**Final report to the Winnipeg Foundation**

**Grant number: 2012-0904**

**Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre – Ducks Unlimited Canada**

**Organizational background:**

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre (the Interpretive Centre) was opened in 1993 as a joint project of Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Province of Manitoba.

Its updated mission is: *To Connect People with Wetlands*

**Project Goal:**

The goal of this project was replace the 18-year-old Winnipeg Foundation Boardwalk and Viewing Blind that has deteriorated and was permanently closed for safety reasons, with a new and improved structure that is safe for use by school groups, tour groups, and public visitors. Improvements were to include: the addition of a special lift that will allow people with physical disabilities to access the canoe program, dock extensions that will increase capacity for critter dipping and canoe loading without blocking the boardwalk, and increased capacity of the viewing blind structure to hold a full class.

**Implementation:**

After two bids from local construction companies, PCL was hired to construct the boardwalk and viewing blind. The project was to start in February 2012 for a completion date of March 31, 2013.

**Community Involvement:**

A local company was selected to install the new boardwalk facilities.

As part of environmental initiative, volunteers assisted with sorting debris to be reused for other purposes.

The urgent need to replace the main boardwalk and viewing blind provided the Interpretive Centre with an opportunity to integrate a specialized lift into the design to make the canoe program more accessible to people with physical disabilities. The lift would be used to move people from a wheelchair on the dock and lower them into a seat in the canoe. At the request of local community members, the Interpretive Centre started a fund to raise money for this improvement several years ago.

The Interpretive Centre sought advice from involved educators and other appropriate groups within the community to expand its capacity to provide people with disabilities with an opportunity to participate in outdoor programs such as the voyageur canoe adventures. Fundraising for this initiative raised close to $1,000 through community member donations. This equipment will improve accessibility and enhance inclusiveness by providing people with disabilities with a rare opportunity to participate in this unique outdoor experience.

**Lessons learned:**

The budget needed to be revised to reflect current material and labour costs.

**Recognition for the Winnipeg Foundation:**

* Ministers Dinner, presentation, program, newspaper article
* June 1st celebration
* New brass plaque
* Interpretive Centre website
* Special edition of OHMIC newsletter

