

# New Communities and the Seine River



## Precinct K - New Royalwood/Island Lakes

Produced by Save Our Seine River Environment  
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“Later my brother came to the foot of the stairs to cry out to me that he was going fishing in the little river...Would I go with him? ... make up my mind! He was not referring to the Red, our valley’s important river, but to our small Seine, a narrow watercourse that twisted its way onward like a snake between thickets filled with rose haws, a tiny river buried in the grass, muddy, secret, of little danger to us, even were to plunge into it headfirst... my pretty river, green as cats’ eyes!”

*Street of Riches (Rue Deschambault)*  
Gabrielle Roy translated by Harry Binsse

## About the Authors

### Save Our Seine River Environment Inc. (SOS)



Save Our Seine's vision is for 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 citizens.

The Goals of Save Our Seine are to:

1. Preserve, protect and enhance the natural environment & heritage resource of the Seine River.
2. Restore and repair features of the environment that have been degraded.
3. Improve water level, flow & quality.
4. Raise the public's awareness of all aspects of the Seine River.
5. Improve the environmental behaviour of private industry, governments and the general public.
6. Improve appropriate public access along the Seine River (by low-impact nature trail & by canoe/kayak.)



ABOVE: SOS President J.P. Brunet celebrates the repair of the Floodway-Seine River siphon and the restoration of Seine River water flow to Winnipeg along with SOS supporters, local politicians and Métis representatives (1999)

"[As I paddled the LaSalle River I] was rather horrified by what I saw. Huge swaths of forest on the north bank had been removed since I had last paddled it a decade ago. Where there were once forests, crops were now planted to the river's edge. Hardly a local phenomenon, it is a scene that has been replicating itself across the land. Rural rivers that flow through agricultural basins have been particularly hard hit. Forced to pay taxes to the river's edge you can't really blame the farmers for having survival instincts of their own. Presently there are not financial incentives in place to offset the cost of preserving these forests and environments that once lined our rivers. Add to this scenario; livestock operations, hydro projects, flood diversions, human habitation and the ravages of Dutch Elm disease, and you are witnessing the wholesale disappearance of an ecological system that has become one of the most menaced in North America. If I have mentioned all of this, it is for us to take heart. Happily and rather gratuitously, the Seine within the city, through neglect rather than planning, has managed to retain a rural character that is more rural than most of its country counterparts. Actually you would be hard-pressed to find a river in better shape within an hour's drive of Winnipeg. The fact is, ten years from now, rural Manitobans may have to visit the Seine in our city to be reminded what a rural river is supposed to look like. Given SOS's greening efforts and the contiguous habitat that happily line its banks, is it a wonder then, that the Seine within Winnipeg probably offers some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities not only in our city, but in our Province? But of course you've always known this. That's why you are coming out for our cleanup, right? Putting it all into perspective - what's a bit of junk, a few tires and shopping carts? Oh, to be so lucky!" (1999)

Jean-Pierre Brunet

## About the Authors

### Riel Parks and Rivers Commons (RPARC)



The Riel Parks and Rivers Commons (RPARC) was founded in January of 2013. Founding members were OURS-Winnipeg (Outdoor Urban Recreational Spaces-Winnipeg), Save our Seine River Environment Inc.(SOS), the St. Germain/Vermette Community Association, and L'Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba.

RPARC (Riel Parks and Rivers Commons) is a coalition of citizens, in the south east quadrant of Winnipeg committed to:

1. Transparent urban planning processes that recognize and incorporate the value and importance of our green spaces.
2. Protecting and enhancing urban forest, wildlife corridors and grasslands, especially along the riverbanks and neighboring lands of the urban Seine River.

RPARC seeks to preserve:

1. The natural beauty of our urban rivers, large and small.
2. Our riverbank lands from unreasonable encroachment of commercial and residential development.
3. Heritage and educational opportunities for citizens of all ages.
4. Opportunities for recreation and health benefits.
5. Existing wildlife habitat and connecting corridors.
6. Public parks and greenspace
7. Natural and economic benefits of a healthy urban ecosystem.

RPARC's common goal is to provide an ecological and cultural asset to pass on to future generations.



