



# Nose Hill

News and Views  
**fonhs.org**



Number 50

The Friends of Nose Hill Newsletter

Spring 2014

## President's Message

by Anne Burke

Thank you for the tremendous turnout for the Society's AGM in November. It was wonderful to see familiar faces, as well as to meet new supporters. I also want to thank our returning and new board members.

Author David Peyto stepped in, with a review of LRT walking routes, including natural open spaces, such as Nose Hill, after Dr. Alessandro Massolo, at the University of Calgary Veterinary Department, cancelled his talk on the Urban Coyote.

Our monthly column "News from the Friends of Nose Hill" in NW Community Newsletters reaches about 83,900 households (Great News Publishing). Our presence on social media is growing too. The Friends of Nose Hill Facebook Page has expanded with all your photos and comments.

I have given a talk about Nose Hill, "The Peoples' Park", its history and groups such as Citizens for Nose Hill and the Nose Hill Users Group. I was invited to speak to a Meet-Up Group on Coalitions and Collaboration, organized by the Community Development Learning Initiative (CDLI).

For the June-August Drop-In Program of the Community Stewardship for

Biodiversity Program, please call 3-1-1. There are several projects each for one-and-a-half hours. The Nose Hill Pilot Project Program relies on volunteers and welcomes speakers. The programs are outdoors, educational and hands-on. Training, orientation, and supplies are provided. There is also a Parks Cleanup planned for Nose Hill, which is usually in September.

There was a city survey about a commercial-use policy for parks, including Nose Hill, which will be park-specific. The outline of the Biodiversity Action Plan was drafted and posted for input. We are happy to contribute. This is part of the State of the City Project that will go to City Council.

There is an Oral History Project: "Stories of Change". The aim is to collect perceptions about Calgary parks, urban landscapes, open spaces, and the overall environment. This is a City Parks initiative. A meeting is scheduled for: Monday, April 21, in the 3rd floor Tyndell Limestone Boardroom, Calgary Public Building, 205 8 Ave SE, Calgary, AB; time: 6:15 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.

The Calgary Foundation contacted us about Jane's Walk, named in honour of Jane Jacobs, the urbanist writer and activist. If you would like to participate or lead a walk (on Nose Hill or elsewhere), go

to their web site at  
[thecalgaryfoundation.org/news-events](http://thecalgaryfoundation.org/news-events).

The Nature Alberta May Plant Count has been conducted province-wide since 1976 and compiled by Nature Alberta. During Count week (May 25-31, 2014) survey your area and record on your checklist any species that are in bloom. We posted the Nose Hill checklists on our web site, and you can contact botanist Suzanne Visser at: [svisser@ucalgary.ca](mailto:svisser@ucalgary.ca).

We know that geo-caching is popular, but please remember the bylaws and stay on the paths and/or use the plateau. There have been problems with hang-gliding, kite-boarding, and potential avalanche training on Nose Hill. Extreme sports are prohibited because the activities can be harmful to natural areas, wildlife, and the general public.

Anne Burke

The Friends of Nose Hill executive is concerned about the publicity regarding the coyotes in Nose Hill Natural Area Park and, in particular, about the request by the U of C Faculty of Veterinary Medicine for members of the public to inform them of the location of coyote dens.

All the local residents that we have consulted believe that, when people are asked to report on dens, they will inevitably go looking for them. Natural Area Parks are primarily areas for wildlife protection and we feel that the focussing of public attention on coyote dens risks converting the park into something less like a reserve and more like a zoo.

We understand that, in general, coyotes can take care of themselves, but when it comes to dens with pups we feel that the less interference by humans the better. We suggest that users of Nose Hill respect the privacy of mother coyotes and their families by staying away from them and not spreading information on den locations.

If you notice park visitors interfering with an occupied den please use your cell phone to notify the bylaw department via 311. And remember that all park users must **STAY ON THE PATHS**.

### **Four Car-Free Visits to Nose Hill Park**

For anyone not living within walking distance of Nose Hill Park the usual method of getting to the park is to drive the car. An alternative method you might like to try is a car-free visit to the park. I have listed four options where you can start from a Northwest LRT Station and ride a bus close to the edge of the park.

