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



**City of
Saskatoon**

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References:

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Canada

SaskEnergy

Booklet 3

Making Dreams a Reality



The truth is, we know all too little about the vital functions of trees. They consume little from the earth and, indeed, give back much more than they take, and as for water, it would seem that they create it.^[2]

~ Richard St. Barbe Baker

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.

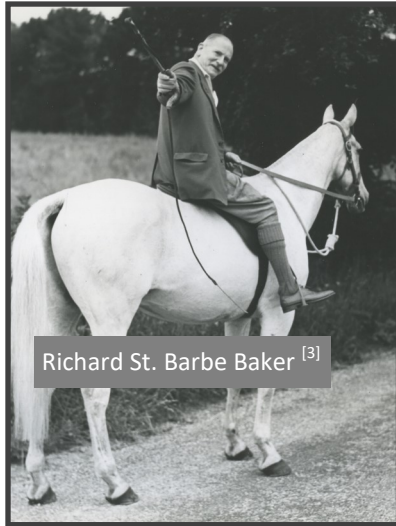
May our relationships with the land, standing peoples, forests, and waters teach us to honour and respect the past and invite us to move forward in harmony. May we all come together as friends, to find inspiration and guidance from histories, languages, and cultures which broaden our understanding and 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 9th, 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.



Richard St. