Three Day Pre-Congress Tour
July 14-16, 2016

www.irc2016canada.ca
E: info@irc2016canada.ca
@IRC2016
Three Day Pre-Congress Tour Overview

3 Day, 2 Night Pre-Congress Tour
July 14-16, 2016

The 3 day Pre-Congress Tour runs from Thursday, July 14 to Saturday, July 16, 2016 with buses departing on the morning of July 14 from the Parktown Hotel in Saskatoon, SK. On the evening of July 13 there will be a brief information session for tour participants at the Parktown Hotel. Bus boarding will begin at 7:30 am with the bus departing at 8:00 am. The tour bus will travel through the mixed grass prairie regions of south western Saskatchewan where the landscape is largely treeless. The mixed grass prairie is so called because of the mix of mid and short grass species. The most important species include needle grasses, wheatgrasses and reed grasses.

Day 1 - July 14, 2016

On Day 1 you will head south of Saskatoon to the Beaver Creek Conservation Area managed by the Meewasin Valley Authority. Wildlife, including beavers, call this area - where a prairie creek (Beaver Creek) meets a prairie river (South Saskatchewan River) - home. Listen to Meewasin Valley Authority land manager Renny Grilz, PAg highlight the native prairie conservation and restoration projects undertaken at the Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

Beaver Creek Conservation Area | Photo credit: Tourism Saskatchewan
Three Day Pre-Congress Tour Overview

The tour will continue south towards Danielson Provincial Park. A lunch speaker will provide an overview of the history of irrigation development in Saskatchewan and the construction of Lake Diefenbaker and Gardiner Dam at Danielson Provincial Park.

After lunch you will visit Perrin Ranching Ltd., a large multi-generational commercial cow/calf operation located in central Saskatchewan on the South Saskatchewan River and Lake Diefenbaker. Grazing management focuses on maintaining native prairie health with utilization of both native and tame forage supplies. Grazing is managed on government operated pastures, government leased pastures and private pastures.

The tour will overnight in the city of Swift Current. Evening buffet meals at the Living Skies Casino with overnight accommodations at Home Inn and Suites.
DAY 2 - JULY 15, 2016

On Day two you will tour the Semi-Arid Prairie Agriculture Research Centre (SPARC), one of sixteen Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) research centres across Canada. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada researchers Dr. Micheal Schellenberg and Dr. Alan Iwaasa will highlight their research programs related to native plant breeding, native forage mixtures and native grazing management.

The afternoon of Day 2 will be spent at Grasslands National Park, one of North American’s largest and least disturbed native prairie areas. Park staff will outline steps being taken to convert hundreds of hectares of tame grass seeded many years ago back to native prairie. Grasslands National Park staff will also provide talks on the re-introduction and grazing management of bison and the conservation efforts towards the black-tailed prairie dog. Time will be available for lunch, hiking and photo taking.
Three Day Pre-Congress Tour Overview

The tour group will overnight in the city of Swift Current. Evening buffet meals at the Living Skies Casino and overnight accommodations at Home Inn and Suites have been arranged. Cowboy poet and local area rancher, Bryce Burnett, will provide an evening of entertainment following the evening meal.

Day 3 - July 16, 2016

On Day 3 you will travel to Valjean Community Pasture located off Highway 1 (Trans Canada Highway). Valjean Pasture is part of the Saskatchewan Pastures Program which has been in operation since 1922. The Saskatchewan Pastures Program has a primary focus of supporting livestock producers through the provision of summer grazing on Crown lands on a fee-for-service basis. Livestock are managed by professional employees, hired by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, with particular skills in livestock care and handling and pasture and range management. Tour Valjean Community Pasture and see a working cowboy demonstration, where pasture riders will demonstrate the skills and equipment needed to manage livestock on the open range.

Then you will head to Moose Jaw where agrologists and resource staff of the Ministry of Agriculture’s Agriculture Knowledge Centre will talk about extension efforts and activities over a BBQ lunch.
The last stop of the tour will head to Meewasin Valley Authority’s Northeast Swale Project. Meewasin Valley Authority land manager Renny Grilz, PAg will highlight managing a rangeland as an urban center grows up around it. The Northeast Swale project focuses on managing human use/needs with conservation and range management.

The tour will conclude with return to Saskatoon by approximately 6:30 pm local time. Supper and evening activities are on your own. The Congress will begin the following day at TCU Place.