

President's Message

Bois-des-esprits is saved! All 82-acres are protected! It is said that goals are dreams with deadlines, and I'm overjoyed this dream came true.

The words THANK YOU can not convey how grateful SOS is for the incredible support we received over the past 3 years for this important initiative. It started on Easter Sunday, April 1, 2002, when Ladco Company began illegally bulldozing this pristine 82-acre forest for development of its 305-acre subdivision. SOS met with the City, who challenged us to raise funds needed to purchase the forest. For the past 3 years, our volunteer Board of Directors worked diligently to raise awareness and protect this habitat. We contacted hundreds of corporations and foundations across Canada, made presentations, attended many meetings, and learned the true meaning behind 'persistence pays'.

By the end of 2003, 66 acres had been protected. Just over a year later in **early 2005, City Council confirmed the entire 80 acres had been saved** from destruction. SOS was successful in raising over \$110,000 from the community; the City contributed over \$1.6 Million; the Province allocated \$930,000; and Ladco gave \$213,000.

Bois-des-esprits (BDE) is an integral component of the 26k Seine River Greenway, referred to as the 'heart and lungs' of the natural corridor. Its protection signals the increasing importance placed on environment by government and society. We wish to acknowledge former Mayor Glen Mayor, Mayor Sam Katz and Premier Gary Doer for their leadership, and for seeing both the forest and the trees! To SOS's generous supporters and donors, give yourselves a very big pat on the back. You successfully protected an 82-acre wilderness in the middle of a city ... and that's just not something that happens every day.

There is no doubt that this urban forest is special, with its oxbow wetlands, unique species of aspen, and mature Bur Oak. In fact, Manitoba's Critical Wildlife Habitat Program identified 7 areas in BDE that are habitat sites. These sites are "*critical habitat for wildlife and serve as important sources of benchmark information about the natural habitats of the region. Their preservation is of utmost importance*".

This finding coincides with Sustainable Winnipeg: A Comprehensive Strategy, which advocates rehabilitating endangered environment and protecting sensitive habitat. BDE provides an excellent opportunity to "*promote biodiversity, the protection of natural areas, and enforce highly sensitive buffer areas*".



President's Message cont'd...

SOS remains committed to ensuring that the valuable investment made in BDE by our community, City and Province will be safeguarded for years to come. It is essential that future development of any kind be reviewed carefully on a parallel basis with the sensitivity of this ecosystem.

Last year, when my husband and I flew to Calgary with other SOS Board members to accept the 2004 Canadian Environmental Award in Restoration & Rehabilitation, we had a chance to visit the Calgary Zoo. At the Zoo, I noticed a plaque with an inspiring quote from Helen Keller: "*To me, a lush carpet of pine needles or spongy grass is more welcome than the most luxurious Persian rug*". Helen, I couldn't agree more. Thank goodness the lush carpet in *Bois-des-esprits* can continue to be enjoyed and cherished by future generations for years to come.

Beverley Sawchuk

Volunteer President

Dakota High School Artists visit Bois-des-esprits

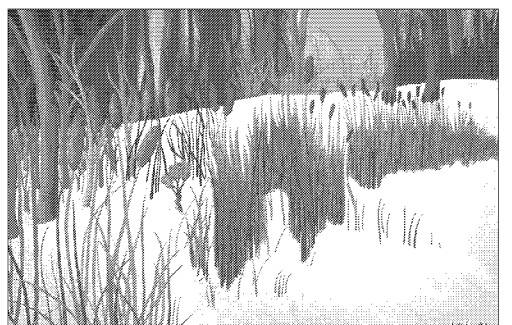
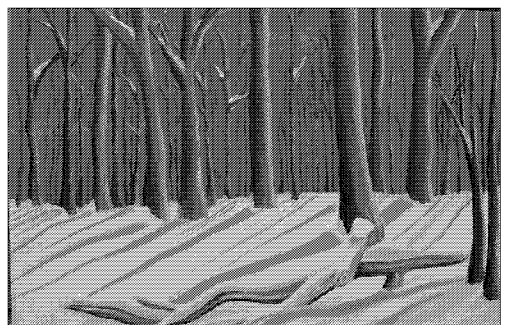
Dakota Collegiate art students were recently given a chance that many high school students never get to experience ... a chance to capture the wilderness with nothing more than a pencil and sketchbook.