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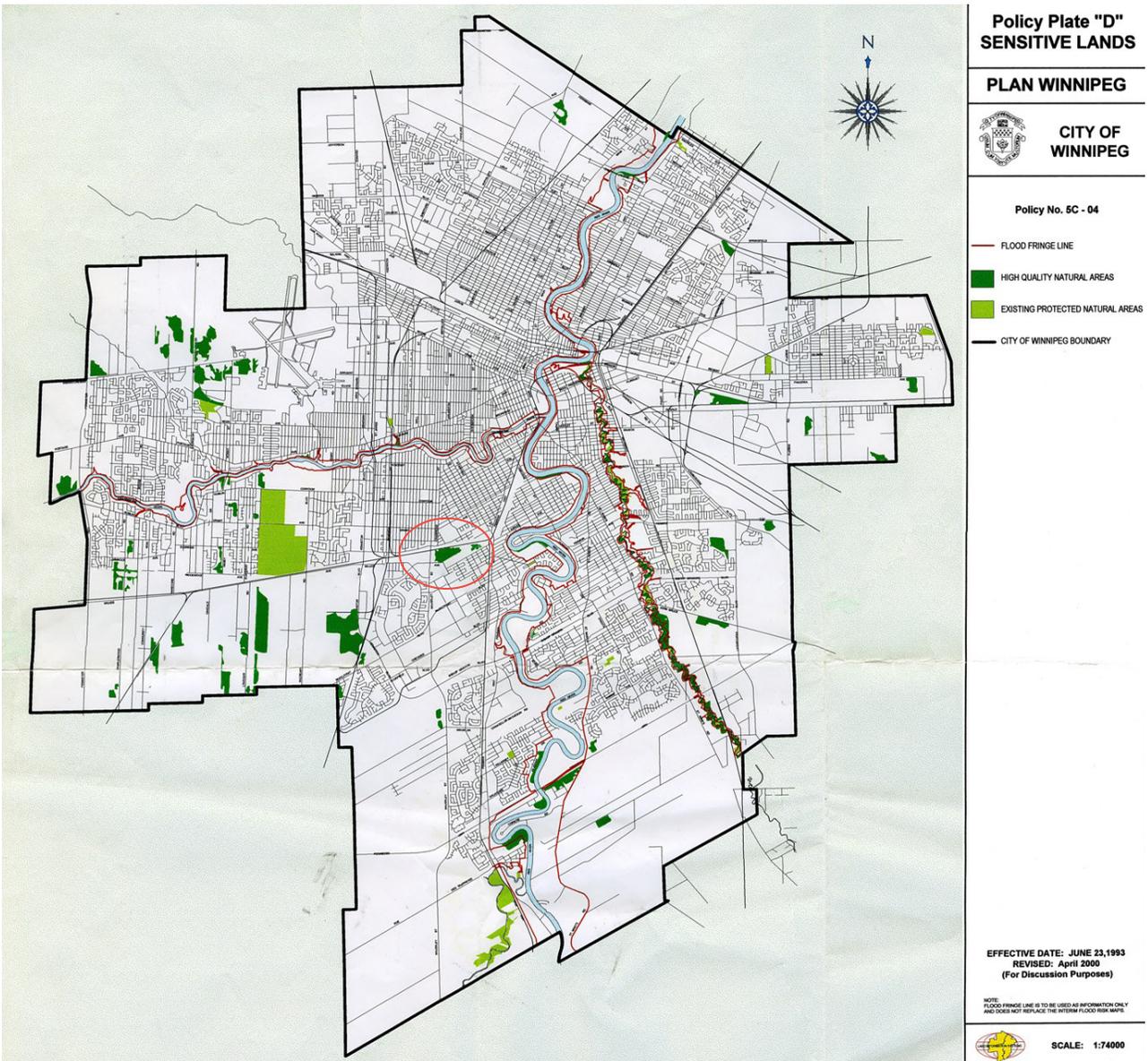
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# INTRODUCTION

## A Tale of Two Forests

Save Our Seine (SOS) and its community partners in the Riel Parks and Rivers Commons (RPARC) have agreed to participate in designing the Riel Community's newest community, Precinct K (New Royalwood/Island Lakes). While we believe that new infill development in established communities can accommodate much of Winnipeg's future urban growth, we also recognize that new communities along the Seine River are an attractive place to live, work and play because of its proximity to the Seine River. However, much of the beauty of the Seine River results from little disturbance. How do we balance protection of Winnipeg's high quality natural areas with development?

Policy Plate "D" was created and revised in April of 2000 for *Plan Winnipeg* and highlights the City of Winnipeg's high quality natural areas. Policy Plate "D" was not approved for inclusion into *Plan Winnipeg* and up until recently very few individuals had seen it. Thanks to the Parker Wetlands Conservation Committee, a rare copy of this map recently surfaced on the internet. Policy Plate "D" helps to tell the story of how high quality natural areas have been lost to suburban growth.



Source: [https://dk-media.s3.amazonaws.com/AA/AY/parkerwetlands/downloads/280976/sensitive\\_lands\\_\\_city\\_of\\_winnipeg.pdf](https://dk-media.s3.amazonaws.com/AA/AY/parkerwetlands/downloads/280976/sensitive_lands__city_of_winnipeg.pdf)

A high quality natural area that more recently “disappeared” east of the Royal Canadian Mint, in Precinct J, the future Qualico community, is clearly shown on Policy Plate “D”. In addition, two large high quality natural areas, are indicated on Policy Plate “D” north of what is Precinct K; one is south of Qualico/Novamet’s Island Lakes subdivision, and the other just south of Ladco/Grandin Park’s Royalwood Phase I subdivision. Whatever happened to those two forests, you might well ask?

