



Has the Seine River been saved?

1972



1993



2010



Upcoming Events · Events recap · 20th Anniversary · Project Updates



From the desk of the president

David Watson—SOS President

Congratulations, we have survived another Manitoba winter and are looking forward to a summer of slow morning walks, lazy afternoons on the deck, and mosquito free (we hope) sunset paddles. Who cares about Westjet seat sales, we are staying home. Manitoba in summertime is hard to beat.



This year is officially the year of Manitoba Homecoming. Hopefully you will meet up with old friends who were lured away to far away climes where wind chill is theory, not fact. This year SOS can help you to meet up with some of those old friends. Our 20th Anniversary Year has lots of guided walks, tree plantings, riverbank cleanings, ribbon cuttings and even a speech or two planned. **Celebrating the Seine - Save Our Seine's 20th Anniversary Event** (October 2, 2010) will be a chance to meet with some of the self taught environmentalists who created SOS over 20 years ago. Read this newsletter (and the next one in the fall) for more information on all of the planned activities. We will tell you about spawning shoals, community tree plantings, re-claimed industrial sites, new walking paths and hopefully a yet another new park in South Winnipeg.

Like all of our summers this will be a busy one for Save Our Seine and its Urban Green Team. We hope to see you on the river as we all try to fit everything in.

We especially want former SOS Green Team members to contact us this spring. How are you doing? Did your summer with SOS affect your life? Did 12 weeks in a canoe make you the person you are today? Former Green Teamers (and others) are encouraged to share their photos and stories with us. We hope to share them at on October 2 and on our website. Were you raised near the Seine? Do you have memories of fishing, swimming, or shooting floating bottles with your BB gun? Share your photos, poems, remembrances and short stories with us. Lets all remember the Seine together as we celebrate its spectacular recovery in 2010.

See you then.

Save Our Seine 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner **October 2—Seine River Retirement Residence, 1015 St. Anne's Road at Warde**

Hundreds, maybe thousands have touched SOS over the years, and we hope to bring as many as we can back together, at least for one night!

Please join us in a beautiful dining room overlooking the Seine in celebration of our 20th Anniversary!

Interested in helping out? We're looking for:

- **Event volunteers**
- **Table Sponsors**
- **Silent Auction Donations**

Celebrate music, support three great causes!

April 23—River Heights United Church

Winnipeg musician *Heather Kozak* will perform for one night in support of *Agape Table*, *St Andrews Shelter Project* and *Save Our Seine* on April 23. Possessing an impressive resume, Heather won the Winnipeg Music Festival Rose Bowl and has opened the prestigious Canada Day event at Assiniboia Downs for several years, performed with Rainbow Stage and has even sung at the wedding of world champion curler Jennifer Jones.

Please enjoy a fabulous entertainer and support three great causes!

Tickets at the door or saveourseine@gmail.com or 470-9247

Jane's Day

Jane Jacobs once said "*The point of cities is multiplicity of choice.*" Maybe that's why SOS has decided to host **two** Jane's Day walks this year. Luckily you won't have to choose one or the other.

Saturday May 1— Old St. Boniface Historic Tour - Lagimodiere-Gaboury Park- Hopefully flood waters don't keep us at bay as we return to the most historic part of the Seine River for an interpretive journey through early Winnipeg history guided once again by local history buff JP Brunet.

Sunday—May 2— Bois-des-esprits Tour— John Bruce Road - SOS Vice President Denis De-Pape leads a tour of Bois-des-esprits. Come discover Winnipeg's second largest forest and see Woody the three meter tall wood spirit carved out of a tree stump. Be among the first to see the new tree carvings completed this winter by local carver Murray Watson.

SOS appreciates the efforts of *Resource Conservation Manitoba* in coordinating the Jane's Day events. Details on these and other Jane's Day walks will be available on the Jane's Day website:

www.janeswalk.net/cities/category/winnipeg

International Trails Day

June 5— Bois-des-esprits (meet at greenspace east of Royalwood Bridge)

SOS looks to keep the momentum going following a fantastic 2009 Int'l Trails Day attended by well over 150 avid supporters. Last year we had a Métis fiddler, Red River cart and a live Great Horned Owl. Expect an equally great event this year celebrating the official opening of the Bois-des-esprits trail.

Details on other International Trails events can be found on the Winnipeg Trails Association website: **www.winnipegtrails.ca**



Join the SOS facebook group and stay tuned to the website for event updates!

