has completed sabbatical years at: (a) Laurentian Forestry Centre, Canadian Forest Service, Natural Resources Canada, Quebec City, Canada (2007-2008). (b) National Institute for Agricultural Research, Cestas, France (2014-2015). (c) the National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment and Le Studium Loire Valley Institute for Advanced Studies, Orléans, France (March-July 2024). He currently serves as the Mexican delegate to the Forest Genetic Resources Working Group, North American Forest Commission, Food and Agriculture Organization (2001-present). His main recent research interest is the management of forest genetic resources (genecology, population genetics, conservation and reforestation) considering climatic change.



Please note that if the link to join online requests a passcode, please enter SNS. If you have trouble connecting via the Zoom link, please text or phone LeeAnn at 306-880-9027. Please consider joining the meeting a little early so we can address any problems.

*All members who have registered an email address with SNS will receive an **email containing the link to join the meeting through Zoom**. If you have not registered an email address with us, but would like to do so, please contact Claire Bullaro at c.bear@sasktel.net.*

Field Trips

All are welcome to participate in field trips, except those described as “members only”. In some cases pre-registration may be necessary. Invite your friends! Carpooling for out-of-town trips is arranged at the meeting place. There are no fees or restrictions unless indicated; however, participants are expected to share gasoline costs and should make arrangements with the driver to do so. Phone the trip leader if you have any questions. Participants can return early if they wish. Members with FRS radios should bring them on out-of-town trips. For information on city buses, phone 306-975-3100. Many of our trip destinations are described in the 3rd edition of “A Guide to Nature Viewing Sites in and around Saskatoon” available from <https://saskatoonnature.org/special-publications/>

If the predicted wind chill is below -30C, check with the leader in case the trip is cancelled or rescheduled.

Saturday, February 7, 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Pike Lake Birding Trip

We will search for winter birds at Pike Lake Park.

Meet by the grain elevator at the Western Development Museum parking lot on Lorne Ave.

<https://goo.gl/maps/3j1KTNfasmC2>

No registration needed.

Leader: Kerry Hjertaas (306-260-6602)

Sunday, February 22, 1:30 – 3:30 PM

Montgomery Place Bird Walk

We will walk through the neighbourhood in search of winter songbirds in the mature spruce trees.

Meet at the parking lot on the north side of Montgomery Park on Caen St near Crerar Drive

Leader: Robert Johanson (306-653-2610)



Northern Flicker

May Haga

Saturday, March 14, 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Beaver Creek Bird Walk

We will walk along the creek trail at Beaver Creek Conservation Area in search of winter birds.

Meet by the grain elevator at the Western Development Museum parking lot on Lorne Ave.

<https://goo.gl/maps/3j1KTNfasmC2>

No registration needed.

Leader: Kerry Hjertaas (306-260-6602)

Sat. March 21 10:00 AM – 12 Noon

Forestry Farm Bird Walk

Meet in the small parking lot near the former Superintendent’s brick house on Rosy Bloom Lane.

Parking Lot Pin:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/pAbqotMXFhXYqfor9>

Leader: Bob Godwin (306-361-6732)

Fri. March 27 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Northern Saw-whet Owl trip

We plan to drive through a wooded area making stops to listen for Saw-whet Owls calling.

Register in advance by texting the leader.

Meeting place: Flying J Travel Centre, Idylwyld and Marquis Drive

Leader: Guy Wapple (306 227-9548)

As a volunteer or participant in the activities of the Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS), you are fully responsible for your own safety, and for your own personal insurance in case of injury. Please exercise great caution and care on field trips or any other outings. The Saskatoon Nature Society is not responsible for damage incurred to vehicles or other personal property while participating in any SNS activity. If going onto private land, always ask for permission, be friendly and respectful, exercise caution, and please be aware that participants may be responsible for damage to landowners' property.

President’s Message

Here we are – well into winter, the weather is so unpredictable, so I don’t know what it’s going to be like when you are reading this, but I have to say I very much enjoyed the warm break we had in January – always surprising and too quick but it gives us the hope and spirit to see winter through to the end!

I must share this wonderful email we received from Paul Gregory of Nature Canada as he was signing up for our most recent presentation about daylighting streams. He writes, “You folks really are doing some incredible things, in the office we call groups like yours “our champions”

and our role is to help support in any way we can and help share your story with the rest of Canada to inspire others.” Very nice! And nice to be noticed as we go about making SNS such a happening group!

So, it is February and the executive and I are starting to think about the upcoming AGM in March. We won't be taking on much more than getting our reports together and helping members to step up to join the executive – it's a great group and we are doing some fantastic stuff from advocating for safer windows for migratory birds, great speakers, awesome trips, the amazing Golden Eagles, youth programming, you name it, we are on it! So, if you can help a bit, think about reaching out and stepping up!

February is also a big month for citizen science and the Great Backyard Bird Count is happening 13th to 16th. Spend time in your favorite places watching birds. Identify them, count them, and submit your counts to help scientists better understand and protect birds around the world. What could be more fun and easier! You can use eBird or Merlin to make your submissions over the 4 days count toward GBBC. Check out their website: <https://www.birdcount.org>.

I want to update you all on the wonderful work our Bird Friendly Team is up to! The team is a coalition of SNS, Living Sky Wildlife Rehab, Wild About Saskatoon and Saskatchewan Light Pollution Abatement Committee and we are always looking for new partners. We were able to get \$5400 from the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee (a first!!); while not nearly enough to fix the windows on city hall, it was a good start, and we reminded the city people we are still here! We continue our certification process as a Bird Friendly city, but it is a big chunk of work. If you are at all interested, please reach out to me or Mercy Harris to help out. Our next big day is Seedy Sunday at Station 20 West, March 8th where we will work a table sharing our story.

Be sure to tune in to Wild About Saskatoon's Conversations Series on January 29th where the focus will be on "Befriending Urban Birds". The panel will consist of our own Mercy Harris, Jan Shadick, and Angela Tremka of Bird Friendly Regina (already certified) who will talk about the development of Bird Friendly Cities and the important part we can play in helping birds in our urban built environment. This should be a fascinating presentation for us all!

Many community groups were invited to a City Budget debriefing in January to discuss the fallout of the very

tough budget that we saw in November. We were discouraged by the Bird Friendly window initiatives not being funded but there were some bright spots especially in parks where there will be more work done within the naturalized areas portfolio and the urban forest which is good news!

The United Nations General assembly has designated 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. To this end the College of Agriculture at the U of S, in partnership with other units on campus, is celebrating with events planned throughout the year including a guest lecture and panel discussion in January with many SNS members in attendance. The key importance of stewardship of the rangelands/grasslands was stressed often by the speakers especially in a province like Saskatchewan where the grasslands play such a significant role!

Book of the Month is an impressive memoir by Brian Buckbee – *We Should All be Birds*. A personal reflection of a life faced with daunting challenges but aided and inspired by birds in his own yard! Released this summer – something to think about!

In closing, I want to recognize the passing of Yvonne Cuttle this past January, a very special SNS member, who was recognized for her amazing volunteerism by receiving the SNS lifetime membership in 2022 as well as being a Fellow of Nature Sask. She was constantly active especially in the Golden Eagles, a special group in her heart – she will be missed.

David Forbes

WANTED: President, Vice President and Directors!

The board of directors of the Saskatoon Nature Society is elected at the March Annual General Meeting. If you would like to serve on the board, please contact the president, David Forbes: email (davidforbes@sasktel.net)



SNS Board Member Profiles

December's Newsletter item "Why Volunteer to Join the Board of Directors" gave some information about how the board works and encouraged you to volunteer in our upcoming elections. We are looking to find 7 volunteers to replace those stepping down in March 2026. In the past couple of years, the president and vice president have introduced themselves. We thought it might be helpful for potential volunteers to know a little about others who have chosen to join the board.