**1. Mule Deer Plateau** – From Sunnyside Station walk one block to the west side of the Safeway store and catch a northbound bus # 4

Huntington. Get off the bus when it turns right from 14<sup>th</sup> St onto North Haven Drive. Cross to the west side of 14<sup>th</sup> St and head west between the Calgary Winter Club and the Calgary Police Service building to the start of your walk in Nose Hill Park. To return to Sunnyside Station retrace your steps and catch southbound bus # 5 North Haven on 14<sup>th</sup> St.

**2. Rubbing Stone Hill** – The bus # 4 Huntington route continues north on North

Haven Drive and then onto Norfolk Drive. Get off the bus at the stop close to Norfolk Way adjacent to Egerts Park. Cross to the far side of Norfolk Drive and follow a path through a green space to reach a tunnel under 14<sup>th</sup> St. The west side of the tunnel is just south of the parking lot for Rubbing Stone Hill. To return to Sunnyside Station retrace your route back to Norfolk Drive and turn right to catch bus # 5 North Haven near Nottingham Road.

**3. Many Owls Valley** – The third car-free visit to the park starts at Brentwood Station and takes you to Many Owls Valley. Ride bus # 143 Northwest Loop to the stop on 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave just west of Brisebois Drive. Walk back to Brisebois Drive and turn left walking north to the crosswalk just south of John Laurie Boulevard. Cross to the east side of Brisebois Drive and follow the John Laurie Pathway east to the pedestrian overpass called Whispering Grass Pathway. Students from Dr. Coffin School chose the name for this overpass. At each end of the overpass are two curved steel panels sculpted by Canmore artist Tony Bloom. The path on the far side of the overpass leads to a trail junction just east of the parking lot. On the return to Brentwood Station retrace your route back to Brisebois Drive and 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Catch bus # 43 Northwest Loop back to the station.

**4. Meadowlark Prairie** – The fourth and final car-free visit to the park starts at Dalhousie Station and takes you to Meadowlark Prairie. From the station catch bus # 77 Edgemont and get off on northbound Edgebrook Drive just north of Edgemont Boulevard. Walk back to Edgemont Boulevard and turn left walking a short distance to the traffic lights at Shaganappi Trail. Cross to the east side of Shaganappi Trail and go through the parking lot to begin your walk in the park. To return to the station retrace your steps back to the corner of Edgemont Boulevard and Edgebrook Drive. Cross to the south side of Edgemont Boulevard and catch bus # 77 Edgemont on Edenvold Drive just south of Edgemont Boulevard.

I hope you will enjoy this alternative way of visiting Nose Hill Park. You can also travel on the South LRT line to either Canyon Meadows Station or Fish Creek-Lacombe Station, to reach walking routes in Fish Creek Park, Calgary's other large urban park.

Submitted by David Peyto, author of "Calgary LRT Walks: The Northwest Stations", "Calgary LRT Walks: The South Stations", and "Walk Calgary's Escarpments and Bluffs".

### **About Spring, Deer and Coyotes on Nose Hill**

(from one of our members)

What a glorious weekend we just had. It feels as if winter's back has finally been broken. Today is March 10 and I saw my first robin of spring in Nose Hill Park.

The dog and I had a blast soaking up the sun as we slipped and slid through thigh deep drifts that had small rivulets of water running beneath them. South and east slopes were either dry or mucky rather

than icy. Gumbo thick mud, especially on the 'stabilized' tread trails, almost sucked my gum boots off my feet. Ah, the smells of spring- dirty wet dog, rotting vegetation and damp earth. Already there are pussy willows in Confederation Park and the Silver Springs Birthplace Forest.

The length of the bitter cold this winter had made me fear that some of the

animals on Nose Hill would not be able to survive. I was happily surprised to count 13 porcupines on last Thursday's walk and I hadn't even gone into Porcupine Valley (there are at least 5 there) or north to Macewan. Those are tough little critters!



It's so easy to spot them in the trees, especially against the sunlight shining through their hollow quills to create a halo or aura effect. On the ground though, they look exactly like a clump of bunch grass.