**This newsletter is printed with generous support from the
*Manitoba Hydro Environmental Partnership Fund.***

Hydrometric Monitoring Program

There's water in the river....but how much?

Marc St. Laurent—SOS Board Member

Although the Seine River flows through the City of Winnipeg, the amount of water in the river and how it varies from day to day, season to season and year to year is relatively unknown. Water levels and flow have not been measured on a regular basis in the urban section of the Seine River.

Past projects such as the Grand Pointe Diversion, Red River Floodway, a leaky Siphon and removal of upstream water for garden markets and agriculture have reduced the amount of river flow that reaches Winnipeg. Within Winnipeg, drainage from housing developments and retention ponds contributes runoff from snowmelt and rain storms that can cause water levels on the river to rise and fall quickly.

In the spring of 2009 SOS established the first phase of a hydrometric monitoring network on the Seine River consisting of three components:

- 1. SOS purchased and installed 3 automatic water level recorders to continuously measure water levels every 10 minutes. Water levels on the Seine River are being measured upstream and downstream of the Floodway and downstream of Marion Street.**
- 2. SOS installed manual water level gauges (metre sticks) at various locations along the river. These were read by SOS volunteers living next to the gauges on a periodic basis as well as when notable changes in water level occurred.**
- 3. SOS measured river flows immediately downstream of the Floodway twice; once during the spring when the siphon was at capacity and once during the early summer when flows were lower.**

All water level gauges operated from June till November of 2009 which enabled several thousand water levels to be recorded last summer. The gauges will be redeployed in the spring of 2010 as soon as the ice is off the river.



Above: Example of water level recorders purchased by SOS.

Bottom: Vice-President Denis DePape keeps a steady hand during a fall survey while Marc St. Laurent supervises.



In years to come the monitoring program will be expanded so that water levels and river flows are measured at additional locations. The program will enable SOS to:

- **Develop an understanding of the hydrology and river hydraulics of the Seine River, particularly the range of flow and water level conditions.**
- **Know how much river flow is coming into the Seine River after it passes under the Floodway**
- **Develop a long term database of water levels and river flows to support future projects along the Seine River**
- **Observe the rate, magnitude, and variation of river flows and water levels on the river at various locations within the City of Winnipeg**
- **Develop an understanding of the effect of the Red River on Seine River water levels in St. Boniface**

During 2009 open water period several interesting events occurred that were measured and monitored by the water level gauge network:

- **Spring Red River flood required a cofferdam to be built across the Seine River upstream of the Siphon Inlet causing Red River water to flow out of the Floodway and downstream into the Seine River keeping river flows high**
- **Numerous summer time rain storms kept river flows and water levels high and caused it to fluctuate quickly between rain events**
- **Improvements to the Seine River Siphon Inlet required the flow downstream into the Seine River to be reduced suddenly and substantially in Oct/Nov.**
- **Accumulation of debris at the Grand Pointe Diversion substantially reduced flows on the Seine River diverting it to the Floodway in Sept/Oct**

*SOS would like to thank its volunteers for developing and supporting this program and **Manitoba Hydro** for lending equipment.*

If you live next to the river and are interested in having a water level gauge on your property please contact SOS. If you are interested in volunteering or supporting the SOS Hydrometric Monitoring program, please contact us at:

saveourseine@gmail.com or 470-9247



Above: Marc St.Laurent and Mike Morris complete a river flow measurement downstream of siphon outlet near the floodway.

Boxing Day River Walk

The making of a Save Our Seiner

Cameron Regier—SOS Board Member

With 2009 coming to a close, what better way to celebrate a monumental year for SOS than right back on the river where it all began. In a year filled with big trail announcements, multi-million dollar remediation and decontamination projects and large scale programs in the works, it was odd to almost forget that there was a river behind it all. Two decades ago residents banded together to lobby politicians to have a look at the sad Seine, a shell of its former past. Twenty years later we gather to enjoy the splendid Seine, with politicians tagging along to put their boots where their trail money is.

Now a seven year tradition, the “close-to-Boxing Day” walk was held on December 27 and was yet again well attended by family and close friends of SOS board members. We were also joined by St. Boniface MP Shelly Glover, who along with the other two levels of government made a significant impact on the organization in the past year. Yet again we had fantastic weather and those who dressed up were quickly layering down as the generous amount of snow that had fallen in the previous few days and the brisk pace set by our trail blazers out front had most working up a modest sweat. Despite the moderate wind chill in the mid-teens to minus twenty mark, down in the shelter of the valley of the Seine the sun was shining and the wind was minimal.

