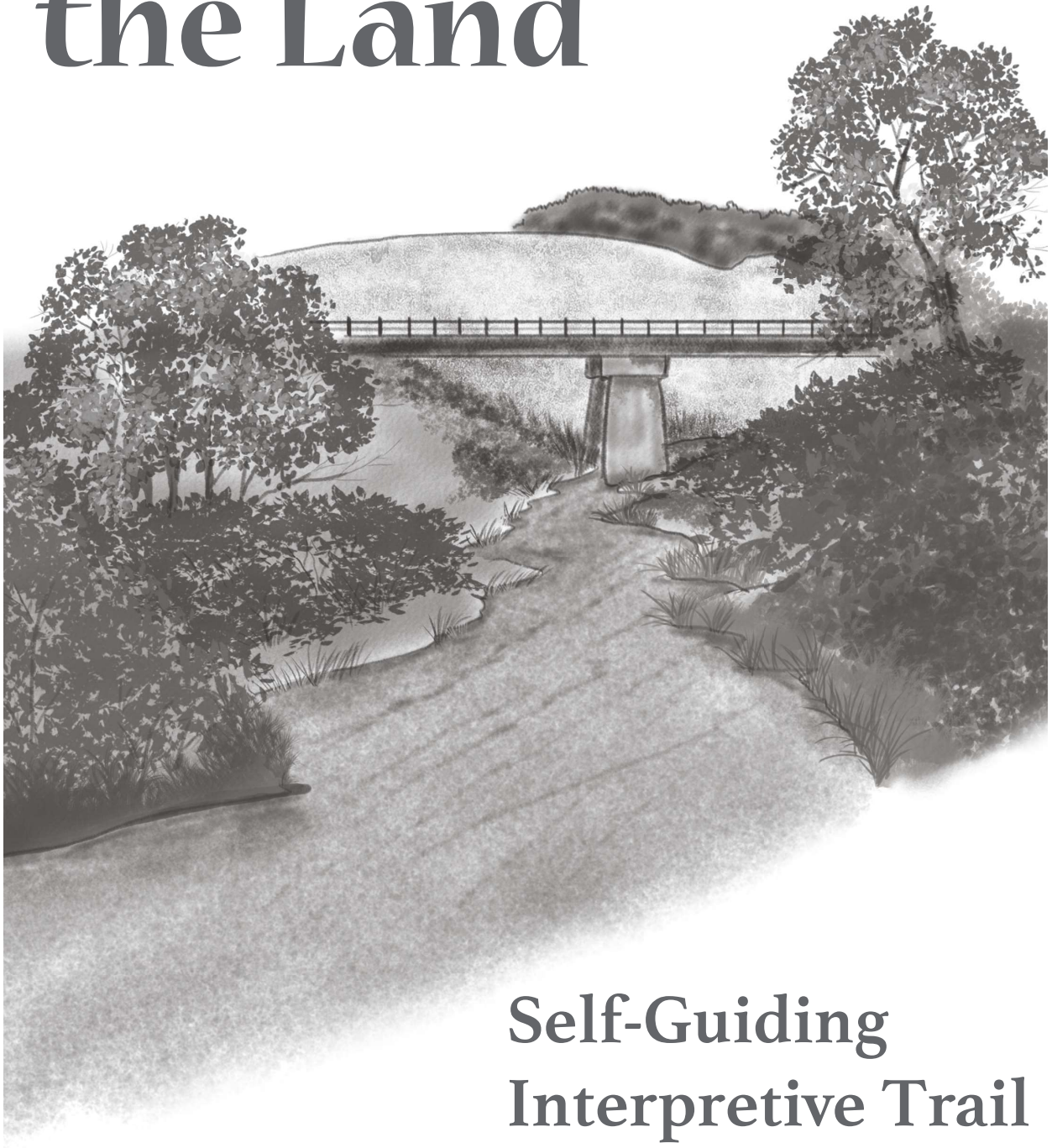


Lessons from the Land



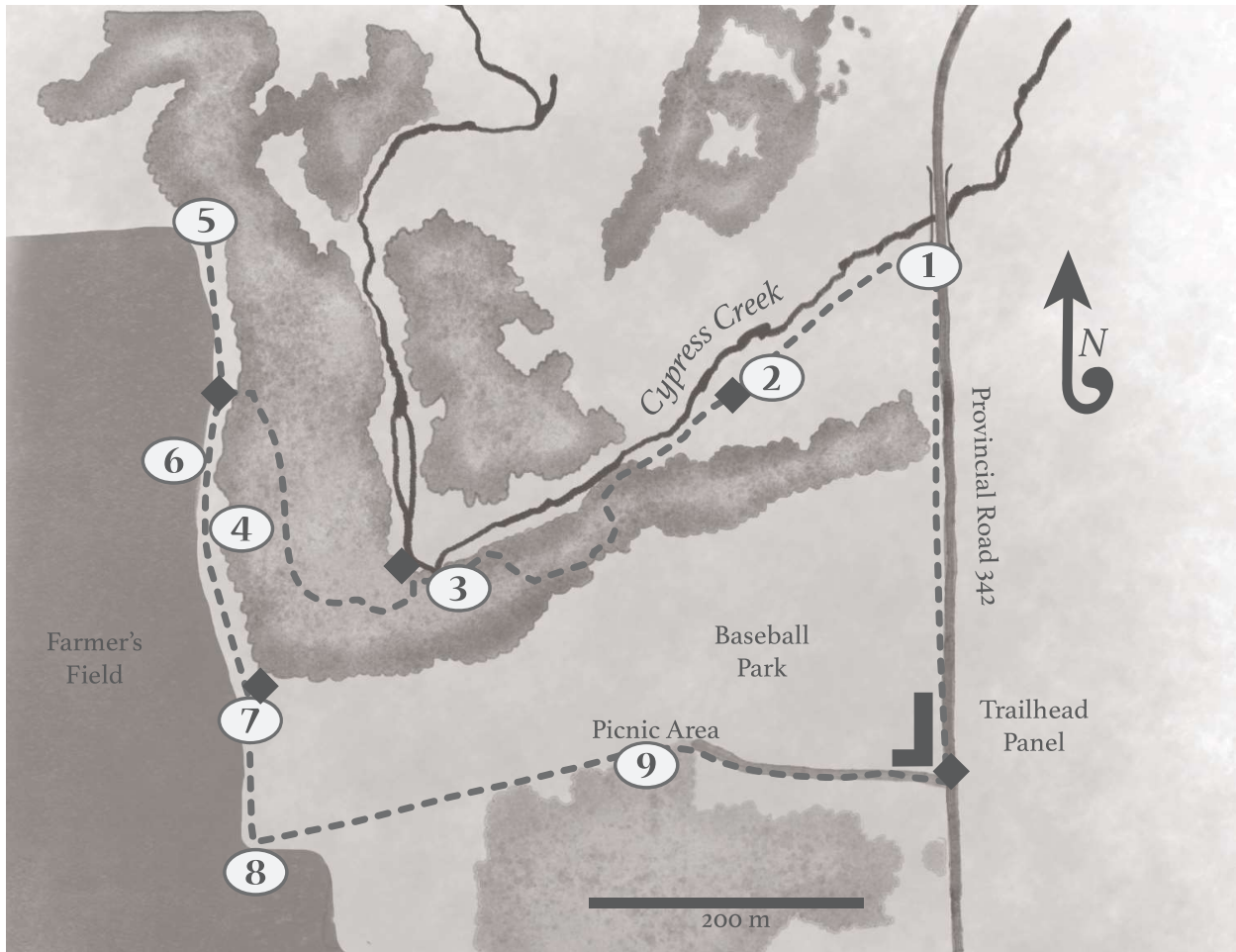
Self-Guiding
Interpretive Trail

Clearwater, Manitoba



Inside Front Cover

Trail Map



◆ Interpretive Signage

○ Exploration Nodes

Introduction

Embark on a journey of exploration.

Welcome to the Lessons from the Land, Self-guiding Trail in the community of Clearwater, Manitoba. This 2.3-kilometre trail is a pleasant and sometimes challenging walk through the forest bordering Cypress Creek.

This walk will take about an hour at a leisurely pace. If you would like to enjoy the forest and the view, but avoid the climb out of the valley, we recommend that you turn around at the picnic area at stop three.

Be sure to bring along this brochure. Each Exploration Node along the trail offers many opportunities for learning. You will also find interpretive panels along the way to further enhance your experience. When you're done, you're welcome to keep the brochure as a souvenir or return it to the main trail sign for someone else to use.

To begin your trek, head north on 11th Street past the Clearwater Sports park. Just down the hill before the bridge is the trail entrance. Watch for the trail marker on your left. Enjoy your walk as you learn from the land around you.



