Engaging People with Conservation through Parks and Recreation

It’s a Natural Connection
Who am I?

Andrew Exelby

• Parks and Open Spaces Consultant with the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA), since 2012
• Bachelor of Applied Science in Landscape Management from Olds College
• I work with volunteers, recreation directors, municipalities, park authorities and others across the province to improve our parks and open spaces and recreational opportunities
• I’ve lived my entire life near Craven, SK
Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association

• Provides leadership, support and services that contribute to recreation’s impact on the quality of life of people in Saskatchewan

Sask Lotteries

• Proceeds from Lotteries support approximately 1,200 groups and more than 12,000 sport, culture and recreation organizations
What are we going to talk about?

- Why connecting to nature is important to conservation?
- How Recreation and Parks are supporting this effort on national, provincial and local scales?
- How we can work together?
Why is a connection to nature important?

• Connecting to nature improves the health of individuals and society

• A personal connection to nature will encourage individuals to support conservation efforts in the future

• The Recreation Sector is vital in creating that personal connection
On a national level

The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association

and

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association

support 2 critical initiatives:

- *Parks for All*
- *Framework for Recreation in Canada*
Parks for All

- An action plan for Canada’s Parks Community
- Developed by Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and Canadian Parks Council

- Includes 4 Strategic Directions: Collaborate, Connect, Conserve and Lead

www.cpra.ca/parks-for-all
We envision a Canada in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster:

- Individual wellbeing
- Community wellbeing
- The wellbeing of our natural and built environments
Framework for Recreation in Canada

- The guiding document for public recreation providers in Canada
- Developed by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association

www.cpра.ca
At a provincial level

How do we support conservation?

• **Advocate** for people to connect with nature

• **Provide funding**

• **Deliver programs, training, and education**, such as:
  • Communities in Bloom
  • June is Recreation & Parks Month
  • Saskatchewan Parks Worker Course
Who do we fund?

• 34 Provincial Recreation Associations

We are going to talk about 3 today:

- Association of Saskatchewan Parks and Conservation Agencies
- Sask Outdoors
- Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation
ASUPCA

- Includes 7 Urban Parks and Conservation Agencies in Saskatchewan:
  - Chinook Parkway, Swift Current
  - Meewasin Valley, Saskatoon
  - Wakamow Valley, Moose Jaw
  - Wascana Centre, Regina
  - Tatagwa Parkway, Weyburn
  - Battlefords River Valley, North Battleford
  - Pehonan Parkway, Prince Albert

- Operates programs across the province in partnership with its members
Nature Play creates the opportunity for kids to connect with nature and the outdoor environment

- Program involves nature-themed activities for grades 1-5 children, for a period of 5 weeks every Saturday
Why is this important?

- Children that connect to nature will be more likely to value their environment in the future.
- Opportunity to engage children in conservation principles that they will remember as adults.
Sask Outdoors

- Connects people with nature, through play, education, programs and services that promote awareness of outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship

- Priorities:
  - Facilitate and provide outdoor experiences
  - Increase public awareness and involvement
  - Build a viable and sustainable organization
  - Develop partnerships and alliances
  - Influence outdoor education policies and curriculum
Growing Up WILD is an early childhood education program that:

• Builds on children's sense of wonder about nature

• Allows children to explore wildlife and the world around them

• Provides an early foundation for developing positive impressions about the natural world and lifelong social and academic skills
Why is this important?

• Growing Up in WILD includes conservation activities

• Targets early childhood educators and children ages 3-7

• Provides the curriculum connections that teachers need to deliver this in the classroom
Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation

- Established in 1929
- 33,000+ members in 122 branches across Saskatchewan
- Per capita, it is the largest wildlife conservation organization of its kind in the world

**Priorities:**
- Acknowledge that the wildlife of the province is a public resource belonging to all Saskatchewan residents
- Develop and maintain conservation through policies and education
- Acquire and enhance habitat for wildlife
SWF Conservation Camp offers the opportunity to learn and experience in the great outdoors and has been an ongoing success for over 30 years.

- At camp, children ages 12-15 are given hands-on learning in a wide range of outdoor activities.
Youth Conservation Camp

Why is this important?

- Help participants understand the value of wildlife and the management of habitat
- Participants connect with nature and build an appreciation for the environment - leading to conservation
What else do our Provincial Recreation Associations Do?

The Navy League of Canada - Saskatchewan Division
  • Wilderness Training

Association of Saskatchewan Urban Parks and Conservation Agencies
  • Plant-a-Forest Days, Interpretive Tours, Conservation Education
  • Protected Lands and more

Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation
  • Educational Programs and more

Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association
  • Over 90 parks with protected lands totally almost 24,000 acres

Saskatchewan Camps Association
  • Supports 46 Outdoor Camps Across the province

Sask Outdoors
  • Grants, “Learn To” workshops, Educational Curriculum about nature and more

Saskatchewan All Terrain Vehicle Association
  • Environmental Stewardship Promotion

We all support conservation together!
Let’s Connect to Conserve!
How can we work together?

Learn about all 34 Provincial Recreation Associations at:
www.spra.sk.ca/membership/provincial-recreation-associations/
Thank you!

Do you have any questions?

Learn more about our work and network at spra.sk.ca

Contact me
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