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BARROWS, RORKETON, WINNIPEGOSIS, WATERHEN,
CRANE RIVER, SPENCE LAKE, DAWSON BAY, ST MARTIN:

NACC Beekeeping Project



The Northern Association of Community Councils Beekeeping program began as a pilot in 2013 and has grown and refined each year since. The program started small with five families taking part. Since that time many have gotten to be quite strong beekeepers. In 2016, there were 11 families actively participating in the program.

The NACC Beekeeping Program is a five year graduated support program that facilitates learning about bees as well as acquiring the bees and equipment needed to keep them. Participants sign a contract that outlines their responsibilities as well as the NACC's commitments to the program. Each participant keeps a logbook that details their beekeeping activity. The logbook helps beekeepers keep track of their operations and helps the NACC track the activities of the apiaries. In 2015, one NACC staff member described the new contract system, "This really helped to guide us towards beekeepers to understanding the path to sustainability. We also did a better job of record keeping with the project."

Pollination benefits have been obvious to many of the participants. Dave Olsen from the Homebrook community shared that his gardens were "over productive" after the bees were added and Alana Parker from Dawson Bay also observed significant changes in local pollination rates.

Honey and other bee products are shared and sold in a variety of different ways. For some families the honey serves to offset the purchasing of sugar for their large families. Other participants sell or share the honey locally. In 2016, the first workshops focused on non-honey products

The participants have an array of motivators for joining the project. From economic development opportunities for their families, to pollination, to positive and action-based projects for children, adults and elders to be involved in, people are finding many benefits from

keeping bees. One 2016 participant said, "The honey we harvested is amazing and the smiles I see on my children's faces when the elders thank them and tell them how good it was, is completely worth every minute and penny."

In 2016, more than 4,100 pounds of honey was harvested from over 70 hives by our participants. Beekeepers have also learned how to split their own hives and some are working on raising queens. The participants are now able to teach and support each other in a way that was simply not possible during the first years of the program. We are excited to support the emergence of new beekeepers, to increase the total number of beehives and see the resulting pollination benefits and honey produced by small and

remote northern Manitoba communities. In 2017, the NACC will be supporting some communities along the Bayline, with only rail access, to get into beekeeping. We will also continue to provide training and supports to our current participants and to promote this important project.



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like candles and soaps took place. Bonnie Dumas commented on the culture of sharing between the beekeepers and other community members, "We shared the honey with members of the community and co-workers. We also shared the information we learned with others and got people interested in possibly trying to raise their own bees."



> PHOTO DETAILS

[1] Alana Parker catches a swarm. [2] Beekeeping workshop. [3] Bonnie's son ready to help. [4] Dave and Aaron Olsen extract honey. [5] Nikki and Els Verink bottling honey. [6] Leilani extracts honey with her baby. [7] Creaming the honey. [8] Beekeepers attend a training.

“The training for the families has really improved. We have experienced participants training new participants now. This helped new participants understand that it (beekeeping) is actually doable. It helped people be more comfortable and to know they can do it, and they have a place to go for help or support.

- NACC Staff

The most exciting things about this project were turning a dream into a reality, involving the entire family in the project and getting those around us excited about it.

- Bonnie Dumas, participant

This project brought in much needed pollination to our community, which helped increase the garden yields for our residents.

- Alana Parker, Participant

NFMCCC funding

- ☑ 2013
- ☑ 2014
- ☑ 2015
- ☑ 2016
- ☑ 2017

> OBJECTIVES

To expand beekeeping in communities of northern Manitoba for community economic development, increased food security, and pollination.

> LOCATION

This project takes place in multiple communities throughout the Manitoba Parklands region, with populations mostly under 150 people per community. All communities are members of the Northern Association of Community Councils. NACC is an advocacy and support group focused on improving the quality of life in Northern Association Communities.