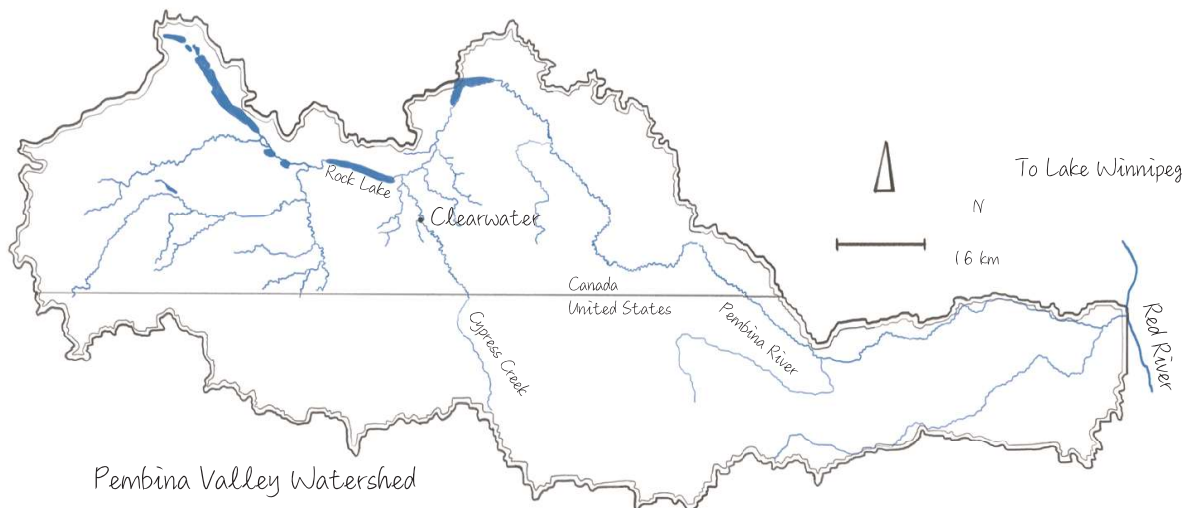
Boreal chorus frog

1. Know Where You Come From...

... and where you are going.

Although it may seem small, Cypress Creek affects land and water well beyond its banks. Once known as Long River, the waterway arises south of the border, flowing northwest to join the Pembina River near Rock Lake.

From there, the water meanders into the Red River and further on to Lake Winnipeg. The water that is passing by you now will one day reach Hudson Bay.

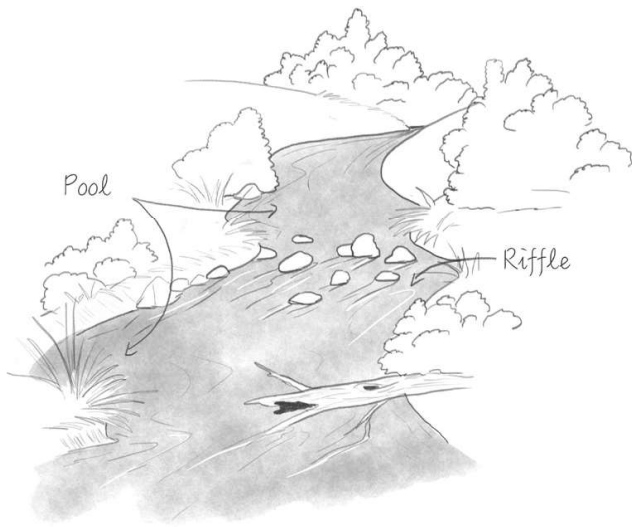


Rivers have been a lifeline for people for millennia, a source of water and arteries of transportation. Today, we realize that how we care for our rivers, like Cypress Creek, has ripple effects well beyond this valley.

2. Everything Changes

The evolution of a creek

The creek is always changing. What bubbles past you now is much smaller than the river that carved out this valley after glaciers receded 10,000 years ago. Thanks to changes in drainage due to farming and settlement, it's even smaller than the stream children swam in a few decades ago.



The Pembina Valley Watershed District is working with landowners to restore Cypress Creek to a healthy stream with a narrow, deep channel, thickly vegetated banks and a series of pools and riffles.

Shoreline plants filter nutrients and pollutants from runoff entering the creek. This protective barrier has been lost along much of the stream.

A healthy water's edge controls erosion, provides structure to the channel, and maintains water quality. By restoring vegetation, keeping livestock out of the creek, and reducing erosion, we hope to bring back a more natural stream.

While nature is always changing, it's up to us to make changes that work with nature.

3. Everything is Connected

Rivers don't only move water.



