

Insights from the Kahkewistehaw
orchard at Bird's Point



Planting a 'Prototype' Orchard



1

The Lands We Call Mikiwam: Kahkewistahaw

- ❖ Youtube video was instrumental in motiving our department to undertake this challenge.
- ❖ Made by Cree Thunder Entertainment it is a valuable tool learning the history of the Nation.

Melissa Arcand, PhD

Associate Professor, Department of Soil
Science

Academic Lead, kihci-okâwîmâw askiy
Knowledge Centre

College of Agriculture and Bioresources
University of Saskatchewan
Ph: (306) 966-2562



- ❖ Melissa team wanted to do Soil testing and working it into the Orchard development was a key piece to seeing this project be a reality.

2

Soil Testing Events

- ☐ Important to have students involved early.
- ☐ Melissa & her crew were out and dug soil pits.
- ☐ They did a day at the school and then moved down to the Rowe Property the next day to get an idea of how the soils were different.



3

Project title: Knowledge exchange on agricultural enterprise development with Kahkewistahaw First Nation.

- In 2023 – Nic and Forrest attended a Sask Ag meeting at the Governance center and I toured them around the Nation.
- Many ideas were thought thro that day and in subsequent meetings that followed.
- At the University of Saskatchewan with Candace, Nic, and myself the orchard idea funding model started.

Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council



4

History of Bird's Point - Rowe Property

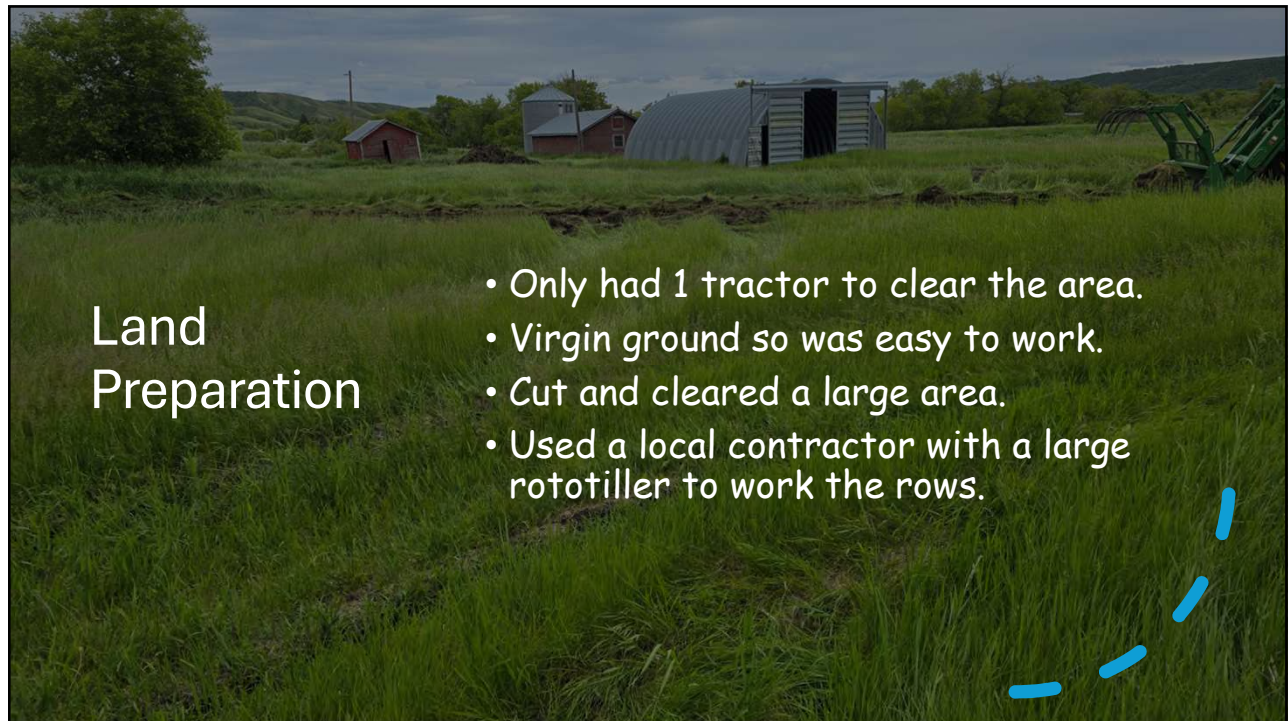
- Purchased in 2021 from Lois Rowe. She was 90 years old and really liked the direction that Chief Evan Taypotat and leadership wanted to take the area.
- She grew up on this property which was originally settled by her father.
- Specific Claim Trust Holding oversees the land leases which is to a band member on a hay share.
- The stone house is over 100 years old and there is active group looking at heritage funding to restore. Many ideas on how to refurbish it have surfaced.



5

Land Preparation

- Only had 1 tractor to clear the area.
- Virgin ground so was easy to work.
- Cut and cleared a large area.
- Used a local contractor with a large rototiller to work the rows.



6

Organizing the Planting

- Preparing the soil and space
- Mobilizing the community / involving youth and students in planting activities
- Knowledge exchange
- Ensuring proper maintenance upkeep over the summer



7

Plant Materials & Budget

- Budget of ~\$1700 was enough to buy the following from USask Horticulture:
 - 160 haskaps (\$5 per unit)
 - Apple trees (6 @ \$65)
 - Rhubarb (4 @ \$5)
 - Black Currants (\$5 per unit)
 - Strawberries (\$1.20 per unit)
 - Other options: Saskatoon berry, sour cherries, Jerusalem artichokes, etc.
- Around ~\$800 – \$1000 would also be sufficient depending on proposed size of the initial planting.

8

Additional Funding Explored To assist with on-going challenges



Kahkewistahaw Lands & Resources has applied to Indigenous Service Canada (ISC) Lands & Economic Development Service Program (LEDSP) to fund additional equipment.



Grant is for an additional \$57,000.00 to add the following:

\$10,000 of equipment – Rototillers, push & riding lawnmowers, Miscellaneous hand tools
\$2000 in water tanks and irrigation equipment
\$37,000 for 3 employment position for 11 pay periods to manage area.
\$10,000 for establishing fencing, signage and security camera system.



Goal for continuing teaching & learning.

Understanding horticulture and value of having fruits.
Ceremony teaching of the different berries and the benefits they produce.

9

Next Steps

- A prototype orchard planting can be a good way to engage the community and identify who is most interested in pursuing the development of the orchard in the future.
- They can also help identify which plant types the community is most interested in and which grow the best at the orchard site.
- The experience of developing an initial, smaller orchard can help to inform further efforts to expand and develop the orchard/garden.
- Potential funding sources include: 1) [ADOPT](#); 2) Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) programs, links [here](#) and [here](#).

10