

Harvest Moon Presentation

by Robert Guilford

Robert & Minnie Guilford's 640 acre farm with Rock Lake in Background
Located 10 miles north of the United States of America



The yard is a mix of livestock and grain handling facilities with a couple of gardens.
The journey and transition into organic farming started in 1987



Our home town
Of Clearwater
Surrounded on
3 sides by
Cypress Creek
which flows to
the Pembina
River. It is
surrounded by
conventionally
farmed land
using
commercial
pesticides and
fertilizers.
Robert's family
has lived in the
community for
3 generations.



Beginning talk
of hosting
music festival
was greeted
with mixed
feelings of
excitement and
scepticism.

How can a sleepy little town like Clearwater of 65 people carve out a survival plan that will attract young people to the community and also make the ones that are here proud?



The first Harvest Moon Festival was held on the school grounds which had closed 2 years earlier due to declining enrollment. We had about 50 people show up.



As a kid we would race out of the school at recess to play baseball here. Now we have planned for a garden to supply food for workshop participants and the festival.



We have lots of deer in the area which would love to munch on our produce and fruit trees, so we built a chicken moat around the garden. A double fence will keep the deer out.



The chicken tunnel to get to all areas of the moat. We added a lot of compost to create this amazing garden. We organized work bees and used things such as Facebook to get the word out.



Other work bees involved building an Adobe Oven using a mix of concrete, sand and local clay. Community development is achieved by being open, trusting and sharing a common vision with people both in and outside of the community.



Who wouldn't want a piece of this pizza. Notice that we spare no expense when it comes to the utensils. People camp on site for the work bees and other events.



In the last couple of years we have added a greenhouse to lengthen out our growing season and attract interns for the growing season. People love the teepee when it's up.



12th year of the Harvest Moon Festival showing some of the 600 or so tents set up for the weekend. We had to cap the number of tickets sold this year because we have maxed out for the space we have. Besides, as organizers we wanted the party. We just decided to share it.



It has taken quite a while, but the Harvest Moon Festival has added a spark to keep the community going by involving as many different groups as possible to feed the people and generate some income which involves money from outside the community. Music and good food go a long way to create long lasting relationships.

The wrap around valley gives campers a beautiful view from their front door.



The recycled greenhouse frame makes an awesome stage cover. All of the decorations are from local gardens, fields, sloughs and ditches. We thrive on the rustic low budget look.



The festival attracts a wide variety of people including many families who want to celebrate and enjoy one of the last outdoor weekends of the summer season.



Besides music we host a variety of workshops such as this blacksmithing workshop with Dwayne Logan who also teaches survival courses. There is a lot of people out there who want to learn some what you might call basic skills. No iPhone hooked up to these tools!



We have been very fortunate to have been able to attract bands such as the Wooden Sky and the Crooked Bros shown here putting on a workshop during the day.



Drumming workshops are always popular. It doesn't matter how young you are. We really try to bring in a wide variety of skilled people to host these amazing workshops.



Food is a huge part of the Harvest Moon and no garden is too big or too small. Used pallets can be an excellent way to grow food for your family on a small scale.



The Farmer's Market on Sunday morning is always a huge hit with folks so they can fill up the car with fresh vegetables as well as many different home made products.



For the past 8 years we have hosted an intensive 10 day, 6 credit Environmental Science course through the University of Manitoba at the end of August. Many of our best energy and motivation has come from participants in this course. Harvest Local Food Initiative, Walking Trail in the valley, Permaculture courses, etc. being just a couple of examples.



Aboriginal culture has always been a big part of the Living Rural Communities and Environments. The students are building a sweat lodge with knowledge of it's meaning.



When it is finished they will heat up the rocks and participate in the sweat.



For many of the people taking courses they get a chance to do things they have only dreamed of doing. Surprisingly many of them come back!



Have you ever tasted apple juice from apples you just picked? She has.



Recycling carries on to a larger scale as well. This home was over 100 years old and abandoned for 20 years. An instructor was brought in to teach us deconstruction techniques.



10 people tore this house down in 3 days salvaging hard wood flooring, antique window and door trim, floor joists, 6" wall studs, light fixtures, siding and much more for reuse.



Here is an example of the floor joists and studs being reused to build cabins by the University of Manitoba Architecture class in 2013. They will be rented out to anyone.



3 different designs of cabins were built and will be fully insulated for those folks who would like a place to stay in Clearwater from time to time throughout the year



3 years ago they built this addition for our community owned restaurant out of a recycled barn.



The patio also doubles as a 2nd stage for at the Harvest Moon Festival as well as place for bands coming to record music in the school a chance to showcase their music.



