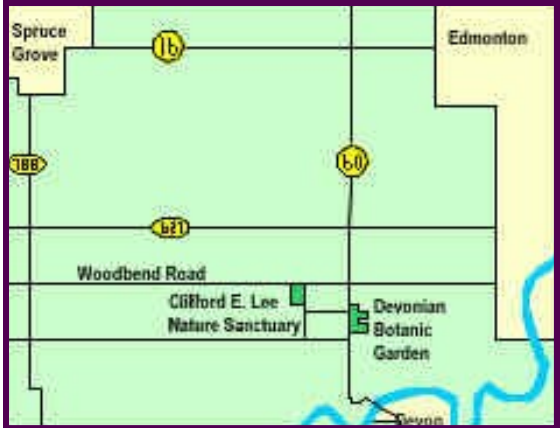


Directions



33km SW of Edmonton city centre. Take highway 16 W to highway 60, go S for 13.2 km to Woodbend Rd. and turn W for 1.6km then S for 1.4 km.

The sanctuary is open to the public year round free of charge. Donations are encouraged on site or they can be sent to:
51306 Range Road 264
Spruce Grove, Alberta
T7Y 1E7



Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary



Historical Journey

Time Line of Events

- 1977** - Clifford E. Lee Foundation provided funds to purchase the sanctuary
- 1978-82** - Biophysical research projects began.
- 1979** - Calgary powerline on north boundary averted
- 1980** - Official opening of Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary
- 1980** - Land subdivision on west boundary appealed
- 1981** - Construction of 3 km boardwalk
- 1982/83** - Purchase of the north quarter of land with funds from the Clifford E. Lee Foundation
- 1983** - Beginning of Canada Goose Management Program
- 1983/84** - Application to Alberta Local Authorities Board for tax exemption status. This was the first organization of this type to receive tax free status in the country
- 1985** - Leasing of County reserve
- 1985** - Management of meadow using controlled burning method
- 1985** - Title of land given to the Canadian Nature Federation from Clifford E. Lee Foundation
- 1986** - Inclusion in the Environmental Law Centre's Book *Guide to Private Conservancy*
- 1988** - Beginning of Ducks Unlimited Water Management Program
- 1990** - Nomination and inclusion in the *Alberta Watchable Wildlife Viewing Guide*
- 1991** - Management committee became volunteer stewards of newly purchased land west of the Sanctuary under the Alberta Lands Forest & Wildlife Stewardship program
- 1991** - Acquisition of the 16 acre County reserve on south-east corner and subsequent development of a new trail in 1994/95
- 1992/93** - Presentation to Stony Plain Council regarding Deer Park Drainage Water Management
- 1993** - Funding recieved from Alberta Fish & Wildlife to re-design and replace viewing platform.
- 1994** - Inclusion in Devon Tourism attractions
- 1995** - Nomination and inclusion in *Nature Walks and Sunday Drives 'Round Edmonton*
- 1999/2001** - Probe Pipeline Proposal to cross the Clifford E. Lee Sanctuary negotiations and finally a brief to the AEUB
- 2001** - Appeal to Parkland County to make Municipal Conservation Easement Program Presentation to Council and have meetings with the County. Many naturalists groups respond and, when council moves forward, numerous letters to the community and the papers are submitted
- 2003** - Canadian Nature Federation decides to divest itself of land and the Sanctuary looks for a new owner
- 2005** - The Management Committee of the Clifford E. Lee Sanctuary becomes a society, the Lee Nature Sanctuary Society
- 2006** - Memorandum of Understanding with the Edmonton Public School Board for the Alternative Science Program to use the Sanctuary as an outdoor classroom
- 2007** - Ducks Unlimited Canada becomes the new landowner of the Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary and The Nature Conservancy of Canada becomes the conservation easement holder



Design by: Sacha Mulholland 2007

About the Sanctuary

How it all Started

In 1977 the Clifford E. Lee Foundation purchased a quarter section of marsh land from Hector Cunningham, a local farmer, for the purpose of establishing a nature sanctuary. Located 25 km southwest of Edmonton the property was leased by the Canadian Nature Federation.

