

SOS Trees Annual News



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SOS Trees Coalition, 1618 9th Ave. N, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3A1
Web Site: www.sostrees.ca

1992-2022

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President's Report

Linda Moskalyk

This is the **Thirtieth Anniversary** of our organization. As it comes to a close I'm happy to report on our many accomplishments. As always, our team worked hard to keep the Saskatoon Urban Forest in the minds of citizens, encouraging them to appreciate and help care for the trees. I am pleased to report that we welcomed two new members to our Board: Sam Bergerman and Chad Hammond.

To recap 2022:

- **Landfill fees for elm wood** - We campaigned successfully to have these reduced, thus promoting proper disposal and reducing Dutch elm disease (DED) risk.
- **Our public DED Billboard** to promote awareness and action, started last year, was out in prominent places again this year.
- **National Tree Day** – partnering with Tree Canada, Meewasin Valley Authority (MVA) and the City of Saskatoon we planted 100 trees in Diefenbaker park.
- **Watering urban trees** - - Because of the drought this summer and last year we did an autumn

watering campaign to remind residents to water their trees as well as trees on their city boulevards.

- **Saskatoon Tree Protection Bylaw** – Working with City officials and others, we participated in, and promoted, the initial community survey. Our Board members then met several times with a city representative to voice our suggestions for improvements to the Bylaw, especially in regard to tree protection requirements. The Bylaw draft is moving through the City process and has been approved for referral to the legal dept. for the final writing, which then will return to council for final approval.

- **Gardenscape** – With the help of volunteers and board members we had an information booth promoting our work, including Arbor Week. As well, Sharon Leach gave an informative stage presentation on trees.

- **World Migratory Bird Day** – Richard Kerbes represented SOS Trees, leading a tree and bird tour for the Saskatoon Nature Society as part of this international effort to protect and conserve wild birds.

- **Arbor Week, May 21-29** – Growing on our experience from last year, Arbor Week was again a great success, adding new activities such as a giveaway of potted trees. Details of events and sponsors are on our website. Arbor Week has become our premier educational event to attract the people of Saskatoon and area, and get them to participate and learn about the importance of trees. Arbor Week gives us the opportunity to

successfully work with many partners. This year we focused on climate change and why trees play a significant role in mitigation.

- **June Yard Sale** – Rae Hearne and Doug Mitchell once again hosted this popular fundraiser. Special thanks to them and our other members and supporters who donated items and/or helped out with the work.

- **Tree protection vigilance** – We continue working with Saskatoon City officials to inform them about issues that we see. We also respond to and investigate tree concerns from residents who reach out us by email or social media. We will continue to advocate for these numerous issues regarding tree protection to be addressed in the new Bylaw that should be completed in 2023.

Partnerships and Collaborations have become our biggest success in the last few years. We have been voicing our concerns and suggestions with the media and City officials, and participating in many related events put on by our partner organizations. We are now seen as a group that information can be shared with, and as a group who will show up and be part of community action. Our main partnerships have been with the City of Saskatoon, Meewasin Valley Authority, Tree Canada, Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas, Saskatoon Cycles, and Saskatoon Nature Society. These and others now reach out to us on a regular basis to review planning, to participate in their events, and to collaborate on new projects. Local businesses have also been instrumental in supporting our activities. Dutch Growers, Lakeshore Tree Farms, and Arbour Crest Tree Service were all there to make Arbor week a success. This is how we get things done. Going it alone is never as successful as working with others. We shall continue to cultivate relationships to ensure a healthy protected urban forest.

We can be proud of what we have accomplished this year - it's been a fitting celebration of our 30th Anniversary! My sincere appreciation goes

out to our members, supporters and donors, with a special thank you to Richard Kerbes, one of our founders. Having served on our board in various roles for all of our existence as an organization, he continues to keep us on our toes!

