



Burrowing Owls

The Manitoba Burrowing Owls Recovery Program (MBORP) has been helping to protect and maintain the burrowing owl population in Manitoba for over 12 years. Alex, the founder and director of MBORP, found her passion for endangered species while working with Manitoba Conservation. She pursued her Master's in burrowing owls and wanted to determine if reintroduction into the wild was possible. Her Master's was spent studying nest success, life spans, breeding pairs, and ultimately if they could secure their own food. The three major focuses of the MBORP are the reintroduction of owls into the wild, research, and community education.

Burrowing owls live primary in grasslands and pastured areas, making cattle farmers the ideal partner for the MBORP and owl reintroduction. The organization focuses its efforts on building relationships with farmers and ensuring there are habitats available for the owls. Each year they host a "digging day" where volunteers install artificial nest burrows. The main goal is to have a healthy, self-sustaining, population of burrowing owls. The MBORP also works to collect data and support research on both wild and captive-released owls. This data is used to better understand the limitations of the owls in a variety of settings.

Awareness of the burrowing owl encourages individuals to care about the animals and grasslands in general. That is why MBORP focuses on an education component that partners with local schools and community projects. They offer presentations to teach all ages about species at risk, ecosystems in Manitoba, and the importance of protecting wildlife and their habitats. They also bring along the cutest guest, Koko the burrowing owl! This program runs during the owls breeding season from April to September. The MBORP is a privately and publicly funded organization that relies on donations to keep it going. Brandon Area Community Foundation helps to support this program by funding the education initiative and funding the artificial nest burrow project. The MBORP enjoys working with the Brandon Area Community Foundation because they help build awareness.

If you are wanting to get closer to these adorable creatures, you have the chance every June. Each year the MBORP puts on an interactive fundraising event. If you donate to their organization during the month of June, you are entered to win an experience of banding the baby owls. If this sounds like a "hoot" to you, please check the MB Burrowing Owls Recovery Program online at mborp.ca for more information!