Winnipeg’s dormant construction industry was jolted into activity in the early 2000’s by a surging demand for new homes. The two rival developers of Island Lakes and Royalwood quickly prepared plans for new construction phases of which included bulldozing ecologically significant high quality natural areas to build new homes- such is the unfortunate price of progress. While this was occurring, who represented the local residents? Who advocated for protection of the ancient forests? And yet, who could possibly object to the idea of new jobs, new houses and extra taxes?

The Island Lakes Resident’s Group and the Royalwood Neighbourhood Association were active members in both the development and growth of Island Lakes and Royalwood and the preservation of the forests. The Island Lakes Residents’ Group (ILRG) was formed in 1989 to address the concerns of the residents in regards to the developer and the City of Winnipeg, and to be the liaison between both parties, along with our provincial and federal governments. The ILRG were deeply concerned with the lost of local natural areas. In 2002, the now dormant, or perhaps dead, Royalwood Neighbourhood Association was dominated by real estate agents, mortgage specialists and other members of the “growth industry”. Which endangered forest was better represented by local residents? Would one of the resident’s groups manage to divert the bulldozer blades? Would any of the forests be saved? Sadly, the beautiful Island Lakes forest south of the obliterated John Bruce Road is now only a part of an old man’s reminiscences.

“Ernie [Dormer] said that he’s glad that the Save the Seine group continues to fight for the preservation of the beautiful forest around the Seine River; but that it is a shame Island Lakes did not retain the lush 20 to 30 acres of mature oak trees he vividly remembers.”

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/lance/A-reminder-that-Island-Lakes-is-still-very-new-212039851.html> (2013)

One of the two forests was ultimately saved, but this was done only through a tremendous effort of many citizens including, local residents, the public at large, and by the members of environmental group Save Our Seine (SOS).

“The community has identified approximately 80 acres it would like to have protected. To date, 66 acres of the [Bois-des-esprit Forest] have been protected. Today’s announcement [Dec 22/04] will see an additional \$550,000 contributed toward protecting the remaining 13.7 acres of forest, fulfilling the province’s commitment to support the community’s fundraising campaign.”

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2004/12/2004-12-22-01.html>

The story of Policy Plate “D” and the two forests illustrates why an environmental group like SOS is willing to help “develop” the new community of Precinct K. The presence of SOS at the table has in the past, and will make a difference to the final outcome and the amount of preserved forest riverbank.

In the 1990’s the Seine River futilely bubbled up from a rusted out collapsed culvert into the narrow channel in centre of the Red River Floodway. Little if any water from rural Manitoba found its way into the dry riverbed in St. Germain/Vermette. Thanks to SOS members like JP Brunet and Jean Dunmire the vital water flow was once again

returned to Winnipeg to benefit the fish and animals of the Seine River valley.

Thanks to SOS members like Bob Tinker and Harold Thwaites one of the largest environmental remediations in the history of Winnipeg took place on the banks of the Seine behind an abandoned shingle factory in Old St. Boniface.

Thanks to SOS members like Bev Sawchuk, Jules Legal and Dave Danyluk almost all of the Bois-des-esprits forest was saved from destruction in Royalwood.

After Precinct K is developed there will be more than memories of tree stands along the banks of the Seine River. Thanks to SOS members like Denis Gautron and Wilma Sotas there will still be a substantial forest remaining in New Royalwood in 2025. We can be certain of that.

Working with community residents, developers, and politicians, the role of SOS is:

- To monitor the Seine River environment
- To act as a critic/advocate
- To be an instigator of projects (initiate projects to be carried out by others)
- To be a proponent of projects (initiate projects to be carried out by SOS)
- To act as an 'expert resource'
- To carry out and promote ongoing public education

SOS vision's and plan for the Seine River is composed of a number of components including:

- Establishment of a protected natural corridor
- Restoration of the river
- Restoration of the riparian environment
- Establishment of a Seine River development authority
- Completion of an urban nature trail and canoe route, the length of the seine
- Establishment of a public education component



## ABOUT PRECINCT K

In November 2013 the MMM Group contacted award-winning environmental group Save Our Seine (SOS) to schedule a rush meeting. MMM has been hired by Genstar, a multi-national residential property developer, to consult with rural St. Boniface area stakeholders such as SOS on the development of Precinct K. Genstar has been tasked by the City of Winnipeg to create an Area Structure Plan for Precinct K, one of the last major undeveloped parcels of land in south east Winnipeg. This puzzle shaped area is bounded by the Warde Avenue ROW to the north, the meandering Seine River to the west, the Perimeter Highway 101 to the south and Highway 59 (Lagimodiere Blvd.) to the east. The area contains only 19 large lot homes and a few businesses. Much of the area is either fallow or actively used farmland.



