

SOS Elms News



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President's Report

James Wood

SOS Elms comes to the end of another year and it is my privilege to report to you, our members, the highlights of what we have been up to.

We have collaborated with the University of Saskatchewan School of Environment and Sustainability in an assessment of the current status of Saskatoon's urban forest. The study will look at the extent of canopy cover, the contribution to carbon sequestration, and the effect of climate change on the urban forest and how that might increase susceptibility to forest insects and disease. The study will form part of the requirements for a master's degree for Ifeanyi Chiedo. SOS Elms has contributed \$2000 to the costs associated with the project. See Tom Gode's report below.

On June 4th Doug Mitchell and Rae Hearn hosted our annual yard sale. This has been our main annual fund-raising event and again we took in about \$1000 dollars in sales. We plan another sale next spring and would welcome your contributions to that effort, either in donated goods or volunteer time.

Our Saskatoon Tree Tour booklet continues to be a popular item, generating over \$700 in donations over the past year. See below for Karen Weingeist's list of places where it is available. Our thanks to her for keeping these sites stocked and to Doug Mitchell for building some cool display boxes which also can hold any voluntary financial contributions.

We continue to be concerned about the financial strictures Meewasin Valley Authority finds itself in, and we mourn the closure of the MVA Centre on 4th Avenue to the public. Both the City of Saskatoon and the Province have a responsibility to see that funding is restored to allow previously offered programs to continue. It is the citizens who need to make this happen.

In 2016, SOS Elms again participated in both Gardenscape and the Nature in the City Festival. We plan to continue this involvement in 2017.

Paddy Tutty stepped down from our board but continues to do a great job maintaining our website and assisting with membership. Our sincere thanks to her. Thanks also to Sharon and Brian Elder who help with the storing, setup and takedown of our large display at Gardenscape, and to Richard Kerbes and Kathy Meeres who put together our newsletters. In addition we welcome long-term SOS Elms member Ken Turner to our Board.

Many people are supporting us by purchasing a membership in SOS Elms and for this we are grateful. We need everyone to help by finding an opportunity to contribute a small amount of your time and knowledge. Please use this as an invitation to cultivate your own special interest in our urban forest. We would welcome your suggestions and initiatives.



Urban Forest Project with U of S

Tom Gode

In 2016 SOS Elms responded to a request for proposals from the U of S School of Environment and Sustainability for potential graduate student projects. We were accepted and are working with and supporting Ifeanyi Chiedo, who comes from Nigeria, on his M.Sc. project relating to Saskatoon's urban forest.

The project will look at how the City of Saskatoon can better protect the Urban Forest. Right now there are only policies for tree protection. They do not address all of the problems of protection, or support legal action against construction, development and vandalism. Trees are a part of the infrastructure of the city but are often ignored by planning and public works departments and developers. Also Climate Change is an important factor in the future for protecting the urban forest.

Ifeanyi's research will help build a viable case for tree protection and conservation. SOS Elms is preparing a presentation to a City council committee asking for better protection for the trees in Saskatoon. The City needs to improve policies and strategies, including a more enforceable city by-law, to give trees and urban forest lands a higher priority. Developers need to include the trees in the early stages of planning their projects.

Proposed Tree Inventory Project

Cliff Speer

SOS Elms is proposing to get involved in the spring of 2017 with helping the City of Saskatoon gather inventory of trees on private property. The City has completed their inventory of trees on boulevards and parks and is continuing their survey of trees on public lands. They need to also acquire data on private property in order to get a complete picture of Saskatoon's urban forest.

The inventory is a fundamental tool in managing the urban forest, identifying and locating species to assist with control of invasive insects and diseases and to assist in creating a diversity of tree species. There is also the opportunity to do public education with private property owners during the inventory process on issues such as Dutch Elm Disease (DED) and Emerald Ash

Borer, presently the two most serious threats to the health of our urban forest.

SOS Elms intends to apply for funds under Canada Summer Jobs 2017, a Federal Government student employment program, to hire a few students to work with the City in gathering tree data, specifically on elm and ash species. Urban Forestry has recently acquired new software for their data collection and processing, which according to Superintendent Michelle Chartier has amazing capabilities.

That is the plan. How successful it will be is dependent on a few things, mostly on whether our grant application hits the jackpot!

