



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Save Our Seine River Environment Inc.



Box 83, 208 Provencher Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R2H 3B4

saveourseine.com
info@saveourseine.com



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STRATEGIC FOCUS

Vision

A sustainable and protected Seine River Greenway that provides a healthy habitat for vegetation and wildlife and contributes to the quality of life of all residents and visitors.

Goals

- » To preserve and protect the Seine River Greenway
- » To restore, repair, and enhance the Seine River Greenway
- » To raise public education & awareness of the Seine River Greenway
- » To improve public access to the Seine River Greenway
- » To work in partnership with levels of government, business and other non-profit organizations for stewardship planning of the Seine River Greenway

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Save Our Seine Environment Inc. conducts our work on Treaty 1 territory, the original lands of Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anisininew, and Dakota Oyate peoples, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We honour and respect the Seine River and its surrounding land that we provide stewardship for at this time.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SOS, LAURIE RINGAERT

Reflecting on 2024, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the remarkable achievements of Save Our Seine (SOS). Over the past year, our work has significantly impacted the health of the Seine River and the broader community. From celebrating the 30th Anniversary of our Summer Team program to advancing critical restoration and educational initiatives, SOS continues demonstrating the power of environmental stewardship, collaboration and respect throughout its work.

Celebrating Milestones and Driving Environmental Stewardship

This year marked the 30th Anniversary of our Summer Team program, a cornerstone initiative that plays a critical role in maintaining the Seine River corridor's health. The program's dedicated team cleans the river and supports the Urban Restoration and Enhancement Initiative (URE), a flagship project that achieved remarkable milestones in 2024.

Through the URE Initiative, we:

- » Planted hundreds of trees and developed pollinator habitats.
- » Managed invasive plant species to protect native ecosystems.
- » Expanded our GIS system to enhance environmental planning.
- » Completed designs for two educational nodes: Blenheim Park and the Healing Forest Reconciliation Node at Bois-Des-Esprits.

These efforts have been supported by successful grant applications, which have already secured critical funding to sustain and expand our work.

Building Collaborations and Advancing Community Engagement

In May, SOS partnered with a dynamic cross-sector committee to publicly launch the National Urban Park Proposal, an exciting initiative led by University of Manitoba landscape architect Professor Jean Trottier. This project reflects a commitment to creating green spaces that enhance both environmental and community well-being. SOS has also kept an important watchful eye on various City and neighbourhood development projects and has promoted more green space and biodiversity through our Seine River Corridor and Policy Development Committee. This includes early efforts to create a new park along the west side of the Seine River between Creek Bend Road and the Perimeter.

Our outreach efforts also gained momentum this year, including numerous public tours, the publication of our monthly e-newsletter, and two well-attended members' meetings. We also made significant progress on our "Ripples from the Past" history project, completing a collection of stories that will be published in 2025. Additionally, we initiated our first major donation of archival materials to the Centre du patrimoine in St. Boniface, preserving SOS's legacy for future generations.

Strengthening Governance and Leadership

This year, the SOS Board made important strides in governance by updating our strategic priorities, establishing our first statement of organizational values, and initial work on developing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies. To ensure long-term sustainability, we formed a Fund Development Advisory Committee to prioritize securing operational funding for our core staff.

While 2024 was a year of progress, it was also a year of change. With the resignation of Jeremy Mumford as President in June, I was honoured to be asked by the Board to step back into the role. In September, our Managing Director, Ryan Palmquist, resigned to pursue new opportunities. We deeply thank Ryan for his significant contributions to SOS over the past two years.

Special thanks to Vice President Rob Perron for his support as he and I worked together to provide executive management during these transitions. We are also grateful to Lindsay Kane, our Outreach Program and Administrative Manager and Chris Penner, URE Project Manager, who have been instrumental in keeping SOS work moving forward.

Respect and Gratitude for Our Ecosystem of Support

Our accomplishments would not be possible without the incredible network of people in the SOS ecosystem. To our core staff (employees and contractors), Board Directors, Committee Chairs and committees, volunteers, partners, donors, funders, members, and supporters—thank you for your dedication and belief in our mission.