In early March, SOS Coordinator, David Danyluk, made a presentation to the students on SOS's efforts to protect the Bois-des-esprits. The students also learned about key aspects of landscape photography from award-winning professional photographer, Mike Grandmaison. After the presentations, David Venema, SOS Board member, guided the students into the river-bottom forest so that they could experience its beauty first-hand.

The wonderful result of this unique partnership was the creation of some incredible paintings by very talented students, who captured the beauty and diversity of the forest. The official unveiling of the art was held on May 5, and SOS was honored to receive a beautiful painting of trees, created by Art Teacher, Heidi Murray. It will be auctioned at a future event to raise some needed funds for SOS's community stewardship activities. The colorful paintings were displayed at St. Vital Centre in May, and will be on exhibit at the Manitoba Legislature this Summer.

SOS wishes to thank Heidi Murray, the talented art students at Dakota, Mike Grandmaison, and Minister Theresa Oswald for their support of this very successful community partnership.

Images courtesy of Ross Murray



Mager House-Site Project



For generations citizens have admired this stately house, once home to the Mager family at 715 St. Anne's Rd. The brick and stone home on the Seine River is just north of the Shorehill/Southglen intersection. **It is part of the culture and community of St. Vital.**

Jules Mager built the house in 1914 for his 11 children! Monsieur Mager came to Manitoba in the 1870's and became one of St. Vital's most successful, and wealthy farmers. The popular painting by local artist Hubert Theroux is widely recognized and graces the walls of many homes throughout Manitoba.

The site is about to experience some major changes in the coming months. The new property owner, Faith Lutheran Church is planning an exciting project on this large site.

The project is an 80-bed personal care home called Faith Gardens. SOS is pleased to be working with the developer and architect to ensure the much needed facility blends in well with the riverscape. **The amenities and site improvements discussed thus far are trails and a canoe launch with parking—all desperately needed along this section of the Seine.** SOS is very excited about the wonderful improvements that will benefit not only visitors and residents to Faith Gardens, but the area residents and recreationists visiting the Seine.

On a sad note, the Mager Home itself may not be around much longer. From the early planning stages, the developer and architect planned to incorporate the old structure into the plans.

Due to severe damage in the flood of 1950, the home and foundation suffered damage. The Faith Gardens Project planned for the structure to be moved onto more secure footing, thus remaining a fixture in the community. After much study and exploration of options, **it appears the home itself may not survive the move to the new foundation, unless extensive and costly work is done.**

A co-funding partner of the personal care home is the Provincial Department of Health. SOS and the community hope there is a chance that additional funding may be added to the budget, to restore and renovate this wonderful and unique landmark in St. Vital's culture and history.

Image courtesy of the artist, Hubert Theroux

Winnipeggers had an opportunity to prove what a hardy bunch they were on January 15, 2005 during the **2nd Annual Discover the Seine in Winter Walking Event**, co-hosted by **Prairie Pathfinders Walking Club** and SOS. Despite the -40 temperatures, over 120 enthusiastic people participated in and enjoyed the community-walking event.

The morning began with a trail report from Marie Ohta, and greetings on behalf of the Province of Manitoba from Healthy Living **Minister Theresa Oswald** and Housing and Family Services **Minister Christine Melnick**. The 10k route along the Seine River, which had been groomed by volunteers Paul Desrosiers and Jules Legal, wound through *Bois-des-esprits* and past the Spirit Tree.



Discover the Seine In Winter

...when it's -40°C?



The majority of participants walked the entire route, but those who stopped at the Agape Villa exit point were most grateful for the warm reception provided by the residents.

A delicious hot lunch was served at the beautiful **Niakwa Country Club**, who generously sponsored this walking event. Presentations were provided after lunch by SOS, as well as Walter Mirosh and Robert LeClair, of **Les Gens de Bois Woodcarving Club**, who spoke about the incredible creation of the Spirit Tree.

Thank you to the 120+ participants and everyone who contributed into making our 2nd annual event such a success!

We hope to see you all again in 2006!

Red River Floodway

You may wonder what the Red River Floodway has to do with the Seine River. You are not alone. In fact, very few people realize that the Floodway actually severs the Seine River in two. In exchange of this flood protection there are tremendous impacts on both the upper and lower Seine River. **Today our governments have an opportunity to correct the situation.**

In order to understand this impact, it is first necessary to understand the structure that allows the river to cross under the floodway and into the city. Simply imagine a squat, U-shaped pipe with the river flowing in one end and out the other. The bottom of the extended U is buried underground.