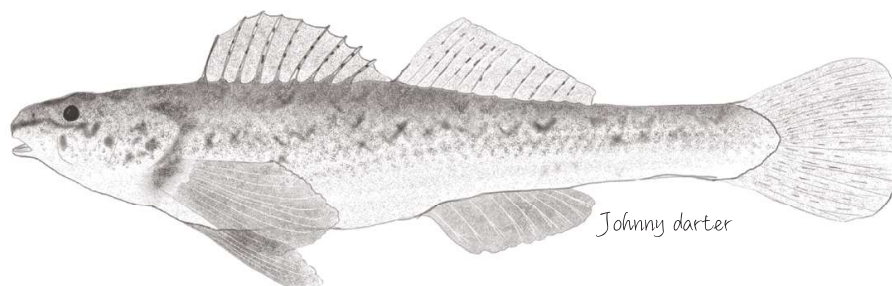
As the water rushes by you, it is carrying nutrients and energy downstream to other places. It's also experiencing a cycle of nutrients and energy at every point along the way. Riparian ecosystems are the interface between land and water. They are an interface between the two different food webs.

Algae and microbes living in the water are eaten by other aquatic species and their nutrients and energy moves through the web. However, at the river's edge, a bird or other land animal may catch a fish, taking it from the aquatic food web onto the land.



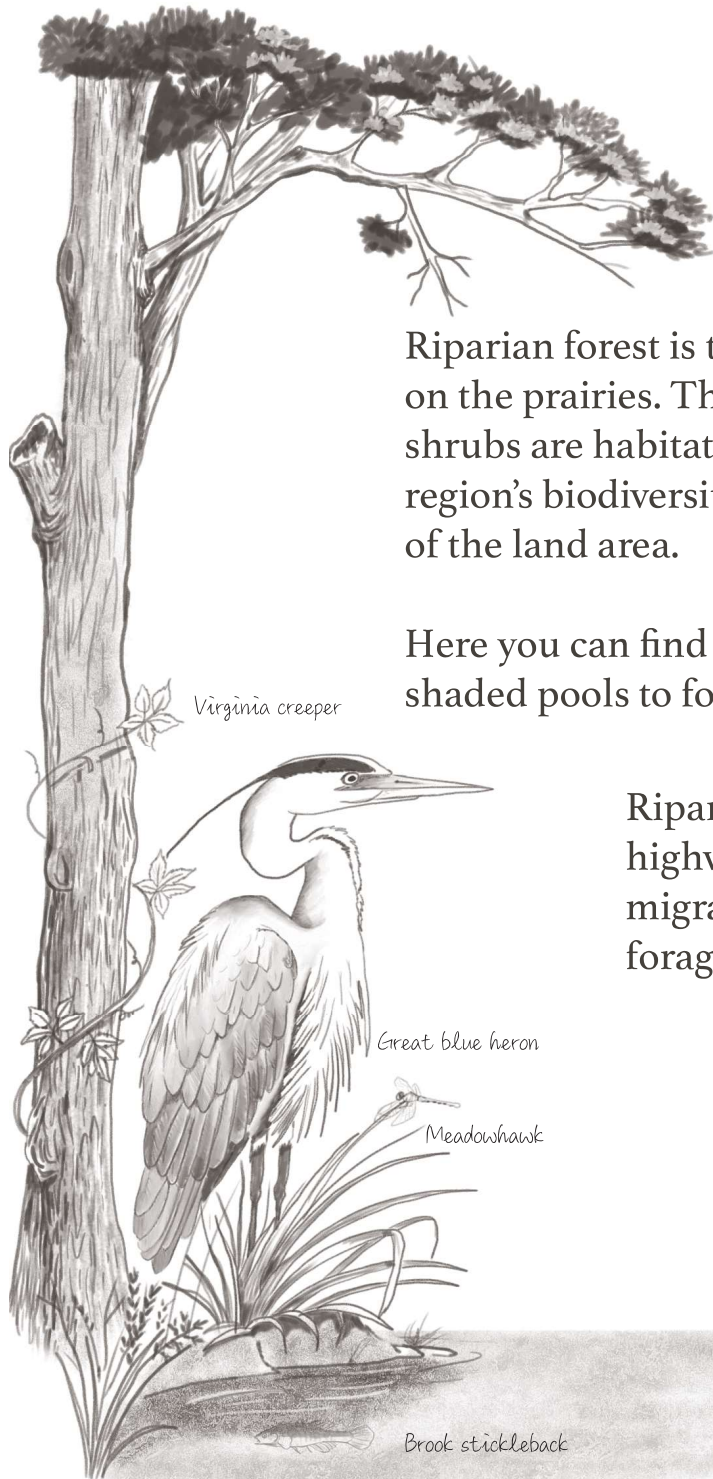
Euglena - a type of photosynthetic microbe

As plants and animals die along the river's edge, their bodies return their components to the water to be recycled again.



