

Sacred site brings faiths together

BY PAMELA COWAN, THE LEADER-POST OCTOBER 30, 2010

A smudge and prayers from many faiths will be offered this afternoon as a sacred site is dedicated on a small piece of land near Craik. Multi-Faith Saskatchewan partnered with the Craik Sustainable Living Project to develop the Designated Sacred Space Project near the Craik Eco-Centre, which overlooks the Arm River Valley.

The project's objective is to promote unity in diversity, said Krishan Kapila, president of the multi-faith organization.

"The land was given to us by the RM of Craik," Kapila said. "I'm an immigrant. I came here from India 42 years ago and I have seen many changes in these 42 years. There are new places of worship and there is a visible diversity ... I feel that there is a need for better understanding, appreciation and respect for each other."

Plaques with the "golden rules" from various faiths are set around a circular path and tall pillars feature messages that encourage everyone to be good stewards of our planet.

"To sustain life for the future, we need to take care of Mother Earth," Kapila said.

Participating in the dedication will be representatives from First Nations, Baha'i, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Unitarian, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

Starting at 12:15 p.m., nine short prayers will be said inside the Craik Solar Garden restaurant. The dedication will then move outside where Elder Murray Ironchild from the Piapot First Nation will smudge the sacred site.

Mardi Tindal, the United Church of Canada's moderator, travelled from Toronto to be the guest speaker at the ceremony. Representatives from interfaith councils in Manitoba and Alberta are also expected to attend.

So far, \$15,000 has been raised towards the project by the faith groups and the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan. Fundraising is continuing.

The public can send donations to Multi-Faith Saskatchewan in Regina at Box 32117, S4N 7L2.

The project will be completed in April after a wall where people can sit and reflect is built and a solar-powered fountain is built in the centre of the sacred space.

The official opening of the project is slated for July.