

SOS Trees Annual News



Newsletter No. 34, December 2020
SOS Trees Coalition, 1618 9th Ave. N, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3A1
Web Site: www.sostrees.ca

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President's Report

Linda Moskalyk

The arrival of COVID-19 in 2020 has made it a challenging year for everyone. Fortunately, the trees didn't stop growing, providing us with shade and shelter, and enhancing our neighborhoods with their beauty. I am pleased to report that SOS Trees Coalition has had many successes in standing up for trees this past year.

- We changed our name from SOS Elms to SOS Trees, with a new logo, to better reflect our goal to care for all trees.
- We totally revamped and improved our website, adding more pictures, information and links. www.sostrees.ca
- We created a new and much improved display, ready to roll out at the next public event, as soon as the pandemic restrictions allow us to gather again.
- Two new enthusiastic members have joined our board (see below). Jim Wood retired from the board after serving since 2011, including leadership as President from 2014 to 2018. We thank him for his many contributions.

- We now have a monthly digital newsletter called **Tree News** which is emailed to our members and posted on our website by our Communications Director, Tom Gode.
- We received many emails with questions about tree legalities, tree health and general care. We made sure to reply to every individual who cared enough about their trees to inquire. Many we could answer quickly, but others took some investigation. Assisting residents to address issues helps to secure a future for trees in our communities. In addition to local inquiries, we had citizen queries from places like Moose Jaw and Prince Albert where they don't have an advocacy group like SOS Trees Coalition.
- We have strengthened partnerships by participating in and collaborating on events with other organizations such as Meewasin Valley Authority (MVA), Saskatoon Cycles, Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas, and Liveable YXE.
- With support from our membership we lobbied Saskatoon councillors, helping to defeat a proposed Nuisance Tree Amendment that could have weakened the protection of city owned trees.
- Continuing to monitor infill construction near trees has led us to a better understanding of what needs to be done to ensure the health of trees under threat. We will continue to promote improved methods of construction when it is close to both public and private trees. We are pleased to report that some developers are responsible, and have taken extra steps to make sure that trees are protected.

We are excited about **2021** to keep up our advocacy for the urban forest. The City of Saskatoon promises to have in place an **Urban Forestry Management Plan**, an essential tool for management and protection. It will then be followed by a long awaited **Tree Protection bylaw**, for which we have been campaigning for over 20 years. The City has accepted us in the consultation process and we will work hard to ensure that the Plan comes to fruition. SOS Trees is committed to reaching out and working closer with our councillors and mayor as well as community associations.

Arbor Day - On April 25 this year the Government of Saskatchewan officially proclaimed May 22 as Arbor Day, and May 17-24 as Arbor Week. Celebratory events will boost the public's appreciation of trees, encouraging people to protect their trees, their environment, and to learn more about the natural world. Our new **Arbor Day Committee** has opened communications with the City, MVA and others towards a community event in 2021. If pandemic restrictions continue we will have a plan B to promote individual activities and learning.

We encourage our members to submit ideas to our board, and contribute interesting and fun tree stories for our monthly website news. I want to thank everyone who has supported SOS Trees Coalition through memberships, donations and participation. We can't succeed without this support. Let's continue to make this city a little greener one leaf at a time!

Get Involved - the Urban Forest Needs YOU!

HOW? Assist with the 2021 Arbor Week celebrations, lead a tree tour, influence public officials, check on new construction sites to assure that the city trees are being protected, and do other important things for trees. If you would like to help please let us know at trees@sostrees.ca.

Donations are also important. Many of our activities, advocacy efforts and educational programs require financial support. Please consider making a year-end holiday donation to SOS Trees Coalition to help in the continued protection of Saskatoon's urban forest. SOS Trees Coalition is a registered charity - all memberships and donations totalling \$20 or more will receive a tax receipt.

Mail a cheque to: SOS Trees Coalition 1618 - 9th Avenue North Saskatoon, SK S7K 3A1.