The bridge on the walking trail is no longer a part of an old school house that was abandoned and falling down. This has attracted people to get married here.



The school is 100 feet by 60 feet and had no weeping tile. 2 years ago we decided to dig down all around the school and install it along with piping for a future rainwater catchment system. We came across some recycled 3" styrofoam and installed it around the foundation at the same time.



The Harvest Moon journey has taught us a lot about community and how it comes in many forms. The projects that have taken place have happened because of a variety of very motivated people with different skills but a common vision and willing to do the work to accomplish those goals set out in the many meetings.

The weeping tile and water lines lead down over the edge of the valley to a pond and future water tanks for outdoor showers and grey water used to water gardens and trees.



This is the first of 4 water tanks to be set up for catching the rainwater off the roof of the school. Rob Avis came to teach us how to properly set up the system.



This shows the area dug out for the infiltrators to handle the rain water as it flows from the tanks. The idea is to have living examples of things people can do at home.



Each one of the yellow and white pegs is where we planted fruit trees. The wood chips are from a local rafter manufacturer the chip all the off cuts and waste pieces of wood.



The wood chips totally cover the 18" deep cavity, but buns of earth were made where the trees are planted. The pipe on the bottom right corner is where the grey water enters.



Healthy Land, Healthy Community has been the main slogan for Harvest Moon and Doug Weatherbee came to give a workshop on composting. Originally, I was not going to take this workshop because I thought he was just another “Expert”. He’s not, he’s amazing.



There were people in that workshop who were gardeners, small- and large-scale farmers and Doug had something for everyone. What he is demonstrating here is a small scale compost tea making system that he adds air to it with speeds up the process to produce compost extract.



I have been involved with organic farming since 1987 and nobody has ever made as much sense in how to manage soil fertility as Doug did in those 3 days. Again to build community it is all about sharing information and providing a public place where people can learn.

On the farm I have a 150' row of manure from the cattle that we added hay, straw, wood chips and water to create a combination that would make the amazing compost



Gerry Dube came with his self propelled compost turner which did a great job of mixing all the ingredients together and leaving a nice neat pile, but it is expensive.



I ended up using my tractor to mix the compost every other day for over a week till I got the right mixture of material and water with the temperature under control.



Regardless of the scale you are doing this the mixing and temperature management are critical. We have these resources here locally, we just need knowledge on using them.



Special material is available to cover the compost to allow air in, but inhibit weed growth. It is fuzzy on one side if you want to moisten the compost when it rains.



Vermicomposting is also a great way to recycle household waste. This design allows you to stack the boxes with a mess bottom so the worms can move up through it to the box above.



Vegetables are added to the box and once it is full, just add a box on top and continue adding your scraps to feed the Red Wiggler worms, which just keep moving up to the food.



You may have noticed a huge emphasis on small scale and raising chickens can be a great family project. These moveable pens work great to mow your grass in the summer.



For egg laying, you might consider some version of the Koop de Ville. This 8'x8' building houses our 10 laying chickens, 2 dogs and 4 cats in the winter. There is an opening so the dogs and cats can come and go as they please.



The front half faces south and is a greenhouse in the spring. The back half is the living quarters for the chickens. The window you see faces east for the morning sun. The shutters on the front are to help keep it warm during the long winter nights. All the walls and roof are insulated.

There is not a lot of space for plants, but it can be used quite effectively. You can see the hen sitting in the nest box with the door open. The area under the shelves is used for a chicken run as well as storage. The pail contains the water for the chickens to drink.



Harvest Moon has always been working to help people become more self reliant and at the same time have healthy food. It can be a lot of work, but the workshops have taught us a lot of ways to be very effective at making the best of what we have.

These chickens drink from the red nipple drinker which is located above the tray which catches their poop. A little tip from a chicken psychologist; the chickens will eat their food down on the floor and then they'll hop up to get a drink to wash that dry food down. Then they'll sit down and have a poop right into the tray below.



The Koop de Ville exemplifies the idea of different folks having to live in close proximity to each other. The body heat from each helps to keep the place warm and cats and dogs don't mind getting fed the odd egg. So often it's the little things that we are taught that matter the most.

For the past 3 years we have been working with Four Arrows Regional Health Authority on Island Lake and Red Sucker Lake to teach some of the residents ways to raise chickens as healthy food for their family. These are fly in communities with limited winter roads.



Workshops were held to build on version of a chicken pen so they could have an example to go home and build one of their own with some of the materials provided.



The arrival of the baby chicks is always an entertaining time. The challenge is to keep them alive for the summer months. Life in the north has lots of challenges.



If we are going to survive the challenges of the future we need to work together.



<http://www.harvestmoonsociety.org/>