Genstar took title to the former provincial Fraipont Land Bank south of Island Lakes from Manitoba Housing only this past spring. This fall they began removing the topsoil from the farmland. Their intention is to present an Area Structure Plan to the Riel Community Committee in April of 2014. They hope to begin new home construction in 2015. "It is expected that the Fraipont will have 1,200 to 1,500 new homes, depending on what is required by the builder and approved by the city. By comparison, there are approximately 2,500 homes in Island Lakes." (ILRG) From 2002 to 2004 Save Our Seine worked along with the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba and its business partner, Ladco Company, to preserve the Bois-des-esprits (B-D-E), the endangered riparian (riverside) forest in Royalwood Phase 2. It was a challenging but rewarding experience for all concerned. The 117 acre "Grade A" quality forest was preserved forever as city parkland yet, as of this writing, it has not been officially designated a park.

Of the 630 acres that make up Precinct K perhaps 547 acres are what the City calls "zoned land" (Lagimodiere and Perimeter Highway ROWs take up a lot of the vacant land in rural Royalwood and Island Lakes). Only 34.6 acres of the land are considered to be "natural areas." Much of that vegetated land is found on the banks of the Seine River and in the narrow shelter belts between the farm fields.

Precinct K does not have a direct equivalent to the Bois-des-esprits forest. The land has been farmed for generations and most of the original groves of river oak are long gone. A particularly beautiful and rare grove of remaining river oaks was felled on the other side of the river in St. Vital only a decade ago to make room for new condos. In many ways Precinct K's natural areas consist of riverbank lands that flooded regularly before the Floodway was built. They were never worth farming. For that reason much of the remaining forested land will be bought by the City for its flood plain waterway requirement at a standard \$15K per acre. In theory this makes the job of SOS, the City and the developers that much easier. Similar to the Sumka Lands to the south, there is wilderness to preserve in Precinct K, yet unlike the Sumka Lands, it is not deemed "high quality".

## PHASE DEVELOPMENT OF PRECINCT K

Precinct K has been divided by Genstar and MMM into three distinct areas, or phases (the City may have certain issues with this approach.) Phase 1 is Fraipont, the former provincial land bank found south of developed Island Lakes. Phase 2 is all the lands in Island Lakes that lie south of Fraipont. Phase 3 is the undeveloped lands in Royalwood, south of the Warde Avenue ROW and north of the Perimeter Highway. The CPR Emerson railroad line neatly divides Phases 2 and 3.



“Phase” implies an order or progression, a certain precedence of importance. To Genstar their first order of business is naturally developing the expensive land that they and Empire, their business partner, purchased for an estimated \$22 million dollars. Fraipont will of course be Phase 1. It will be developed in late 2014/2015. It currently contains no residences or businesses. The former Fraipont land bank can be easily integrated into the existing local infrastructure. Sanitary sewer, water, and surface drainage connections are all accessible using the existing infrastructure in Royalwood and Island Lakes.

Phases 2 and 3 will need at least one new retention pond. They will need new sewer and water connections to “the grid”. While the new section of Creek Bend Road already built in St. Vital was reportedly developed with “oversized” infrastructure, it is unknown if the future services for Phase 2 and 3 in St. Boniface will be tunneled under the Seine River at Creek Bend Road. This would certainly make sense as the ROW required to do so is already secured by the existing roadway.

Aside from a few commercial properties on Melnick Road there are only two existing houses in Phase 2. Melnick Road is already connected to a section of newly built Warde Avenue at Lagimodiere. Many of the 5 acre homesteads found on the Creek Bend ROW were never developed. Used as farmland, this land has been held as speculative property for generations. There should be no significant resistance to future development in Phase 2. Phase 3 contains several existing businesses on Aimes Road and on Sioux Road West. Easy access to the Perimeter Highway is very important to both them and their clients. Any closing of Aimes Road access onto the Perimeter would be of great concern to them. One option the province has proposed in the past is joining Aimes Road in St. Boniface to Creek Bend Road in St. Vital. This would involve a new Seine River crossing immediately north of the Perimeter. Local ENGO Save Our Seine has a delicate history with new river crossings, so MMM Group and Genstar are being very careful in discussing this.

The real problem with Precinct K hinges on the fragmented ownership of the area and how that affects any future park dedications. Fraipont is reportedly owned by the Fraipont Partnership, a Genstar/Empire business partnership. Fraipont, the reported Phase 1, is a 244-acre single piece of stripped farmland with no remaining tree stands. A standard parks dedication of 10% (or more probably 8% plus 2) presents no problem to any of the concerned parties. Undeveloped Royalwood (Phase 3) presents quite another challenge. As of this writing a significant portion of the property in this area lying north of Creek Bend Road is being acquired/has been acquired by Qualico, one of Genstar's major business competitors. (Windmills and farm fields included.) Qualico reportedly owns farmlands south of Fraipont in Phase 2 as well. Land consolidation in the area is ongoing. Many smaller properties will soon change hands. At this point Qualico is apparently acquiring properties to develop in ten years time. That is literally their business, acquiring large parcels of land, holding them and developing them in a staged manner. Qualico still has considerable lands in River Park South, Sage Creek and Precinct J yet to "build out."

The vexing problem for Save Our Seine is that the developer sitting across the table from them this winter will not be Qualico. Genstar, despite admittedly not owning any property in rural Royalwood alongside the Seine River, will be the only developer that SOS will be dealing with.

