



## German volunteers with Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve

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After six months of traveling through Canada, Thomas and Susanne Abe from Germany arrived in Hafford last week. "We are really happy to stop here and spend some time volunteering with the Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve", says the 28-year old Thomas.

Various interesting projects indoors and outdoors are already waiting for them: Revising the Biosphere Reserve's website and keeping the facebook page updated. The couple is also involved in the Redberry Lake Watershed Agri-Environmental Group Plan (AEGP). This project encourages livestock producers to implement sustainable management practices on their farms.



Thomas & Susanne Abe Enjoying their time at Redberry Lake

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Together with Rachel Turnquist, the AEGP Technician, Thomas and Susanne visited two farmers who would like to join this program. "It is so exciting to see all the different kinds of land use, to talk to the people and to learn more about environment-friendly farming", Susanne notes.

But what brought the German couple to Canada and to the Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve? "One evening about two years ago Susanne and I were sitting together talking about what we would really like to do in our lives", Thomas remembers. It took them not very long to know the answer: Spending one year abroad! "With it's combination of amazing wilderness and a language we wanted to improve, Canada was perfect for us", Susanne says. And so, end of March, they quit their jobs, sold their cars, put all their belongings in storage and took the flight to Toronto. Visiting the country as tourists was not enough for the two Germans. To get in a deeper touch with the landscape, culture and ecosystem, they decided to support several Biosphere Reserves in Canada with volunteer work while staying in regions where they exist. "Starting in Ontario we spent some wonderful weeks in the Biosphere Reserves Georgian Bay and Long Point. Afterwards we headed out east to explore the beauty of the Maritimes and to volunteer in the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve in Nova Scotia", Susanne summarizes their journey. On their way back and further west to Saskatchewan they decided to visit first the grasslands in the southern part of the province and the Rocky Mountains before settling down at Redberry Lake. "Traveling through Canada is like traveling ten different countries – it was and is still an incredible experience for us", the couple explains. "We are so glad to have both Thomas and Susanne here to support us with their help", says John Kindrachuk, Executive Director of the Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve. "And maybe they can add another experience to their collection: A winter in Saskatchewan."

Eventually the couple will end their journey on Vancouver Island and fly back to Germany at the end of March next year.