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## Powell Property

A transfer of land to the Manitoba Wildlife Federation on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1978 marked the creation of the MWF's Habitat Trust Program, which later led to the formation of the MWF Habitat Foundation Inc. The donation of land from the Estate of Rowline Ann Powell in the mid 1970's spearheaded the Federation's program to protect wildlife habitat. The property consists of 295 acres along #16 Highway on the north and south sides, one mile west of the junction of Provincial Road #264 that heads to Rosburn. The Highway and Canadian Pacific Railway intersects the property from South-East to North-West which reduces the 160 acres per quarter. The area of donation property on the northwest quarter was 145 acres and the northeast quarter 150 acres with about 140 acres under cultivation. As this land donation was a first to the Manitoba Wildlife Federation, there was no set process on how to accept the land. A committee consisting of Fred Mayor of Gladstone, Sig Mack of Plumas, Vern Spangelo of Morden, Henry Strong of Winnipeg, Gord Bradley of Winnipeg and Greg Fehr of Gladstone was set up. Their objective was to come up with a means of carrying out Rowline Powell's wish that "as long as practical the Federation will preserve my farm as wildlife refuge". Their goal was to preserve and enhance the wildlife habitat while allowing some agricultural activity on the cultivated land as a source of revenue for enhancing the wildlife habitat.

There were existing potholes that held water for part of the summer but most times by fall they were dry. Several of the potholes were used by ducks for nesting cover. There were low spots that could not be planted along with treed bluffs that covered the property. This made good cover for the wildlife that used the area.

In the early years a committee over saw the running of activates on the Powell property.

The 140 acres of cultivated land was initially leased for a three year term, with an agreement between the leasee and Federation as to what crops would be planted. The income derived from the lease was used to create more cover for wildlife. Over time, the acres under cultivation were reduced and trees planted to provide more cover.

Ducks Unlimited was asked to do a survey of the land to see what could be done to improve water retention for waterfowl. Their recommendation was not favorable as there was not enough spring runoff to warrant installing a water retention structure as sufficient water levels would not be reached and be retained. The area would dry out before the fall.

In 1984 a dugout was made on the west side of the property for water retention and in turn over the years some of the best dam builders were on site and started to take down trees for their structures. The beavers were a blessing for the water issue but created flooded fields and crossings in the area.



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In time areas of the property became covered in willow and low bushes as more cover was created naturally. This in turn held deer and in a report from Ray Simms in March of 1994 he stated that there were probably 10 deer that wintered over and a natural salt lick at the dugout was heavily used, In those years, the Snake Creek Sportsman Association took it upon themselves to care take the Powell Property. Delmar Bamford, Dunc Johnson, Ray Simms and many other members of the Snake Creek association oversaw the property and were involved in its management, and their efforts were very much appreciated.

During the 90's there was a movement to remove as many pocket gophers as possible from the Powell property. The cost and Mother Nature had last call and the project was not successful; the pocket gophers still live.

The property is leased out today to a local rancher for cropping of alfalfa for his cattle operation. The rancher has been leasing the land from the MWF Habitat Foundation Inc. since 1992. The Foundation has placed newer signs at the east and west boundaries on Highway #16 to identify the Powell Property. The cover has increased over the years and with the help, and sometimes the hindrances, beavers are still an issue.

This was the first of many properties that the MWF Habitat Foundation Inc. has under title. This started 32 years ago and if it wasn't for our predecessors that had the foresight to create the Habitat Trust and later the MWF Habitat Foundation Inc., we would not have today over 90 parcels of land in agro-Manitoba.

They looked at their future and provided us with the start of the MWF Habitat Foundation Inc. But there are many more tomorrows in which we have to hand off the results of our work to protect wildlife habitat land for future generations of Manitobans.