Special recognition goes to the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions (RNDM) and the City of Winnipeg Water and Waste Department for their vital contributions to our operational funding. We are also grateful to our partner, Niakwa Country Club, for their ongoing collaboration, for providing storage for our truck, and for hosting our monthly Board meetings. Thank you to all funders as listed in this report.

Looking Ahead to 2025

As we prepare to celebrate our 35th Anniversary in 2025, we can take pride in SOS's lasting impact on both the natural environment and the community we serve. Together, we are creating ripples of change that will resonate for generations.

I will be retiring from the Board in April 2025 after 10 years of service, and it has been truly an honour and a pleasure. I am pleased to welcome and thank Brent Thomas for agreeing to stand as SOS's next President, who will be appointed at the first Board meeting after the AGM. Brent served as CEO of Casera Credit Union before his retirement in 2023. He was instrumental in ensuring long-time support of SOS by Casera Credit Union over several years. SOS is indeed fortunate to have Brent step up to lead the Board.

I look forward to another year of meaningful progress and collaboration for SOS.

With gratitude and optimism,
Laurie Ringaert
President, Save Our Seine



URBAN RESTORATION & ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE

SOS OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

To preserve and protect the Seine River Greenway

To restore, repair, and enhance the Seine River Greenway

OVERALL GOAL OF THE INITIATIVE

The goal of this initiative is to apply innovative approaches to restore, preserve and enhance the ecology and the biodiversity of the Seine River Greenway that produce measurable and sustainable environmental outcomes.

IMPLEMENTATION

During 2024 SOS led a number of actions under the Urban Restoration and Enhancement initiative.

Innovative Approaches

- » In partnership with Professor David Walker from the University of Manitoba, completed a GIS map of the ecology of the urban Seine River Greenway. This database includes GIS data collected by SOS's Urban River Keepers as they cleaned the Seine River Greenway in summer 2024.

- » Deepened our partnership with Niakwa Golf and Country Club by agreeing to work together to build natural infrastructure projects on the golf course, including a wetland swale. These projects are scheduled to be built in 2025.

Connecting People with Nature

- » In partnership with Ft3 Architecture Landscape Interior Design, completed conceptual and construction designs for two outdoor education sites:

Blenheim Park Educational and Demonstration Node, an outdoor classroom and educational space, featuring immersive learning opportunities for interacting with nature.

Bois-des-Esprit Healing Forest Interpretive Node, A spiritual and community gathering and educational place with a focus on land based spiritual healing and connection in the forest environment.

- » Began Phase 1 of construction on the Blenheim Park Educational and Demonstration Node, including the design of new interpretative signage for the riparian trail and securing a contractor to build several immersive learning components.

- » Secured funding to fully construct both outdoor education sites in 2025-26.

Restoration and Enhancement

- » Planted over 1,100 trees, all native species, within the Seine River Greenway, including approximately 1,000 trees in Marlene Street Park. We engaged approximately 200 volunteers to get the trees in the ground, including SOS members, volunteers from the Manitoba Métis Federation, and community members.
- » Planted roughly 2 acres of pollinator habitat in various locations along the Seine River.

Citizen Scientist

- » Robyn Palmer (SOS Landcare Steward): Kavanagh Park Invasive Species Removal - European Buckthorn

22 events were held once a week, 5pm to 7pm for buckthorn removal.

Events varied between 2-8 volunteers.

We have managed to control the vast majority of large fruiting females with ongoing monitoring next season to prevent the spread in this area.

- » Fenella Temmerman (SOS Landcare Steward)

16 events, including 20 volunteers contributing over 200 hours.

Events varied between 1-6 volunteers.

Construction of Creek Bend Road Bridge: Together with Dave Watson, Brian Crow, and Pam Lucenkiw, we worked with the City and the bridge engineer during the construction of the bridge to prevent damage to the existing flowering shrubs, and promote the wildlife corridor under the bridge.

PROJECT PARTNERS & FUNDERS

- » We appreciate the support from all our partners and funders.
- » Special thanks to the main funders: the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Conservancy: Conservation Trust and the Government of Manitoba : Building Sustainable Communities.



