

Seven Oaks School Division
Learning & Service Centre
1985 Grassmere Rd.
West St Paul, MB

Winter Newsletter



January 2019

Ozhaawashkwaa Animikii-Bineshi Aki Onji Kinimaagae' Inun
Celebrating the Seven Oaks SD connections to land



The Update

A short time has passed, yet so much to share! In this newsletter we will capture some of the many highlights from the last 4 months.

- Open House
- Naming Ceremony for the land and learning centre
- Soil Sampling
- First class visits
- Partnerships and grant support
- Booking Information



Open House



This is Treaty One territory, the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

On September 22, 2018, over 400 people attended the Open House at the Learning and Service Centre. We had cold weather, but a MOST warm reception! Staff generously shared their initiatives around gardening, land-based learning, connecting to nature and a myriad of hands-on learning projects. We displayed and shared our updated Site Plans, Learning Centre Plans and project information. Thank you to all staff and students presenters and volunteers! Special thanks to our guest educators and presenters: East Interlake Conservation District, Prairie Habitats and Bryan Millar, Native Plant Solutions, Discover Owls, Ag in the Classroom, Sage Garden Herbs, Green Action Centre, and Université de Saint Boniface (Master Composters & soil biology explorers). Special thanks to Ridge Creek Ranch for the Hay Rides, and to Frogs' Hollow Farm for the Petting Farm!



Naming Ceremony

Ozhaawashkwaa Animikii-Bineshi Aki Onji Kinimaagae' Inun
(Blue Thunderbird Land-Based Teachings Learning Centre)

On September 27, 2018, Elder Dan Thomas and Elder Mary Courchene held a Naming and Pipe Ceremony on this land. Elder Mary Courchene shared that she had a dream where “Land-Based Teachings Learning Centre” came to her as a name for our new, shared place. When Elder Dan Thomas held the Pipe Ceremony, he had a vision of a big blue thunderbird “whose wings were outspread, covering this land here, that we are on”.

The first part of our name, "Ozhaawashkwaa Animikii-Bineshi" means Blue Thunderbird in the Ojibwe language. This is the spirit name for our centre. The second part of our name, "Aki Onji Kinimaagae' Inun" means Land-Based Teachings Learning Centre.

Each year we will feast the name. In spring of 2019 we will mark the territory over which the Bineshi spread its wings by placing a post at each corner of the land, and tied to each post will be coloured ribbons.

To hear this name pronounced, please visit our website: [click here](#). Elders know it will take time to learn the name, so they offer this nickname: “Aki Centre” (Land Centre). This way, we keep our languages together, signifying our shared journey.

Soil Sampling

Touching, smelling, and looking for patterns on the landscape are great ways to get to know the soil. Our geography and history also lend us important clues and answers. Soil sample lab results can consolidate our observations with numerical values reflecting our soils composition. These numbers can help us to see the effects of our stewardship efforts over time, and help us to choose the right practices for our soil needs.

In 2017, when a soy bean crop still grew on our land, patterns in the crop were noticeable. In some areas the crop did not grow at all, in other areas the crop grew shorter, and in other areas the crop looked just fine! By collecting observations, historical context, as well as soil samples, we found our land is slightly saline, holds a lot of water, and could use a boost of nutrients.

Soil sampling is often a fall task. A sampling tool, such as a probe or auger, is helpful in retrieving a sample of soil from various depths. Samples are bagged, labelled, and taken to a lab. Results are returned, and an agronomist or soil specialist is very helpful in understanding the results.

Marla Riekman, Manitoba Agriculture Soil Management Specialist, generously offered her expertise to share with SOSD on how soil samples are taken, and some observations she made while we sampled. You can view these video clips on our [YouTube Channel](#).



Soil Auger and 12" hole

Timeline:

- **October 2017:** Phase 1 Construction begins (Service Centre, Pond excavation)
- **May 2018:** Oat Cover crop sown
- **June 2018:** 3 km trails constructed, swales dug and sculpted
- **July – Sept. 2018:** Remnant prairie surveyed for biodiversity. Seeds collected.
- **August 2018:** Service Centre complete
- **August 2018:** Circle Garden relocated to 1985 Grassmere Road
- **September 22:** Open House
- **September 27:** Naming Ceremony
- **October 2018:** Learning Centre Construction begins, Tree Nursery is installed, Soil Testing with MB Ag
- **October 2018:** Partnership with TDFEF, supporting prairie restoration and seed procurement
- **January 2019:** Partnership with Winnipeg Foundation, Reconciliation Grant, supporting prairie restoration, education and relationship building at the Aki Centre through land-based teachings, experiences and shared stewardship of the land.

Coming Up in 2019:

- Planting the Circle Garden, teachings
- Developing a vegetable garden
- Passive Solar Greenhouse
- Ceremony space, Tipi and Sweatlodge

First School Visits

After the Open House, there were a number of classes ready to make connections with the land in Autumn.

Grade 1 / 2 class, Riverbend: Scavenger Hunt, Tracking, Exploration, Wetlands, Cattail Seeding



Grade 9, Maples MET: Fire Teachings and Fire Chemistry



Grade 12, Garden City Collegiate, Global Issues & Geography: Wetlands and Prairie Conservation and Sustainable Agriculture

Linking "Caring for the Watersheds" Project to our specific place: our land at the Aki Centre.



Photos: Collecting indigenous seeds of Manitoba; Canada Goldenrod, Switchgrass, Big Bluestem, Smooth Aster in the Remnant Prairie.

Thankful for our Partnerships!



TD Friends of the
Environment
Foundation

We are grateful for the generous support and partnership of TD Friends of the Environment. With their support, we can achieve a major stewardship goal of procuring local ecotype seed for our 30-acre prairie restoration.



We are grateful for the inspiration and partnership of The Winnipeg Foundation Reconciliation Grants. With their support we continue to deepen our community building through land-based education and land stewardship that values, informs and infuses Indigenous pedagogies and recognized the links between Land, Language and Culture as a path toward Reconciliation.

Booking Information

The Aki Centre facility will be wrapping up construction soon, we will be informing you when the centre is ready to host visitors.

When you are planning class visits for Spring and beyond, please use our new Booking Form here:

Staff Portal > Instructions > 7OaksGrows

On the right hand side of the main page, you will find: “Planning a Field Trip to the Learning Centre?”

Beneath is the link to the [Learning Centre Facility Usage Request Form](#).

First, check the calendar for availability. Then, complete the form (*check all boxes that apply*), and press submit.

Once your submission has been reviewed, you will receive a confirmation **or** rejection email. If confirmed, your booking will appear on the Calendar.

When using this booking form, you have the option to book time at the Ozhaawashkwaa Animikii-Bineshi Aki Onji Kinimaagae’ Inun facility, the facility’s Kitchen, toboggan hill, trails, Wawiyia'kiti'gahn (Circle Garden) and fire pit. Please check all that will apply to your visit, it will help us to coordinate multiple visitors on the same day.

Remember! Transportation must be booked separately.

If you are looking to book the Conference Rooms in the Service Centre, please visit:

Staff Portal > Departments > Maintenance

There you will find the [Maintenance Conference Facility Usage Request Form](#).

If you have questions about the project, or wish to develop experiences that connect students to the initiatives and projects here, we are happy to work together. Be in touch!

Alexis Nazeravich, Program Coordinator, alexis.nazeravich@7oaks.org

***NEW* Website:** [click here](#)

[iNaturalist](#) @sevenoaksgrows

[Instagram](#) @7oaksgrows

[Twitter](#) @7oaksgrows

[Teacher Resources](#): SOSD Staff portal > Instructions > 7OaksGrows