Tree Tour Booklet

Karen Weingeist

Our Saskatoon Tree Tour booklet is available for free, although a small donation is welcome. In the past year we have collected \$713.05 in donations. In distributing it we have received kind help from a variety of places in assorted locations in and near Saskatoon. It is currently available at:

- Beaver Creek Conservation Area
- Galleria kiosk, Innovation Place (U. of S.)
- Green Ark (212 20th St West)
- J. S. Wood Library (1801 Lansdowne Ave.)
- Local History Room, Frances Morrison Library (311 23rd St. E.)
- McNally Robinson Booksellers (3130 8th St. E.)
- Scoles Fine Arts and Framing (106-335 Packham Ave.)
- Steep Hill Food Co-op (730 Broadway)
- The Better Good (714 Broadway)
- The Refinery (609 Dufferin Ave.)
- Twig & Squirrel (504 20th St West)
- Western Development Museum Gift Shop (2610 Lorne Ave. S.)
- Wild Birds Unlimited (2600 8th Street)

Update on DED in Saskatoon

Rod Burghardt, Jeff Boone and Michelle Chartier, Urban Forestry, City of Saskatoon

Saskatoon has an estimated 100 000 elm trees. Individual tree value varies according to size and location. American elms with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 50 cm are typically valued in the \$16 000 to \$20 000 range.

Particularly large, stately American elms can have values as high as \$40 000. Dutch elm disease (DED) is a serious disease of American elm caused by a fungus spread by elm bark beetles. The disease was introduced into North America in the 1930s, and has killed millions of elms in Canada and the United States.

Saskatoon remained DED free until July 2015. A positive DED lab result prompted the City of Saskatoon to initiate its DED Response Plan in the Queen Elizabeth neighbourhood. That Plan involves removing infected trees and intensifying elements of the DED management program near the point of initial detection. These elements include the sampling of adjacent public and private elms, searching for elm storage violations, adding supplemental traps and enhancing public awareness.

The total cost of the response in 2015 was \$29,814 including rapid removal of the infected tree, additional surveillance and sampling, removal of elm wood infractions, and supplemental bark beetle monitoring. In 2016 the response continued in the Queen Elizabeth neighbourhood including additional staff searching for signs and symptoms of DED as well as a public awareness campaign.

Monitoring of adult elm bark beetles consists of utilizing pheromone baited traps affixed to telephone poles in 30 locations throughout the city. The trap and bait are replaced every 30 days from April to September. In response to the DED positive sample in 2015, five Lindgren funnel traps were set up within a 200–300m radius of the point of initial detection. Traps ran from April 1st to September 30th and were checked 5 five days a week. The native elm bark beetle and two introduced species are monitored.

The Saskatchewan DED Regulations (2005) outline what can be done with elm trees and elm wood during different times of the year. Pest management staff enforce the pruning ban (April 01 - August 31) of elm trees (American or Siberian). Staff also enforce the prohibition on storing of any elm material. In 2016, there were 247 notifications of infraction issued, compared to 64 in 2015. 98 % of infractions were cleared by the property owners, while the remaining 2% were cleared by civic staff.

Elm trees that show symptoms of DED are sampled and tested for the disease. In 2016, 58

samples were tested, 14 more than in 2015. Surveillance increased throughout the city, with a focus on the area near the site of the infected tree from 2015. No new DED infections were found in 2016, but seven samples tested positive for *Dothiorella* wilt (Doth), a fungal disease with similar symptoms to DED. Elms infected with Doth can die in 3-5 years. The spores of this disease are spread by wind, rain and possibly insects creating wounds as they feed on plant tissue. To prevent spread of the disease and the weakening of elms, trees on city property that are infected with Doth are pruned and monitored. If a tree is found to have Doth on private property, the property owner is informed of the test result.

Urban Forestry continues to develop an inventory system which includes the coordinates of tree locations. The ability to obtain accurate maps of the elm distribution will be critical in responding to future cases of DED. The location of the infected tree will help determine the risk to the rest of the urban forest.

Emerald Ash Borer – a Potential Threat

Rod Burghardt, Jeff Boone and Michelle Chartier, Urban Forestry, City of Saskatoon

Emerald ash borer (EAB) is a highly destructive insect that feeds on ash trees causing tree mortality after several years. Through the movement of infested firewood, EAB has been killing ash in Ontario, Quebec and northeastern USA. A cost effective method to detect EAB and reduce damage uses specially designed traps. In Saskatoon there are 26,800 ash trees on boulevards and in parks. Currently, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency monitors for EAB here with two traps. In 2016, we added six traps. To date EAB has not been detected in Saskatoon.