Mercy Harris (Secretary)

Hello SNS members! My name is Mercy and I grew up in Pennsylvania before moving to Montreal and later Saskatoon. I joined SNS in 2020 when I was a graduate student at the U of S. Through SNS's field trips and newsletters, I became aware of local conservation issues, and when I finished grad school, I decided that I wanted to become more active in advocating for issues about which I cared. I thought that joining the SNS Board could be a good way to do just that, so when I saw an ad about SNS needing a Secretary, I thought "I could do that!". Since then, I have thoroughly enjoyed being on the Board not only because the other Board members are kind and helpful, but also because it has allowed me to learn about local environmental issues in much more detail. I never knew how much SNS did until I joined the Board! I especially appreciate that the Board has given me the time to work on my own "passion project" of raising awareness about bird-window collisions with the newly-formed Bird Friendly Saskatoon group.

I would encourage anyone who has a nature related passion – whether it's getting kids outside, protecting natural spaces, providing input to decision makers or anything else – to consider joining the Board. For a time commitment of just one meeting per month, you'll be surprised how much you will learn!

Golden Eagles

The Golden Eagles is an informal group of Saskatoon Nature Society (SNS) members. Our interests include all aspects of the natural world as well as social and multicultural history. We engage in out-of-town and city field trips. Participants should be SNS members and consider membership in Nature Saskatchewan. Unless otherwise indicated, we meet on Thursdays at the Churchill Shopping Centre, Taylor St and Clarence Avenue. Please check departure dates and

times. Leaders may request registration for certain destinations. Participation is free, although some destinations may charge admission or encourage donations. Please contact the trip leader if you have any questions.

February 26th, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) tour 117 Veterinary Road (large glass building with concrete steps).

Limit of **20** people.

People must register by **February 18th**. VIDO requires registrant names for a security check at least one week prior to the tour (Nancy Zacher will provide the names). Attendees must provide picture ID the day of the tour. The tour will provide an overview of personal protective equipment used in high-containment research, observation of ongoing research through a secure viewing window, and an overview of the specialized operational equipment required for high-containment work. Because parking at VIDO is limited, carpooling will be organized from Churchill Shopping Centre for anyone who would like to join. Please meet at 9:00 a.m. with a 9:15 a.m. departure. If parking at VIDO, please register vehicles at the reception area.

Leader: Nancy Zacher. Lunch to follow at Filosphi Restaurant.

Register: for the tour/lunch by **Feb 18th** by contacting Nancy Zacher by text: 306-717- 5871 or email: nancyzacher@sasktel.net

March 19th 10:00 - 12:00 p.m, Egypt

Travelogue Saskatoon Field House, Meeting room 3.

Ron Jensen to present: An Egypt Travelogue of birds and history traveling from the Nile delta to Sinai Peninsula, Sharm El Sheikh, Lake Nasser visiting temples, pyramids and finding birds along the way. Free parking (key in your license plate number when you come into the building). Cost: \$2.00/person for the room charge.

Leader(s): Nancy Zacher/Hilda Noton.

Lunch to follow at the Olive Garden. Please **register by March 16th** for the lunch with Hilda Noton (phone or text: 306-321-4760).



Beaver Creek

K. Meeres

Young Naturalists

The Young Naturalists is all about nature activities for kids and their families. Each program offers interesting activities geared for children aged 5 to 11 years. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. **Advanced registration is required.** To register or for more information e-mail: naturekids@saskatoonnature.org. Visit the Young Naturalists web page for more details. <https://saskatoonnature.org/young-naturalists/>

Chickadee Pishing - February 7

Owl ecology/owl pellet dissection – March 14

Wild About Saskatoon's "Conversations" Series

Befriending Urban Birds

Thursday, January 29 2026, 7-8pm. Online

Have you ever thought about what it is like to be a bird in Saskatoon? What places would you want to spend time in, and what risks would you need to avoid? Join this discussion about the **Bird Friendly Cities** program. For more information and to register (and receive the link) see: <https://wildaboutsaskatoon.org/conversations/>

Also note their next "conversation": The Costs of Urban Sprawl Wed., February 25 2026, 7-8pm. Online.

