

SOS Elms News

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Acting President's Message - Stephanie Laverty

The SOS Elms Coalition has always played an active role in the community to raise awareness of Dutch elm disease (DED) and will continue to do so in the future. For example, the City of Saskatoon has developed an Emergency Response Plan to carry out once DED has been confirmed in Saskatoon. As a citizen's coalition, our goal is to ensure that the City carries out its contingency plan efficiently and effectively. In conjunction with the Saskatchewan Dutch Elm Disease Association (SDEDA), the SOS Elms Coalition will be presenting to City Council in February in regards to "getting serious" about its efforts to prepare for the eventual arrival of DED.

Our greatest concern relates to privately owned elms. Where will the money come from to properly prune or remove these trees in order to prevent the spread of this infectious disease? The SOS Elms Coalition hopes to meet with community associations in the next year to inform the communities about the threat of DED and what the community as a whole can do to contribute to its management.

The City of Winnipeg has been fighting this disease for over 25 years, and is now close to losing the battle due to problems with DED management in the city's buffer zone. We in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan need to demand the support of our province, as well as our municipalities, in the battle to

save our elm trees. Please get involved with your community and do your part. Contact me at 244-9980 with any questions or concerns you may have.

In Memory of a dedicated SOS Elms Member

Ray Boyle, long time board member and a past president of SOS Elms Coalition, passed away in Saskatoon on September 23rd, 2001. Ray, a retired professor of Engineering at U of S, worked very hard on behalf of SOS Elms and the trees in the communities of this province. Applying his 50-year professional background in cartography and computer-graphics, he developed software for the mapping of urban trees. He was a driving force behind the SOS Elms inventories of mature trees on private property in Saskatoon and several other Saskatchewan cities and towns. He contributed a great deal to public education about trees, and he was a very successful fund-raiser for SOS Elms. His boundless energy, enthusiasm and interest in people were an inspiration to everyone who worked with him. Ray will be sadly missed.

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.*

- Robert Frost

Visit the Rendek Elm Forest before it's gone!

There is a treasure called the Rendek Elm Forest tucked away in northeast Saskatchewan. Home to one of the last stands of wild American elms in North America, it is a mature sanctuary with an amazing variety of plants. It is located in the valley of the Red Deer River, about 25 km northeast of Hudson Bay. Some members of SOS Elms visited this area in 1997 and they returned raving about the beautiful elm trees and spectacular ostrich ferns. Sadly, more recent reports have confirmed that DED has been moving westward along the Red Deer River, and is now in the Rendek.

For more information about the Rendek Elm Forest check out *Saskatchewan Naturally* magazine (Fall 2001 – Vol. 3, No. 3) and *Blue Jay* (June, 2000).

Urban Forest Diversification Program

One way to ensure that we have a healthy urban forest for future generations to enjoy is by selecting a wide range of tree species in our planting projects today. As part of the Urban Forest Diversification Program the City of Saskatoon received more than 600 trees over the last two years. The species of trees provided in this program included bur oak, ivory silk lilac, showy mountain ash, spring snow crab, prairie spire ash, basswood, aspen, and elm. These are species or selections of species that have not been planted in great numbers in Saskatoon and therefore will provide species diversification. Some of these trees have been planted on boulevards, in parks, in shelterbelts, others have been planted in the Civic nursery to grow on to a larger size for future planting projects. Murray Little of the Tree Canada Foundation organizes this program and

major funding for this program comes from TransCanada Pipelines. This year approximately 2690 trees were provided to 35 communities across the province.

Win, Lose, and Draw - the status of DED in Saskatchewan

Glenn Gustafson
- Executive Director, Saskatchewan Dutch Elm Disease Association

As the 2001 Dutch elm disease (DED) season drew to a close, it was apparent that in some areas of the province the battle was won, in some areas we lost ground, and in some places you could call it a draw. DED is on the move in Saskatchewan, but we are doing what we can to make sure that it moves as slowly as possible.

In general, the communities that were actively doing DED management were the winners this year as most saw their removal rates drop from previous years. This is what we expect to see in communities where everyone is involved in the fight to slow the spread of the disease. The main exception to this trend was the City of Regina that saw eight trees removed due to DED in 2001. Considering that Regina had only lost six trees i

We are always saddened to see new communities become infected or to see infections reappear in a community. These would be the areas where ground was lost in 2001. Communities with new infections included Moose Jaw, White City, Grayson, Welwyn, near Sedley and the south end of Last Mountain Lake. Weyburn had its first infection in ten years. Lumsden, a community that had eased off of its DED management activities, was the worst hit community in the province with a total of 68 infected trees removed. Several areas such as Carlyle and Katepwa saw similar infection rates to last year, so I guess we can call it a draw in these towns. To put the

year in perspective, we saw that a total of 21 communities had infections this year, a substantial increase from 14 the year before. Infections were found again in Buffalo Pound Provincial Park, Carlyle, Carnduff, near Craven and Codette, Estevan, Fort Qu'Appelle, Kamsack, Katepwa, Lumsden, Moosomin, Nipawin, Regina, Weyburn, Yellow Grass and Zenon park. Overall a total of 520 infected trees will be removed once winter removals occur in the buffer zones around Regina, Fort Qu'Appelle and Estevan. This compares with a total of 694 trees that were removed in 2000.

What conclusions can we draw from all of these names and numbers? It would seem that in some areas we are holding our own or even improving on the situation. However, lower total removal numbers while they look promising, may have more to do with the lack of elms left to remove in buffer zones versus overall success in DED management. It is safe to say that DED will continue to threaten our communities, but it is important to remember that we do know how to slow the spread and rate of infections.

Those who are not aware of what they can do to help save the American elms of Saskatchewan should either check our web site at: <http://www.sdeda.ca> or call the Saskatchewan Dutch Elm Disease Association at (306) 933-5546.

Ian Birse is the new City of Saskatoon Superintendent of Forestry

After twelve years with the City of Saskatoon Forestry Section, Dave Domke has recently moved back to his hometown of Winnipeg where he will be working with the City of Winnipeg Parks Department.

Ian Birse was selected as the new Superintendent of Forestry and he arrives in Saskatoon with a great deal of experience and expertise in biology and arboriculture. He has worked with trees and the insects and diseases that affect trees for the greater part of his career. He looks forward to the opportunities and challenges presented to him in maintaining and enhancing the greater than 100,000 trees on boulevards, parks, and shelterbelts in Saskatoon.

Prior to moving to Saskatoon Ian spent twenty years with the City of Edmonton in the administration of their pest management unit and more recently for directing their urban forestry program. In this position, like his new job in Saskatoon, his duties included the delivery of services for tree maintenance, tree planting, insect and disease control, and the operation of a tree nursery.

Ian also represented the City of Edmonton on several provincial groups and international organizations including the Alberta Plant Health Council, the International Society of Arboriculture, the Alberta Forestry Association, the Society to Prevent Dutch Elm Disease, and the American Mosquito Control Association.

With a keen interest in tree diseases and insects he has been concerned about Dutch elm disease for many years. He was a founding director of Alberta's Society to Prevent Dutch Elm Disease (STOPDED) and served on its executive for six years. He was recently elected to serve as a director on the Saskatchewan Dutch Elm Disease Association as well as on their policy advisory committee. Ian has recently met with the SOS Elms Coalition board and we look forward to working together to see that our urban forest is protected.

