

Crow Wing Trail officially opened

by Doris Penner

The Crow Wing Trail was officially declared open Saturday at St. Adolphe Park with a ceremonial ribbon cutting. About 40 people attended including past and present members of the Crow Wing Trail Association, dignitaries and volunteers.

“The development of the Crow Wing has taken several years and a lot of hard work,” said Linda Morin, president of the Association which was formed in 1999.

The trail is the segment of the Trans Canada Trail linking Winnipeg to Emerson, and part of the 18,000 km long recreational corridor connecting Canada’s regions and the three oceans to become the longest trail in the world. At 191 km, the Crow Wing is the longest section in Manitoba, moving through the RMs of Richot, Niverville, De Salaberry, St. Pierre, Franklin and Emerson and the Roseau River First Nation.

While the Crow Wing is open to hikers, bikers, horseback riders and skiers (and in some areas snowmobilers), Morin noted there will be ongoing trail improvements and efforts made to develop the interpretative program so trail users can identify what they are looking at.

The trail is based on the historic Crow wing Trail that first opened in 1844 and stretched from Upper Fort Garry along the eastern side of the Red River to St. Paul, Minn. As a main trade route it ran through the villages of St. Adolphe, Niverville, Otterburne, St. Pierre, St. Malo, Ridgeville and Emerson and these connections remain.

Morin told the gathering that unlike some other sections of the TCT, the Crow Wing is not located on an abandoned railway track.

“Therefore, to determine where it would be located has involved a lot of cooperation,” she said, noting an effort was made to carve out the trail to take in significant natural, cultural and historic sites. For example, hikers on the trail will be treated to a wide variety of topography including stands of bush, hayfields and wetlands, often with abundant wildlife in the vicinity. Sometimes the trail meanders along the river which affords beautiful views of the water through poplar, aspen and oak trees.

Historical sites such as Senkiw Cable Bridge, First Nations ceremonial grounds at Roseau Rapids and Mennonite Landing Site close to Ste. Agathe have been incorporated into the walk.

Morin told the audience that while the trail is open, a remaining challenge will be the connection to the Winnipeg section of the Trans Canada Trail.

“Although the route through the floodway has been determined, due to current construction of the Floodway Expansion Project, this portion of the trail remains off-limits to trail users,” she noted, adding the temporary end of the Crow wing is located at the corner of Richardson and Schapansky Roads. The construction will be completed in three years when the final connection will be made.

Cutting the ribbon at the opening of the Crow Wing Trail were Charlie Nelson, Roseau River First Nation representative, Priscilla Reimer, RM of Franklin representative, Linda Morin, president of Crow wing Trail and RM of Ritchot representative, Ron Lemieux, MLA La Verendrye and Murielle Bugera, vice president of Crow Wing Trail and Chaboille representative.