

## **Our History**

The Forestry Farm Park was started in 1913 and officially opened in 1914.

The "Farm" was dedicated to the propagation and production of trees from the prairie environment. The site was known as the Dominion Forest Nursery Station, a branch of the Indian Head Nursery Station. Owned and operated by the Federal Government, the Forestry Farm was laid out with landscaped demonstration areas as well as actual production and experimental plots. The first shipment of trees was sent to farmers in 1916. From that time until 1936 the station sent out more than 59 million seedlings and cuttings to farmers.

As the plant material grew, the demonstration areas of the farm became popular places for an afternoon stroll. It was also a popular site for church picnics and field days. The demand for recreational use of the farm increased over the years. The tree nursery operations shut down in 1965. In 1966 the site was acquired by the City of Saskatoon for \$1.00 for use as a park.

From 1913 to 1965 the Sutherland Forest Nursery Station shipped an amazing 147 million trees to the farmers of western Canada. To honour its past, the City of Saskatoon declared the Forestry Farm a Municipal Heritage Site in 1989. Two years later the Government of Canada declared the Sutherland Forest Nursery Station a National Historic Site. The Friends of the Forestry Farm House restored the Superintendent's Residence complete with an interpretive display depicting life at the Sutherland Nursery Station. The Friends of the Forestry Farm House also conducts interpretive tours of this National Historic Site. The Discovery Centre, located within the Affinity Learning Centre at the Forestry Farm, also has interpretive panels that depict the changes in the site over the past 100 years.

In 1964 the Golden Gate Animal Farm on Saskatoon's west end was in decline. Overtures began in February of 1964 for the City to acquire the Golden Gate Animal Farm. The City Council decided to purchase the mammals, birds, and equipment and maintain them until facilities could be prepared at the Sutherland Forestry Farm site in October 1965. The decision by Council may have been due in part to the school children who collected pennies and presented them to the Mayor and City Council in front of City Hall with a plea to please save the animals. Animals from the Golden Gate Animal Farm were eventually moved to the Forestry Farm site and the new Zoo opened in 1972.

In 1976 a group of concerned citizens recognized the education potential of the Forestry Farm Zoo. They started a group called the Saskatoon Regional Zoological Society (SRZS). The aims of the SRZS were to ensure the animals held at the Zoo were properly cared for properly, to fund raise for better facilities at the Zoo, and to provide educational programming.

The SRZS became The Saskatoon Zoo Society. Today we are a volunteer driven, non-profit organization dedicated to fostering respect for nature. Each year the dedicated volunteers of the Saskatoon Zoo Society carry out more than 400 educational programs and special events.

We are funded through our membership program, grants, donations, cost recovery on our programs, our Adopt-a-Critter program, and Paws Inn Concession and Gift Shop sales. You can support the Saskatoon Zoo Society by becoming a member today.