SUMMER TEAM PROGRAM

This is a long standing program of SOS, making a significant contribution to the stewardship of the Seine River Corridor.

SOS OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

Restore, repair, and enhance the Seine River Greenway

Improve public access to the Seine River Greenway

IMPLEMENTATION

- » SOS hired a team of 4 youths to help care for the greenway: Summer Team Coordinator (Monique Ellison), Lead Hand (Katherine Terra), and two River Keepers (Nastassja Loiselle, Nalani Sharpe).
- » The team removed waste from the Seine River, the surrounding trails, and riverbanks including 96 extra large garbage bags, consisting of aluminum cans, plastic bottles, coffee cups, and other garbage, 163 pieces of treated wood, 32 various metal objects, 10 charis/dooors, 12 shopping carts, 9 tires, 4 bicycles, and 1 mattress.
- » High water levels frequently restricted the team's ability to access the river directly. As a result, the team conducted work from the shore and in canoes. Towards the end of the season, as water levels decreased, the team revisited many areas of concern to address the remaining issues.

- » During the summer, the team identified and removed nearly twice the amount of treated wood compared to the previous year due to the high water levels. The increased presence of treated wood in the Seine is a significant concern due to the potential for various chemicals and toxins to leach into the water from these materials.
- » Log jams encountered were frequently attributed to structures within the river, including bridges and culverts, as well as accumulations around fallen trees
- » The team successfully removed four substantial fallen trees from the river. The removal process spanned multiple days across the season due to fluctuating water levels but was a success in maintaining the navigability of the Seine river for local kayak and canoe paddlers.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- » This program was funded by the Province of Manitoba (Urban Green Team Program) and the Government of Canada (Canada Summer Jobs).
- » Thank you to Red River Coop for their generous donation of gas funding for the SOS Summer Team Truck.
- » Thank you Niakwa Country Club for the partnership and support of our Summer Team Program, including use of their club house and parking space for the team and their vehicles.



PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

SOS OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

Raise public education & awareness of the Seine River Greenway

IMPLEMENTATION

The Public Awareness and Education Committee (PAEC) had another busy year. The committee continues to work towards getting the message out about the importance of preserving and maintaining the Seine River Greenway. We have done several guided tours, information nights and are working on using technology to get information to the public.

Activities

- » Members Night – we started the year off with a night especially for our members. Not only did we have an interesting presentation by staff on the great work of the summer team but the opportunity to mingle and chat with those who so dutifully support the work of SOS was very rewarding.

- » Annual General Meeting (2024): Over 90 people attended our May meeting and were engaged by a presentation by Jean Trottier (Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba) who is leading the proposal development of a National Urban Park which SOS is involved with.
- » In September we participated in an open house put on by the South Park Community. During this day-long event we had many opportunities to spread the word about SOS. The map of the Seine River continues to be a real hit with visitors.

Tours

- » IRCOM (Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba) tour for new Canadians. In March, a group of excited new Canadians had the opportunity to enjoy Bois des Esprits on a cold spring day.
- » Our annual Earth Day tour was well attended, as we walked toward the rain garden, there were many questions about the environment and the work of SOS.

- » Janes Walk is always a popular event, and this year was no different.
- » The walk on National Indigenous Peoples Day was led by a very knowledgeable Indigenous couple and the focus on Indigenous culture helps us all understand the importance of connection to the land.
- » The family Halloween tour was new this year and searching for woodland animals (stuffies) had the children alert to the environment and the hidden treasures in our forest.
- » The memorial tour for the late Bois-des-Esprits wood carver, Murray Watson gave his friends and family an opportunity to revisit his many carvings and magical legacy left on the trail he loved.