Cottony Ash Psyllid

The cottony ash psyllid is a non-native pest that was first found in Saskatoon in 2006 on black and mancana ash. Cottony ash psyllids are seen in low numbers in most of the susceptible trees in Saskatoon. The current infestation was first noticed in the Central Business District and along Broadway Avenue and 20th Street. Decline has been noticed in susceptible trees, particularly when there are additional

factors that impact tree health including drought, limited soil volume, salt exposure and reflective heat.

This insect is native to central Europe but has made several appearances in North America including recent infestations in North Dakota, Minnesota and Alberta. To date there is limited information on the biology of the cottony ash psyllid.

Adult psyllids are small, 2.95-3.57 mm in length, and light green to yellow-green in colour with black markings. Because of their size, the presence of cottony psyllids is most easily recognized by the damage they produce. Look for the damage symptoms to identify an infestation of cottony ash psyllid, in the canopy of a black, Mancana, Northern Treasure or Northern Gem ash.



Adult Cottony Ash Psyllid

What kind of damage do cottony ash psyllids cause? -

- Browning, yellowing and curling of the margins of ash leaflets indicating a 1st generation psyllid population.
- White cotton within the curled leaflet margins that roll under and towards the midrib to cover the nymphs.
- White cotton along the midrib of an uncurled leaf (2nd generation psyllids).
- Heavily infested trees will often be partially defoliated with the remaining leaves twisted into a corkscrew or cauliflower shape.



Typical Ash Psyllid damage

How do I control cottony ash psyllid? -

Psyllids are difficult to control and like many tree pests the best approach is to ensure your tree is kept in good health. Supplementing natural rainfall with additional watering during droughts, protecting trees from root or trunk damage, and avoiding the use of herbicides or excessive salts in the soils near trees helps to keep trees healthy. If you think that a city-owned tree is being affected by cottony ash psyllids, please contact the City of Saskatoon, (306) 975-2890.

This information provided by:
Pest Management
City of Saskatoon
1101 Ave P. North
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7K 0J5
Phone: 306.975.3300
www.saskatoon.ca

DED – 2016 Provincial Update

Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment

In 2016, the Ministry of Environment continued its strategic approach to the management of DED in Saskatchewan. In particular, the ministry focused its resources on communities conducting DED management programs.

The ministry's support includes the maintenance of community buffer zones. The Ministry of Environment continued to identify and remove DED-infected trees in buffer zones around seven communities (Regina, Moose Jaw, Estevan, Indian Head, Balcarres, Wolseley and Tisdale) to help safeguard elms within those communities. This year, the ministry identified for removal a total of 278 elms from the buffers, up from 199 trees in 2015. In addition, the ministry provided regulatory, technical and scientific support to communities. The province's Crop Protection Lab continued to provide free sample testing. Of the 213 samples submitted for testing this year, 68 tested positive for DED and 17 tested positive for Dothiorella wilt.

The Ministry of Environment also continued its co-operation with the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport to manage DED within provincial parks, with Environment identifying infected trees and PCS co-ordinating necessary tree removals. In 2016, 89 elms were identified for removal within Katepwa, Echo Valley and Rowan's Ravine provincial parks and the Regina Beach recreation site, a significant decrease

from 137 trees in 2015, with that decrease attributed to the fewer American elm trees within the parks.

Outside the buffer zones, urban and rural municipalities are responsible for DED management within their jurisdictions. In 2016, DED continues to be a concern for many communities in southeast Saskatchewan. Some communities have been very successful in minimizing tree losses by maintaining comprehensive DED management programs; others struggle to keep up with essential tree removals as the disease spreads throughout the area, particularly communities within the Qu'Appelle Valley. Prince Albert, Swift Current, Melfort, North Battleford and Yorkton remained DED-free in 2016. Unfortunately, Canora discovered its first infected tree in 2016. Saskatoon, which had one case in 2015, had no further infections this year.

The Ministry of Environment also promotes the positive actions that people can take to help prevent the spread of DED into their communities, such as the importance of proper pruning done outside the annual ban period (Apr. 1 – Sept. 30), and the correct and timely disposal of elm wood. Also important are regulations prohibiting the transportation, sale and storage of elm firewood, and establishing standards for tree care professionals. Communities are empowered to enforce these regulations through the appointment of municipal DED inspectors. There are currently approximately 50 such inspectors across Saskatchewan.

