

# Nature, culture abound along the Seine



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## ST. VITAL

The Seine River Greenway is a patchwork of city-owned parks and private properties that line the river.

The city-owned parcels include golf courses, parks, and other open spaces. They range in size from 0.05 to 124 acres. Over 90 per cent of the parcels are less than 0.1 acre in size. Combined, they account for only 0.75 per cent of the city's total area of over 117,000 acres. Despite its small area, the Seine River Greenway contributes enormously to the natural and cultural wealth of the city.

There are 63 historic points of interest between the mouth of the Seine and the floodway. These include buildings, archeological sites, and parks. They tell the story of St. Boniface and St. Vital from pre-European settlement to present day.

The oldest site is an Aboriginal campsite from the Late Woodland period (A.D. 800 to 1750). Many sites tell the story of Métis settlement. There are remains of homesteads, sawmills, grist mills, market gardens, brick works, soap works, and hotels.

Some sites reflect Francophone culture (Roy House) or the Belgian community. More recent points of interest include bridges, rail stations, churches, housing projects, and a residential school.

The unifying factor along the greenway is the river itself. Its riverbottom and upland forests, oxbows, and prairies provide a vibrant natural backdrop for the human activities that shaped this rich cultural landscape.

The greenway supports over 180 species of plants. Some 78 per cent of these are native to Manitoba. It is home to at least 149 species of birds, 24 species of mammals, 34 species of fish, and 37 heritage tree candidates. Most of the heritage trees are plains cottonwoods or peach-leaved willows. Some of the cottonwoods are at least 100 feet tall and well over 100 years old.

To celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2015, Save Our Seine (SOS) is planning a series of public events to highlight the nature and culture of the Seine River.

These volunteer-led events will honour the grassroots origin of SOS. Planned activities include shoreline cleanups, tree plantings, historical tours, guided walks, and educational activities. Each event will showcase a different location along the river.

In future columns, we will take a closer look at the special features that make each



Supplied photo

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stretch of the river truly unique.

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