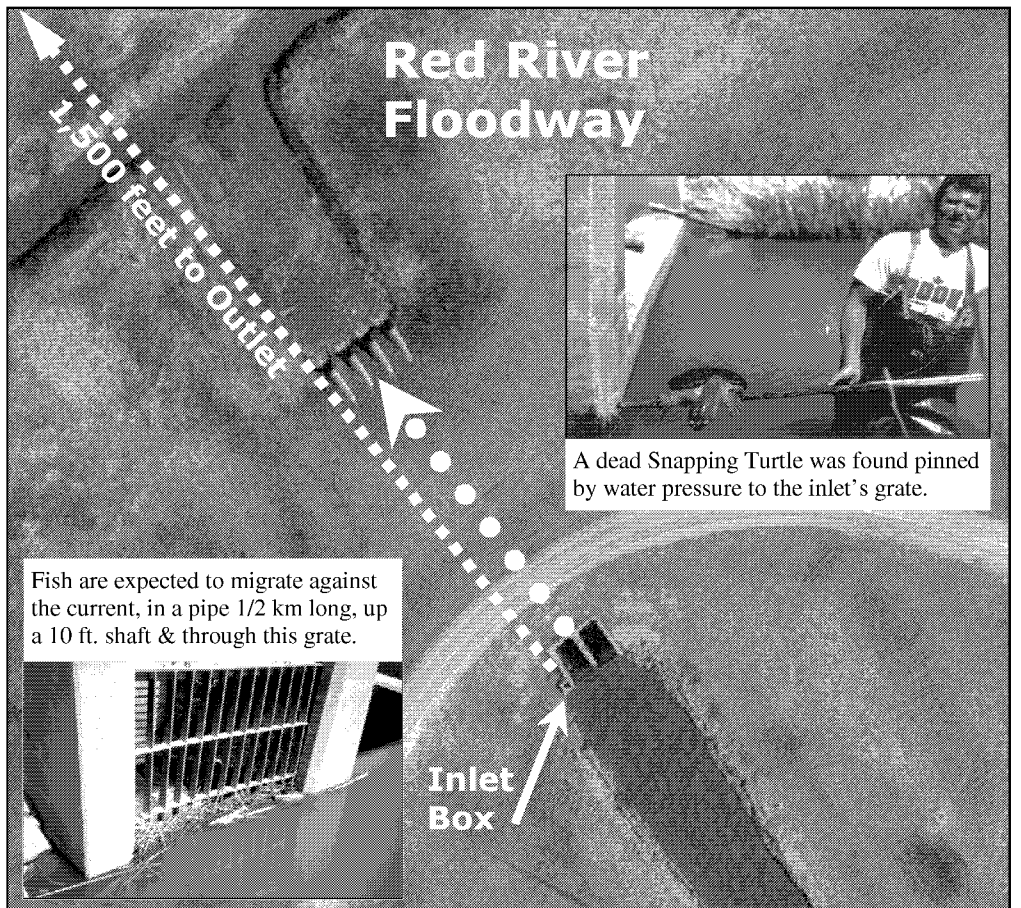
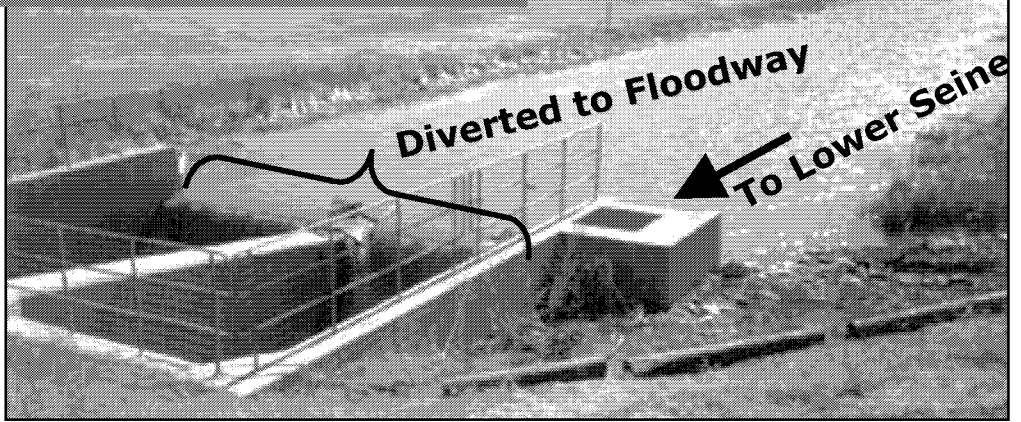
The Seine River was re-channeled to direct flow into an Inlet Structure (top-right image) where the river is spliced. River water flowing over the weir portion is directed into the floodway channel and removed from the Seine River bioregion. In the other case and if the grate is not clogged, some water is able to flow through the metal grate, down a 10-foot shaft and into a 48" pipe that extends under the floodway, 467 meters (1,450 feet), where the water emerges from the Outlet Structure. This subterranean river course below the Floodway, with restricted water volumes, has replaced 1-2 kms. of the natural Seine River habitat.