Imagine brokering a peace treaty between Israel and Palestine, but you can't talk directly to Palestine. You can only talk to Egypt instead of Palestine. Sound easy? Ask Jimmy Carter how easy that was. As of this writing both Qualico and the Province of Manitoba have not come to the table. Getting them there is the type of challenge that SOS has successfully taken on in the past.

# CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEW COMMUNITIES ON THE SEINE RIVER

## Forgotten Stakeholders?

Métis people have lived along the banks of the Seine River since before the birth of Louis Riel. The Riel family harvested trees, threshed grain, and used water power to mill flour alongside the Seine River over 125 years ago. The Seine is a historic river that should certainly be celebrated in Precinct K. The Métis members of l'Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba and our neighbours living in St-Germain/Vermette, also members of RPARC, feel that they are much more than observers in this "local" development process. They see Precinct K as being part of their future even though they live, work and play along the Seine outside of this area. Will the Perimeter Highway act as a barrier to suburban development forever? This seems less and less likely every decade.

## Local residents and businesses

The 19 or so families currently living in Precinct K have done much to preserve what is left of the local forests. They and the local businesses should be full partners in the design process.

The existing businesses in Precinct K will face great challenges in maintaining easy access to their properties. New traffic solutions designed to assist them should be sustainable ones that do not unduly impact public and wildlife safety.



## The Seine River

The 25km long meandering Seine River in urban Winnipeg presents more riverbank frontage (50km) than can be found on the Assiniboine River. Save Our Seine was formed to act as a steward of the intrepid river that would not die. The history of SOS and the Seine River's history have been linked for almost 25 years.

For more information on the Seine River and the City's plans for this Reach please refer to the Seine River Greenway Study.

Opportunities for an all-ability accessible river dock and public parking for canoeists and kayakers should be considered in Precinct K.



## Water Quality

We believe that water quality of our major lakes is the concern of all of us. The removal of existing septic fields from Precinct K helps to protect Lake Winnipeg from potential runoff pollution. Naturalized water retention ponds in new areas should strive to improve Seine River water quality, not diminish it. We have been assured that storm water runoff levels will be the same post development in terms of flow rate into the river. This should be mandated within the development agreement.

## New Bridges

The building of the Royalwood Bridge at Shorehill/Southglen was very traumatic for SOS and its members. Efforts should be made by MMM to make them part of the transportation planning and bridge site selection process as well as the associated trail and park planning process.

Any new bridges needed for the area should be designed and built to allow winter walkers on the river to pass below them without stopping. The bridges should be designed so that paddlers can navigate below them even in springtime high water conditions without fear of capsizing. Clear span bridges are preferred by SOS over box culverts for this reason.



## New Parks

We believe that Winnipeg does not have too much park space. We believe that Winnipeg has too little park space. Precinct K presents new opportunities for Winnipeggers to discover the Seine River in a park setting much like the ground-breaking Bois-des-esprits Forest to its north. A new regional city park in SE Winnipeg would be a major asset to the community. Island Lakes, Royalwood, Sage Creek, and Dakota Crossing represent large population groups who do not have a regional urban park, one akin to St. Vital Park, in their vicinity. Such a park would provide valuable and enduring green space and park assets and amenities to this large population. The Seine River Greenway from Bois-des-Esprit south to the Perimeter is the only sizeable remaining area of natural land in this region that is suitable for becoming a regional urban park. From a societal, as distinguished from land valuation perspective, this is the most highly valued use that could be made of Greenway lands.



## Preserving Nature Corridors

Manitoba Hydro power line ROWs and existing Four Mile Road roadway rights of way should be retained to create nature corridors and to provide access points to the river and a new 3.3M wide gravel trail system. The local urban deer herd, approximately 30 animals, use these tree belts to shelter in the wintertime. We believe that our native wildlife need a home as much as we do. While our diminishing urban agricultural land is precious and valuable, existing farm fields are far better places for new homes than our riparian forests. We need to maintain green connectivity along the riverbank to the significant riverside forests found north and south of Precinct K. Our local deer herd and other wildlife are all the property of the Crown. We believe that the Province of Manitoba has much to contribute to this discussion and we invite them to come to the table to meet with the community.

NOTE: There is no still no available online information from the City Naturalist website on any of the natural areas found in the area defined by Precinct K. For reasons these surveys are mandated AFTER, not BEFORE, the developer announces intentions to develop an area .Until such a time that a survey is conducted for lands South of Warde Avenue please refer to the survey done for the immediately adjacent area North of Warde, the Bois-des-esprits forest. [http://www.winnipeg.ca/publicworks/naturalist/ns/Natural\\_Areas/NA\\_Reports/223.html](http://www.winnipeg.ca/publicworks/naturalist/ns/Natural_Areas/NA_Reports/223.html)



## New Public Facilities

New schools and community recreation centers help to make new houses into new homes. We believe that new public facilities should be planned to create critical masses and synergies of green space, recreation, study, and leisure. The Seine River valley in Precinct K offers unique opportunities for both young and old to learn about the environment in general and the Seine in particular. Locating public facilities along the Seine River is an idea well worth considering.

