



Trans-Canada Trail: Enjoying nature at it's best

Visitors to the Qu'Appelle Valley are being told to take a hike: literally.

This is the 11th year the Trans-Canada Trail has been officially open, and the Crooked Lake region is part of it.

Following established trails, old railway beds, and other paths, the network provides a walking tour of Canada. Its path along Crooked Lake and the nearby provincial park is a boon to hikers and off-road bicyclists, says Donna Appell, a member of the Crooked Lake Parks and Recreation Board.

"This is the 11th year that the Trans-Canada Trail has been in use in the Crooked Lake area and it is wonderful to see children and families using the trail rather than the highway," says Appell.

"There's definitely an interest in trails. There are people riding their bikes and taking nature hikes into the hills for health reasons, and for the enjoyment.

"The trail gives a majestic view of the lake. There's also a lot of nature there - animals, deer and geese."

The Trans-Canada Trail is linked between Crooked Lake and Katepwa through the Ellisboro Trail, a beautiful and historic part of the Qu'Appelle Valley.

Formed in January 1997, the Crooked Lake Parks and Recreation Board wanted to take part in the new national trail. The residents and seasonal visitors in the area wanted a safe cycling and walking path, Appell says.

"There are people walking on the highway (Highway 247) and that could have led to an accident. We had heard that the Trans-Canada Trail was going through Saskatchewan, but it was going to bypass Crooked Lake. It was going from Melville right through to Regina along Highway 10, which would have missed a whole scenic part of Saskatchewan," she says.

"We put in a proposal to the Trans-Canada Trail Foundation and had that section of the trail detoured through to Crooked Lake. It creates a safer environment for recreational activities for the people who live at the lake."

The Crooked Lake Parks and Recreation Board undertook fundraising efforts to help pay for the establishment of the trail through the area and continues to provide maintenance.

The trail runs about seven kilometers and multitudes of users are evident from the long weekend in May and through to the end of the vacation season. Part of the trail goes through

Crooked Lake Provincial Park. Saskatchewan Environment has built a walking trail through the park which links up with the Rec group's trail.

Park benches and flower pots have been installed. A pavilion is located west of Cedar Cove. The names of people who've donated to the trail have their names inscribed at the pavilion. The Rec Board accepts three categories of donations — personal, business or in memoriam.



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