4. Live Life on the Edge

Take a moment to bask in all the life around you.



Riparian forest is the most diverse ecosystem on the prairies. These ribbons of trees and shrubs are habitat for over 50% of the region's biodiversity despite covering only 5% of the land area.

Here you can find a variety of niches, from shaded pools to forest canopies.

Riparian zones are also highways for everything from migrating birds and mammals to foraging fish and frogs.

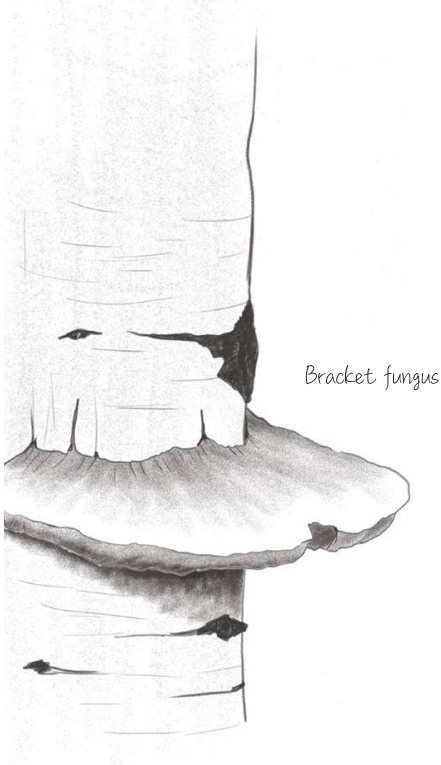


Manitoba maple (boxelder)

5. Life Has Many Layers

and you can see them all around you.

From this vantage point, you can see how the forest is made up of layers. The trees create a canopy that stretches along the banks.



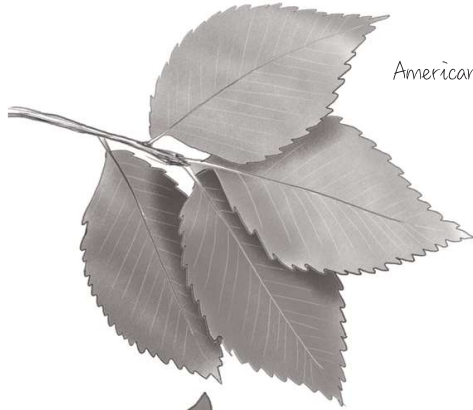
Below this top layer, a second canopy of shrubs competes for light among the taller trunks. Below that, ground vegetation grows along the forest floor, spilling over the banks towards the river.

Each of these layers provide unique habitats for an array of different plants, animals and fungi.

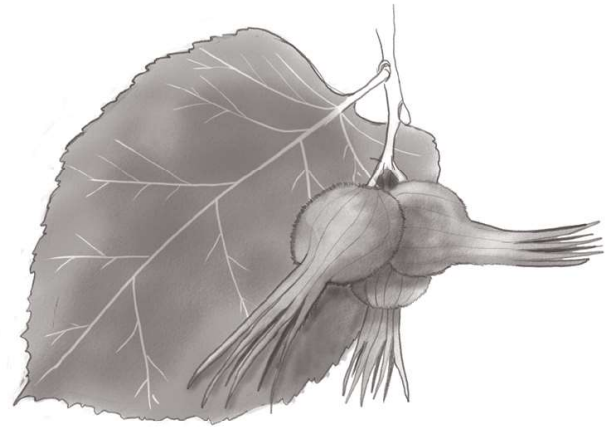
Warbling vireos flit among the canopy, eating insects. Bracket fungi grow on the tree trunks, which are home for woodpeckers and squirrels. Deer browse on shrubs while mice, voles, sparrows and grouse scuttle along the forest floor.