The system relies on gravity and is designed with a small drop in elevation at the Outlet Structure – creating flow. Simple as it seems, there was a complete failure in the late 1990s, which saw *no water* getting across the floodway to the lower 26.2 kms. SOS successfully campaigned for its repair in 2000.

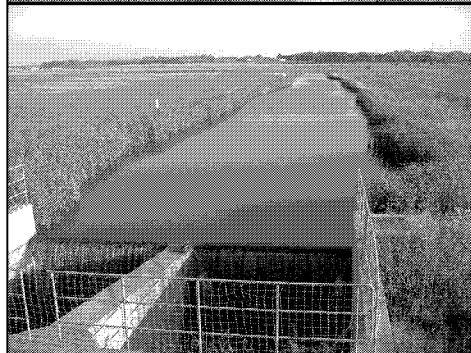
In 2004, SOS was granted research funding from Manitoba Conservation to study the Seine River Crossing. The study was conducted by Cochrane Engineering Ltd and Green Spaces Environmental Consulting. SOS reported the findings to the Clean Environment Commission (CEC) on March 3, 2005. **The conclusions were shocking. We learned that the crossing is a total barrier to upstream fish passage. This denies the movement of fish and other aquatic species to the 300+ kms of river upstream!** It may be considered an 'illegal crossing' under the Federal Fisheries Act.

It was also discovered that the volume of water actually crossing was drastically less than originally thought. **The bulk (~75%) of the river's natural water, derived from 90% of the Seine's watershed, is being poured directly into the floodway!** This results in low river levels along the lower 26 kms. – impacting both water quality and quantity – and thereby the health of the aquatic habitat. **The effects are most severe along the shoreline's sensitive edge, (called the 'bench'), plant communities on the shoreline, and floodplain habitats.** Winnipeg has 55 kms. of affected shoreline, with over 380 acres of floodplain that are denied this natural 'flushing' effect. This impact has been compounded for the past half century.

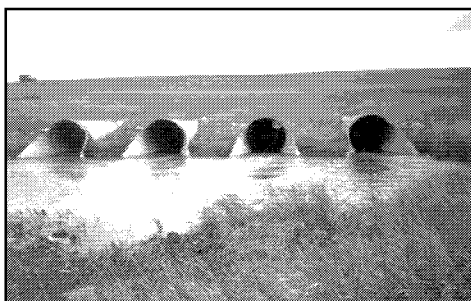
To make a bad situation worse, in 2002, another crossing, the Grande Pointe Control Structure or Highway #59, was built across the Seine River. **More of the Seine River is now diverted into the Floodway via a ditch along the highway. This new crossing is suspected to be yet another fish barrier!** When installing a trash rack two winters ago, the river was dammed, dropping the river levels below the ice. Once completed the river was permitted to flow again, in sub-zero temperatures. As a result, the river was flooded with a foot of water



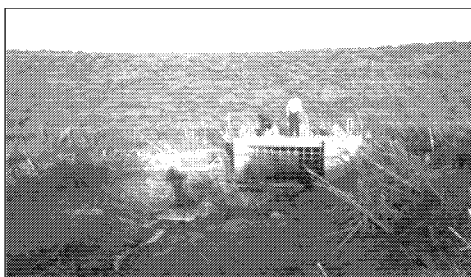
Fish are expected to migrate against the current, in a pipe 1/2 km long, up a 10 ft. shaft & through this grate.



During an obvious non-flood event, significant river water (above) is diverted from the river environment and lost into the floodway (below)



Only trickle at the Outlet Structure (below) shows the complete failure of the Crossing



over the ice, which froze solid. This sudden drop in water levels and subsequent flooding and freezing caused untold damage to the 26 kms. of aquatic habitat.

SOS has asked the CEC to recommend having the Seine River Crossing replaced with a structure that allows fish passage and adequate levels of water to sustain the critical riverbank habitat. The Federal Fisheries Act was not followed in the 1960s, and it appears it may be conveniently ignored again in 2005. **Thus far the Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA) has agreed to meet and discuss the issues but has, to date, insisted replacing the crossing is out of the question.** SOS urged the modification of the Grande Pointe Control Structure be addressed at the same time, as both must be redesigned together. The study concluded that the lower Seine could easily accommodate much higher flows and that these recommendations would not increase the risk of flooding to properties in Winnipeg or Grande Pointe.

As a citizen the next step is yours. Let your Provincial and Federal Governments know that now is the time to correct this horrible but reversible disaster!

If you won't save our Seine, who will?

Comments or enquiries...

Mr. Gerry Tessier, Senior Program Officer,
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
Suite 445, 123 Main Street, Wpg. Man. R3C 4W2.
Telephone: (204) 984-8020. Fax: (204) 983-1878
Internet: gerry.tessier@ceaa-acee.gc.ca

The deadline for the receipt of public comments is: 5:00 pm on June 22, 2005. Comments received from the public will be taken into consideration before federal authorities decide if the project will proceed.

Do you Remember...?

"Damn it, this is a campaign that concerns every man, woman and child (and animal) living in our community. For the Public good, I hereby invite every newspaper and every radio and TV station to lend their support to get the S.O.S. (Save Our Seine) campaign stamped down as an annual event...."



Mr. Peter Warren's article,
*Plea on behalf of
troubled waters*

The Winnipeg Sun
October 13th, 1990

<http://www.saveourseine.com/media/901013.html>

Attention all SOS members, volunteers, donors and citizens interested in issues affecting the Seine River—the 2005 Annual General Meeting has been postponed to late fall, and further details will be provided in the Fall Newsletter (Sept/Oct).

It simply made sense to hold this meeting later so that the volunteer Board of Directors could focus on planning community events and stewardship projects in the summer.

SAVE OUR SEINE MANDATE

THE GOALS OF SOS

1. Preserve, protect and enhance the natural environment & heritage resource of the Seine River.
2. Restore & 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 behavior of private industry, governments and the general public.
6. Improve appropriate public access along the Seine River (by low-impact nature trail & by canoe).

THE ROLE OF SOS

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

A VISION AND PLAN FOR THE SEINE RIVER

1. Establishment of a protected natural corridor.
2. Restoration of the river.
3. Restoration of the Riparian Environment.
4. Establishment of a Seine River Development Authority.
5. Completion of an urban nature trail and canoe route, the length of the Seine.
6. Establishment of a public education component.

Adopted 2000

Volunteer Board of Directors

Beverley Sawchuk- President, **David Watson**-Vice-President, **Serge LaRochelle**-Treasurer, Jules Legal, Jean-Pierre Brunet, Kimberly Balance, Alain Cenerini, Denis DePape, David Venema, Tannys Moffatt & Suzanne Gessler

Coordinator—David Danyluk, Phone 470-9247 ddanyluk7@yahoo.com

Advisory Board Members

The Honourable **W. Yvon Dumont**, Former Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, **Cheryl Heming**, City Naturalist, **Harold Thwaites**, Former Pres. of SOS, **Marcel Ritchot**, retired Airline Captain, **Constantina Douvris**, M. Land. Arch. GPP Architect.e.s, **Kathy Taylor-Hallick**, Former President of Canadian Recreational Canoeing Assoc. **Dr. David van Vliet**, MCIP, Dept. of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, U of M, **Jim Gyselink** retired Winnipeg Fire Captain

- ◆ Volunteer Database Creator and support > Claude Trudell
- ◆ Volunteer Book Keeping> Kate Gessler and Yue Yan
- ◆ SOS Newsletters are Printed at **Kendrick Quality Printing, 888 Portage Ave. 943-7100**

***HELP WANTED! SOS IS SEEKING A VOLUNTEER WEBMASTER—
FOR MORE DETAILS, PLEASE EMAIL**

coordinator@saveourseine.com or 'Contact' at www.saveourseine.com

SAVE OUR SEINE 2005 DONATION FORM

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. Your contribution assists SOS in enabling all citizens to reconnect with their local environment! **For any donation inquiries call 470-9247**

