

For more information on the Saskatoon Afforestation areas:

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**Friends of the  
Saskatoon  
Afforestation  
Areas Inc.**



**City of  
Saskatoon**

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References:

1. Gridley, K. (1989). *Man of the Trees: Selected Writings of Richard St. Barbe Baker*. Willits, California: Ecology Action of the Midpeninsula.
2. Hanley, P. (2018). *Man of the Trees: Richard St. Barbe Baker - the First Global Conservationist*. Regina, Canada: University of Regina Press.
3. University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections, Richard St. Barbe Baker fonds, MG 71 Box33 M2 3 Baker And Sister 1895 001

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Literary Trustee of the Estate of Richard St. Barbe Baker

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## Booklet 1

### Born with a Purpose



**The forest is the mother of the rivers.**

~ Richard St. Barbe Baker<sup>(1)</sup>

## Land Acknowledgement:

The afforestation areas are situated in the West Swale Yorath Island Glacial Spillway, a sacred site in Treaty 6 Territory and Homeland of the Métis. Those who entered into Treaty 6 are the Cree *Nêhiyawak* (neh-HEE-oh-wuk), *Saulteaux Nakawē*, and *Nakota Yankton and Yanktonai* people.

May our relationships with the land, standing peoples, forests, and waters teach us to honour and respect the past and invite us to move forward in harmony. May we all come together as friends, to find inspiration and guidance from histories, languages, and cultures which broaden our understanding and community collaboration for the present and future.

## Season: Fall

### Introduction:

Have you ever heard of the Man of the Trees? He was born on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1889, in England. He travelled the world, promoting tree planting, good forestry practices and the protection of special forests like the redwoods. His greatest ambition was to reverse the growth of deserts and he worked out a plan to reclaim the world's biggest desert, the Sahara, through tree planting. He understood 100 years ago that trees and forests influenced climate, protected soils and by holding water, prevented flooding.

Why is he so important to Saskatchewan? He studied at the University of Saskatchewan, lived near Beaver Creek, spent time in the forest near Prince Albert, and planted his last tree on the U of S campus before passing away at the age of 92. The afforestation area we describe here was planted in 1972 and named in his honour in 1978.

## Fall Seeds:

2. As you walk around try to notice the plants that are going to seed. If your tree has cones, try to find a cone that still has seeds between the bracts (scales). (You can plant these seeds in the spring; just keep them in the fridge for winter).

Draw, stick with tape, or tell a story about the seeds that you find:

Draw or collect some fall leaves to press here:



Richard with his younger sister  
Ethel Mary St. Barbe Baker<sup>[3]</sup>

## Outdoor or On-site Activity:

1. Your teacher will guide you to an area where you will be able to explore and choose a tree to adopt. What does the bark look like? Feel the bark, looking closely at the patterns. What do the leaves or needles look like? Take a few deep breaths, leaning against the tree and relaxing.

Draw, paint, or tell a story about this tree:

## Story: Born With a Purpose

*Note: Anything written in italics was written by Richard himself and quoted directly from his texts.*

Do you feel like you were born with, or for, a purpose? If you asked Richard this question, he would likely have replied that everyone, and every part of nature, has a purpose in life.

He knew, from the time he was a child, that part of his purpose was to plant trees. Richard was absolutely amazed when he took two freshly cut willow branches, placed them in the soil at the entrance of his small garden, and watched in awe as they grew new roots and leaves. His curiosity only grew from there.

Richard's family ran a tree nursery, so he was able to help his father with seeding and taking care of the saplings. This was an important part of his education about life and regeneration.

*On Saturday evenings instead of playing cricket, as a great treat I was allowed to help my father sow tree seeds in long narrow beds I had helped to make. As the little pine seedlings came up they wore a little 'cap' which they seemed to be raising in salute. I was fascinated by the regiments of seedlings and I protected, weeded and watered them. Their care was more important to me than any game.<sup>[2]</sup>*

There were no toys that Richard preferred over the baby trees and his imagination. He would use his toy sword to pop off the seed "caps" of the new trees and honour them with a salute. He loved watering the seedlings and would carry the watering can back and forth from the rain barrel hundreds of times.

Richard recalls imagining his sandbox as a desert, shaping contours to catch water and placing twigs as trees in an imaginary world where he was the tree planter reforesting the desert. The amazing part is that this was what he grew up to do!

## Reflection:

1. Richard fell in love with trees as a child, what part of nature do you love most?

2. Sometimes the things that interest us most are a big part of our roadmap to a good future. What dreams for your future inspire you most?

## Indoor Activity:

*"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe." ~ John Muir*

1. Your teacher will present to you a list of species that live at the afforestation area. Choose a plant and animal to learn more about. What are they doing in this season? Why?

### Plant:

English Name:

Indigenous Language Name:

Scientific Name:

### Animal:

English Name:

Indigenous Language Name:

Scientific Name:

(Specify which Indigenous Language—Cree, Lakota, Nakota, Saulteaux, Michif)

Draw or describe the plant you chose:

Draw or describe the animal you chose:

2. In a group of 4 or 5, create or adapt your favorite game to include some of the animals from the afforestation area. (for example: hide and go seek, capture the flag, etc.)

Game:

Animals included: