



June 1, 2009

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Saskatchewan Municipal Awards Program recently held its third annual awards ceremony on May 22, 2009. At the ceremony, municipal governments and communities from across the Province were recognized for their leadership commitment to innovation, quality service, and community and regional partnerships. Winners of the 2009 Saskatchewan Municipal Awards were named in five categories: Municipal Service Excellence, Regional Leadership and Partnerships, Community Development Leadership, and Environmental Stewardship.

Please find attached profiles of the City of Regina and the Town of Mossbank, the recipient and finalist, respectively, of the 2009 Saskatchewan Municipal Award for Environmental Stewardship. The articles, which feature the McKell Wascana Conservation Park in Regina and the Old Wives Lake Nature Area near Mossbank, are provided for you to include in your newsletter and magazine publications, and to post on your website. Please consider publishing these success stories and sharing the news about the innovative accomplishments of our Province's municipal governments.

For more information about the Saskatchewan Municipal Awards Program, contact me at (306) 525-4398 or visit www.municipalawards.ca.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G Meyer".

Gail Meyer
Manager, Member & Administrative Services
Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association

2009 Saskatchewan Municipal Awards – Recipient Profile

Environmental Stewardship

City of Regina – McKell Wascana Conservation Park

A native prairie park found in the city, the McKell Wascana Conservation Park is providing a place for Regina residents to experience and learn about the ecology of the Regina plains and wetlands.

“The park is a great opportunity for residents to experience nature, to go birdwatching, and to go for a walk on the trails within the area,” says Dominique Clincke, Coordinator of Landscape Design with the City of Regina. “School groups can come out and take advantage of the outdoor classroom where they can learn about the prairie ecosystems. At the dock, they can go pond dipping, discover water creatures and learn about the prairie environment firsthand.”

For the City of Regina, the McKell Wascana Conservation Park not only provides an outdoor classroom for residents, it also fits in well with the city’s ongoing efforts to increase environmental sustainability through the use of native grasses.

In recognition of this focus on environmental sustainability, the City of Regina recently received the 2009 Saskatchewan Municipal Award for Environmental Stewardship for its work at McKell Wascana Conservation Park. The Saskatchewan Municipal Awards Program recognizes the commitment of Saskatchewan’s municipal governments to innovation, community leadership, environmental stewardship, regional partnerships, and economic development.

Designated as an environmental reserve, the McKell Wascana Conservation Park began to be developed in 2005 when the McKell family and Ducks Unlimited Canada approached the City about creating a conservation space as a legacy on behalf of Robert McKell. The City of

Regina gladly joined in on the idea.

“It was an opportunity to create a more unique park space. We were able to develop a programmable space for the public with partners that had expertise in the area – Ducks Unlimited Canada,” says Clincke.

He adds, “The Conservation area is part of a larger program in which we are constantly trying to make our open spaces more sustainable. In Regina, there are several other park spaces with areas of naturalized grasses but none entirely dedicated to conservation and education as is accomplished here. It all contributes to healthy communities and a more sustainable city.”

Clincke explains that the native grasses in the park are better for the surrounding creek environment, and also help to prevent erosion, require little maintenance, can withstand drought, and are non-invasive to the neighbouring farm and urban spaces.

“The park provides a habitat for animals close to the city, whether its ducks, birds, or frogs. It’s also an opportunity for native grasses to take hold and actually spread along the creek.”

In 2007, restoration work began by seeding the park with native grasses, an environmentally sustainable choice. The seeding required great attention to detail, with oats planted first to remove invasive plants and create crop stubble to seed plants into. The following year, eight types of native grasses were seeded. This past year, the park sign, an amphitheatre and a dock were constructed, offering educational opportunities for schools and families.

The park will continue to grow in the coming years, with the addition of more trails, interpretive signs, park benches, and the introduction of native shrubs and flowers.

2009 Saskatchewan Municipal Awards – Finalist Profile

Environmental Stewardship

Town of Mossbank, R.M. Lake of Johnston No. 102 - Old Wives Lake Nature Area

The fourth largest saline lake in North America, a designated Migratory Bird Sanctuary, and part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, Old Wives Lake is a crucial environmental habitat that is home for 500,000 shorebirds stopping in on their way to the Arctic each year.

The Town of Mossbank and surrounding communities have long treasured the region's lake and its rich environment. To preserve this natural resource and also share it with others, the Town, along with the R.M. of Lake of Johnston No. 102, set out to create an eco-tourism destination and an educational area next to the lake.

“It was the vision that a lot community members have had for a number of years,” says Melanie Baker, Economic Development Officer with the Town of Mossbank. “The people who live in the area have always been strong believers in environmental sustainability. Doing this project has helped to preserve and promote the area, along with the community.”

The Saskatchewan Municipal Awards Program recently recognized the community's commitment to the environment by naming the Town of Mossbank as a finalist for the 2009 Saskatchewan Municipal Award for Environmental Stewardship. The Saskatchewan Municipal Awards Program recognizes the commitment of Saskatchewan's municipal governments to innovation, community leadership, environmental stewardship, regional partnerships, and economic development.

The Old Wives Lake Nature project got off the ground when the Town of Mossbank secured a green initiative grant from Saskatchewan Environment, as well as support from the

Economic Development Executive, the Town Council, and the R.M. of Lake Johnston No. 102.

Development started in April 2008, with the goal of not only creating a tourist destination, but also ensuring that the natural habitat was not disturbed and any additional construction was completely green.

Baker explains that the Old Wives Lake area is an important wildlife habitat. “A large percentage of the flyway passes through the region every year and uses the lake as an important staging area to stop and rest. There are endangered species nesting out there and it is important to protect them.”

Over the past year, the Old Wives Lake Nature area project has created 2.4 km of walking trails – made of reused flax straw and covered in gravel – a gazebo for educational activities and picnics, a viewing deck, benches, interpretive signs, and an eco-friendly outhouse with a composting toilet. Volunteers pitched in to do the trail building, and the R.M. Lake of Johnston No. 102 completed maintenance on the road to provide access to the site. Brochures, activity booklets, and birding lists have also been produced, and the brochures are available at Saskatchewan Tourism offices and visitors centres across the province.

Today, many people are enjoying the Old Wives Lake Nature Area. “Everyone is very impressed with the area. A lot of people are coming from cities to enjoy the quiet, wide open space and native prairie habitat. We are even receiving emails from people overseas who are interested in visiting and are reading about our preservation efforts,” says Baker.

The Grand Opening of the Old Wives Lake Nature Area will be held in August 2009, in conjunction with the Old Wives Festival.