- ◆ Tree Planting & Clean-Ups
- ◆ Discover the Seine in Winter
- ◆ Seine River Greenway Map
- ◆ Summer Student Positions
- ◆ Canadian Rivers Day
- ◆ Seine River Trails
- ◆ School Partnerships
- ◆ www.saveourseine.com
- ◆ SOS Newsletters

☀ **SOS is pleased to coordinate tribute-gifts to honour a special achievement, birthday, anniversary or in memory of loved ones.**
If you are a United Way donor, you can now designate monthly contributions to SOS



Name: _____ (DONOR'S NAME)

Address: _____ City: _____
(RETURN ADDRESS FOR TAX RECEIPT)

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____ Phone: (_____) — _____

Email Address: _____ Charitable Tax Number 89399 6975 RR0001

SOS IS A REGISTERED CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION. ALL CONTRIBUTIONS OF \$20+ WILL RECEIVE A TAX RECEIPT.

Canadian Rivers Day Celebration

2005



Parking at
Canada Post
595 St. Anne's Rd
Or #55 St. Anne's
Transit Bus!

The first Canadian Rivers Day Celebration was such a success SOS has adopted it as our newest annual event. Join us again this year on **Sunday, June 12** as we return to **John Bruce Park** for a tree planting and clean-up event, BBQ, walking tours, fiddling and a VIP paddle trip!

In 2002, the Minister of Canadian Heritage signed a Ministerial Proclamation to officially declare the formation of this day [second Sunday of June] as an opportunity to bring Canada's river communities together on projects for conservation, interpretation and enjoyment.

Tree Planting and Clean-up 10:00 a.m.—2:30 p.m.

Give back to the river environment and plant some native plant species along the shoreline. SOS & Manitoba Hydro have partnered with the City of Winnipeg and the Union Nationale Métis de St Joseph to co-host two tree plantings at John Bruce Park and the historic Riel Mill Site nearby.

Bring your shovels, boots, hat and gloves!

Opening Ceremony 1:00 p.m. Let's raise our national flag and sing Oh' Canada under one of Winnipeg's tallest trees. Visit displays, munch on a hot dog and check out the silent auction and great prizes.

Hiking Tours 1:15—3:00 p.m.: Les Gens de Bois Wood Carving Club and SOS invite you to visit the 82-acre *Bois-des-esprits* with guided or unguided tours—see the Ox-Bow wetlands, Aspen Grove, wildlife and Woody the Tree Spirit, in Winnipeg's newest Natural Park!

Canoeing: Dust off your canoe, put on your life jackets and paddle the Seine River (Call SOS for route suggestions)

VIP Paddle Trip: SOS, *Northern Soul Wilderness Adventures*, *La Brigade de La Riviere Rouge* and *The International Centre of Winnipeg* have partnered to sponsor 40 of Winnipeg's newest Canadian citizens for a canoe trip through *Bois-des-esprits*! A perfect way to celebrate Canadian River's Day and give a warm Winnipeg welcome!

Feathered Ambassadors: Learn about the Wildlife Haven Rehabilitation Organization and meet their live birds of prey—non-releasable educational ambassadors!

GREENWAY MAP

Save Our Seine's slogan is "A river lies waiting to be discovered..." This is certainly true for most citizens and visitors. The Seine River is rarely viewed as a greenway corridor within the City, but rather as a patchwork of isolated parks, golf courses, public and private property and natural spaces. It is difficult to understand where and how to access the river and what amenities there are, if any. This is all about to change.

SOS is very excited to announce that this Summer, we will be launching the very first Seine River Greenway Map. **The very generous support of The Rotary Club of St. Boniface and St. Vital** has provided critical resources for this 2' X 3' two sided, colour map in English and French. SOS will formally launch the map mid-summer!

STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS!



Sincere Thanks to Our Canadian Rivers Day Partners!

- ◆ Manitoba Hydro, Forest Enhancement Program
- ◆ City of Winnipeg, Naturalist Services Branch
- ◆ City Councillor Franco Magnifico
- ◆ City Councillor Gord Steeves
- ◆ MP Raymond Simard
- ◆ Morrow Gospel Church
- ◆ Take Pride Winnipeg
- ◆ Les Gens de Bois
- ◆ La Brigade de la Riviere Rouge
- ◆ Northern Soul Wilderness Adventures
- ◆ Sobeys's (1939 Bishop Grandin)
- ◆ World of Water
- ◆ The Wildlife Haven
- ◆ Canada Post
- ◆ Union Nationale Mestis
- ◆ International Centre of Winnipeg

Paddle the Seine River!

