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Partnership, trees planted

□ Prince Albert National Park marks Arbor Day

BILL GLISKY
DAILY HERALD

WASKESIU — The community of Waskesiu is a little bit greener thanks to the efforts of more than 100 volunteers and Parks Canada staff.

One hundred and fifty trees were planted at four locations Sunday at the second annual Arbor Day in Waskesiu, part of a continuing effort to maintain the area's forestry.

"By doing this, we help maintain the beauty and character of Waskesiu."

HERVE LANGLOIS,
Waskesiu
vegetation
management
committee

Last year, 75 trees were planted at the inaugural event.

Herve Langlois, chairman of Waskesiu's vegetation management committee, said the Arbor Day idea came out of a growing concern among community residents about the state of the area's forests.

"The forests are maturing. A lot of trees are reaching the end of their natural life," Langlois said.

"We realized that if we didn't do something we would lose the very thing that makes Waskesiu so perfect.

"By doing this, we help maintain the beauty and character of Waskesiu. Over the long term, we are making a contribution that will be very meaningful for this community."

Parks Canada staff provided the bulk of the tough work — digging the holes — but it was the volunteers who showed up at 9 a.m., planted the trees and bushes in the holes and filled them in.

The crowd included people of all ages, ranging from young children to grandparents, and included longtime residents of the community as well as relative newcomers.

"There are a lot of new faces out this year," Langlois said.



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TREE PLANTERS — More than 100 people helped plant 150 trees at Arbor Day at Prince Albert National Park Sunday. Among those who organized the event and pitched in to plant were, from left, Herve Langlois, Peter Strawson, Brian Robertson, Wayne Simpson, Don Ravis and Jeff Weir.

"I've seen a lot of people who have been in the park for a long time, but I've also met people who I have never met before.

"It really is a community event. It is very encouraging to see this kind of response."

All the children who took part in the event received a certificate of appreciation and will receive a letter of thanks from park superintendent Rod Blair.

As well, every child received a prize, as did most of the adults, contributed by area businesses.

Waskesiu Community Council chairman Don Ravis, who approached area business about donating prizes, said the response was beyond what he could have hoped for.

"I did not have one person even say they had to think about it. They just made a contribution," he said. "It is very rewarding to see that kind of response.

"Having that kind of response from the business community is very important."

Ravis said the co-operation between the community council and the Parks Canada staff was also crucial to having the event come together.

He said in recent years the relationship between the two groups has become increasingly friendly, which can only mean good things for the area.

"The new management team for Parks Canada has really made an effort to enhance community relations, and I think it is paying off," he

said.

"That kind of good working relationship makes something like this so much easier."

Ravis said the added bonus of Parks Canada staff reaching out to the community is that community members are now more willing to step up when asked to help out with an event like Arbor Day.

"In the past, it was just so easy to have an attitude of 'Let Ottawa fix it,'" he noted.

"Now people are willing to come out and help out.

"The result is that everyone is working together to make the park more beautiful and to make the community nicer to live in. And together we are leaving a legacy for the people who come after us."