Great Backyard Bird Count Feb 13-16

For information see <https://www.birdcount.org>



Great Backyard Bird Count
29th Annual • February 13-16, 2026

Count birds in your backyard, local park, or wherever you spot a bird, and submit your observations online.
[birdcount.org](https://www.birdcount.org)

Common Goldeneye / Bufflehead déjeuné
Photo: Alex Sarker / iStockphoto.com

Audubon BIRDS CANADA / OISEAUX CANADA Cornell Lab Founding Sponsor: Wild Bird Habitat

Join us for **Gardenscape 2026** on March 27, 28 or 29 as a volunteer for the Saskatoon Nature Society booth!

There will be a variety of exhibitors and events including the **Media Challenge, Art Show and Superdogs**, as well as the **Speaker's Theatre** and **Gardening 101**.



Just **3 ½ hours** of your time is needed to meet and share with others the appreciation of nature and value of the natural world. <https://www.gardenscapeyxe.com/show-info/>

And best of all, you'll receive a **free admission pass**.

Interested? Contact Jan Spencer at j.spencer01@sasktel.net or by cell at 306-715-5948

Volunteer Hours Reporting

Each year we are required to submit volunteer hours in order to maintain our charitable status. **We ask that each volunteering member of SNS tally the hours you have volunteered in 2025** and send your totals to the treasurer at treasurer@saskatoonnature.org. Thanks to all for your good work on behalf of SNS during 2025, and for the additional time that, I hope, you will be willing to spend on this request.

Membership information

Invite a friend!

SNS memberships run from January-December.

Find a membership form at:

<https://saskatoonnature.org/membership/>

Saskatoon Nature Society Members are eligible for the following discounts:

- Early's Farm and Garden Centre provides a 10% discount on regular-priced seed, birdhouses and books;
- Wild Birds Unlimited provides a 10% discount on many regular-priced items;
- Don's Photo offers a discount on photo-finishing



Saskatoon Nature Society

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Website:

<https://saskatoonnature.org>

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SaskatoonNatureSociety

Newsletter



The deadline for the next newsletter is **February 17**. Please send any announcements or articles to Kathy Meeres. Please email: godmee@sasktel.net or call 306-343-8590. The editor would appreciate if articles are complete and submitted electronically.

Please consider switching from a paper to electronic copy of the SNS newsletter. You will help us save on paper, stamps, and volunteer time and you will get information more quickly and get pictures in colour.

Please contact Claire Bullaro (c.bear@sasktel.net) with your email address to switch. Thank you.

Chairs and Coordinators


Conservation	Sara Bryson.....306-261-6156	
Display	Greg Fenty.....306-370-8839	
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Board of Directors


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Director	Julianna Balaton	
Director	Sara Bryson.....306-261-6156	
Director	Kerry Hjertaas.....	
Director	Robert Johanson	306-653-2610
Director	Nicole Pasloski.....	
Director	Peggy Schmeiser.....	
Director	Jan Spencer	j.spencer01@sasktel.net

The board of directors meets about once a month, usually in the week before the monthly meeting. If you wish to bring an item to the attention of the board, please contact the president.

February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 	2	3	4	5	6	7 Pike Lake Birding ----- YN: Chickadee Pishing
8	9	10	11	12	13 Great Backyard Bird Count 13 th -16 th	14
15	16	17	18	19 February Meeting	20	21
22 Montgomery Place Bird Walk	23	24	25	26 GE: VIDO tour	27	28

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Beaver Creek Bird Walk ----- YN: Owl pellets
15	16	17	18	19 March Meeting AGM ----- GE: Egypt Travelogue	20	21 Forestry Farm Bird Walk
22	23	24	25	26	27 Northern Saw-whet Owl trip	28
29	30	31				

YN: Young Naturalists; GE: Golden Eagles; CBC: Christmas Bird Count