Or simply go to:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/12757> to

donate, or set up a monthly donation through the Canada Helps website



Linda beside a Ginkgo tree

New board member John Penner



I grew up on a small farm in the middle of the bald prairies, that is to say, in a treeless landscape. However, a creek ran through our farm lined with a number of giant Cottonwoods and our

yard was surrounded by American Elms, Green Ash, and Manitoba Maples which my grandparents and great grandparents had planted when they immigrated from Russia. As a kid I played in a tree house my older brother built and I loved making ink drawings of the American Elms with their intricate branching structure.

Years after graduating with a Degree in Environmental Studies, I worked for the City of Saskatoon as the Urban Design Co-ordinator, and in our streetscape projects we planted hundreds of trees in downtown, Broadway and Riversdale areas.

Planting trees is not only a primary means of combating climate change but it also yields unlimited aesthetic rewards and it is a joy to be shared. To this day, wherever I travel, I collect seeds from trees and shrubs for propagation back home.

New board member Caroline Dinter



My family moved to Saskatoon when I was 4 years old. We were one of the first houses in a brand new neighbourhood. Needless to say there were absolutely no trees. At that time the City of Saskatoon

was still planting trees on every new residential street and within our first year they planted two trees in our front yard. With the guidance of a landscaping plan from Dutch Growers, my parents filled in our front and back yards with a beautiful mix of young trees.

As a kid I was impatient with the small size and slow growth of the trees. I would sit on the lawn and try to imagine what it would be like if they were fully grown. However, as the years went by my impatience was replaced with an appreciation for the long term rewards of what had been planted in our yard and throughout our

neighbourhood. The barren landscape was developing into an urban forest.

When I left home I knew that I wanted to live in a neighbourhood with mature trees and eventually bought a house on one of the many Elm lined streets of Caswell Hill. For over two decades I experienced, with great appreciation, the four season beauty and benefits of that amazing forest of trees. Then, a few years ago, I moved back into a brand new Saskatoon neighbourhood — with no trees. The contrast was startling, to say the least.

My appreciation of our city's mature trees and passion for their preservation is stronger than ever. However, I now have a renewed passion for the development of the urban forest in Saskatoon's new neighbourhoods. I am grateful for the opportunity to be on the board of SOS Trees. I look forward to joining in on their efforts to protect and promote the benefits of Saskatoon's amazing trees and to hopefully inspire the planting and care of the urban forest throughout the expanding neighbourhoods of our city.

Donald Cameron Kerr 1936 – 2020

When Don Kerr passed away in Saskatoon on Dec. 8, 2020, SOS Trees lost one of its original members. In fact, at our founding meeting (of SOS Elms) in June 1992, Don was the very first to sign up, making him "Member Number One". He donated regularly, and gave a lot of enthusiastic encouragement to our work for the urban forest, e. g. original poetry for our newsletter. A talented and well-respected editor, writer, and professor of English and Drama at the University of Saskatchewan, he made many contributions to local history and heritage preservation, and to wider causes for the arts, environment, peace, and development overseas. Our urban trees are a memorial to Don Kerr.

**Woven Woods: A Journey
Through the Forest Floor by
Lorraine Roy
Exhibition**



Nov. 14, 2020 - Jan. 9, 2021

To combine a love of art with trees visit the Craft Council on Broadway for this spectacular exhibition. It is both educational and a truly imaginative and captivating depiction of how trees communicate and grow. A private tour can be arranged on-line with the Artist herself. Highly recommended as a COVID allowed Holiday Season's outing!

Link: [Woven Woods: A Journey Through the Forest Floor | Saskatchewan Craft Council \(saskcraftcouncil.org\)](https://www.saskatoon.ca/news-releases/dutch-elm-disease-identified-one-saskatoon-tree-0)

Second Record of Dutch Elm Disease (DED) identified in Saskatoon

Following its first case in 2015, Saskatoon Urban Forestry staff discovered a Siberian Elm in Montgomery Place infected with DED in the fall of 2020. <https://www.saskatoon.ca/news-releases/dutch-elm-disease-identified-one-saskatoon-tree-0>

Prompt action was taken in accordance with the City's DED Response Plan, which requires immediate removal of all infected trees. Also, inspectors followed up with a search for stored elm firewood in yards located in Montgomery, Fairhaven, Meadowgreen and the South Industrial area in an effort to pinpoint a source. Over 13 tonnes of elm firewood were collected and properly disposed at the City Landfill.

