

Three Rivers Trail Newsletter

(Arm River – Qu'Appelle River – South Saskatchewan River)

Three Rivers Trail Association (TRTA), Box 367, Craik, SK, S0G 0V0.

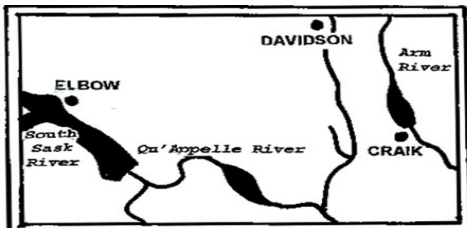
No.5, Fall 2004

The TRTA Objectives:

- To promote the beauty of valley vistas, the prairie geography and the 'spirit' of the land;
- To give an understanding and appreciation of grassland ecology by identifying points of interests and associated trails in glacial pothole country, sand hills, wetlands, and old glacial valleys;
- To make maps showing birding trails and heritage sites; and
- To mark hiking and equestrian trails with metal posts showing the TRTA Logo (below):



The TRTA Area:



The TRTA Board of Directors:

Bob Doig, Chamberlain
Lyle/Christine Benz, Aylesbury
Sterling Schollar, Craik
Doug McIvor, Girvin
Don Wilkins, Girvin
Gloria Kadlec, Bladworth
Ed Spratt, Davidson (Chairman)
Shirley Eade, Craik (Sec./Treasurer)

Trail Rides: Ride at your own risk!

TRTA has a philosophy of developing new equestrian trails to enable our members to see off-road sites and the grand vistas of our valleys. The tourist industry will be able to use and promote these trails over the long term.

To scout these trails a TRTA committee contacts the land owner(s) and we traverse the land, hills and vales in a 4 wheel drive truck. Our theory is – if a truck can do the trail then so can a team with a wagon. In July 2004, Bob Doig, Peter Farden and self, in a 4x4, eliminated some steep hills and boggy ground from the trail proposed for the TRTA July 31 Trail Ride.

On July 31 about 30 keen equestrians showed up for the ride. Nice day. At the beginning, everyone is excited, including the horses.

Soon after starting the ride (1/2 mile) we had to stop to open a gate to the first pasture. As always happens, the spread-out group bunches-up to wait to go through the gate. The trail we were on was just wide

enough for tractors and wagons to use for hauling bales, etc. No one kept in mind or noticed that old machinery, old fence posts, etc., were stored by the side of this trail. We did not spot this possible hazard on the side of the trail while cruising in the comfort of a 4x4.

As the group bunched-up, my horse, a flighty 7 year-old Arab, got off the main trail and stepped on a small roll of page-wire. She jumped, tripped and nose-dived, and I did not keep my seat (nor would anyone else but a professional and nor would any other horse not have 'jumped' when something tangles up it's feet). I broke my wrist.

We who participate in these exploratory type trail rides have to expect that we ride at our own risk because we can not expect the TRTA to see everything that could be a hazard when we first identify a potential trail. ES

THREE RIVERS TRAIL ASSOCIATION (TRTA)

ANNUAL MEETING

November 8, 2004

Craik Eco-Center

6:00 PM Supper (Penny's Special)
7:00 PM Call-to-Order

Come and find out what we are all about!

A meeting to discuss plans for this Newsletter, Sleigh Rides, Equestrian Trail Rides for next year, Cross-Country Biking, Birding Trails, Wildlife display at Eco-Center, Maps, and other suggested activities for TRTA.

Plus Guest Presenters:

Barbra Hanbidge of Ducks Unlimited will tell us about the relationship of DU to Birding Trails and tourism.

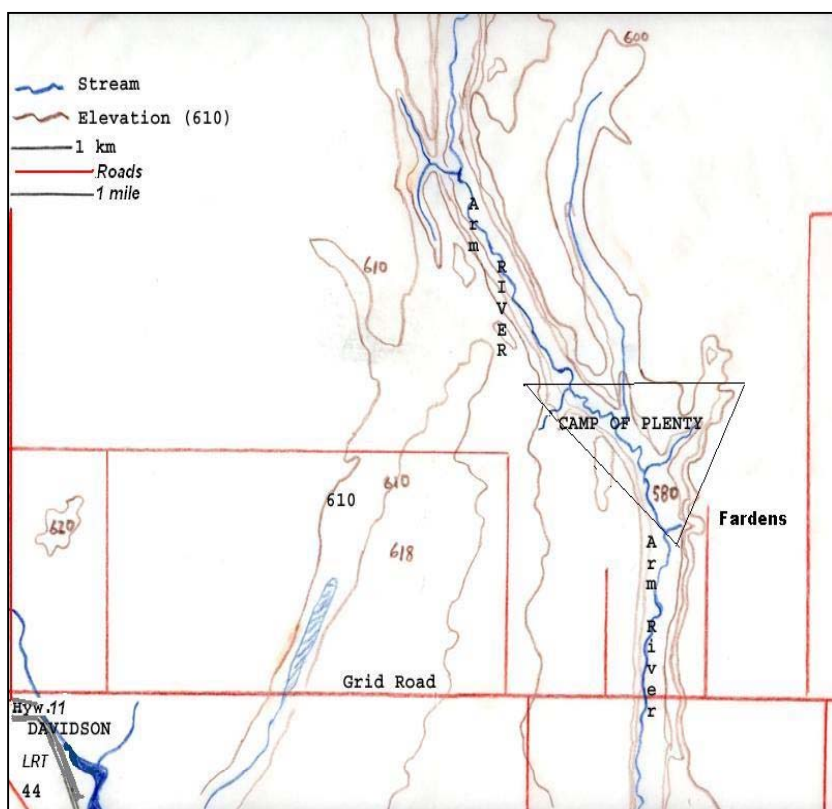
John Gries, from Regina, will present a tourist industry investment opportunity for horse drawn caravan camping in our region; he's done it!