## Alternative Transportation Trails

Existing Active Transportation trails need to be linked at multiple points with Precinct K to further improve active transportation options in south east Winnipeg. The interior trail system should provide multiple opportunities for leisurely fair weather strollers and for serious winter cyclists both.



## New Additions to the Seine River Trail System

At least four trail sections are needed to connect the existing Bois-des-esprit trail ending at Shorehill Drive in Royalwood Phase 2 to the Perimeter Highway along the EAST side of the Seine River in Precinct K.

### *Section 1: Shorehill Drive to Warde Avenue*

“On January 5, 2009, pathway construction commenced in Bois-des-esprit, a 117 acre forested area owned by the City of Winnipeg and located along the banks of the Seine River in Royalwood. The new ‘Primary Pathway’ is being constructed in winter to reduce root damage to trees and shrubs.

The location of new pathways in the forest was determined through a multi-stakeholder planning process conducted in 2007 that included local residents, Save Our Seine River Environment Inc., trails groups, environmental experts, home builders and developers, and key City of Winnipeg staff. The consensus of the planning process was that “to do nothing” was not an option. New development adjacent to the forest has led to increased traffic, along with significant habitat damage from new informal trails being blazed in sensitive areas. The intent of this new pathway construction is to provide a main north-south trail that links John Bruce Road and Shorehill Drive, as well as neighbourhood connections to River Valley Drive and East Oak Drive. Secondary wood chip trails will be provided in the future.” [http://winnipeg.ca/ppd/planning\\_parks\\_boisdesEsprits.stm](http://winnipeg.ca/ppd/planning_parks_boisdesEsprits.stm)

The developer insisted that final section of graveled trail not be laid down on the existing trail ROW south of Shorehill until all of the adjacent home lots were sold. That has now happened. The City will have to provide the funds needed to build the trail when it is required.

### *Section 2: Warde Avenue to Creek Bend Road*

Node 1 West – Future Warde Avenue Bridge and Seine River West Bank Trail

Node 2 East – Possible Rapid Transit Station at CPR Emerson Line ROW crossing Node 3, South

Three landowners own properties along this section of future trail. The northernmost two lots are owned by a known land speculator. The lots have been conditionally sold to an out-of-province buyer. The middle two lots are part of a farm owned by the Smith family since the 1930's. The lots may or may not have been recently sold to Qualico. There is a nice treed coulee behind their original farm house. If saved the forest could be used to join the linear shelter belts that extend almost to Lagimodiere to form a major east-west spine.

Node 3 Smith Farm Forest Node East (possible AT/Wildlife Corridor)

There is one more landowner on Creek Bend on this reach. If their 5 acre lot is subdivided a trail dedication could be asked for by the City if needed.

### *Section 3: Creek Bend Road*

Node 1 West – Creek Bend Road Bridge and Seine River West bank trail

Node 2 East/South – South Royalwood

As in the case of John Bruce Road to the north, there are four residential properties on Creek Bend that are built very close to the Seine River with limited access potential to their backyards. These undersized RR5 properties may not be sub-dividable. There is little opportunity for public paths in their backyards. An AT pathway alongside the street will probably be needed for this section of trail.

#### Section 4: Creek Bend Road to Aimes Road/Perimeter Highway

There are two options for AT trails in Section 4.

Option 1 (Short term) Using Sioux Road West ROW for an asphalted AT Trail

<http://www.winnipeg.ca/CLKDMIS/Documents/DocExt/BL/2001/2001.7815.pdf>

<http://rparc.wordpress.com/2013/07/14/saving-the-sioux-road-right-of-way/>

Option 2 (Long Term) Building a gravel riverbank trail as land is developed

There are several large lot properties along this reach. Some of them have small businesses on their properties. Some of them have new homes built directly beside the river. Their privacy and security have to be assured. At least two companies, Agwerks and Cobblestone Homes Inc., can be found at 125 Aimes Road on the graveled Perimeter Highway access road. This riverside commercial property has a product storage compound surrounded by wire fencing built alongside the riverbank. Building a safe and dry trail access around this property would be difficult.

South of the Perimeter lies the beautiful Sumka Forest. At the end of St. Anne's is the Duff Roblin Parkway Trail built on the side of the floodway. There are definitely places to go south of Precinct K. Could they ever be linked to the new Precinct K trail system?



The province discourages cyclists from crossing the busy Perimeter Highway. Building a pedestrian overpass like the one found near Bird's Hill Park is probably not going to happen. For now the river trail will end looking longingly at the old Sumka greenhouses on the other side of the Perimeter. There are already existing gravel access roads to both the east and west of the Seine River. St. Anne's Road is planned to get a new Perimeter flyover at a future date, so perhaps one should never say never.

