

Guest Speakers for 22nd Annual Camps With Meaning Birding Retreat

Alex Froese is a wildlife biologist and author, residing near Winnipeg. She has worked with endangered bird species in Manitoba for over 16 years. For the last 14 years, she has dedicated her time in the southwestern corner of Manitoba to aid in the recovery of Manitoba's most rare owl, the burrowing owl.

Alex founded the Manitoba Burrowing Owl Recovery Program (MBORP) after finishing her master's studies at the University of Winnipeg where she focused her studies on the species. It was obvious to Alex, as she finished her degree, that the species was in need of conservation management, and she stepped up to become a champion for them.

MBORP is a recovery and conservation program that reintroduces burrowing owls back into the wild on historical lands and where recent wild burrowing owls have been sited. Program staff survey thousands of kilometers of land each year by roadside and on-foot to locate wild burrowing owls and suitable habitat. Staff engage with landowners who have suitable habitat and discuss options for further improvement for Burrowing Owls.

Alex has also created an education program that travels throughout Southern Manitoba to engage communities in conversations surrounding grassland-focused conservation and endangered species. Through education programming, Alex and her sidekicks, education burrowing owls, Ko'Ko and Bindi, have connected with thousands of people over the years.



Brad Bird lives at Lake Metigoshe on Turtle Mountain. He has deep roots in the area being the grandson of one of Boissevain area's beloved, long term Doctors. His family is Red River Metis. As such, Brad was drawn to learn the skill of fur trapping from his neighbours. He's a student of animals, birds and plants of the area and worked for a time as the Turtle Mountain Park interpreter.

By profession, Brad was a newspaper reporter, including as a war correspondent in Western Sahara, Kosovo, Turkey, Georgia (near Chechnya) and, in 2014, in Ukraine. He has channeled his adventurous spirit by embarking on epic journey's across mid America. One winter he walked from his Metigoshe home to Churchill to raise money for the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and to test himself against the rigours his fore bearers had faced in the 1800s. He also canoed from York Factory on Hudson Bay to New Orleans on the Mississippi River, 400 km with his cat no less.

Brad Bird is the author/editor of 5 books; writing about human conflicts, family and adventure. And, he shines as a packed-room story teller!

