

April 23

C Ross, Councillor

### **GFSS Nature Hike**

On Thursday April 12 I joined Graham Watt and the GFSS Outdoor Education class and teachers for a enthno-botanical/ecosystem education hike. Graham lead us on a decent hike along “novel” wetlands, grasslands, rock outcroppings, delicate hillsides and along the river riparian areas and flood plains. Throughout the hike we learned about the many unique and novel ecosystems that both thrive and struggle within city limits. We were reminded of the unique and precious features that make Grand Forks a envious place to live, especially for community members who enjoy being in nature. Graham was able to emphasize the role that local government can play in protecting habitat and ecosystems that provide hidden services to all of us. The students were engaged throughout a rather long walk in cool wet weather. It was a fun opportunity to connect students with nature close to home, while giving a lesson in civic engagement. Grahams knowledge was extensive, and his memory of Latin botanical genus and species was impressive!



### **Humbolt Memorial**

I was moved by the thoughtful memorial that was held at the hockey rink. It was a very well attended event, with many very moving moments.

### **Vienna Forest**

I received a couple of calls from local politicians who wanted to discuss the Ponderosa Pine forest. It was concluded that the forest had no significant novel traits, and although some of the trees may indeed be approaching 100 years in age, that the monoculture forest is not "old growth". It was also noted that although the trees were used for roosting, that they were not of significant importance to local wildlife in terms of habitat for nesting, mating or foraging. It was suggested that any removal of trees should be done with care, ensuring that trees that can remain should be protected. We talked about urban forests that better represent the original mixed local forests that once thrived throughout this region and that better representations of such forests that include more species better represent biodiversity and provide habitat that is more likely to attract nesting birds and animals.