#### Future Rapid Transit

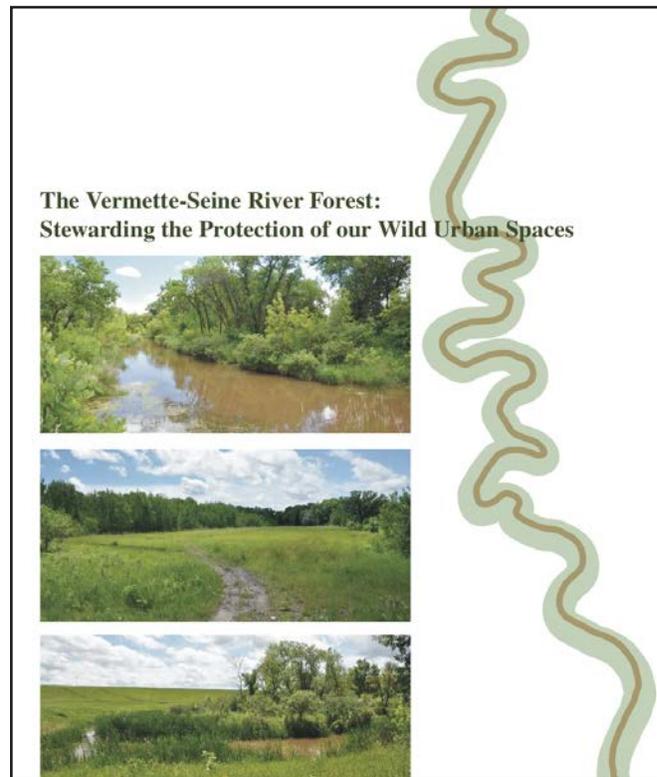
While new Rapid Transit in SE Winnipeg is still a generation away, some of the existing Sioux Road/ Sioux Road W public rights of way should be maintained to allow for new approaches to urban transportation in coming decades. Today's AT trail could also be tomorrow's rapid transit corridor if we take the time to plan for it.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### The Vermette-Seine River Forest: Stewarding the Protection of Our Wild Urban Spaces

*The Vermette-Seine River Forest: Stewarding the Protection of Our Wild Urban Spaces* is a preliminary research document prepared for SOS and RPARC this summer. It examines the Seine River lands South of the Perimeter Highway; lands referred to at various times as the Vermette-Seine River Forest, the Sumka Lands, or even the Bois-des-esprits Sud. As this area is found within City of Winnipeg's boundaries researcher Erika Blackie's findings can be applied to Precinct K just as easily.

Excerpt from *The Vermette-Seine River Forest: Stewarding the Protection of Our Wild Urban Spaces* by Erika Blackie, SOS/RPARC Researcher, 2013 (pp.18-20)



### Green Space Conservation and Development

It is important to understand how and why green space conservation and development occurs. An understanding of the how and why can mobilize individuals to seek change if change is viewed as desirable. Green space conservation and development is guided by both development plans and policies. A few of the key plans and policies directing green space conservation and development are outlined.

#### *OurWinnipeg*

In 2011, *OurWinnipeg* took effect as the city's official municipal development plan guiding growth and change for our city. *OurWinnipeg* outlines numerous visions related to green space conservation and development. For example, below are a few applicable direction strategies pulled from *OurWinnipeg* relating to green space:

#### *OurWinnipeg: A City that Works, Recreation*

Direction 1: Promote and enable opportunities for all age groups to be active as part of their daily lives

Direction 2: Work with community partners to provide services that are responsive to the community's recreation and leisure needs

#### *Complete Communities: New Communities*

Direction 5: Encourage green development and conserve natural areas to develop new communities in a sustainable manner

Direction 6: Reflect heritage in the development of new communities

#### *A Sustainable Winnipeg*

Direction 2: Recognize and preserve Winnipeg's parks, green spaces, and riverbanks as green oases in our urban setting

Direction 6: Enable the protection of ecologically significant lands  
Direction 7: Promote the use of rivers and riverbanks

The direction strategies of *OurWinnipeg* have good intentions yet the application of these strategies in Precinct Plans [remains] unclear. A Precinct Plan is the “blueprint” for future development in areas identified by the City of Winnipeg as under-developed, called Precincts. An example of a Precinct is the area south of Island Lakes, designated by the City as Precinct K. The development of these precincts is to be guided by a comprehensive planning process, the Precinct Plan, which reflects the strategies of *OurWinnipeg*. Although legally recognized as Winnipeg’s municipal development plan, *OurWinnipeg* is often criticized in lacking weight and authority in determining the content of Precinct Plans. If the *OurWinnipeg* strategies for green space conservation and development are limited in Precinct Plans, what then is directing green spaces conservation and development?

### **Public Park Reserve Strategy**

To provide community green space, the City of Winnipeg has an established practice referred to as the Public Park Reserve Strategy. The Public Park Reserve Strategy states that:

- A) The developer shall dedicate a minimum of 8% of the net area for public park purposes and pay the remaining 2% in cash. Or,
- B) If land is not dedicated for public purposes, the Developer shall provide cash payment representing 10% of the appraised value of the Development Application as determined by the City and prior to the release of subdivision mylars by the City.