American elms with Dutch elm disease may start showing symptoms as early as the month of June. Typically, the leaves will start to wilt and turn yellow, then curl and turn brown. Residents who notice any of these symptoms are encouraged to call Urban Biological Services at 306-975-2890.

The most effective management strategy for DED is to not transport or store elm wood. Infected

firewood is the most likely way that DED would be brought into Saskatoon. For more information on DED, visit saskatoon.ca/dutchelmdisease.

Dutch Elm Disease – 2020 Provincial Update

The Ministry of Environment's 2020 Dutch elm disease (DED) program included: identifying and removing DED-infected trees in eight rural management (buffer) zones; surveying nine provincial parks; providing scientific and technical support to individuals and communities dealing with DED; enforcing provincial DED regulations; assisting those appointed as municipal inspectors under *The Forest Resources Management Act*; and reviewing applications to utilize elm wood or to import elm seedlings.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented several operational challenges for surveillance and tree removal crews. Our surveys, completed in July and August, identified 457 DED-infected trees to remove in:

- Balcarres
- Estevan
- Indian Head
- Melfort
- Moose Jaw
- Regina
- Tisdale
- Wolseley

The identified trees were removed in October and November, to protect healthy elms from potential disease pressures. Our 2020 buffer zone tree count is down 15 per cent from 2019, when 538 infected trees were removed. Urban and rural municipalities outside the eight provincial buffer zones are responsible for DED management within their jurisdictions.

The Ministry of Environment continued to work with the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport (PCS) to manage DED in provincial parks, with Environment identifying infected trees and PCS co-ordinating tree removals. In 2020, the ministry identified 58 elms for removal between Katepwa Point, Echo Valley and Rowan's Ravine provincial parks, and Regina Beach and Valley Centre recreation sites.

DED continues to spread rapidly in parts of Saskatchewan. The return of DED to Saskatoon and the continued spread of DED within Wakamow Valley near Moose Jaw were of particular concern this year. DED is spreading through rural communities, native elm stands, farmyards and shelterbelts, and the affected area is expected to grow. Until recently, other than isolated cases, DED was only found on the east side of the province, but that's starting to change. In recent years, the disease has spread and is now established further west than ever before.

The province's Crop Protection Lab continued to provide free sample testing to communities and the public. In 2020, the lab received 362 samples, confirming DED in 101 samples and 18 samples tested positive for Dothiorella wilt. Positive DED samples were received from the following communities:

- Arcola
- Balcarres
- Big Beaver
- Carnduff
- Edenwold
- Estevan
- Grenfell
- Kinistino
- Kamsack
- Melfort
- Midale
- Moose Jaw
- Mossbank
- Outlook
- Regina
- Regina Beach
- Pense
- Saskatoon
- Tisdale
- Watrous
- Weyburn
- Willow Bunch
- Wolseley

The Ministry of Environment encourages people to take positive actions to prevent the spread of DED into their communities, including proper elm pruning outside the annual ban period from April 1 to August 31, and appropriate disposal of elm wood. It is also important to respect regulations prohibiting the transportation, sale and storage of elm firewood, and establishing standards for tree care professionals. Communities can help to enforce these regulations by appointing municipal DED inspectors.

