

AUTUMN

On October 22nd AWA hosted Autumn Splendour, AWA's largest event of the year in Edmonton. Over 100 AWA members and supporters gathered once again at Edmonton's Snow Valley Ski Club to re-connect with each other and learn more about AWA's activities over the past year. Guests

had the opportunity to mix with and ask questions of eight of AWA's eleven-member board – led by our President Owen McGoldrick. We were very pleased that Edmonton Strathcona MP Linda Duncan was once again able to join us. The same should be said of Laura Jackson, of Jackson Power, and Steve and Kay Kulak of Edmonton's Wildbird General Store. They generously

sponsor Edmonton's speaker series. The highlight of the evening came courtesy of Vivian Pharis, Alberta's archangel of wilderness. Vivian took her audience on a tour of Willmore Wilderness Park – what she labelled "a million acres of wildest wonder." She described the Park's importance to Alberta's First Nations – archaeological evidence points to aboriginal occupation and use in the Willmore as long as 10,000 years ago. By the time of World



Sam Gunsch, Peter Lee, and Glen Semenchuk in conversation with MP Linda Duncan.



Some of the many treasures donated for the evening's silent auction.



Owen McGoldrick and Christyann Olson with a Sunflower Platter, generously donated by Wildbird General Store.

SPLENDOR

War II the Willmore had gained a considerable international reputation for its wildlife riches – many outfitters took their clients out on hunting expeditions through the Willmore’s valleys, many trappers harvested the area’s bounty of furbearing animals.

The human ambitions Vivian outlined in her remarks bear a striking resemblance to those that have sacrificed too much of Alberta’s wilderness. Those ambitions want to tame the Willmore or enslave it through

development and industrialization. What’s different about the Willmore is that those ambitions largely have been held at bay. The work of Vivian’s generation of AWA membership played a vital role in frustrating those ambitions. AWA looks forward to working with groups today such as the Rocky Mountain Wilderness Society to ensure that the Willmore continues to enjoy

the protection it now receives through its own act, the *Willmore Wilderness Park Act*. I hope that, at next year’s event, Vivian will be able to confirm that the Alberta government remains committed to preserving Willmore’s “million acres of wildest wonder” for future generations. 🍀

- Ian Urquhart

MP Linda Duncan and AWA Board Emeritus Vivian Pharis, two tenacious defenders of wilderness.



A glimpse at some of the evening’s many conversations.



Although Elvis had left the building he left this collection of memorabilia or the raffle.



Vivian Pharis delivered a wonderful talk about the Willmore.