

Plucking the planks at Waterton Park Front project

BY GEOFF MORGAN

The Nature Conservancy of Canada hosted a stewardship project called "Plucking the Planks" at the Waterton Park Front Project on Saturday, Aug. 8, with a twist: once the conservation work drew to a close, a temporary art installation was erected at the site.

Volunteers, staff and a troupe of Calgary-based artists attended the multi-purpose event aimed to conserve the natural landscape at the Marsh property.

The Marsh property is one of the NCC's properties at the Waterton Park Front Project, immediately East of the national park gates along Highway 5.

"It's part of our stewardship responsibility of this particular property," said Robin McLeod of the NCC.

The volunteer-supported event intended to remove a burdock weed infestation, remove wind fencing and a shack for future weeding projects.

The event also attracted an artists' group called Aeolian Recreational Boundary Institute. Chritina Greco, Michael Benoit, Doug Haslam and Mark Dicey have each spent more than 20 years practising various expressions of art, and collaborate together as ARBI in projects which use boundaries as a theme.

Of the NCC's Plucking the Planks event, Dicey said, "we really like these projects."

Using the deconstructed lumber from the shack and fences, the four artists worked together to create a temporary artistic work at the site.

The artists were interested in creating art "outside of the traditional boundaries of the studio" and in a setting where "nature will reclaim it."

In addition to the ARBI artists, approximately 20 volunteers and NCC staff worked hard at the property, and were treated to a nature hike following their cleaning and clearing efforts.

Another NCC event at the Waterton Park Front this



PHOTO BY GEOFF MORGAN

Demolition crews... Volunteers, artists and Nature Conservancy of Canada staff met at the Marsh property of the Waterton Park Front Project on Saturday, Aug. 8, for a day's work plucking weeds and clearing old structures.

summer saw botanists from across the province gather to study rare plant species on

NCC property.

The Botany Alberta weekend catalogued a number of

rare and common plants throughout the Waterton Park Front, and volunteers will be

returning to the site this Oct. 1-4 to reconsider the plants surveyed last June.