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

Diversity: Crucial to an Urban Forest

Greg Gibbons

Rare Trees of Saskatoon and Northern Prairies

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1119846438116835>

Saskatoon's current urban forest is in trouble with the threats of serious disease and insect pests. We need diversity in our city forest and the homeowner can take part. We have so many new and underutilized trees available. Hardy selections of **sugar and Freeman hybrid maples** are obtainable now. *Unity*, *Inferno* and *Lord*



Selkirk are 3 of the sugar maples that are hardy to zone 2 and 3. They are performing well in Saskatoon given the right

growing conditions. The **Freeman hybrids**, crosses of the red and silver maple, are also doing well and there are some fantastic specimens already growing in some parts of town. Again, hardiness is improved. *Regal Celebration* is the hardiest but *Northern Blaze* is also doing well in urban areas. These trees become large over time and need plenty of room to grow. An exciting new **honey locust** - *Northern Acclaim*, is doing well everywhere I have seen it growing. From Edmonton to Regina to Dauphin, Manitoba they are hardy and tough with lacy foliage, tolerating heavy and high pH soils. This tree joins the *Prairie Silk* selection, which has also performed quite well in sheltered locations. There are several new oaks that need to be utilized more. The **Northern pin oak** has two very hardy selections, *Shooting Star* and *Majestic Skies* that are performing well here. *Admiration oak* is another fully hardy interesting oak that has been sourced from a local tree. It is an alternative to the commonly planted bur oak. **Amur corktree** is still fairly rare in Saskatoon, but mature specimens are showing it really needs to be used more; perhaps, with similar foliage and growth habit, it could be an **alternative to the green ash trees** in the city

which are going to see severe problems in the future. There are other trees that need to be used more! I suggest going on line and looking at the many nurseries across the Prairies that offer these and many other interesting trees. Suggest to your local nursery people that they start offering these new maples and oaks. Diversity will be crucial to the survival of our urban forest in Saskatoon.



Shooting Star northern pin oak

CP Rail “Clear-cut” of Trees

Tom Gode and Richard Kerbes

In March and April this year, with no advance consultation with the City or the local neighborhoods, CP Rail removed virtually all the tree cover on both north and south embankments of its track parallel to 33rd St E, from Spadina Cr E to 5th Ave N. Most apparent was the removal alongside 33rd St of an estimated 1000 trees, mainly Manitoba maples, many of them up to 50 years old. Result: an extremely unattractive clear-cut, removing a buffer against the rail traffic for residents and trail users alike.

Local residents and their associations protested and local media picked up the story. SOS Trees

attempted many times to get a response from CP Rail to understand how this huge reduction in our city’s canopy could have happened. CP Rail finally responded that, essentially, they have returned to the vegetation management policy of the early 1900’s to clear trees from all rail line rights of way across the country. SOS Trees submitted a letter to Mayor Clark urging the City to work with CP Rail and other major landowners to share information and consider other solutions prior to any such tree removal in future. Elm wood and elm stumps must to be dealt with according to provincial regulations. We contacted the contractor, Marksmen, who removed the trees, to inquire about how they dealt with the elm wood but to date we have had no response.

CP Rail has recognized their failure to communicate with the community. We have been informed that an advisory committee will be set up with CP Rail and the City to look at remediation for the area, but nothing on that has come forward. In late summer the City of Saskatoon planted trees adjacent to the clear cut area, where space allowed, along 33 Street. On its property, CP Rail has let all of the stumps from the clear-cut to sprout back with dense bushy growth, and no apparent plan for remediation.

Bikeway Construction Plan Threatens Trees

Tom Gode

The City of Saskatoon's Active Transportation Plan proposes a cycling route on Victoria Avenue between 8th Street and Taylor Street. Five options for a bikeway have been developed: **Options 4 & 5 both call for the removal of a number of City boulevard trees.** SOS Trees Coalition can support Options 1, 2 & 3 **but we must oppose Options 4 & 5.**

Action is needed - Please go to

<https://www.saskatoon.ca/engage/neighbourhood-bikeways-project> to learn more and then go to the "Link for online survey" to state that the

trees of Saskatoon are important to you, and you **oppose Options 4 & 5.**

You also can send your comments directly to:

Project Manager: Carly Grassing

email: Carly.Grassing@Saskatoon.ca

Mail: Attn: Carly Grassing, City of Saskatoon,
222 3rd Avenue North, Saskatoon,
SK S7K 0J5

We always encourage you to share your urban forest concerns with your city councillor.

