



## Showcase Projects

### City of Selkirk / Pollinator Park Environmental Action / Community Group Projects



A citizen's urgent desire to take an environmental stand and a vision that leads the City of Selkirk to decisions that protect our natural surroundings has turned a former eye-sore into a pollinator park that will benefit people as well as the birds and the bees and the butterflies too.

Selkirk council worked diligently to remove the Lord Selkirk II from its 20-year-plus final resting ground in Selkirk Park four years ago, completing what was Phase 1 of a plan to restore the inlet off the Red River to a natural state. Phase 2 involved remediation of the area and now Phase 3 is the volunteer-driven establishment of a pollinator park, where natural vegetation will be a beacon to birds, bees and butterflies.

It was a bit of synergy that resulted in Selkirk resident Corinna Rach contacting Mayor Larry Johannson about tackling the shoreline adjacent to where the old ship had sat for so many years. Rach was taking environmental studies at the University of Winnipeg and needed to volunteer on an environmental project. Her passion for a healthy environment made it easy for her to love the idea of creating a pollinator park, but she admits now that the project is done, she really didn't know how receptive the city would be.

Johannson said Rach and her group of volunteers, who worked for two weeks planting dozens of native Manitoba plants and grasses at the inlet, are a wonderful example of private citizens taking ownership of their community. Ruth Rolfe, the city's Manager of Parks and Recreational Facilities, said the city purchased all the plants for Rach and the volunteers to plant and assisted wherever possible.

"They're all Manitoba species and they're all plants that would naturally grow there, so we're trying to impregnate the area with the species that could have grown there," Rolfe said.

"A lot of Manitoba species are starting to become extinct, so we're doing our part to combat that."

Chief Administrative Officer Duane Nicol said the city's Strategic Plan calls for the city to develop its natural features and outdoor spaces, to promote environmental stewardship and to help citizens make good choices. Turning an unused spot into one that is beneficial to people and the environment, is a win-win.

"It's exciting because the intention was always to naturalize the space, turn it back to what it could have been originally," Nicol said.

As part of the city's Park's Strategy there's been a move towards naturalizing parks, which is good for the environment and also financially responsible because naturalized spaces require less man hours to maintain as they require little maintenance.

Rach said returning spaces to their natural habitat is crucial to the survival of countless Manitoba plants as well as bees, birds and butterflies, which makes the transformation of the inlet all the more important.

"If you plant them, they will come, they just need the food," Rach said.