

In the December 2004 issue of *Blue Jay*, I reviewed the first edition of Candace Savage's *Prairie: A Natural History*.¹ How does the 'new edition' compare to the spectacular first edition?

Aside from a new a book cover, page format, preface, some new information and modest changes in references, the two editions are surprisingly similar. The text in first eight chapters (Where is Here?, Digging into the Past, The Geography of Grass, Secrets of the Soil, Home on the Range, Water of Life, Prairie Woodlands and The Nature of Farming) are nearly identical in text between the two editions. The last chapter, The Long Range Forecast, had the most revisions adding new information about recent agricultural and land use trends, and species risk and conservation.

I would have liked it if the author had taken the opportunity to add a glossary and expand certain topics as natural forest islands, First Nations and their traditional knowledge of the Great Plains, prominent expeditions and naturalists and impacts of human demographic changes on the Great Plains in the new edition. These additions would have strengthened

the new edition and help distinguish it from the first edition.

I found the layout of the first edition to be crisper and more logical than the new edition. The hardcover first edition will also last longer compared to the soft cover new edition.

The text in both editions is superb and the same excellent illustrations and photos are used in both editions. What I wrote in 2004 about the first edition generally applies to the new edition: "Seldom so writing craftsmanship and respect for scientific fact come together to make such a readable book. *Prairie* is a pleasure to read cover to cover, a chapter at a time or in small pieces by sampling the text boxes and illustrations. This book is truly a gift to all interested in the natural history of the prairies".¹ If you do not have a copy of the first edition, I do recommend the more affordable new edition of *Prairie: Natural History* for your natural history library.

1. Warnock R (2004) Book Review: *Prairie: A Natural History* by Candace Savage. Greystone Books, Vancouver, BC. *Blue Jay* 62: 223-224.

THE GREAT SASKATCHEWAN BUCKET LIST

ROBIN AND ARLENE KARPAN. 2012. Parkland Publishing. Saskatoon, SK. \$19.95 CDN. Soft Cover. ISBN: 9-780980-941937. 176 pages. 173 colour photos. 15.2 cm by 22.9 cm.

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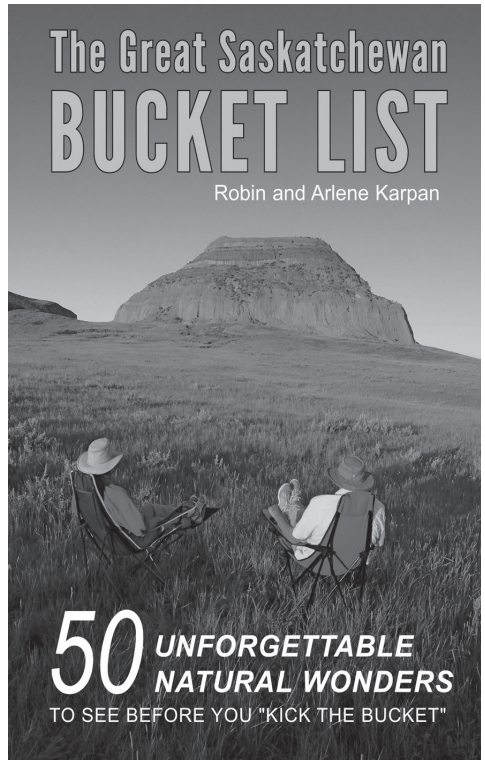
The Great Saskatchewan Bucket List is the latest book by well-known award-winning Saskatchewan nature and travel writers and photographers Robin and Arlene Karpan. This book is about the natural wonders of Saskatchewan and the Karpans have selected 50 of them for this fascinating bucket list for their 'wow factor' and public access. It must have been a challenge to limit the selection to only 50 as Saskatchewan has many

places of natural beauty. Selected natural wonders range from the Conglomerate Cliffs in the Cypress Hills to the Athabasca Sand Dunes in the far north. The authors did a good job in achieving balanced geographical representation and a mix of difficulty ratings. However, a vast majority of the selected natural wonders are accessible to people of average abilities and the authors only selected only two natural wonders in the far north with

the maximum difficulty rating of five for the most adventurous and experienced wilderness campers. The easiest natural wonder to access is the ever changing and beautiful Saskatchewan sky.

First time readers of this book should read carefully the introductory chapter as it contains key information about how the 50 natural wonders were selected, and how to use this guide and its five difficulty ratings. The difficult ratings range from one (easy, minimal effort) to five (out and out difficult). After the introduction, the book is divided into 50 chapters for each natural wonder. These chapters contain spectacular colour photos of the natural wonder, information about the natural wonder, including location with coordinates and enlarged highway map inserts, how to get to each natural wonder, and resources for additional research including websites addresses of Saskatchewan Parks, Parks Canada and Tourism Saskatchewan.

Like *Saskatchewan's Best Hikes and Nature Walks*¹ (reviewed in the September 2011 issue of *Blue Jay*), this attractive volume is very well written and researched by the authors who visited each natural wonder discussed in the book. Of the natural wonders in this volume that I have personally visited in recent years, I found the information to be extremely accurate so I do have confidence that information throughout the book is accurate at the time of writing. Like previous guide books, the authors do place a key disclaimer at the beginning of book stating that trail/road conditions change over time due to weather and other factors and all readers should do their research and contact the authority responsible for the trail or road before traveling. The authors also recommend hiring reputable outfitters and guides for trips to the more remote and difficult locations in northern Saskatchewan.



As the Karpans say on their website “Whether you prefer an hour's stroll along an easy path or a week hiking in remote backcountry, there's never been a better time to take a hike.” I agree. Therefore, I highly recommend this extremely useful and reader friendly guidebook to anyone interested in 50 natural wonders in Saskatchewan.

1. Karpan R, Karpan A. (2011) *Saskatchewan's Best Hikes and Nature Walks*. Parkland Publishing. Saskatoon, SK.

