



FLOWING through ALBERTA

*explore the diverse eco-regions of Alberta
from the Rocky Mountains to the Badlands*



by Michael O'Brien, Red Deer River Naturalists

Next year's Canadian Nature Federation Conference will once again be a birthday party. The CNF will be celebrating its 20th birthday; and the hosting naturalist organization will be celebrating its 85th year of operation. We'd like to invite you to the party.

Our group has been very actively involved in environmental issues and battles, particularly in the past 15 years. However, our conference is being organized on two tracks next year. One track will be issue oriented, but the other track will be on straight natural history, and the enjoyment, through knowledge of our natural world.

Our society, the Red Deer River Naturalists, and our community, Red Deer, both derive their name from the river which runs through our small city of 55 thousand. Our river, we have decided, will also be the focus of the conference. Both the sessions of the conference, and the trips which will bracket it, will follow the river as it flows through the mountains, the parklands, and the prairie zones of Alberta. Since the CNF will likely be dealing with water management problems as its principal theme next year, the 91' Red Deer conference will complement that investigation.

One set of speakers will deal with the environmental issues of these three zones while another set of speakers will deal with the pleasures of seeing and understanding the natural history of the three zones. So whether your interest in nature is mainly issue oriented or pleasure centered, there will be lots for you to enjoy. You can stay on one track or mix and match.

Prior to the conference we are preparing a major 5 day prairie zone trip, as well as several 3 day to 1/2 day trips to various locations in the parklands of Central Alberta.

The post conference trip will be a week long mountain trip. All of the longer trips will be by motor coach. Some of the field trips within the conference proper will be on the river itself, and others will be beside it and will provide a look at the beautiful park our organization helped to plan and which stretches the entire length of the city. The Sunday CNF birthday brunch will probably involve a river rafting tour through our city.

Most bird walks will start at the conference hotel, since it borders the bicycle and walking trail network which runs for nearly 40 kilometers through the city - most of the trails through wooded and other natural areas. Bird life is varied and abundant in Red Deer since we are, I think, the first city in the country to have instituted a purely biological mosquito control program - a program that is economical, inexpensive, environmentally friendly, and also a program that works. Come and find out more about our mosquito control program, a program which relies in part on the enhancement of natural mosquito predators, part on Bacillus thurgenensis, and partly on an educated willingness of the citizenry to swat what lites.

Besides the conference motel, there will be a wide variety of alternate places to stay, including clean and economical motels. Red Deer has a very pleasant camp grounds by the river, and there are spots for the RV enthusiasts.

