

The page features a decorative graphic consisting of three blue circles of varying sizes, each composed of concentric rings of different shades of blue. These circles are arranged in a triangular pattern. Two thin, light blue lines intersect at the top left, forming a large 'V' shape that frames the circles. The text is positioned on the left side of the page.

Community Initiatives Water Conservation Program

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Community Initiatives Water Conservation Program

The City of Yorkton in partnership with Saskatchewan Watershed Authority embarked upon a Community Initiatives Water Conservation Program. Numerous activities proceeded throughout the year, they included: the promotion of xeriscaping as an effective water conservation tool; a xeriscaping seminar; community outreach and research that included the development of water conservation tips in the form of pamphlets and information packages; selected areas for household water consumption data (audits); and a display at the local exhibition promoting water wise techniques and xeriscaping.

A xeriscaping seminar/workshop was held April 28, 2008. Sara Williams, a former editor of *The Gardener for the Prairies*, author of *Creating a Prairie Xeriscape* and before her retirement the horticultural specialist with the extension division of the University of Saskatchewan, conducted the workshop. She is a well-known horticultural educator and writer. Sara spoke about the effectiveness of xeriscaping as a water conservation tool to a crowd of 32 people. She included an extensive collection of slides for attendants to get a good idea of what a xeriscaped area can look like. A large number of drought tolerant ground covers, trees, shrubs perennials, bulbs and ornamental grasses were listed in material hand outs. Many of the attendees commented on how knowledgeable and informative Sara was. All of the feedback on the seminar was favorable.

Shortly after the workshop there was an article in *Yorkton This Week* dealing with xeriscaping and water conservation. In the "Gardener's Notebook", Debbie Hayward from the Yorkton and District Horticultural Society wrote the article "Lawns are the highest consumers of water" and commented on Sara Williams' "Creating A Prairie Xeriscape" workshop and elaborated on and reiterated on many of the points from the workshop.

Xeriscaping began on a triangular shaped lot in the northwest area of Yorkton. Excavation of the lot and preparation for planting began in May, 2008. A variety of aggregate was used to cover the walkways and borders were set up to enclose the plantings. Numerous plants and shrubs were planted and protected with mulch to retain moisture and inhibit weed growth. Planting was completed on June 27, 2008. Signage was placed at the site identifying the lot as a Xeriscape Demonstration Garden sponsored by the City of Yorkton and Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. Future maintenance of the demonstration garden will be completed by the Parks and Leisure Department along with their other green spaces. Notes will be taken as to how much maintenance will be needed for this site in comparison to regular green spaces.

Community Initiatives Water Conservation Program

Information brochures have been made available to the public on different water conservation ideas. These brochures are available at City Hall and through the Parks and Leisure Department. The Parks and Leisure Department has put together information packages to be used in conjunction with community programs on water conservation and xeriscaping that will be presented on a continuing basis.

Displays and information were put together for a booth at the Yorkton Exhibition, which was held July 3-6, 2008. Xeriscaping and water conservation information was included in the material presented. A good response to the booth was noted.

A community survey was conducted with the help of the Parks and Leisure Department. There were four survey sections distributed to ten demographic areas of the city. The survey included xeriscaping, water wise solutions, composting and West Nile. Two of these pertained to the water conservation initiatives program; xeriscaping and water saving habits.

The City of Yorkton was divided into ten zones for the purpose of surveying the community. The survey was distributed to the ten demographics; the information from the survey was gathered through personal residential and business visitations. A variety of questions were completed by each zone.

In general, many residents did not know much about xeriscaping but were interested in learning more about it and trying to implement it. Some respondents were already incorporating water wise solutions in their homes; of those that were unaware of these types of water saving techniques most wanted to learn more about how they could conserve water.

The Parks and Leisure Department of the City of Yorkton will continue with community outreach and research. From the information compiled for the brochures and display at the exhibition, and after finding how the residents of Yorkton responded to the survey an information/presentation package has been put together for future use. The Parks and Leisure Department will offer workshops pertaining to xeriscaping and water conservation in the future.

The City of Yorkton website includes information on the xeriscaping demonstration garden and other water conservation information.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM

CITY OF YORKTON

FUNDING	GRANT	IN-KIND
Staff Wages	\$4,000.00	\$15,032.05
Design & Management	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Shop Materials	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Community Awareness	\$11,800.00	\$9,089.97
Administration	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Site Preparation	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Hard Landscaping	\$3,000.00	\$0.00
Plants, Material & Mulches	\$4,000.00	\$0.00
Equipment	\$1,500.00	\$760.00
Signage	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Contingency	\$7,700.00	\$300.00
Consultant & Staff Meetings	\$0.00	\$4,756.34
Reporting	\$0.00	\$478.76
TOTAL	\$43,500.00	\$36,417.12