<https://www.saskatoon.ca/city-hall/mayor-city-councillors/councillors&wards>

Update from Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas

Julia Adamson

We “The Friends” are a non-profit organization formed to protect, conserve and restore the ecosystems and biodiversity of the two Saskatoon afforestation areas: the 326 acre Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area (RSBBAA) and the 147.9 acre George Genereux Urban Regional Park (GGURP). The Friends are working with the Saskatoon community, corporate sponsors, the City of Saskatoon, and Meewasin Valley Authority for the best means to protect these greenspace woodlands and the wetlands of the West Swale. We have been immensely grateful for the advice, partnership and support from SOS Trees Inc.

Clean-up of historic and recent trash, dumped illegally, has been a top priority for us each year. This fall our supporters and volunteers removed an accumulated total of 15.34 tonnes of waste from the GGURP and RSBBAA areas, along with about 100 old tires for recycling. The City of Saskatoon has posted six large signs around the perimeter of the greenspace forest of the GGURP. This is much appreciated. These 24/7 guardians hopefully will prevent further misuse and encourage legitimate use. If you have information regarding violations at the afforestation areas, call the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment TIPP Line at 1-800-667-7561.

Dumping and DED

As noted above, a tree with DED was discovered this summer in Montgomery Place, near the afforestation areas. Sadly, bags of elm branches and leaves have been dumped in the afforestation areas which could be devastating to these greenspaces. In 2021 the City of Saskatoon will issue informational pamphlets to those who are turned away from the 11th street compost because of Elm. This action should further education and awareness about DED. The Friends inform RSBBAA user groups about DED concerns, and promote approved methods to control it.



Six new signs installed by the City of Saskatoon at George Genereux Urban Regional Park in support of the autumn clean up.

Unique Tree Species

There are some unique tree specimens at the afforestation areas, and **about a dozen species of flora and fauna at risk that have been identified through [citizen science bio-blitzes](#) on the [iNaturalist smart phone app](#) and via e-Bird.**

The red elderberry or red-berried elder (*Sambucus racemosa*) *Sambucus racemosa* ssp. *Pubens*, a native shrub, has an S2 risk ranking in the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre.



Another unusual arboreal find was the Cutleaf Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina* 'Laciniata'). This tree was likely a nursery hybrid somewhere, and possibly a bird introduced these unique trees with their feathery looking leaves.



This autumn Amur Maple (*Acer ginnala*) made a spectacular splash of vibrant red colour at GGURP. Indeed, it is eye candy in Saskatchewan where our main autumn foliage colour is gold. Joining the Amurs



in GGURP are Squashberries (*Viburnum edule*).

These forests could use [additional help via the identification of trees](#) to preserve these areas as the city grows to the SW. If you would like more information about the afforestation areas or the Friends nonprofit group, please contact us! <https://stbarbebaker.wordpress.com> E-mail: friendsafforestation@gmail.com

SOS Elms Coalition Inc. Board of Directors

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Member at Large: Rae Hearn	244-3082
Member at large: Doug Mitchell	244-3082
Member at large: John Penner	
Member at Large: Caroline Dinter	

This newsletter edited by Richard Kerbes and Kathy Meeres

SOS Trees new/renewal membership form:

- \$20.00 Annual membership per household
- \$0.00 Student membership
- \$_____ Donation
- \$_____ Total - (tax receipt will be mailed to you)
Money order or cheque enclosed
(Payable to SOS Trees Coalition)
- Yes! I wish to help out as a volunteer

Name _____

E-mail _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____ Telephone _____



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

NOTE: To reduce mailing costs and paper consumption we send the newsletter by email. Those with no email address will continue to get a paper copy in regular mail.

Our website: <http://sostrees.ca/>