Upcoming Initiatives

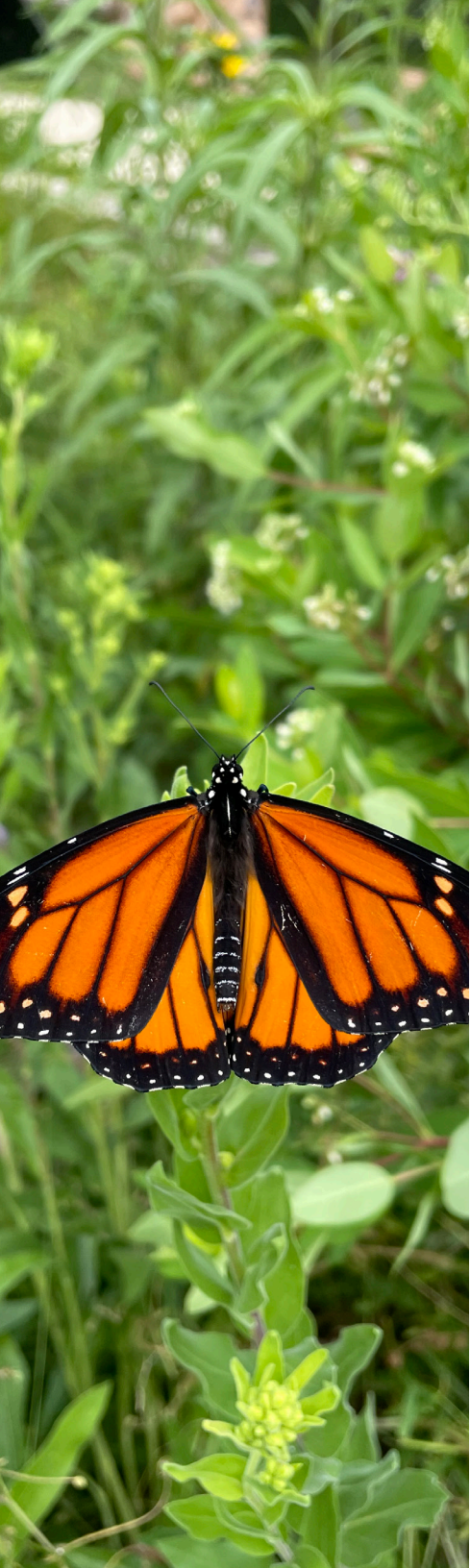
- » Maintaining SOS Trail Signs:
The PAEC has taken over the care and maintenance of the nine trail signs located at various trail points along the urban Seine River. Updating the information inserts, cleaning away the graffiti and the on-going maintenance and repair.

- » Technology in the forest

We are planning a photo monitor stand along the Seine River Corridor to capture the activity of animals and the changing seasons. Watch for this!

The committee has been exploring the use of QR Codes and a self-guided tour.

Watch for us, in our bright green pinnies, on the trail!



SEINE RIVER CORRIDOR POLICY & DEVELOPMENT

SOS OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

Work in partnership with all levels of government, businesses and non-profit organizations for stewardship planning of the Seine River Greenway

IMPLEMENTATION

- » Continued working with a committee led by Jean Trottier of the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Landscape Architecture, and including Point Douglas Residents Association and other partners to pursue an Urban Park Proposal for Winnipeg that radiates from the Little Forks/Petite Fourche (junction of the Seine River and Red River).

A report describing and analyzing the proposed park was completed by Jean Trottier and his team. SOS participated in a public launching of the proposal in spring 2024 and continue to participate in a sub-committee looking at support for the proposed project.

- » Continued to participate in a Core Working Group of experts and key stakeholders established by the City of Winnipeg to assist in developing a Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan By-law and Biodiversity Policy for the City. The Core Group was instrumental in completing Phase 1 of the Plan and Policy Development process, including identification of the values, principles, and objectives for the Plan and Policy.

The Core Group contributed to developing the Request for Proposals for a consultant to undertake stakeholder consultation, technical analysis and report writing required for development of the Plan and Policy, and participated in the RFP review process which resulted in selecting the consultant for Phase 2.

A key component of the Plan and Policy process is co-creation, whereby First Nation/Metis members are working as equal partners with the City of Winnipeg towards development of the Plan and Policy. Phase 2 of the Plan and Policy Process got underway in the second half of 2024 with the consultant beginning their technical analysis and stakeholder identification.

- » Continued with work to create a community park on five contiguous, publicly owned, forest-covered parcels of land on the east side of the Seine River from Creek Bend Road to the Perimeter Highway.