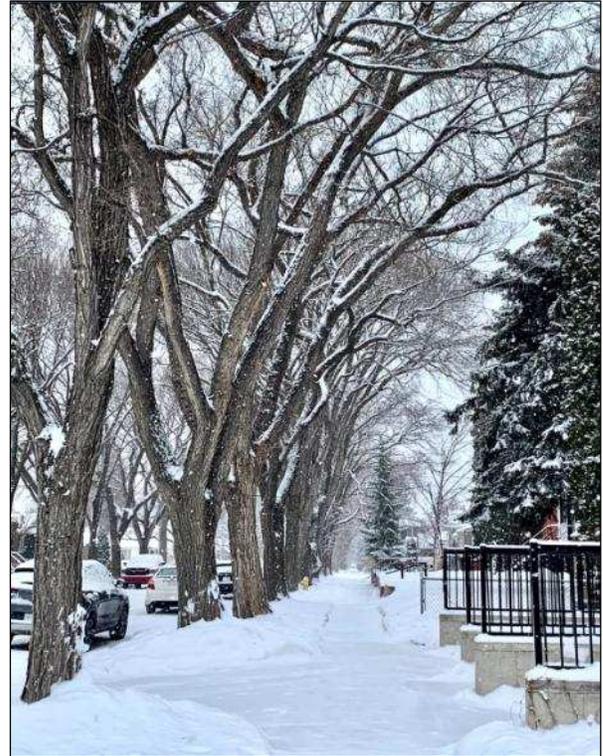


Photo by Linda Moskalyk



Linda Moskalyk and Richard Kerbes at the Climate Action Rally in Saskatoon, 12 Nov. 2022.

Thirty Years with SOS Elms / SOS Trees – Richard Kerbes

I am one of the founders of SOS Elms, now known as SOS Trees, and the only one still living here in Saskatoon. As such, I felt compelled to write a few words on how we started, 30 years ago, and how we evolved, from our initial focus on the American elm and DED to a broader commitment for the whole of the urban forest. My initial step of involvement came in early April 1992 when I followed up on an invite dropped into our mailbox by a neighbour whom we had not yet met. My partner and I had moved to City Park largely due to its lovely tree-lined streets. The note announced a meeting downtown in which Saskatoon's Superintendent of Urban Forestry was going to speak about DED and its potential to rapidly kill beautiful mature American elms, the main species in all of Saskatoon's older neighbourhoods. I met that neighbor, Judith Benson, and her husband Geoff Benson, among a number of concerned citizens and home owners at that meeting. The speaker had a blunt message for us – the City and the Province were not committing nearly enough resources to control DED. One of the other attendees, Karen Taylor-Browne, was especially well-informed, articulate and vocal in voicing her concerns. In discussion following the presentation it was clear that we needed to organize as a non-profit group to muster public support in getting the municipal and provincial governments to get serious about fighting DED.

The four of us: Judith, Geoff, Karen and I regrouped later at Karen's home, and the rest is history. We soon attracted a number of key individuals, groups, institutions and businesses that could see the importance and timeliness for action. In early June we got a large turnout for our founding meeting - and SOS Elms Coalition Inc. was on its way. We have had our challenges and frustrations for sure, but also rewards and satisfaction in seeing major improvements in the appreciation and care of our elms and the urban forest as a whole. Our initial focus was on DED,

due to its visceral appeal as an immediate and deadly threat to our beautiful American elms. However, we were well aware that we were also fighting for the whole of the urban forest. In many of our projects, such as community tree inventories and tree planting activities, we covered all tree species. By 2007 we were discussing the need to broaden our formal mission statement and goals. In 2014 we began a serious discussion about a name change. Finally, in 2020 we officially transformed into SOS Trees Inc.

We have a rich history. Some say I am the one who must write it up in detail at length ...someday.



A 2022 award from Meewasin Valley Authority to Linda Moskalyk and Tom Gode for mentorship in tree planting with them, through SOS Trees.

DED – 2022 Update, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment

The Ministry of Environment's 2022 Dutch elm disease (DED) program included: identifying and removing DED-infected trees in eight rural management (buffer) zones; surveying eight provincial parks; providing scientific and technical support to individuals and communities; enforcing DED regulations; assisting those appointed as municipal inspectors under The Forest Resources Management Act; and reviewing applications to use elm wood or to import elm seedlings.