The cash in lieu of land dedication occurs when the dedication is deemed unnecessary or undesirable due to the geographical context of the area (size, external pressures, location).

The City of Winnipeg public park reserves strategy reflects the amount of green space that will be available to residents. While the amount of green space is an important concern, the City of Winnipeg’s public park reserve strategy does not consider the following issues:

- Quality of landscape design
- Ecological health and diversity
- Appropriateness of design for diverse users and activities
- Interpretive and educational programming
- Connectivity

Residents, organizations and communities across Canada and in Winnipeg are recognizing the value in identifying and utilizing more performance-based approaches to parkland needs assessments.

### **Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Strategy and Policy**

The City of Winnipeg employs the Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Strategy and Policy to protect Winnipeg's natural lands. Under this policy, natural lands are identified as all lands that support native plants and animals, and are representative of the natural ecology of the region. During the development of a precinct plan, the presence of natural areas is reviewed. Using an established method, a City of Winnipeg surveyor conducts an assessment of natural lands within the precinct. The method rates characteristics of the natural habitat and includes: the presence of native species, natural habitats, and degree of disturbance. If the site is deemed worthy of protection, options are considered in cooperation with the developer of the land.

Natural land assessments of the publicly owned lands, including the assessments of the Vermette-Seine River Forest, can be found online at: [http://www.winnipeg.ca/publicworks/naturalist/ns/Natural\\_Areas/default.asp](http://www.winnipeg.ca/publicworks/naturalist/ns/Natural_Areas/default.asp)

### **The Canadian Ecological Gifts Program**

In addition to municipal policies, green space conservation and development can occur through tax incentive programs. The Canadian Ecological Gifts Program is an example of a tax incentive program. Canadians who own ecologically sensitive land can gift it to a qualified recipient, such a municipality or environmental organization. When the land is gifted, a covenant or conservation easement is placed on the land ensuring that the [land's] environmental heritage is conserved in perpetuity. In return [for] donating ecologically sensitive land, the Income Tax Act of Canada provides significant tax benefits through the program. Pollock Island is a local example of a property donated under the eco-gift program to the City of Winnipeg. Further information about the Canadian Ecological Gifts Program can be accessed at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/pde-egp>.

## RECOGNITION OF SAVE OUR SEINE'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### *International Coalition of Water Management Award*

The International Coalition of Water Stewardship in the Red River Basin (AKA International Coalition of Water Management Award) was received by SOS in December 1990.

### *Manitoba Sustainable Development Award of Excellence*

The Manitoba Sustainable Development Award of Excellence was received by SOS on the 16th of February 1995.

### *Federal Government of Canada's Certificate of Environmental Citizenship*

In 2000, Save Our Seine was honored to be the first recipient of the Federal Government of Canada's Certificate of Environmental Citizenship

### *The Mayor's Volunteer Service Award for Environmental Stewardship*

St. Vital MLA, Nancy Allan, nominated SOS for the 2004 Mayor's Volunteer Service Award for the Environment "...To recognize the 1000 members and volunteers of SOS and their efforts to protect, preserve and enhance the Seine River Greenway."

### *The Naturalists Society's Prairie Crocus Award*

Save Our Seine was awarded the 2004 Prairie Crocus Award from the Manitoba Naturalists Society. This was the first time an organization has received the honour in the award's 9 year history. This recognition from our peers is very flattering. JP Brunet (who joined SOS in 1990) accepted the award on behalf of the SOS Board and Members.

"The Prairie Crocus Award is presented by the Society for outstanding service in preserving a part of Manitoba in its natural state. The Society is presenting the award to SOS for your efforts in rescuing and preserving the Seine River and its habitat over the past 14 years."

### *Manitoba Eco-Network's Group Award*

The Eco-Network Steering Committee announced Save Our Seine as one of the winners of the 2004 Manitoba Eco-Network Environmental Awards. The award is presented "in recognition of significant efforts to protect, preserve and restore Manitoba's environment", recognizing the commitment, creativity and diligence of active environmentalists. Save Our Seine was recognized as stewards and advocates of the Seine River and its surrounding ecosystems, and acknowledged for our yearly clean ups and tree plantings, trail development, habitat improvements for the river's 28 species of fish, and most recently, the protection of the splendid and unique Bois des Esprits forest in south St. Vital.

### *Canadian Geographic's Canadian Environmental Award*

Save Our Seine was selected to receive the Canadian Environmental Award for 2004 in the category of Restoration and Rehabilitation. Six SOS members and guests traveled to Calgary to receive the honour at the gala dinner. The award was presented by then Federal Minister of the Environment, David Anderson and the former CEO and President of Shell Canada, Linda Z. Cook. SOS was the first group in Manitoba to receive this prestigious national award. SOS members were thrilled to meet other environmental groups from across Canada and share experiences.