

Seine River Greenspaces Enhancement Project gets underway



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Imagine our excitement. On April 16, the Hon. Rochelle Squires, Minister of Sustainable Development, presented Save Our Seine with the very first cheque from the Province of Manitoba's new Conservation Trust.

Just the day before, the province officially unveiled the list of environmental groups that will receive funding for projects in the first year.

The Conservation Trust is a new endowment fund that is expected to generate \$5 million every year for conservation projects throughout Manitoba. For the first time ever, the Trust makes conservation funds available for projects in urban environments. The Winnipeg Foundation will manage the fund and the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation will administer the grants.

Save Our Seine was selected to receive

funding for a Conservation Trust Signature Project. Over the next two years, SOS will work with the City of Winnipeg and the community on the Seine River Greenspaces Enhancement Project. The project includes a variety of initiatives to enhance the natural habitats along the urban Seine River and connect people with the river.

The Seine River provides important natural habitat for wildlife and people in the heart of Winnipeg. Its crown jewel is the Bois-des-Esprits. As Winnipeg grows in size, more and more people are drawn to the river and its narrow band of green. They want to enjoy the trails by foot or bicycle, explore the river by canoe and kayak, and experience nature. Increasing pressure from human activities is damaging the river's sensitive floodplain vegetation, eroding steep riverbanks, and degrading upland habitats. Through this project, Save Our Seine will enhance the use, enjoyment, and appreciation of the Seine River while protecting its natural spaces.

Native prairie will be restored on the upper banks of the river. Invasive plants will be removed. Native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses will be planted. Steep sections of riverbank will be repaired where they are eroding. Floodplain trails will be enhanced

to protect vegetation. Signs will be installed to manage trail users. An interpretive node will be created for small tour groups to gather at a scenic location along the river. Interpretive signs will be installed to inspire, educate, and motivate people to care for the Urban Seine River. A Stewardship and Education Team will work on land stewardship activities and organize guided tours and events for the public and school groups.

SOS is still raising funds for one of the project's key components. Our dream is to install a dock that meets the requirements of the American Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA-dock will be the first of its kind in Winnipeg. It will allow people with physical disabilities to enjoy the beauty and serenity of the Seine River by kayak or canoe. It will make the river more accessible to school groups, tourists, and seniors. An ADA-dock is not cheap. It will cost between \$45,000 and \$60,000 depending on the site. A generous grant from The Winnipeg Foundation has brought us over halfway to our fundraising goal but we still need your help to make it a reality.

Save Our Seine is a volunteer-driven environmental group. In addition to funding for the ADA-dock, we need community vol-

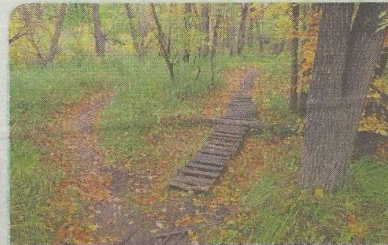


Photo by Michele Kading

Save Our Seine will use funding from the Conservation Trust to repair and enhance popular floodplain trails and protect vegetation from further damage.

unteers to join the Land Stewardship team to help organize events that will connect people with the river. Save Our Seine will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary in 2020. With support from the Conservation Trust, The Winnipeg Foundation, and you, it will be an anniversary to remember!

Michele Kading is a community correspondent for St. Vital and the executive director of Save Our Seine.