In July and August, annual surveys were completed for buffer zones surrounding eight communities: Balcarres, Moose Jaw, Estevan, Regina, Indian Head, Tisdale, Melfort and Wolseley.

The survey identified 515 DED-infected trees, which are being removed to protect healthy urban elms from disease. This is an 11 per cent decrease from 2021, when 583 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 within provincial parks. In 2022, Environment identified 44 diseased elms in Echo Valley, Katepwa Point and Rowan's Ravine provincial parks, as well as the Valley Centre Recreation Site, which were subsequently removed by PCS. This number is down 12 per cent from the 50 diseased elms identified in 2021.

DED continues to spread through rural communities, native elm stands, farmyards and shelterbelts, with the numbers of affected areas expected to grow. At one time, DED was found only on the east side of the province, other than isolated cases, but that has changed. The disease is now established as far west as the Outlook

area. In 2022, Saskatoon did not have any confirmed DED infections.

The province's Crop Protection Lab continues to provide free sample testing to communities and the public. Positive DED samples were received from the following communities: Arcola, Dysart, Oyama Park, Atwater, Eyebrow, Regina, Bengough, Broadview, Francis, Kamsack, Simpson, Strasbourg, Bulyea, Kipling, Uhl's Bay, Carlyle, Melfort, Weyburn, Craik, Moose Jaw, Wolseley, Davin and Outlook.

The Ministry of Environment encourages citizens to take positive actions to prevent the spread of DED into their communities. To keep your elm trees healthy, only prune them outside of the annual ban period (April 1 to August 31) and dispose of the elm wood properly. Do not transport, sell, store or use elm firewood: it's against the law. Make sure the tree care professional you hire has the required training. Communities can help by appointing municipal DED inspectors to enforce the regulations.

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, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or by email at centre.inquiry@gov.sk.ca



Photo by Linda Moskalyk

Update from the Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas (Friends)

Julia Adamson

Did you know that Saskatoon's two afforestation areas celebrated 50 years in 2022?

The 132 ha (326 acre) Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area and 60 ha (148 acre) George Genereux Urban Regional Park were envisioned as "man-made forests on the prairies." A variety of common shelterbelt trees were planted in 1972 as part of the Green Survival Program. In 1979 the first 267 ha (660 acres) of afforested lands were preserved in perpetuity by City Council.

In celebration, a variety of events were held throughout 2022 by the Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas Inc. (Friends). During Arbor Week and National Forest Week special events included environmental restoration. Two clean-up events removed tons of hazardous waste from the afforestation areas. Clean-ups of illegal dumping have been promoted each year by the Friends since 2015. This year, financed by a grant from the Government of Canada, we installed fencing which will prevent further illegal entry and dumping.



An enthusiastic young supporter cutting the ribbon at the announcing of new fencing at the Richard St. Barb Baker Afforestation Area, 24 Sept. 2022. Photo by Julia Adamson

Park identification signage was placed to inform the public about the sites and encourage better care and protection. These endeavours were a great way to celebrate the golden anniversary of the afforestation areas. Thank you to SOS Trees for their partnership in getting the federal grant.

The notable heritage of these greenspaces is now commemorated with three video documentaries entitled: *Legacy of Saskatoon's Secret Forest*, *Richard St. Barbe Baker Park*, and *Wildwoods of Saskatoon*. A companion place-based, eco-heritage curriculum series describes Richard St. Barbe Baker's holistic world view, and his daring life of action on behalf of our planet.

The Friends have applied for municipal heritage status to have formal public recognition and legal protection of these two historic places. Forests are vitally important during this era of climate change. Receiving heritage status would be another layer of protection for the two afforestation areas.

