

# Manitoba's Naturist Legacy is open for business

*By the Naturist Legacy Board. This article was published in the Winter 2012-13 edition of Going Natural magazine (Federation of Canadian Naturists)*

In early 2010, Manitoba's oldest landed naturist club lost its home of 40 years when the campground's owners decided to take it textile. With pure determination and sheer will, our small membership immediately began the task of purchasing new land of our own and building what is now known as Naturist Legacy Park. We're pleased to report that we became fully operational in 2012 and hosted our official Grand Opening in July.

So how did we go from absolutely nothing to something quite amazing in just two short years? Countless hours of "outside the box" thinking and planning produced a solid business plan for a naturist park that inspired enough confidence in our members to both fund it and build it. We owe money only to ourselves, with not one thin dime owed to any external bank or lender. Everything we have, including our new land, is fully ours — paid in full. Except for the help of a few necessary tradespeople, every hour of labour that has gone into our park has been volunteered by our own members. It goes without saying that these enormous efforts have yielded great pride and satisfaction amongst us all!

The early development of our new naturist park has been chronicled in two articles previously published in *Going Natural* (Vol. 25, No. 4 and Vol. 26, No. 4). We now have graveled roadways, twenty seasonal campsites (all occupied), and four guest campsites. We have a huge tenting area located within part of a meadow that allows for sun, shade and quiet times in a hammock. We have a modern building which houses two unisex washrooms (one being disabled accessible) and showers. We also built a large screened outdoor shower that allows two people to share the space comfortably. It offers a wonderful view of the park's primary meadow as one soaps and rinses.

The centerpiece of the park is our new swimming pool. It's a 33-foot round, partially in-ground pool which is heated to a nice 30°C (87°F) or warmer on most days. A sunburst pattern splash deck encircles the entire pool and fans off onto an immense sun deck conveniently connected to the washroom building and a boardwalk to the outdoor showers.

Our last major capital project is to build a clubhouse that will adjoin the pool deck. Fundraising is now underway for that project.

Recreational amenities within the park include our sand volleyball court which has been outfitted with luxurious white sand originating from one of Manitoba's great beaches! Even on the hottest of days, this sand is cool and soft underfoot. A 12-ft. by 60-ft. bocce court has been located such that both sun and shade can be enjoyed while playing. In the south meadow we have a great open space perfect for tossing around a ball, flinging a Frisbee or maybe playing a game of football or soccer. Horseshoe pits are planned for 2013.

All of these activities are located so that they can be seen from the pool and sun deck. This affords everyone a view of the action. The parking lot and campsites are situated well back from the main activity area so that members can enjoy the sights and sounds of the natural world around them without the view being spoiled by cars and RVs.

We have several wonderful hiking trails within our 80-acre forest, with more planned. These unique trails take you deep into the woods through changing elevations, trees that include towering old growth spruce amidst pine, poplar and birch, and great expanses of ferns. A great many species of birds along with deer and other wildlife share our wonderful forest.

Naturist Legacy Park has chosen to be fully nudist instead of clothing optional. We are nude whenever and wherever possible. Board members greet all visitors in the nude whenever the weather allows. Being greeted by a nude person tends to offer new arrivals — whether they are first timers or experienced naturists — an immediate sense of "permission" to be nude. Most new visitors choose to take our orientation tour in the nude without even being asked. They are thus able to begin enjoying the naturist experience immediately.

Naturist Legacy's business structure is somewhat unique. It's not a "mom and pop" club, a co-op or a commercial, for-profit corporation. We are instead a membership-based non-profit (non-share) corporation. No one 'owns' Naturist Legacy. It's governed and managed by a board of directors (elected by the membership), who are in turn governed by the corporation's by-laws. The core reason for our very existence is spelled out in our Articles of Incorporation: "The purpose of the corporation shall be...to sustain and advance naturism through the acquisition and management of lands to be held in trust and permanently designated for naturist use."

A unique feature of Naturist Legacy is that its business model is based on that of a true private club reserved almost exclusively for seasonal members. We're not in the "pay-by-the-day" market, though we do welcome such visits from members of other naturist organizations like FCN. Even though we offer campsites for our members, we're not really in the "campground" business, either. We've chosen instead to simply focus on the "naturist" business, which is a far broader marketplace. Prospects who express an interest in purchasing a seasonal membership are offered a complimentary visit so they can see for themselves why Naturist Legacy Park is such a wonderful activity destination. Nearly half of our current members come out to the park for the day and then go home at night. Since we're just 35 minutes from the edge of the largest population centre in Manitoba (Winnipeg), the journey is not that far. This distinctive business model has generated membership growth for our small club of more than 25% in two years — and this while we were still under construction!

Members are permitted to invite guests at no charge so that outsiders may see and experience our park. Not unlike any other type of private club, members must take full responsibility for the guests they invite. Members are expected to be nude as usual and encourage their guests to be nude as well. The goal is to invite those who are (or who may be) interested in naturism and then strongly encourage them to become members after a visit or two.

That — very briefly — is the story of Naturist Legacy so far. Our corporation's mission is to provide continuity and stability and endurance for landed naturism in Manitoba. That mission is both our present and our future. Ours is not just a story about how to build a naturist park. Perhaps more significantly, ours is also a story about how to build an enduring legacy...a naturist legacy! We invite you to follow our progress by visiting our Web site at <<http://www.naturistlegacy.org>>.