Watch for these plants along the trail



American elm



Beaked hazelnut



Wild raspberry



Bur oak



Wild rose

Watch for these plants along the trail



White birch



Trembling aspen

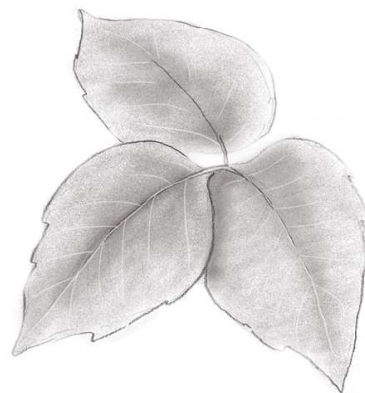


Saskatoon



Wild strawberry

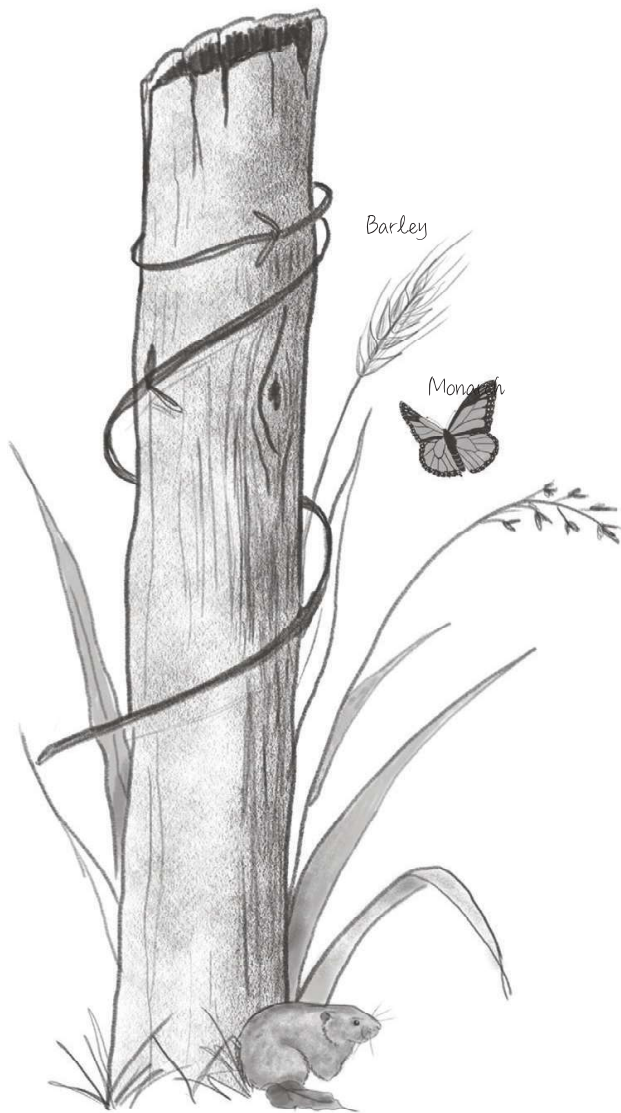
Poison ivy



6. Feeding the World...

...requires finding a balance.

The over 8 billion people of the world rely on agriculture to eat. Here in Manitoba, our farmers produce 2.6 million metric tons of food such as grain, oilseeds, meat, potatoes, lentils, and more. We feed people both within our province and abroad.



Barley

Monarch

Meadow vole

That level of production can have serious effects on our water, soils, air, and climate. Farming also takes up a lot of space, affecting habitat for thousands of species.

However, farmers are innovators and have found many ways to balance agriculture with ecology.

Practices like growing shelter belts, pollinator strips and cover crops, along with no-tillage farming help create wildlife habitat, keep soil and water on the land and reduce harmful emissions.

7. Feed Yourself First

There is food all around, if you know how to look.

Riparian forests are home to a wide variety of edible plants, and fungi that provide food for wildlife and the experienced naturalist throughout the season. In spring, you can look for stinging nettle, and morel mushrooms. Summer brings wild strawberries, saskatoons, and raspberries. Fall offers a harvest of chokecherries, high bush cranberries, hazelnuts, and rose hips.

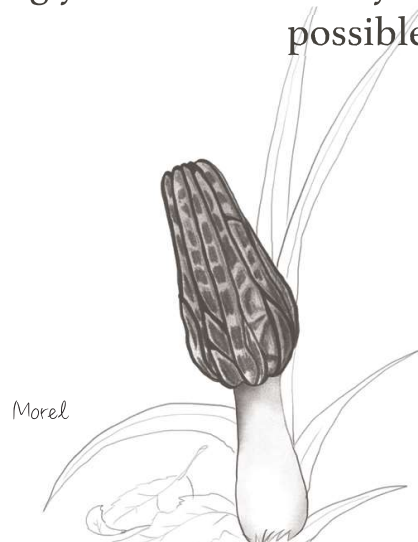


Chokecherries



High bush cranberry

Foraging for wild edibles takes knowledge and practice. Be sure you are certain of an ID before eating anything wild. You can also feed yourself and help your community and the environment by sourcing your food as locally as possible.



