

# WASCANA FREEWHEELERS TOUR TO GRASSLANDS NATIONAL PARK

## WHEN

Labour Day weekend - Friday, August 29 to Monday, September 1, 2014

## WHERE

Grasslands National Park – West Block near Val Marie, SK

## HOW TO GET THERE

The most direct way is to travel west on Highway 1 to Swift Current and then south on Highway 4 to Val Marie. The trip takes about four hours.

## CAMPING

We are camping in the Frenchman Valley Campground, in the heart of the park.

- we'll use sites 8-10 with tents also in the area north of site 9 and 10. Park staff will be bringing in extra picnic tables for us.
- We can use the Cook Shack as a gathering space and shelter from the elements. It has power outlets and a nice long counter. There are lots of picnic tables in and around the Cook Shack.
- There is potable water, but you should bring lots of your own for cooking and washing yourself and your dishes.
- There are vault toilets, but there are nice and not too smelly.
- There is no shower, but our new club shower tent will be set up for you to use. Bring one of those black shower bags to heat up the water. The tent's frame is strong enough to hang it on.
- Cell coverage is available, but spotty. Don't count on it.
- We'll have our new big, blue club tent. It has screen sides all around to protect us from the bugs. It also has sides that fold down to protect us from the wind and rain. But we're hoping to have no bugs, wind or rain.

## ITINERARY

### *FRIDAY, AUGUST 29*

- Drive to Val Marie
- Stop in Val Marie:
  - pick up info about the park at the Park Visitor's Center
  - have lunch or a snack in the excellent Harvest Moon Café.
  - Check out the art gallery where you can buy from local artists
  - Buy last minute groceries at the White Mud Grocery store.
- Drive to the campground and set up camp
- Cook supper and visit with everyone

### *SATURDAY, AUGUST 30*

- Cook breakfast in camp
- At 9:00 a.m. we'll leave camp riding north along the Ecotour Road about 10 km to the park boundary, stopping to see the sights along the way.

- We'll have lunch at lunch time either on the road or back in camp. Make sure to bring your lunch.
- Then we'll ride south from camp to the southern boundary of the park.
- There will be a map of the park on the Web site.
- We will have a SAG wagon with water, a tire pump and support if we need it.
- Supper is in camp with people cooking for themselves
- At 7:00 p.m., Dave Cyca, a sing-songwriter from Swift Current will be leading a sing-along in camp. Many of us know Dave from the GASP tours.

### *SUNDAY, AUGUST 31*

- In the morning we'll drive to the west side of the park and in on the 70 Mile Butte Road.
- we'll hike the 70 Mile Butte Trail, a 5 km loop over difficult terrain. It will take us to one of the highest points in the park.
- If we still have energy, we will also hike the Eagle Butte Trail, a 2 km loop over easy terrain
- Lunch can be in Val Marie, if the Harvest Moon Café is open. I have to check. Or you can bring your own lunch
- In the afternoon, we can try to ride the Broken Hill Trail that leaves close to the campground. It's a 11 km loop trail over undulating and broken prairie. The park staff said that others have ridden the trail on their bikes. I didn't have time to check it out.
- Supper will be in camp. We will have our usual potluck supper, where everyone cooks something to share. Given our limited facilities for food storage and cooking, the food won't be fancy. But we always seem to have lots of wonderful food to eat.
- There will be a movie at dusk.

### *MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1*

- At 9:30 a.m. park staff will lead a tour to the Snake Pit where the snakes go to hibernate for the winter. The cost is \$3.90 per person.
- After the tour, people can hang around the park or drive home.

### WHAT TO BRING

In addition to your usual camping and cycling gear and food, bring:

- A bike with wide tires to ride over the gravel and dirt roads in the park
- Lots of water
- A black shower bag for heating water for your shower

### COST

- Camping fees are \$4.90 per person per night
- The Snake Pit tour is \$3.90 per person per night.
- The club will pay both fees.
- You pay your other expenses such as gas and food.

RESPONSE REQUESTED - Please let me know if you plan to attend.

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