Subsequently, a steering committee comprised of local residents, the Edmonton Bird Club, and the Edmonton Natural History Club was formed for administrative purposes. The Sanctuary was officially opened to the public in 1980.

The Geography

The Clifford E. Lee Sanctuary is situated on the Devon Sandhills, which were deposited during the last glaciation. About half of the sanctuary is wetlands surrounded by sandy ridges.

Jack Pine bluffs, open hillsides and willow-fringed potholes make up the rest of the sanctuary. The north section is dominated by remnant Boreal forest while the south is mainly Aspen parkland habitat. An

additional 160 acres of similar habitat has been purchased, but is not open to the public at the present time.

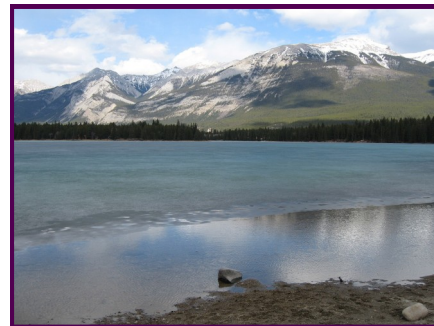


Site Management

The resource management committee decided on active management for maintaining the meadow and controlling water levels in the marsh. Several management techniques have been used to slow down the natural successional growth of Poplar trees in the meadow, including burning, mowing and selective cutting. In the north section of the sanctuary, Ducks Unlimited built a weir, a small dam for regulating water levels in the marsh. This has been successful in attracting previously uncommon birds like the Canada Goose and several species of shorebirds.



Clifford E. Lee, The Man



Clifford E. Lee was an Edmonton businessman who used his personal fortune to establish a humanitarian foundation. Since his death, his family and friends have continued the foundation's work. This includes the purchase of the nature sanctuary, sponsorship of the Concert Master's Chair in the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, major contributions toward the establishment of a medical clinic in the Boyle Street area of Edmonton, an emergency shelter for women in Grande Prairie, and a walkway for people with disabilities around Lake Annette in Jasper National Park.

Before the Sanctuary

Before the land was initially purchased in 1916, it was a timber reserve. George H. Tomlinson, a tinsmith from Yorkshire, England, was the first owner of what is now the south section of the Sanctuary. Mr. Tomlinson built a home and homesteaded the quarter section. This original site can be seen from the Sanctuary's eastern boundary.



In the 1920's, Mr. Tomlinson built his second house, which faced south along a rise just west of the main entrance. Later he and his wife moved into Edmonton to open a Tinsmith Shop on 124th street. Mr. Tomlinson sold his homestead to Charles Clausen, who lived with his son, Theodore, and mother-in-law, Mrs. Platt. The land was eventually divided into an east and west section to be sold. Hector Cunningham bought the west section and George Cunningham bought the east section. In 1915, William Walter Clevette, a stonemason from England, purchased what is now the north section of the Sanctuary. He did not receive full title to the entire 160 acres because 40 acres were under water. He built his log cabin home by cutting the logs himself and carrying them on his shoulders since he did not own a horse. The wetland area, although not suitable for farming, became Mr. Clevette's favourite picnic and berry picking spot. In 1922, the Alberta Government encouraged residents to start fur farms for mink or fox as a result of the area



not being suitable for agriculture. Some fur farms were established, but rarely they became a source of income.

Local Roadways

Early roads in the district typically followed Indian trails over hills and around marshes. Local residents sometimes paid off their taxes by hiring themselves and/or their horse teams for road building.



Natural Disasters in the Area



Several forest fires have occurred in the Sanctuary over the years, but there are two that really stand out. In 1933, a fire destroyed the area surrounding the Clevette homestead, yet amazingly left their home untouched. In 1961, an aggressive fire burned through the Woodbend area.

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