Morel

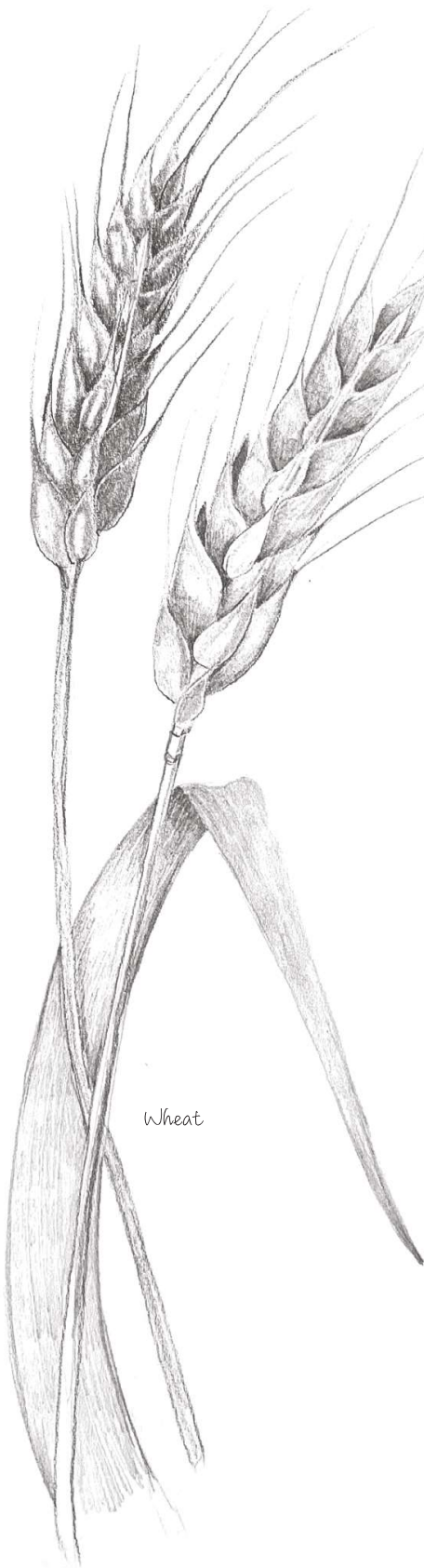
8. Make Community Connections

Cooperation brings ideas together.

Living with and learning from the land is best done as a community. Whether you are a scientist, farmer, traditional knowledge keeper, artist, baker, or anyone else, everyone has their own unique perspective to share and we can learn from each other.

Founded in the spirit of cooperation, community, and camaraderie, The Harvest Moon Society offers many opportunities for making connections with the land and each other.

The learning centre offers retreats and workshops and the festival in the fall draws visitors from all over, making links between urban and rural people.



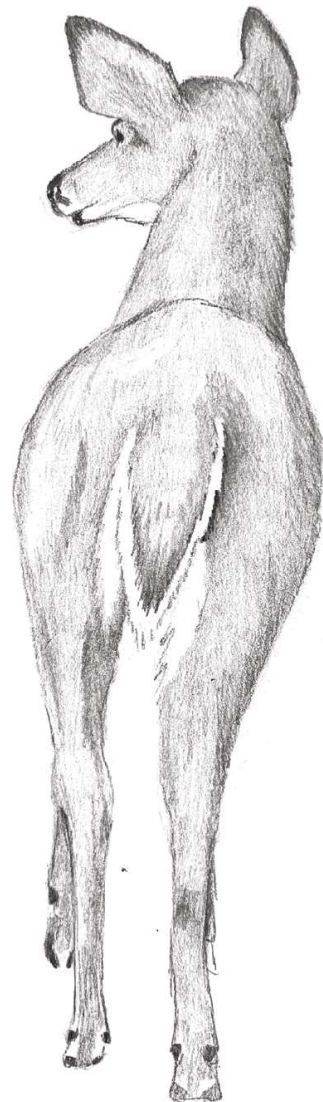
Wheat

9. Take Your Next Steps From Here

Here, at the end of the trail, take a moment to reflect on where you've come from.

We have so much to learn from spending time in nature, but spaces like this one are always at risk of disappearing.