For more information about DED or other ministry programs, please contact the Ministry of Environment's Client Service Office at 1-800-567-4224, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

SOS Elms Delegate attends Canadian Urban Forestry Conference (CUFC)

Richard Kerbes

I was honoured to be unanimously chosen by our Board to attend the CUFC in Laval, Quebec, 27-29 Sept., 2016. I greatly appreciated our Coalition for having the confidence in me to do this, and for covering my expenses. The Canadian Urban Forest Conference (*Conférence canadienne sur la forêt urbaine*) is a bilingual

national meeting sponsored by Tree Canada, held every second year. It provides a focus for discussion on Canadian urban forestry practices, and to allow for dialogue by professionals and community groups on innovative urban forest strategies, policies, technologies, and management practices. The conference also serves to raise the profile and enable discussion of urban forestry, from global to local scale.

Initial stimulus for us to be involved was the hope that Saskatoon might host the 2018 CUFC. In early summer a spirited campaign to get that Conference was launched by Tourism Saskatoon, with support from Urban Forestry, SOS Elms, The Forestry Farm, and others. However, Vancouver, our main competitor, had a very large contingent at Laval, while I was the only one from Saskatoon. Vancouver won - they had a package way beyond what we could hope to do here. Nevertheless, it was a very educational experience for me; a huge amount of information both challenging and exciting was given by excellent speakers in the plenary and technical sections. For more details see https://www.laval.ca/conference-canadienne-sur-la-foret-urbaine/Documents/CCFU_prog+court_ang_VF_rev3.pdf

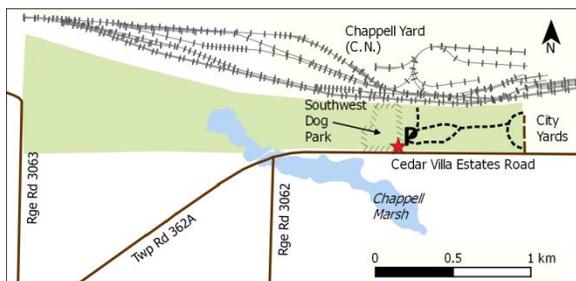
Among a number of world class experts and speakers, Cecil Konijnendijk, gave an inspiring plenary to open the Conference: "Revealing the world's urban forests – Adding a place perspective to green infrastructure planning." A visionary leader who has worked with many cities in Europe, he has recently been hired for the new undergraduate degree program in urban forestry at UBC. Although the Conference was primarily by, for, and about professional aspects of urban forest management, there were parts with specific potential ideas/benefits to SOS Elms, which I will be discussing with our board in the coming year. I obtained a plethora of information, notes, and photos, and invite anyone to contact me for more information.



Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area –The power of citizen action

Robert White

For 37 years, the 660 acre Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area (RSBBAA) in southwest Saskatoon (see map) was mostly neglected even though proclaimed by City Council in 1979 as an “urban regional park” and a “forest in perpetuity”. The park began in 1960 with a visionary idea of City planners. A large area of farmland south of the new CN yards was planted to trees beginning in 1972. In 1978, this afforested land area was named in honour of Richard St Barbe Baker, a world renowned forester with many ties to Saskatoon. Unfortunately there was no further plan for the area and in recent years it was being trashed by illegal dumping. In 2015 a small but determined informal group, Stewards of the Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area, spear-headed by Julia Adamson, turned that neglect into an opportunity and as a result a planning process guided by the City of Saskatoon Long Term Planning section has been initiated.



Map courtesy of “A Guide to Nature Viewing Sites In and Around Saskatoon” (2016).

The first effort by the Stewards was a clean-up of the area east of the Southwest Dog Park in 2015 when 3,300 kilograms (7,275 pounds) of trash were removed by “one woman with a baby and four men” as reported by Montgomery Place Community Association. In January 2016 Julia Adamson appeared before City Council to draw attention to the problem of illegal dumping. Then, taking matters in their own hands the Stewards began a website and Facebook page for publicity and began organizing a major clean-up. The community-led, day long clean-up took place on July 9 and was an amazing success. Julia ably secured the support of authorities and private companies for the effort and set out a call for volunteers for full-day or half day shifts. Both shifts began with a thorough introduction about

procedure, safety precautions and a group song to engage volunteers in the spirit of service.

A total of 8,300 kg (18,300 pounds) of trashed material was removed, including about 350 bags of litter, shingles, appliances, chesterfields, fences, decks, construction materials and household waste. There were 85 tires, 90 litres of used oil and three containers of needles properly disposed of. A pre-inspection had identified specific sites of major dumps and these were all attended to as well as many smaller trash sites.