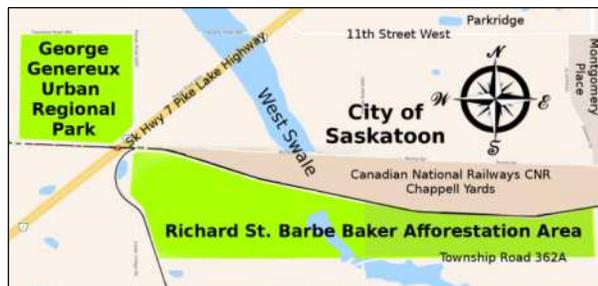


On 5 June 2022 a tree planting ceremony was held next to the last tree planted by Richard St Barbe Baker exactly 40 years earlier. This celebration honoured the 50th Anniversary of the afforestation areas and World Environment Day.

We are grateful that the City of Saskatoon has commissioned a Natural Area Screening Study by Environmental Dynamics Inc., as part of the Blairmore Sector Plan Amendment Survey. Hopefully, the two afforestation areas will officially become green park spaces with heritage status. Thereby they would receive extra

protection, e.g. from commercial exploitation. On December 19, 2022 City Council instructed Administration to proceed with the development of pilot management plans for the Small Swale and Richard St Barbe Baker Afforestation Area.

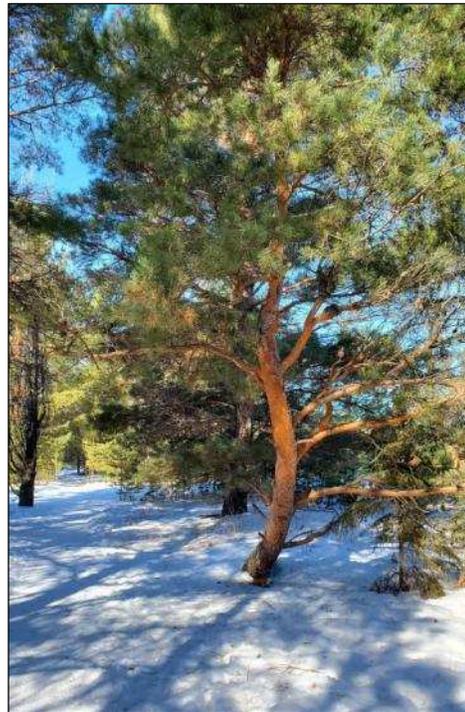
Forests are vitally important in the international efforts to mitigate climate change. Saskatoon's afforestation areas are hidden gems that fit perfectly with the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration - 2021 to 2030. The Friends have produced limited quantities of an Inspirational 2023 Afforestation Areas Calendar for distribution. It features breathtaking seasonal images of the flora, fauna and landscapes of the afforestation areas, with quotations from Richard St. Barbe Baker. During the Meewasin Valley Authority's annual donor recognition event the Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas Inc. were given a spot in the program to honour Richard St. Barbe Baker and the centenary of the International Tree Foundation (Men of the Trees).



Location of George Genereux Urban Regional Park GPS 52.1089473,-106.7925807 and Richard St. Barbe Baker Park GPS 52.100826, -106.742013

For more information:

- YouTube @friendsareas
- friendsafforestation@gmail.com
- <https://stbarbebaker.wordpress.com>
- <http://friendsareas.ca>
- Prairie Forest Guide <https://pfg.friendsareas.ca>



*Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area
Photo by Kathy Meeres*



House sparrows sheltering in minus 30 wind-chill in trees near the Weir, 18 Dec. 2022. Saskatoon is a candidate to be recognized as a bird-friendly city. Photo by Richard Kerbes
<https://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/federal-environment-minister-certifies-14-bird-friendly-cities-in-six-provinces-including-saskatchewan>



SOS Elms Coalition Inc. Board of Directors

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Treasurer: Cliff Speer	306-653-5693
Secretary: Richard Kerbes	306-653-4209
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Tom Gode	306-250-0442
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Member at large: Doug Mitchell	306-244-3082
Member at large: John Penner	306-290-8900
Member at Large: Caroline Dinter	306-241-0592
Member at Large: Chad Hammond	639-384-0930
Member at Large: Sam Bergerman	306-261-1241

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 Today's Date: _____
- \$_____ 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 _____

Date _____

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

If this is a renewal, please update your contact information if there have been any changes.

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: <https://sostrees.ca>