

CHAMPIONS

FOR OUR COMMON FUTURE

Ordinary people taking extraordinary action

CRAIK: GROWING MORE THAN PLANTS

There are many communities in Saskatchewan that are part of Communities in Bloom. The mission of Communities in Bloom is to nurture environmental sustainability, green space enhancement and heritage conservation in municipal, residential, commercial and institutional spaces. Accordingly, most participating communities focus on enhancing their physical features, but some communities take it a step further. Craik is one such community.



Glenn Hymers is the chair of Craik's Community in Bloom Committee, a committee of about 15 community members. The committee organizes and engages the community in improvements to local parks, a pollinator garden, spring plant and seed exchanges, downtown flowerpots, a community greenhouse and annual downtown autumn and Christmas displays. In 2022, the committee took a step outside of their focus on plants and greenspaces and hosted an event intended to promote diversity and inclusivity in the community. It was called "Our Blooming Cultural Landscape." Glenn says it the best thing the committee has ever done. Two years later, people in the community still talk about it.

Two factors drove the idea to create the celebration of the community's diversity – the desire to support the diversity awareness programming at the local school and the growing number of cultural groups in the region. In addition to Indigenous neighbours and the descendants of historic homesteaders, newcomers from all over the world were moving to the area. The event, which included displays and food from as far away as the Philippines, Thailand, El Salvador, South Africa and Korea,

promoted inclusion and welcomed many new families to the community. Indigenous drummers and dancers performed, and an Elder explained the significance of the drumming and dancing. Guests were invited to participate in a Cree Round Dance. It was the highlight of the day that brought together many attending in a large community circle.

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The event laid the foundation for another community project that celebrates inclusion and diversity – the Peace Pole Project. Started in Japan, peace poles can be found throughout the world. On each of the four sides of the pole the words “May Peace Prevail on Earth” are written in a variety of languages. Craik features three peace poles with the message in twelve languages found in the community, including Braille.

The cultural activities of the Craik Communities in Bloom committee are helping to build a strong community. Glenn Hymers feels that the focus on environmental sustainability that is embedded in the mission of the Communities in Bloom approach is better supported by a strong social sustainability. Communities where all feel welcomed and invited to contribute are important parts of this. If people do not feel attached to a place, they have little interest in working to secure its future.

This column is a collaborative project of the Saskatchewan Environmental Society and the Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development – RCE Saskatchewan.



Saskatchewan Environmental Society

Saskatchewan Environmental Society is a non-profit, registered charity that is committed to supporting sustainable living and sustainable resource use in Saskatchewan. We work with, and on behalf of, communities, organizations, businesses, and policy makers to encourage

informed decision-making that moves us towards sustainability. SES's current action areas include sustainable energy and climate solutions, water protection, resource conservation, biodiversity preservation, and reduction of toxic substances. Our work in Saskatchewan is carried out in Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, and our office is in Saskatoon on Treaty 6, the traditional territory of Cree peoples and the homeland of the Métis Nation. Learn more at: www.environmentalsociety.ca



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RCE Saskatchewan is a voluntary network of individuals, organizations, and experts advancing sustainable development in Saskatchewan. Founded in 2007, RCE Saskatchewan's partners are the University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Luther College at the University of Regina, First Nations

University of Canada, Campion College at the University of Regina, the City of Regina, City of Saskatoon, Craik Sustainable Living Project, and United Nations University. Our honorary patron is Her Honour the Honourable Bernadette McIntyre, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan. There are more than 190 RCEs around the globe. Learn more at: www.saskrce.ca