The procession of thirty or so walkers began in a familiar place on Creek Bend Road and walked through relatively newer territory in Bois-des-esprits and into a welcoming Royalwood home for a festive gathering. The trail route was strategic, as we roughly followed the route of the new south St. Vital trail announced in October.

We followed the meandering Seine north roughly paralleling St Anne’s Road, until we hit the Shorehill bridge where we forayed into the Bois-des-esprits. It becomes all too easy to get philosophical with even a simple walk as the route led us up a freshly announced new greenway section (the results of nearly a decade of work) and into such an incredibly significant area as the Bois-des-esprits (a majestic forest saved tooth and nail by SOS from bulldozers) now enjoyed by hundreds, perhaps thousands of creatures; two legged, four legged, multi-legged and even winged.



Top: Walkers make their way north on the frozen river.

Bottom: Hiking along the river through Bois-des-esprits.

Connection came rushing back

As we walked through the stark contrast of the aspen grove in Bois-des-esprits, I remembered back a couple years ago when I sat hunched, braced on a picnic table in the middle of the clearing watching a dozen or so of the thirty to forty white-tailed deer who call the forest a winter home make their way across the clearing. These were my early days as a casual SOS volunteer, writing articles and snapping pictures in the BDE, living only a few minutes away. A handsome young deer stood watch, evaluating me less than 100' away as his comrades filed by behind him. I was careful to be still, and as big fluffy snowflakes fell around us, I watched his ears flick each time my camera shutter quietly clicked away. It had been some years since I had been in Bois-des-esprits, having moved to a more northern part of the Seine, but the connection came rushing back.

With all the things gained in the past century through technology, many feel that a connection with nature is one of the truly important things we have lost. I am grateful that a group of unordinary citizens some twenty years ago built the foundations of an organization that would one day allow me to reconnect with nature in the middle of a sprawling suburban neighborhood. 2010 marks the 20th anniversary of Save Our Seine, and the Seine is one of only a few places within the city where one can lose themselves in nature; the sounds of traffic, construction and commerce replaced by bird song, burbling water or the eerie silence of the forest.

I challenge everyone to renew their connection with the Seine and nature in general this year. We promise you will be in good company.



Above: Lost in nature, the picture that perhaps started it all.

SOS wishes to thank Casera for their continued support of our Green Team!