Activities included conducting guided tours of the area with, among others, interested politicians and a professor of Landscape Architecture, whose students undertook individual projects on what might be included in the park.

The student's projects were presented at the SOS AGM in May 2024. SOS communicated regularly with a City of Winnipeg Parks Department representative to inquire about ongoing land transfers and to discuss the process of creating the park.

- » As in previous years, SOS stayed informed about the status of the lands where the Sumka Forest is located. Looked at potential opportunities when the parcel of land again appeared on the market and worked to explore opportunities to assist others in acquiring the lands. SOS learned recently that the lands have been purchased by Qualico.

- » Along with OURS Winnipeg, SOS began to monitor the City of Winnipeg's Housing Accelerator Fund scheduled open houses and public hearings. We also started monitoring the City of Winnipeg's St. Vital South Perimeter Sector Plan which is expected to be initiated in 2025.

OUR APPRECIATION

The Committee would like to extend our appreciation to:

- » Pam Lucenkiw and others at OURS-Winnipeg
- » Dave Watson, President, Creek Bend Residents Association, former SOS President
- » Jason Bell, City of Winnipeg Parks Department
- » Councillors Brian Mayes, Matt Allard, and Markus Chambers
- » Mike Moyes, MLA for Riel, now Minister of Environment and Climate Change
- » Jean Trottier, his team and students at the Department of Architecture, University of Manitoba
- » Dietmar Straub and his students at the Department of Architecture, University of Manitoba
- » Stephanie Whitehouse, Shauna Prociuk, Michael Pyl, and Valdene Lawson of the City of Winnipeg's Property Planning and Design Department
- » Cat Gauthier, Coalition to Save Lemay Forest



MARLENE ST. PARK PLANTING - 1 WEEKEND, 100 VOLUNTEERS & 1000 TREES PLANTED

Over two days, nearly 100 community volunteers planted 1000 trees and shrubs at Marlene St. Park. Previously a City of St. Vital landfill site that had been decommissioned and covered, the park has a simple gravel trail and open grassy field that run alongside the Seine River at its outer boundary.

Our recent planting serves to create Winnipeg's newest urban forest and provide an extraordinary natural amenity for the Lavallee Community. Reforestation is part of our Urban Restoration and Enhancement Initiative activities.

SOS is extremely thankful to all the wonderful and enthusiastic volunteers who came out to help put trees in the ground!

PROJECT PARTNERS

We appreciate the partnership with Manitoba Metis Federation for making this event possible.

"We're hoping that, across the board, all forms of life that co-habitat here in the city and that live in our urban ecosystem...all of them will benefit from this project," - Ryan Palmquist, former SOS Managing Director

VOLUNTEERS

- » Volunteers recorded over 1,835 hours of supporting SOS activities during 2024. This is valued at an estimated \$195,500 in equivalent paid staff.
- » Volunteers included people serving on the Board of Directors, Committees and helping out with SOS activities including landcare and clean-ups.
- » Volunteers served on 9 different program delivery committees: Executive, Governance, Nominations, Summer Team Program Advisory, Public Awareness and Education, Urban Restoration and Enhancement Advisory, Seine River Corridor Development Advisory, Funding and Grant Proposals.
- » All SOS Board Directors volunteered their time to attend board meetings and served on various committees as well as volunteering for various programs.
- » Please see our website for volunteer opportunities.

OUTSTANDING RECOGNITION



Laurie Ringaert, SOS President

In April 2025, after 10 years of devoted service as the President of Save Our Seine, Laurie Ringaert will retire from her Board Director position.

Laurie's dedication, contribution and endless hard work have been invaluable to SOS, specifically her outstanding support in fund development, governance, organizational development and our URE initiatives.

SOS is grateful for Laurie's passion and commitment to the organization. We wish Laurie all the best.



Ryan Palmquist, former SOS Managing Director

In Sept 2024, after 2 years serving as Managing Director, Ryan resigned to pursue other opportunities. Through Ryan's work, SOS gained several grants to fund important organizational and programmatic funding that will continue through 2025. SOS is grateful for Ryan's energy and passion over the two years with us.