Muriel Peterson, Elbow, and/or **Russ McPherson**, REDA, will tell us how we can link to the Lake Diefenbaker Tourist Association.

See you there; give your ideas; Questions?
Phone: 734-2250 or 567-4215

Camp of Plenty

East of Davidson the Farden family has ranch and farmland that straddles the Arm River Valley. On 31 July 2004, about 30 TRTA equestrians and supporters had the privilege of exploring the native



Camp of Plenty (continued) ... prairie pastures adjacent to the Arm River, with Peter Farden as our guide. It was a sunny day, and one could see miles across the prairie vista.

The Arm River arises from the Allan Hills, some 30 km north of Farden's land; but at this geographical location the valley deepens because it is joined by a major tributary. These are old glacial drainage channels that carried the melt water from a large ice lobe that left a moraine now called the Allan Hills. The Farden pastures encompass these two merging valleys. The Arm River is fed by many 'springs' and at this junction there is an exceptional amount seepage water making its way to the river through 'bogs'. Because of the above described geographical features (easy to recognize) and the lush growth and excellent water supply, the aboriginals of the prairies used this point in the valley as a 'camp'. There would have been much wildlife, as there is today. Hence, this broad valley site was called "Camp O'Plenty", as translated from Cree.

Peter showed us many land marks and artifacts which prove that native peoples (for thousands of years) and more recently the Metis used this camp site extensively. There are many teepee rings existing and evidence that many others were used by early settlers to build foundations for their houses and barns. There is an amphitheatre-like basin in the hills that looks like a dance ground and a nearby mound with stones that look like a Medicine Wheel. Native Elders have visited the site several times to confirm Peter's observations, but no archeological digs have been approved.

There are dug-out recesses left in the hillside arranged in relation to each other in such a way that one can envision that they were winter shelters used by Metis over-wintering during the fur trade era. They are the right size and shape, angled to the south, which indicates that they were once the traditional hide covered (earth on top) lean-to type shelters (as illustrated in Metis literature).

Buffalo jumps are evident along one valley edge where the drop-off is extremely steep. Also, one ravine starts from a wide plain and as it gets deeper it gets narrow up to a point where it is evident that a buffalo trap or retaining compound was built. Past the

narrowest point the ravine bottom becomes a 'bog' due to the springs, so buffalo chased down the ravine would become 'stuck' long enough to kill. Many buffalo bones have been 'heaved-up' by frost from these bogs.

On the Arm River, near some spring outlets, there are remnants of a fish weir. The weir (small dam) was made of large rocks and created a pool behind it. In the spring, as fish came up the river to spawn, they would jump over the weir and the fisher-people would wait to catch them in nets. This adds to the story of this place being a camp of plenty. The first food of the spring, a break from pemmican, was fish. There was also the returning waterfowl by the thousands. Many natives over-wintered in the valley as evident from the double-row teepee rings (indicating double walled teepees were used). Single row teepee rings were from single walled summer teepees. The reason natives could over-winter in the valley was due to the abundance of saskatoons for making pemmican and preserving it during the summer (stored in a cache for winter). And of course, the fresh water from springs.

All in all, when one surveys the landscape of the Arm River at the Farden junction, one can easily identify with the idea of it being a Camp of Plenty. In addition, it is evident that it has been (or still is) a spiritual site for native people (and us too if we take the time to absorb the peace of the place). Several living Native Elders have visited the site at Peter's invitation, and they claim that if Wanuskewin could be rated at 7 or 8 out of 10 for spirituality then the Camp of Plenty would rate 9 or 10.

Sincere Thanks

Like all activities of TRTA, the Trail Rides on 23 May and July 31, 2004 would not have been possible without much volunteer support.

First, thanks to Austin Eade for erecting the TRTA plaque at the Trail-Marker No.1 (Flag-Pole), near the entrance of the Craik Park;

Many thanks to Don Wilkins for leveling a road to his pasture and installing a beautiful steel gate which was donated by Vern Mittleholz;

Thanks to Kevin Binder and Tom Miller for installing hitching posts and repairing a portable toilet for the use of TRTA on trail rides;

Thanks to the Bakken family on whose land the Birding Platform has been installed; and finally, for 2004, Thanks to the Farden Family for permission to traverse their land, for the stories that Peter told us, and to Shelia for sharing her garden for the Bar-B-Q.

Thanks to our Directors and others for their continuing help and support.

Ideas for the TRTA Newsletter

One purpose of this Newsletter is to document the natural history and folk stories of our region, like the stories told in this edition. Mrs. Vi Spencer has assigned an Archives accession number for the TRTA Newsletters at the Palliser Library, Craik. They will be saved for posterity. We would welcome some 'suggestions and leads' to work on for future articles. We also need photographs. Phone or write your ideas to Ed (567-4215) or edspratt@sasktel.net

In the pipeline: The History of the Lloyd Farm by Loraine Gust; Settlement History of the Eyebrow Lake Area by Doug Dale; and The Craik Museum by Ed Spratt.