Someone asked what had happened to the group of deer that usually hung out along Shaganappi Trail. The answer is, really, nothing. All animals move through

territory, looking for food, shelter, or avoiding interactions with perceived predators. As always, in fall and winter, deer tend to form larger groups of both sexes. White tail deer (the most common on Nose Hill) tend to move in and out of groups. Biologists have studied why animals form groups and the focus has often been on the anti-predator benefits of group size. Those include shared vigilance (more eyes to spot the coyote, wolf etc.), dilution of risk (less chance of me being taken down in a group), and confusion of predators (who is the coyote actually trying to bring down). Since the white tail most often flee, rather than trying to defend themselves, a flexible group is a good strategy.

On mule deer plateau (appropriately named 40 years ago when mule deer were more common than white tails), we have, since February's bitter weather, encountered a large herd of deer. It encompasses 50 or more white tail. On many occasions there are two to four coyotes moving through the herd. These coyotes are merely foraging for small ground animals such as mice and voles. It is interesting to note how the deer ignore their potential predators. Usually they also ignore pedestrians and well-behaved dogs. We've often walked parallel to the group with less than 5 meters separating the dogs from the deer.

White tails can outrun coyotes unless they encounter deep, deep snow, especially crusty snow. As the deer plunge through the crust, their momentum is slowed while the much lighter coyotes stay on the surface and maintain speed. That is why during the winter, we often find deer carcasses near the bottom of slopes and deep gullies where they literally hit the wall of snow.

Dr. Susan Lingle (University of Winnipeg) has spent many years studying coyote-deer interactions and predation. Her work in many peer-reviewed journals is based on observational studies where she and her co-workers have spent many thousands of hours at their spotting-scopes watching and recording. This type of work is very different from projects that elicit observations from the public. When 100 people call 311 with coyote sightings, how many coyotes really are there? Do these people all see the same coyote? Or do 30 people see one, 45 people see another and 25 see yet another?

Have you looked at "Coyote Conflict Reported in Calgary (2005-2008)"? You can find it at: [rockies.ca/coyotes](http://rockies.ca/coyotes). I was unable to navigate the mapping system (but I am a spaz at that type of thing), but Nose Hill Park seems to have a very low density of coyotes and few reported confrontations. The authors state that interactions are much more common in areas that have garbage which can be utilized as food by the coyotes.

Remember that coyotes are most likely to react to you on Nose Hill when it is pup-rearing season (April to May). Please try to note the sentinels around den sites and stay away to avoid disturbing the animals. That may mean not using designated trails that go within 100 meters of several long-term den sites.

I highly recommend playing the sound track of coyotes howling and barking at [urbanwildness.com/coyotes\\_howling.html](http://urbanwildness.com/coyotes_howling.html). (Quick Time plug in required). Not only is the sound truly inspiring but it can be used to help train your dog(s).

As spring has sprung I expect to see many more people out enjoying the park. Let's all show respect for one another and for the animals by avoiding needless confrontation, and by picking up our garbage and dog droppings.

Unfortunately, winter came back with a vengeance on March 20, the official first day of spring.

**Friends of Nose Hill Society**

**Membership Year: 2014**

**\$10.00**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **RENEWAL 9 NEW 9**

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The Friends of Nose Hill invite submissions of articles, poems, thoughts, drawings or photographs from members, visitors and others who have experienced the Hill. We will do our best to print all submissions, but because of space limitations, we reserve the right to edit as necessary.

Please include your name and phone number with submissions.

**The views expressed are those of individuals and do not necessarily reflect those of the FONHS**

## The Friends on Facebook

The Friends of Nose Hill have a Facebook Group. If you are a Facebook member, check out the group: "Friends of Nose Hill Society". Feel free to post your stories, photos, comments and questions about the Park.

Members who would like to receive future issues of the Friends of Nose Hill Newsletter by e-mail should send an e-mail message with their request to: [ervan@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ervan@ucalgary.ca)

New members can join the Friends of Nose Hill by mailing \$10.00 to:

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**130 – 5403 Crowchild Trail NW**  
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