



First Made-in-Manitoba Nature Prescription Partnership Launches at Assiniboine Park

Winnipeg, MB – September 16, 2025 – Today, the Assiniboine Park Conservancy (APC) joins a growing community of organizations across Canada promoting the health benefits of nature by partnering with **PaRx, Canada’s national nature prescription program** that empowers healthcare professionals to prescribe time in nature as a way to improve physical and mental well-being. This new partnership reflects what many community members have already discovered firsthand—that regular time spent in nature can be a powerful tool for improving overall health and quality of life.

The day longtime St. James resident Darlene Lewis retired from her career as a schoolteacher and administrator, she got rid of her treadmill: “I knew I was going to start walking daily, in Assiniboine Park, and I have pretty much every day ever since,” she said. “It’s great physical exercise, it lifts my mood, and even helps with chronic pain. Out here, surrounded by the sounds of nature, my whole body and mind feel lighter.”

Darlene’s experience is not unique. Research shows that time in nature can lower blood pressure, reduce stress hormones, ease symptoms of anxiety and depression, and improve chronic conditions, cardiovascular health and sleep quality. To help more people access these benefits, APC is partnering with BC Parks Foundation’s PaRx program.

Starting today, patients who receive a PaRx nature prescription from their [registered health care provider](#) will be eligible for 50% off the purchase of an individual annual Inspire membership at Assiniboine Park. The Inspire Membership offers unlimited visits to the Park’s signature attractions—The Leaf and Assiniboine Park Zoo—along with access to the Park’s free greenspaces, gardens, trails, cultural programs, and community events.

APC becomes the second zoological organization in Canada (after the Toronto Zoo) to join PaRx, and the first non-government attraction in Manitoba.

“Assiniboine Park is a place where people of all ages can connect with nature year-round. Whether you’re walking the trails, exploring the gardens, or taking part in seasonal events, there’s always something to do and a reason to get outside,” said Jody Watson, Senior Director of Programming & Education, Assiniboine Park Conservancy. “Through this partnership, we’re making it easier for more people to enjoy the restorative benefits of nature while also experiencing the Zoo and The Leaf year-round. It’s about supporting long-term health and wellness by reducing barriers to access.”

“Time in nature has proven, measurable benefits for both mental and physical health,” said Dr. Nichelle Desilets, President of Doctors Manitoba. “By prescribing nature, we’re giving patients a simple, evidence-based tool to reduce stress, boost mood, and improve overall well-being. This partnership helps ensure more Manitobans can access those benefits, right in their own community.”

Any Canadian licensed healthcare provider can [register](#) to prescribe nature with PaRx and receive a nature prescription file, a unique provider code, and instructions for how to prescribe and log nature prescriptions.

“At BC Parks Foundation, we’ve seen the difference nature prescriptions can make for kids, families, and communities,” said Jennie McCaffrey, Vice President of Health and Education, BC Parks Foundation. “Removing financial barriers—like APC is doing—means that the healing power of nature becomes more accessible and equitable, reaching the people who need it most.”

For Darlene, who has called the Park her backyard since 1990, the impact is deeply personal. Walking daily has helped her cope with grief, form a caring community of fellow walkers, and deepen her connection with the natural world. Volunteering in the Park has opened up new and meaningful ways for Darlene to contribute to the care of the place she loves. Whether she’s checking on newly planted trees, monitoring biodiversity with the iNaturalist app, or keeping the Park clean, her time in the Park continues to nourish her health and well-being.

“It has such calming, peaceful sensory input... wildlife, sunrises, the plants, the trees,” said Darlene. “It’s so kind to your body, your whole mind, your whole self. Walking in the park puts me in an attitude of gratitude. And when I have that attitude of thankfulness my life is richer.”

Media Contact, BC Parks Foundation

Chelsea Rooney

media@bcparksfoundation.ca | 604-343-3975 x130

Media Contact, Assiniboine Park Conservancy

Laura Cabak, Director of Communications & Public Relations

lcabak@assiniboinepark.ca | 204-795-0091

About BC Parks Foundation

BC Parks Foundation is on a mission to create the best parks system in the world, connecting people to the life-changing power of nature and inspiring personal, community, and planetary well-being. Through initiatives like PaRx, the Foundation works with partners across the country to support access to nature, conservation, and healthy communities.

Learn more at bcparksfoundation.ca.

About PaRx

PaRx is Canada’s national nature prescription program, supported by the BC Parks Foundation and over 18,000 health professionals across the country.

Learn more at parkprescriptions.ca.