However, you can help. Create space for nature in your backyard by planting native species, support your local conservation areas and choose leaders who value nature to ensure that we will continue to have opportunities to learn from the land for many generations to come.



White-tailed deer

Trail Structures

In the fall of 2007, 14 undergraduate and master's students from the University of Manitoba, led by professor Lancelot Coar, carefully deconstructed the old Crystal River one-room school house near Clearwater. The material reclaimed from this building was then used to design three projects: renovations for the kitchen area of the Harvest Moon Learning Centre, and two structures for this trail. The trail features two projects: an observation platform overlooking the beautiful Pembina Valley Watershed Region and the 30 foot long pedestrian bridge that straddles the gorge along the trail and riverside.

All the destruction and construction work for these projects was completed by the students, a unique design-build experience for both students and residents alike.

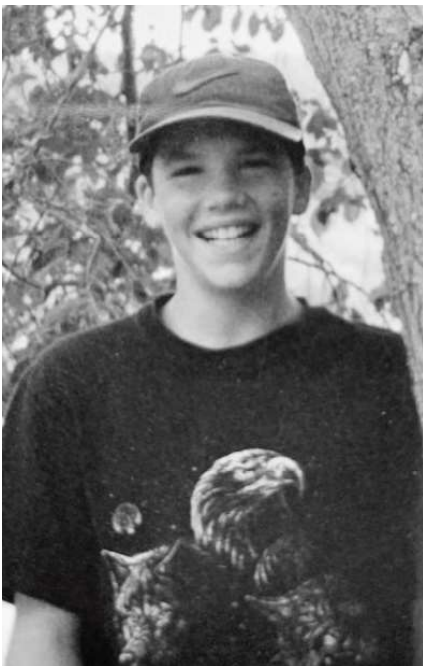
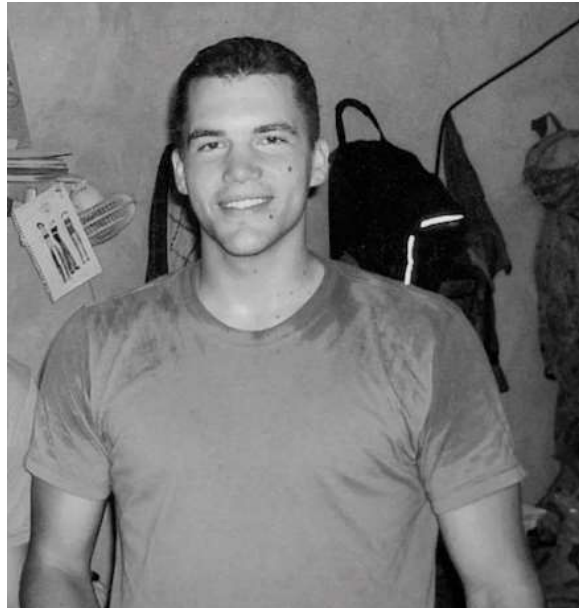
Those students are: Stephanie Oullette, Dora Baker, Graham Taylor, Jessica Stuart, Christina LaMorte, Bert Bartake, Pablo Batista, Kristen Balchen, Byung-Hee Kang, Kristin Szuminsky, Wai Yip 'Keith' Yeung, Alex Olivson, Joel Dandeneau and Sang Kwon Park.



Dedication

The Lessons from the Land Trail is dedicated to the memory of

Private Lane Watkins



Lane was a peacemaker who died in Afghanistan during the creation of the trail. He was raised in Clearwater, loved the outdoors, playing ball, hunting, and fishing. Lane and his brothers, along with generations of Clearwater children, spent hours down at the creek where they developed an appreciation for nature.

At the age of 20, Lane gave his life trying to make the world a safer and better place for all.

Acknowledgments

The Harvest Moon Society thanks Roy McLaren for the time, effort, and knowledge he has so willingly shared, which inspired the creation of this trail. We also thank Alexis Knispel, whose energy and expertise made this creation come to life.

This trail has been brought to you through the support of Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism - Heritage Grants Program, the Pembina Valley Conservation District, the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, the Rural Municipality of Louise, Dan Stewart, Rick and Mark Lussier, and the Harvest Moon Society.

This booklet was redeveloped in 2022 and interpretive signage created in 2023 by Heather Hinam of Second Nature Creative Interpretation. This was made possible by made possible by the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF)

For More Information

Harvest Moon Society - www.harvestmoonsociety.org
Manitoba Watershed Districts - www.manitobawatersheds.org
Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation - www.mhhc.mb.ca



Inside Back Cover

