

Best Practice

McKell Wascana Conservation Park

CONTACT

City of Regina
P. 306.777.7862
F. 306.777.6809
E-mail. dclincke@regina.ca
Mail. Box 1790, Regina SK S4P 3C8
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THE PRACTICE

This project is a cooperative endeavor between the City of Regina, Ducks Unlimited Canada and a private citizen, Robert McKell, and will be the only urban based native prairie park located in the city limits of the City of Regina. School children will be able to visit the park and learn about ecology of the Regina Plains and how the ecology of the area works, including what plants and animals one could expect to see.

THE PROCESS

This project came to life from a phone call between the McKell family and Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC). The McKell family was inquiring about ways to leave a legacy and DUC suggested a natural areas park that will be dedicated to the family. DUC contacted the City of Regina and Dundee Development inquiring about partnering to bring a natural park to the City of Regina. All parties agreed that it would be a good idea and the planning of the park began to occur. The City of Regina worked with DUC to put maps and plans together and began the construction of the park. In summer of 2007, the park was seeded to an oat crop to remove invasive plants and have some crop stubble to seed the native plants into. In summer of 2008, the park was seeded to a broad mix of native plants, native to the area. Also during the summer of 2008 a dock was constructed which will be used for pond dipping by school children to explore the water and see the invertebrates that many waterfowl feed on for survival. Plans for an amphitheatre to house school groups and informative presentations about the park is also scheduled to be completed in 2008.

Grassed trails will be constructed in summer 2009 and their will be an asphalt or crusher dust trail installed that will connect the amphitheatre with the park dock. Interpretive signage and park benches will be placed throughout the project in summer 2009.

THE RESULTS

As of spring 2009, the park has met some time milestone goals – the revegetation work has completed and the amphitheatre and dock have been constructed. These are the first steps towards housing the outdoor classroom. A major challenge of park construction has been the scale of the work completed. The seeding required great attention to detail to be sure that the correct plants were seeded and that weed control was conducted to ensure the best chance of success of the seedlings. Through this project many benefits will be realized. The city will receive a natural areas park that will not require as much management as other parks within their control and the private citizens will have an outdoor classroom to learn about the native prairie that surrounds Regina.

LESSONS LEARNED

This project, initiated by a private citizen in partnerships with Ducks Unlimited Canada, shows what a difference one person can make. These two partners, with the City of Regina, worked together to create a unique urban based prairie park to ensure that native habitat was preserved for future generations to use.