

Three Rivers Trail Association Newsletter

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

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

Events & Archives: www.craik.ca/trta

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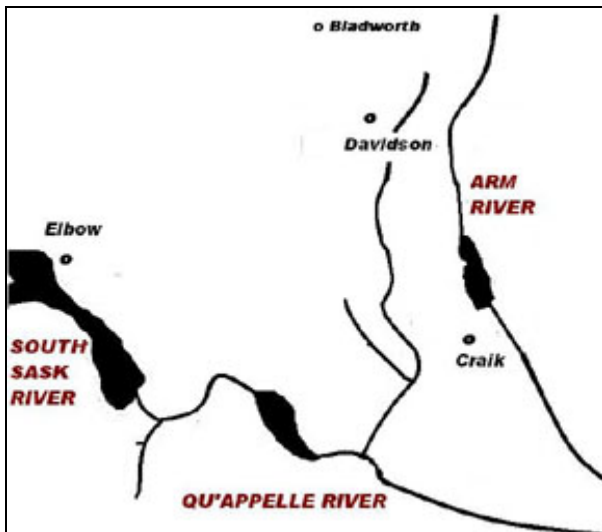
The TRTA Objectives:

- 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 multi-purpose trails, birding trails and heritage sites; and
- To mark hiking and equestrian trails with metal posts showing the

TRTA Logo:



The TRTA Area:



The TRTA Board of Directors:

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

TRTA Annual Meeting

Craik Eco-Centre, Saturday January 06, 2007

Programme:

10:00 AM TRTA Business
12:00 PM Lunch
1:30 PM Host STA Group

TOPIC: Do we need "A Provincial Trail Conference" to convince Governments and Sponsors of Trail Benefits (Preventative Medicine and Tourism)? Formulate funding requests for the conference and future trail development.

The Saskatchewan Trail Association

The STA annual meeting was held 23 September 2006 in Outlook, SK. TransCanada Trail Officials (including the new CEO) were there and the main presentation was about offering all trail groups a reasonably priced group insurance program. There is hope that provincial governments will underwrite the broad base (first million \$ of liability) and clients will only pay for the low risk (high liabilities).

The good news for the STA was that their application for funding from Sask Lotteries was accepted. Initially this will mean \$ 15,000 added to the budget. A new President was elected, Curt Schroeder. Ed Spratt was named to fill Curt's former position of vice-president.

The Elbow Sandhills

The TRTA region is defined on the west side by the South Sask River. Where the Qu'Appelle Valley meets the South Sask River valley there is now a dam holding back Lake Deifenbaker. From the dam running north along the lake is the Douglas Provincial Park, featuring beautiful sandy beaches and to the west, the Elbow Sandhills. The Park was named after late Saskatchewan premier Tommy Douglas. The park is a natural environment facility featuring 27 km of interpreted hiking trails, including a section of the Trans-Canada Trail that hugs the shoreline of Lake Diefenbaker. The trails offer an invigorating way to experience a habitat teeming with wildlife such as moose, white tail and mule deer, squirrels, rabbits and more than 170 species of birds, including pheasant. There is an interpretive museum (Dune Nature Centre) and trails into the dunes.



TRTA has the mandate to draw to the attention of potential visitors some of the physical attractions in our region, along with some history and the ways and means to attain more information. To obtain a good background on the Sandhills one could start at the Elbow Museum; first contact the Town Office (306-854-2277) to find out the museum contact person and the days/hours that it is open. On request, archived documents may be available to peruse. In 1965 the first replica of an authentic sod house was constructed as part of the celebrations for Saskatchewan's 60th anniversary as a province. In the summer of 2000 the house was rebuilt from native prairie sod, and furnished with period pieces.



Ten thousand years ago, the sand that was deposited at the confluence of two giant glacial drainage channels came from fast moving water from the melting of the large ice lobe that was over what is now the Allan Hills. This formed what is called an alluvial fan (delta), and after that it was re-worked by wind over the centuries.

Going east from Lake Deifnbaker (south of Elbow village) one goes past irrigation pivots and then the Elbow PFRA Community Pasture with sand dunes visible to the south. At the PFRA Headquarters (Pasture Manager's residence) one may get permission to go into the dune area, especially after the cattle have finished summer grazing and returned home. The farmland along here is very sandy and there are signs that farming wasn't very sustainable (abandoned farmsteads as in the photo). Plentiful spring grass and water (shallow wells) for horses made it appealing for early settlers (easy plowing) but frequent drought took a toll on seeded crops. Rensby cemetery is a reminder of the population of the district in early days (see photo).



Further east one hits Grid road # 627 (to Tugaske). Turning south until reaching the Qu'Appelle valley, one can see the sandhills to the west. On the south side of the Qu'Appelle valley the road to the Qu'Appelle dam goes by the Gallagher Farm, where they have kept a native pasture that was once an Aboriginal camp ground. It has many teepee rings. Teepee rings are circles of stones that held down the bottom of the teepees (tents). When there are 2 rows of stones, they were used for the inner and outer tents during the winter. Usually there are 2 larger stones at

the door way facing south. The view from here is spectacular, overlooking the valley. To the north, one sees the sand hills and to the west, Lake Deifnbaker. Sunsets are especially beautiful. Permission to enter the Gallagher farm can be attained in Tugaske (phone Rural Municipal or Town Office, 306-759-2211).

Take a tour and walk a little (or snowshoe)!

What is "Spiritual Geography"?

Why do some people stay on the prairies to keep small towns alive, and keep farms/ranches turning over from generation to generation? Why do others move away never to return? To find out read:

DAKOTA, "a Spiritual Geography"; (2001) by Kathleen Norris. Publisher: Mariner Books, NY.

Your library will get you a copy.

The word 'Dakota' can be substituted by 'Saskatchewan' all the way through the text. It has great descriptions of the types of people that have developed and sustained the prairie culture, and the way they love the land. You can think of the same type of characters in Saskatchewan.

K.Norris was a well known New York writer when she returned to western S.Dakota to take over her grandfather's ranch. Her interest in religion inspired her to go to Benedictine Retreats near the Black Hills, where she learned to appreciate the silence, space and manual work in the Monasteries and around their grounds. She was constantly reminded of the open spaces around her home town of Lemmon, SD. Her relationships with the Monks and Sisters who had taken up a life with "limits" reminded her of the limits that farmers and ranchers on the prairies have to endure. She discovered that she could get the same peace of mind right at home. Later she became a lay preacher in an old protestant church in a small town named Hope, which was barely surviving due to out migration. Gradually people came from miles around to hear her in the revitalized church. The church became the community for farmers and ranchers just as it was in the old days.

Kathleen Norris is a professional poet and writer. She traveled thousands of miles for the Arts Councils of S&N Dakotas to teach school children and adults how to write interesting stories about the Dakotas and the people. With her beautiful language she was able to describe the vastness of the Dakotas, the magnificent views of valleys and vista, and the spectacular weather changes.

Add this book to our own Saskatchewan books that describe the love of our land. 1. Wild Stone Heart (2000) by Sharon Butala. Publisher: Harper-Collins, and 2. River in a Dry Land by Trevor Herriot, Publisher: Stoddart Books. This latter book helps us explain our own TRTA territory.