



Dakota College at Bottineau, the NRCS Plant Materials Center in Bismarck and Upper Dakota RC&D partnered to grow over 250 native plants for the Mystical Horizons Native Plant Garden—Bottineau, ND

Mystical Horizons Adds Native Plant Garden

(MINOT, ND) --- Located 9 miles north of Bottineau, ND and 3.5 miles west on the Turtle Mountain Scenic Byway, highway 43, Mystical Horizons is “A 21st Century Stonehenge.”

Jack and Georgia Olson members of the Turtle Mountain (ND/Manitoba) Tourism Association (TMTA) presented a sketch for a scaled down version of England’ Stonehenge at a tourism meeting in Boissevain, Manitoba in 2000. Mae Streich, TMTA secretary and Bottineau County Auditor pursued the project through Bottineau County and many other partners to become a reality.

There are three structures to the Stonehenge. The first is a Polaris sighting tube positioned perfectly to view the North Star. The second structure is a Sundial that uses Roman numerals to tell time. The third is a group of six walls that represent the solar calendar with slots in them. Each one is positioned with GPS to allow direct sunlight to pass through only the Winter and Summer Solstice and Vernal and Autumn Equinox. Now people enjoy the outdoors by marking their calendar and travel to the site to watch their time lens on the outdoor calendar, set their watches with the correct time, all in one setting!

Streich, felt there were further educational opportunities at Mystical Horizons and working with the Bottineau County Commissioners requested technical assistance from the Upper Dakota RC&D Council in planning a native plant addition the Mystical Horizons site. Dakota College at Bottineau’s (then MSU Bottineau) horticulturalist Diann Beckman was contacted. Working with one of her students a preliminary design was presented to the Bottineau County Commissioners. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Plant Materials Center in Bismarck (PMC) was also contacted for design assistance and native seeds.

Eight varieties of native grass seed and three varieties of native broad leaf plant seeds were provided by the PMC. Starting this past spring, Beckman, along with one of her students nurtured the seeds in one of the Dakota College at Bottineau greenhouses.

Near the end of June, Streich, Beckman, students, county and college employees, NRCS employees and a council representative combined efforts to plant over 250 native plants in an 800 square foot plot on the Mystical Horizons site. A kiosk is being developed that will identify the plants and describe their benefits.

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