We wish Ryan all the best in his new ventures.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS AND INDIVIDUAL DONORS!

Our work wouldn't be possible without your generous support!

Operating Grants



Summer Team Program



Urban Restoration and Enhancement Initiative (URE)



Urban Restoration and Enhancement Initiative (URE) Collaborators



BOARD, STAFF AND COMMITTEES APRIL 2024 - APRIL 2025

Officers

President:
Laurie Ringaert

Vice-President:
Rob Perron

Secretary:
Alanna Forsman

Treasurer:
Ryan McIntosh

Member at Large:
Brent Thomas
(Appointed to the Board
September 2024)

Note: Jeremy
Mumford served as
Vice-President from
January-May 2024, was
appointed as President
in May 2024 and then
resigned from the Board
June 2024.

Board Directors

Anju Bajaj

Barbara Cape

Denis DePape

Michael Dyck

Richard Farthing-Nichol

Marlene Gregory

Richard Remnant

Scott Robinson

Peter Ward

**Board of Directors
Who Left in 2024**

Jeremy Mumford
(November 2023-June
2024)

Michael Pereira
(April 2023-May 2024)

Eric St-Onge
(April 2020-May 2024)

Staff

Managing Director :
Ryan Palmquist
(resigned Sept 2024)

Outreach, Program and
Administrative Manager:
Lindsay Kane

**Summer Team Staff:
2024**

Coordinator (Monique
Ellison),

Lead Hand
Katherine Terra, and two
River Keepers (Nastassja
Loiselle, Nalani Sharpe)

**Operational
Consultants**

Stacy Stanley Young :
Stanley Young Business
Strategies: Bookkeeping

Mike Mclenehan :
Mclenehan and
Associates Chartered
Professional
Accountants

**Operational
Consultants**

Stacy Stanley Young :
Stanley Young Business
Strategies: Bookkeeping

Mike Mclenehan :
Mclenehan and
Associates Chartered
Professional
Accountants

Program Consultants

Dr. David Walker :
Assistant Professor
of Environment and
Geography, University
of Manitoba

Chris Penner : Applied
Ecologist, Ecological
Restoration Services

2024 Committees

E-Comms

Chair :
Eric St-Onge

Staff :
Lindsay Kane

Executive

Chair :
Laurie Ringaert

Members :
Rob Perron,
Alanna Forsman,
Ryan McIntosh,
Brent Thomas

Governance

Chair :
Scott Robinson

Members :
Laurie Ringaert,
Denis DePape,
Anju Bajaj,
Peter Ward,
Ray Temmerman,
Brent Thomas

**Fund Development
Advisory Committee**

Chair :
Laurie Ringaert

Members :
Brent Thomas, Anju
Bajaj, Barbara Cape,
Denis DePape, Rob
Perron, Ryan McIntosh,
Michael Dyck (Became
Chair in 2025)

Staff:
Lindsay Kane

Nominations

Chair :
Scott Robinson

Members :
Micheal Dyck,
Anju Bajaj,
Jodh Ghuman,
Rob Perron,
Richard Farthing-Nichol

Staff:
Lindsay Kane

**Public Awareness &
Education**

Chair :
Marlene Gregory

Members :
Alanna Forsman,
Jodh Ghuman,
Simran Ghuman,
Barbara Cape,
Anju Bajaj, Anita
Moyse

Staff:
Lindsay Kane

**URE Advisory
Committee**

Chair :
Richard Farthing-Nichol

Members :
Laurie Ringaert,
Rob Perron,
Alanna Forsman,
David Walker,
Chris Penner,
Fenella Temmerman,
Robyn Palmer,
Marlene Gregory

Staff:
Lindsay Kane

**Seine River Corridor
Development
Advisory Committee**

Chair :
Richard Remnant

Members :
Michael Dyck,
David Watson,
Denis DePape,
Kristina Hunter,
Laurie Ringaert,
Pam Lucenkiw

**Summer Team
Advisory Committee**

Chair :
Anju Bajaj:

Members :
Anita Moyse, Robyn
Palmer

Staff :
Lindsay Kane

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