

# Assiniboine Forest News

Summer 2009

## Assiniboine Forest & Harte Trail Urban Green Teams

A warm welcome to this years Urban Green Team from left; Katie Norberg, Beth Windsor, Andrew Stalker, and Corey Thompson who will be working in and around the forest and Harte Trail to maintain and improve these beautiful natural areas for us all to enjoy. Please feel free to stop by and say hi, ask questions, or even offer words of encouragement!

Work has already begun in the forest this spring using an ATV and trailer to top-up worn down wood mulch on the trails and add corduroy bridges to some of the low lying areas. Throughout the season the green team will begin mulching new trails, pruning trees, building corduroy bridges, posting important information in the kiosks, cleaning up loose garbage, and changing the bags in the blue bins located throughout the park.



## Dear Dog Owners: A Friendly Reminder



The Urban Green Team and the Naturalist Services Branch are working hard to keep Assiniboine forest clean, healthy, and beautiful for it's users and would like to request your help to make some positive changes in the forest this year.

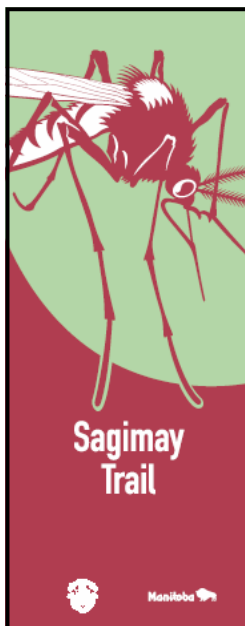
In the past garbage bags have been tied into the trees along the trail in order to increase the convenience of dog waste disposal while using the forest. Although these bags do help to encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets they are infrequently removed once full and are unsightly for other trail users. There are twelve large blue bins located at trail intersections throughout the forest that are there specifically for dog owners to dispose of dog waste. These bins are the responsibility of the Urban Green Team and the Naturalist Services Branch to maintain.

We would like to ask forest users to please help us keep our forest beautiful by refraining from leaving garbage bags along the trails and instead use the blue bins that have been provided. The Urban Green Team will be removing any bags that are left along the trails.



## Trail Markers

Assiniboine Forest will now be easier to navigate through for new and veteran trail users alike! Beautifully designed trail markers have been installed on bollards along the Sagimay Trail (meaning "Mosquito" in Cree) and Preston Trails. Trail markers will also be installed along the Harte Trail extension as construction activities permit.



## Harte Trail Extension Update

Work on the Harte Trail extension along the South border of Assiniboine Forest began in fall 2008 when the coarse gravel layer of the trail was laid from Shaftesbury Boulevard to the end of the most westerly wood mulch trail of the park. Work on the extension will continue this summer with a fine layer of crushed limestone being added to the surface of the trail. Please feel free to enjoy it in it's current state until construction resumes.

## Prairie Renewal; Assiniboine Forest Controlled Burns

This spring the Naturalist Services Branch conducted a controlled burn with support from the Fire Department on the Eve Werier mound overlooking the pond in Assiniboine Forest. A second controlled burn will likely take place this fall alongside the Sagimay Trail near the parking lot on Grant & Chalfont.

Fire is an integral part of the Tall Grass Prairie and Aspen Parkland ecosystems. Over time the duff layer of decomposing organic matter builds up and removal of this layer with fire helps to control unwanted invasive and non-native plants, reducing competition and allowing native species to proliferate once more. These two areas already contain many desirable prairie grasses and wildflowers and it is hoped that after the burn more native plants will become established.



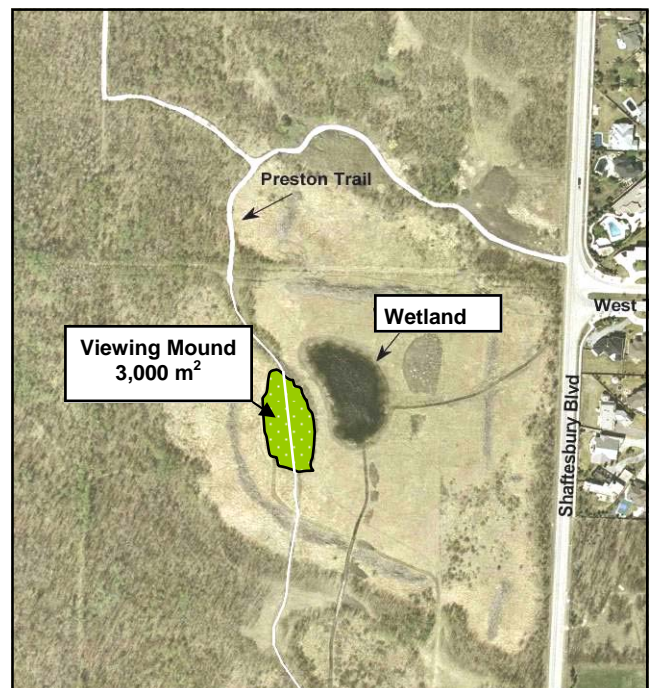
Some prairie species that are present on the Eve Werier mound include:

- **Big Bluestem**  
(*Andropogon gerardii*)
- **Western Wheatgrass**  
(*Pascopyrum smithii*)
- **Switch Grass**  
(*Panicum virgatum*)
- **Green Needle Grass**  
(*Stipa viridula*)

### NEW PRAIRIE PLANTING!

In 2005 a new wetland was constructed on the east side of Assiniboine Forest near Shaftesbury and West Taylor to address changes in drainage patterns within the forest. In 2006 excavation materials from the wetland were used to create a viewing mound, and in 2007/2008 Native Plant Solutions (NPS) a subsidiary of Ducks Unlimited Canada oversaw the grading and shaping of the mound and performed weed control measures to prepare the site for vegetation.

This Year the viewing mound is finally ready to be seeded! A mixture of Prairie grasses suited to the open upland habitat of the mound will be established this spring by NPS.



### Manitoba Provincial Grass Emblem Campaign!

This campaign encourages all Manitobans to choose from four of our most charismatic, identifiable and representative native species. The candidates are Big Bluestem, Sideoats Grama, Blue Grama, & Little Bluestem. **Votes can be cast online** at [www.manitobagrass.ca](http://www.manitobagrass.ca).