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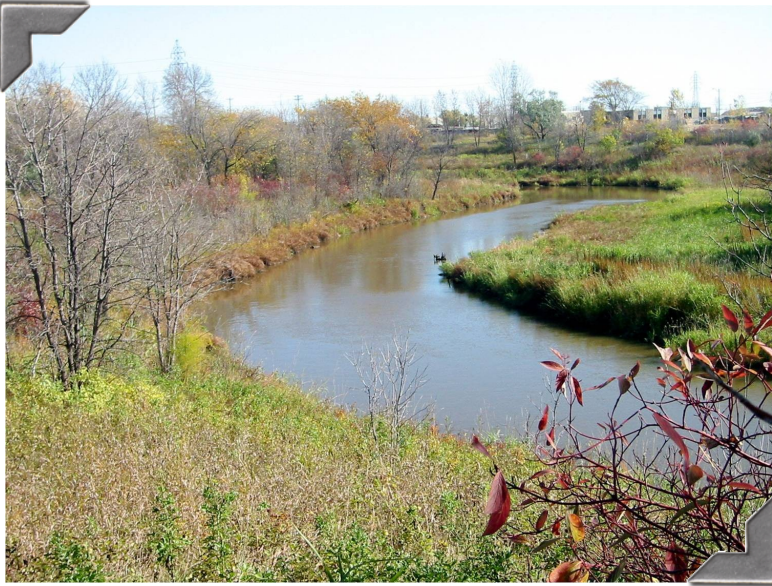
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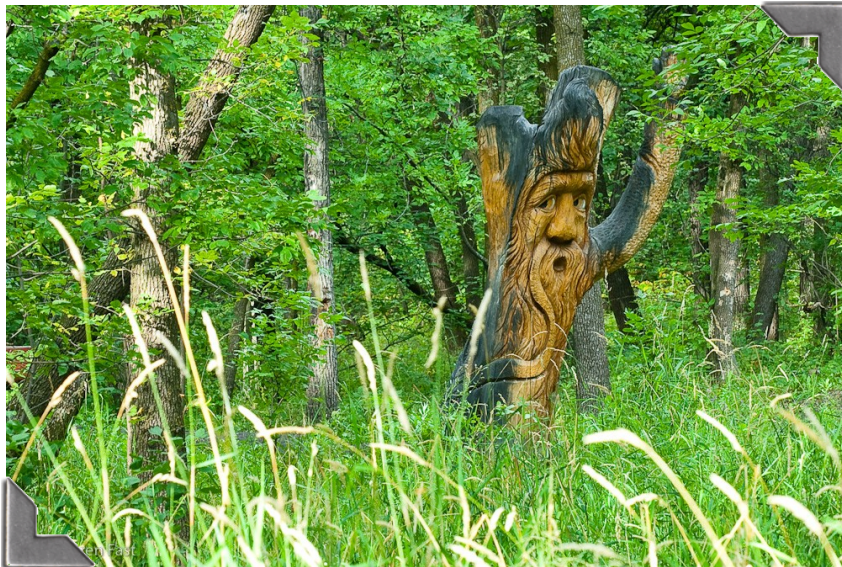
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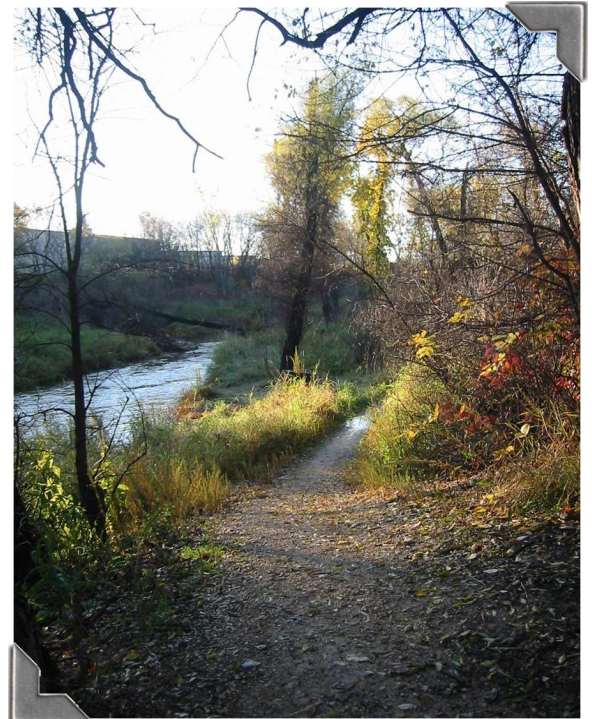
**of the Seine you would
share?**

**All kinds for display at our 20th
Year Evening!**

**archival photos like the ones on
over.**

send to:

com or call 470-9247



Seine River Floodway Siphon Upgrades

Long awaited changes to Inlet & Outlet

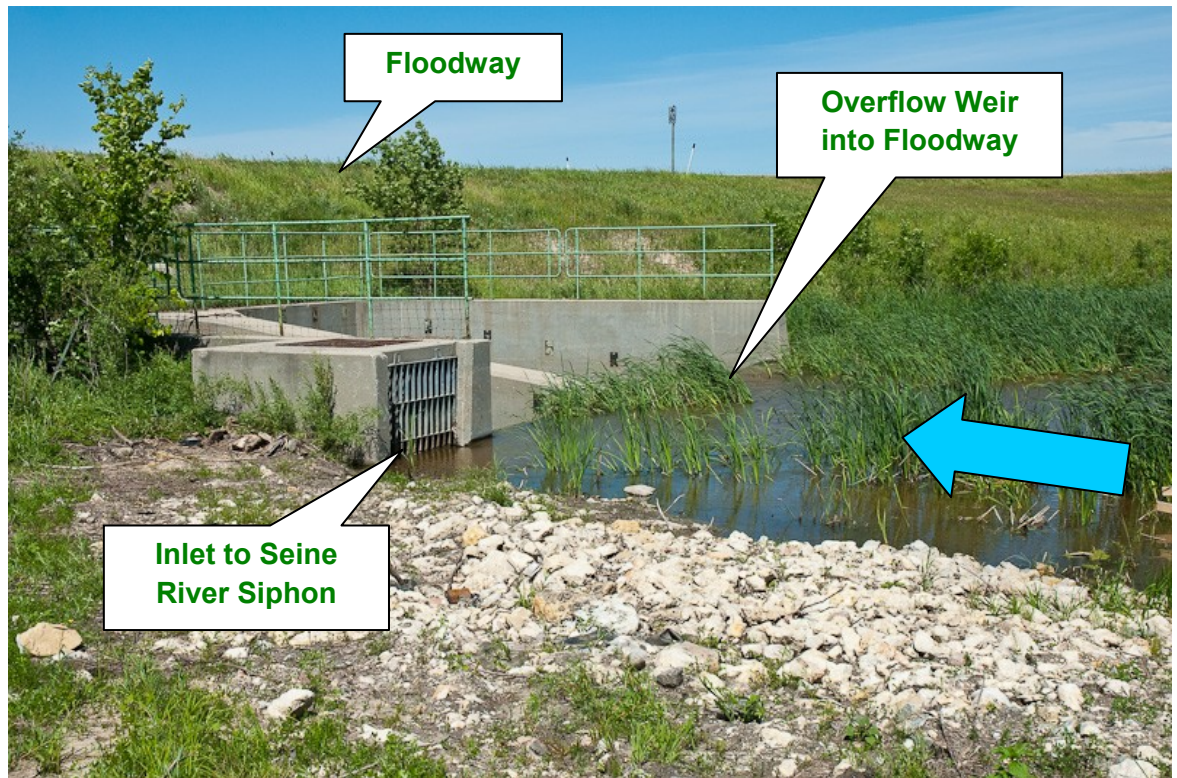
Marc St. Laurent—SOS Board Member

In the Fall 2009 Newsletter SOS reported that the Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA) was completing improvements to the Seine River siphon to improve river flows through Winnipeg. The \$2.5 Million project, completed from October 2009 - March 2010, will be used to offset a portion of the fish habitat destruction resulting from the floodway expansion project. The improvements will reduce the amount of flow that was being diverted and leaking into the Floodway and increase river flow through Winnipeg. This will have a positive effect on water levels, navigability, water quality and fish habitat.

The key highlights of the project include the following improvements:

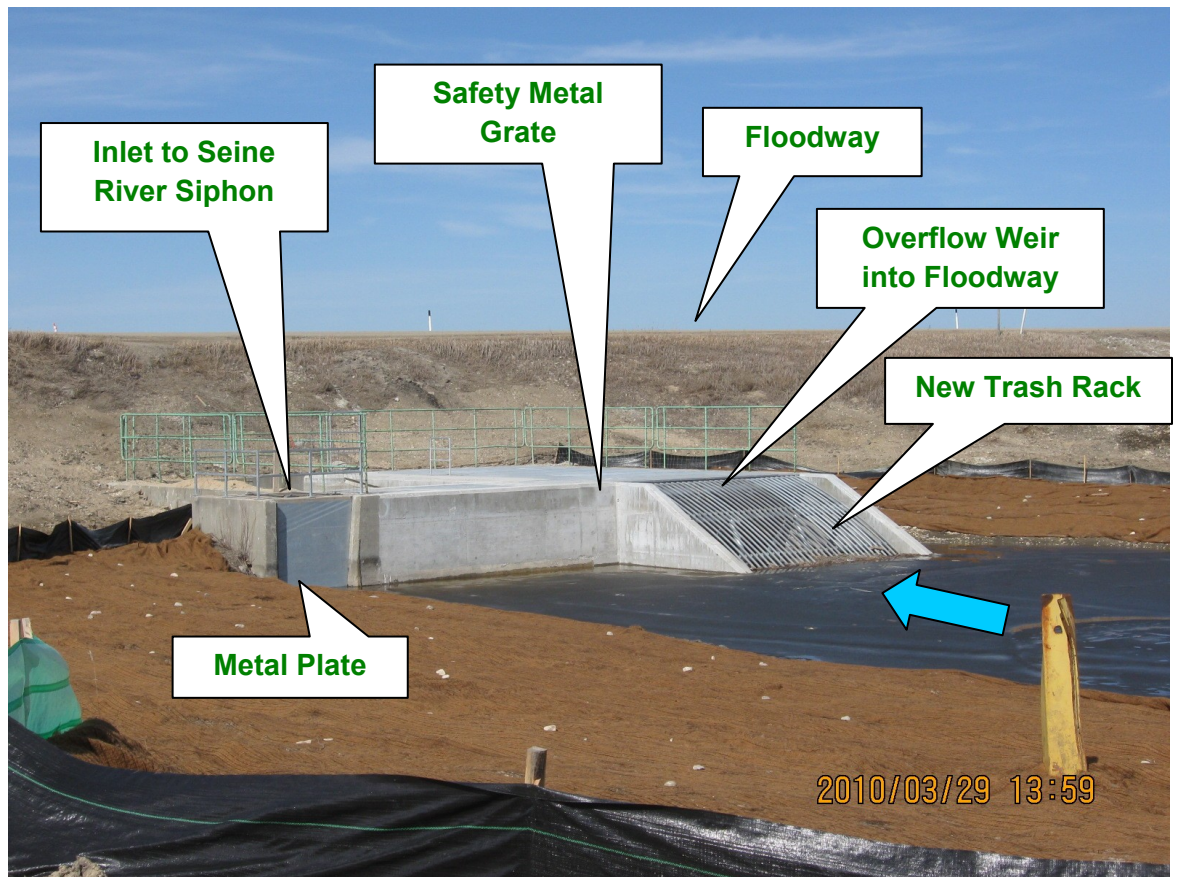
- **Installation of a new trash rack:** *The old trash rack was routinely plugged with debris reducing flow into the Seine River. The new trash rack is much larger and should ensure that flow is not impeded by debris in the river.*
- **Installation of a new back up gate:** *Three of the four original culverts that diverted water from the Seine River into the Floodway will no longer be used. The remaining culvert was upgraded and a gate was installed on the culvert that can be closed during periods of flooding when the floodway is in use thus protecting the community of Grand Pointe from floodwaters backing up out of the floodway.*
- **Raising the elevation of the overflow weir:** *This work will result in an increase to the maximum flow in the Seine River from 1.1 m³/s to 2.5 m³/s and an increase to the average flow from 0.7 m³/s to 1.2 m³/s. Provisions to raise the weir in the future were included through the use of stop logs. Once downstream flow restrictions are removed in the future, stop logs can be added to increase the average flow into the Seine River even more. This will not improve low flow conditions.*
- **Installation of impervious barrier around siphon at outlet:** *SOS learned recently that water infiltrated from the Seine River at the siphon outlet back along the granular "envelope" around the siphon pipe into the floodway embankment. An impervious barrier is being placed around the Seine River siphon pipe immediately upstream of the siphon outlet box to create an impervious barrier and stop the leakage.*
- **Improved Safety with installation of additional guard rails and metal grate over culvert:** *These will prevent people and animals from falling into the floodway culverts.*

The recent upgrades address problems with the siphon that SOS has identified over the last decade. In 1999 the siphon was relined to prevent the leakage from the siphon. Although it has taken many years for the siphon inlet to be improved SOS is grateful to see these improvements.



Above: Original siphon inlet structure. Note the very large overflow weir into floodway diverting excessive amount of flow and small horizontal trash rack prone to plugging with debris.

Below: Upgraded floodway inlet structure with improved trash rack and safety features.



IKO Remediation Update

Over 100,000 tons of soil removed

Robyn Palmer —SOS Board Member

Last summer a portion of the Seine running through St. Boniface went through a major overhaul as one of the largest soil remediation projects in Manitoba history was completed. The remediation involved excavation and disposal of contaminated soil and sediment then backfilling with clean materials. Over a period of nearly 100 years, coal tar from a shingle factory seeped through the river bank and under the river to the other side. The project is nearing completion and following update is provided:



Above: Excavation took place in the fall of 2009 through 2010.

- **Previous estimates of 48,000 tons of contaminated soil were updated to the actual figure which ended up being just over 140,000 tons of soil removed and shipped to various decontamination facilities, some as far as Sarnia, Ontario.**
- **Clean fill was trucked in to raise the riverbed to its original elevations and an erosion control blanket was put in place.**
- **To minimize shoreline erosion log deflectors were placed into the bank as an additional stabilizing agent. These consist of the original trees which had to be cleared during the remediation.**
- **The channel used to divert the Seine around the construction site has been closed off and the fish contained in this section were rescued and transported back to the original Seine River waters.**
- **To offset the harmful alteration and destruction of fish habitat during the project, three wetland areas were constructed; one on the east bank and two on the west bank including a fish spawning area.**

What's next?