**Discover Winnipeg's best kept secret!
This summer, why not *Paddle* the Seine River?
Experienced or beginner—it's easier than you think!**

The best way to enjoy the beautiful 26.2 Km of urban Seine River is by paddling it. Simply let your canoe follow the meandering path of the river. The Seine is scenic, sheltered, shallow and safe—no waves or power boats! It also boasts 20 city parks, 3 golf courses & 140 bird species!

Done properly, paddling is a zero-impact activity that leaves no trace and lets you observe wildlife as you silently glide past.

Start your canoe trip even earlier by skipping the drive to the Whiteshell! Why not take advantage of our long summer evenings with a 3-hour paddle after work? Plan a full-day paddle combining a picnic & hike with your family or friends, all mere minutes from your home.

Do you prefer a solo or a group trip? Morning, afternoon or evening? A 1-hour trip or 9 glorious hours? Whichever section of river you paddle, the Seine is a neighbourhood wilderness offering a unique adventure spring, summer and fall!

See you on the water!



Save Our Seine has partnered with **Northern Soul Wilderness Adventures** in the past for Canadian Rivers Day, summer youth employment training and Purple Loosestrife removal.

Northern Soul is known for their experience, professional service and care for the environment on their trips along the Seine.

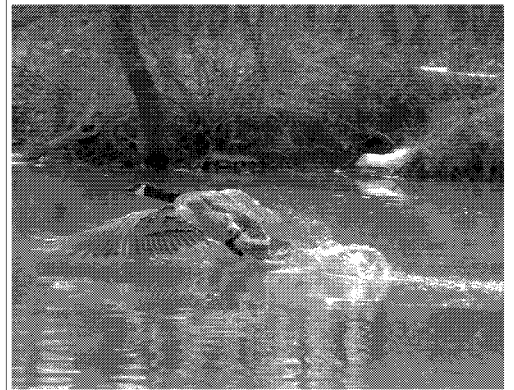
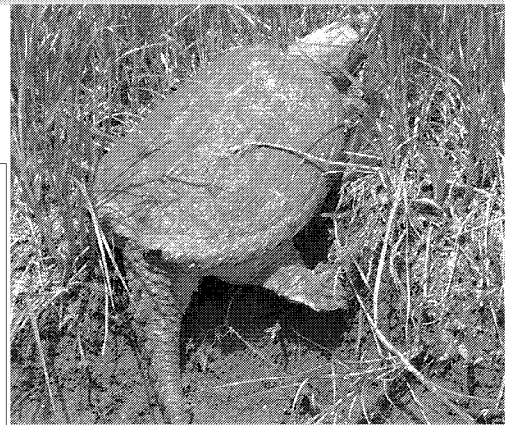
To ensure your first trip is smooth and memorable, let Northern Soul help with your trip planning. They offer insured guiding service and equipment (life jackets, paddles, canoe, shuttle service etc.) to make your trip safe and hassle free. Convenience is not tying-down your boat, or borrowing, cleaning and returning gear each trip. Instead, rendezvous at your launch point and get picked up at your finish point!

Trips depart daily, but check your calendar and book ahead to ensure availability (recommended for larger groups) and customize your own special interest trip (bird watching, photography, birthdays or paddle lessons etc.) Northern Soul also offers Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association (CRCA) certification for all ages.

PHONE: Office 284-4072 Mobile 471-SOUL (7685)

EMAIL: adventure@northernsoul.ca www.northernsoul.ca

NOTE: SOS encourages *all paddlers, regardless of skill level to ALWAYS wear a lifejacket on or near the water and take all necessary safety precautions. Children must always be accompanied by an adult. ** Due to river bottom debris SOS recommends NOT using canoes made of aluminum, fiberglass or wood/canvas materials, which may become damaged.*



**Explore
Winnipeg
By Canoe**

Join local wilderness guides for paddling fun and stories down Winnipeg's Rivers.

Departs daily.
All are welcome.
No experience preferred!



Ph: 284-4072
adventure@northernsoul.ca