A total of 66 individuals registered at the clean-up. Several groups supported the effort, and, as global citizen Barbe Baker would have fully endorsed, this included a few volunteers from other parts of Canada and the United States. A CISV “Peace Bus” with 16 students from across Canada had arrived in Saskatoon the night before, and joined the effort as part of their mission to learn through service. Over one dozen elders and year-of-service missionaries from the U.S.A., all part of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, joined as well. Jeff Hehn, a Steward member, brought out the Fatbike Fatlanders Brigade. Support personnel included Renny Grilz, Resource Management Officer for MVA and Ross Harwood, President of Cedar Villa Estates. The City’s Environmental Protection Officer, Regan Olson, was on site to help safely pick up oil, tar, and tires for recycling. Loraas contributed bins and a driver and the City waived the tipping fees. Local businesses provided some small prizes.

What does the future hold for the RSBBAA?

At one time this area was peripheral to the city but now Saskatoon is expanding around this unique urban forest and wetland area and the clean-up was a first step in restoration after years of non-action. Fortunately, the Stewards also pressed the responsible authorities to take action. On July 18th Julia, Jeff Hehn and Robert White made presentations to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Development about the clean-up and the necessity for barriers to prevent vehicular access.

In October vehicle barriers were put in place by the City. The Stewards arranged another clean-up, and 1,525 kg (3,360 pounds) of additional garbage was collected.

The stewards also began fundraising and planning for enhancements to RSBBA. Stimulated by their effort, and the growth of Saskatoon westwards, the City is now developing plans for the area around and including the RSBBA. This is good news, though it means a broad multi-year process.

On August 10, 2016, a letter from Chris Schulz, Senior Planner with the City, outlined the necessary steps “to ensure fairness to all stakeholders, consistency with City standards, operating sustainability, etc.”

The short term goal (2017) is to develop a “Natural Area Strategy” which would be an overarching vision for a City-wide natural area network. This would provide direction for the incorporation of new and existing natural(ized) open spaces into the City’s parks and open space inventory. The focus of this plan will not be specific to RSBBA – but the policies will apply, and there may be specific recommendations for next steps for areas like RSBBA.

In addition to including RSBBA in a City-wide natural area plan, the City is developing a Southwest Sector Plan in 2017. In addition to identifying land use, servicing, transportation and open space, it will include identification of possible uses for the park, giving consideration to its original intent, current status, and feedback gathered through the sector planning process.

The letter also indicated that beyond 2017, medium term plans (likely 2-5 years) would involve a “Master Plan” for landscape improvements, programming, etc. These are required before any significant landscaping or planting work can take place within the RSBBA. Timing will depend on approval and budgetary support from City Council.

The question ahead, as posed on the website <https://stbarbebaker.wordpress.com/> under the post, “A Tree-mendous Result!” is “how will Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area find its place in an expanding Saskatoon?” How will a variety of contemporary stakeholders see it? How will this coalesce with the intent of the city visionaries of 1960 who bought this piece of land as a “green belt” for Saskatoon? Will it continue in the spirit of the parks department personnel who went before city council to preserve the afforestation area in perpetuity in 1972?

Julia Adamson and the Stewards deserve to be applauded for leading the effort to properly manage this unique area, but now it is up to the citizenry of Saskatoon to ensure that wise choices are made. To be inspired by great photographs and poetic and informative posts check out the above website/blog and sign up for new posts to stay informed.

The Stewards have also set up a Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area trust fund administered by MVA. I encourage everyone to help shape what the Stewards call “Saskatoon’s best kept secret.”



Vehicle Restriction Barriers at the RSBBA

Blog Musings

from Stewards of the RSBBA

<https://stbarbebaker.wordpress.com/>

“After a walk through the Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area we reach the shore of the West Swale Wetlands and look over the calm waters just awakening into life, and out across the marsh hidden by the blanket of fog rolling in from the morning dew. Did you ever stand on the edge of such a wonderland in the early morning, when the prairie sky comes low to nurture the waterfowl, dabbling ducks, and marsh ducks nestling in the lowlands at your feet?”

The background is sylvan and serene with trembling aspen bluffs and woodland horizon....”



Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area in the fog

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This newsletter edited by Richard Kerbes and Kathy Meeres

YES! I WANT TO JOIN SOS ELMS!

<http://www.soselms.org>

- \$10.00 Annual membership per household
- \$_____ Donation
- \$_____ Total - (tax receipt will be mailed to you)
- Money order or cheque enclosed
- (Payable to SOS Elms Coalition)
- Yes! I wish to help out as a volunteer



Mail to:
SOS Elms Coalition
1618 9th Ave. N,
Saskatoon, SK
S7K 3A1

Name _____

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Season's Greetings