The plan for this summer includes re-vegetating the site. A complex revegetation plan was developed in conjunction with biologists and the City of Winnipeg Naturalist department in order to ensure the viability of native species in their appropriate environments. The original planting schedule was to take place between late May and early September 2010 but, after consulting with Save Our Seine and the City Naturalist Department a longer planting schedule is being looked into.

What can I do?

Save Our Seine expressed interest in seeing a community involvement initiative to allow those interested in taking part in this massive revegetation project. Keep an eye on our website for updates.

Next year?

As part of the remediation agreement monitoring of water and soil quality will take place on a regular basis as well as monitoring plant survival and replacing those candidates that don't sur-



Above: Reconstruction and completion of the remediated river channel.

Did you know...

- ***This newsletter costs several dollars per copy to print, stuff and mail?***
- ***We mail to close to 800 addresses each issue?***
- ***You can receive this newsletter by email?***

We are quite proud of the printed paper copy, however to reduce the impact on the environment and reduce costs we'd like to reduce the number of copies mailed and increase the number sent by email. If you prefer to receive by mail consider making a donation to support Save Our Seine's newsletter (if you haven't already). See the back page of this newsletter for donation options and information.

Every dollar helps!

New Spirits in Bois-des-esprits

How many can you find?

Denis DePape —SOS Vice President

Visitors to Bois-des-Esprit forest are being "wowed" by carved wood spirits and owls along the new upland gravel trail in the forest. Self-taught Métis carver Murray Watson spent many hours in the first three months of 2010 transforming dead branches and stumps in the forest into works of art for visitors to enjoy. So far he has carved 6 eerie wood spirits and one spectacular great grey owl between the Royalwood Bridge entrance and the bottom of the wetlands about a third of way down the new trail.

There may be more to come and even a few we have not yet found. Some are easy to discover such as the wood spirit at the entrance to the trail and the owl near the opening into Royalwood, but most are integrated into the forest and require a very sharp eye to see. *Discover them for yourself.* Visit Bois-des-Esprit and see how many you can find. Pictures of the ones we know about accompany this article.

*If you find any that are not in these pictures, please send Save Our Seine pictures of them so we can add them to our website. Send pictures to **dadepape@mts.net**.*



Two guided walks in Bois-des-esprits

Save Our Seine will be holding walking events in the Bois-des-esprits to celebrate *Jane's Day* on **Saturday, May 1** and on **Saturday, June 5** to celebrate the *International Trails Day*.

These walks will show you all of the carvings we know about. Murray Watson, the carver, will be at the Trails Day event. For more information on these events check out the website.

You can also meet Murray and see some of his other carvings at the St. Norbert Farmer's Market.



New Map of Bois-des-esprits Trail

Denis DePape—SOS Vice-President

Those of you who have walked through Bois-des-Esprit realize that there are many trails in this forest and it is easy to get confused about which path one is on. Prairie Pathfinders and the Winnipeg Trails Association are working with Save Our Seine to produce an easy to follow map of trails through Bois-des-esprit as well as special locations in the forest, such as the location of Woody, the spirit tree.

The map should be ready for use later this spring. It will appear on the Save Our Seine and Winnipeg Trails Association websites. Thanks to Janice Lukes of the Winnipeg Trails Association and Wendy Wilson of Prairie Pathfinders for making this project happen.



Save Our Seine needs your help!

SOS depends on community volunteers and community contributions to help protect, preserve and enhance the Seine River Environment through education, awareness and hands-on participation.

All of the activities of SOS throughout the year require funding, including this newsletter, organizing walks and events, our new hydrometric monitoring program or the continued success of the Green team. A lot of these costs are not covered by grants and we rely on generous donations from the friends of SOS to keep these activities going.

Your contribution assists SOS in enabling all citizens to reconnect with their local environment!

**For any donation inquiries please email
saveourseine@gmail.com or call 470-9247**

**You can also donate online at
www.canadahelps.org**

Did you know....

If you donate to the United Way at work you can allocate a portion to SOS. Speak to your payroll administrator!

SAVE OUR SEINE 2010 DONATION FORM

- ☐ I would like to receive the newsletter by mail.
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