

# Japanese researchers visit Saskatchewan and Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve

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Left to right: Dr. Akiko Sakai (Yokohama National University and Japanese National Committee for MAB), Prof. Maureen Reed (School of Environment and Sustainability, SENS), Dr. Nobuhiko Wakamatsu (Japanese National Committee for MAB), Ryo Sakurai (Japanese National Committee for MAB), John Kindrachuk (RLBR), Susanne Abe (RLBR), Rachel Turnquist (RLBR) and Dr. Vladimir Kricsfalusy (SENS). © Maureen Reed

Dr. Akiko Sakai, Dr. Nobuhiko Wakamatsu and Ryo Sakurai are members of the Japanese National Committee for Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and also researchers of a project conducted by the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature in Japan. This project brought them to Canada and Saskatchewan to learn how local environmental knowledge (including culture) is formed through interaction among various groups and community members and how it is used to make decisions.

Another goal of this project is to study how both researchers who live in the community and researchers visiting the community support the local actions as scientists and community members.

For their research the three Japanese delegates chose four sites in Saskatchewan: The School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) at the University of Saskatchewan, Prince Albert National Park, Sturgeon River Ranch and Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve (RLBR). The program at Redberry Lake started with a barbecue and an informal discussion with the Executive Directors of the RLBR Board about the history and establishment of the Biosphere Reserve, about environmental education and awareness and about the engagement of the local community in the projects designed and implemented for and in Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve and area.

On the second day three professors from SENS joined the group and started off visiting a local farmer. The family gave an introduction about their way of sustainable farming and living and how they appreciate residing in one of the 16 Canadian Biosphere Reserves. Here the Japanese delegation also had the chance to do horseback riding and roping.

The afternoon was dedicated to learn about the history of Saskatchewan when the Voyageurs shaped the country and to actually paddle on Redberry Lake. Vinessa Currie-Foster, owner of Clearwater Canoeing, first gave a hands-on demonstration on how the Voyageurs were dressed

and made a living by trading fur back in the days. Keeping this in mind the group went out in a “Voyageur Canoe” to paddle on Redberry Lake. Watching the pelicans nesting on one of the islands was part of this tour as well. After three hours of being on the water the group came back to the Research & Education Center for a home cooked Ukrainian supper introducing them to one of the main cultures in the Biosphere Reserve. The day ended with a drive through the area to spot some wildlife and to get an impression of the busy harvesting season representing the primary economic activity within the area. The three visitors from Japan spent two nights at a cabin at Redberry Lake which gave them the perfect opportunity to combine doing research and enjoying their stay in Saskatchewan.



The Japanese Delegation visited a farm in the Biosphere Reserve.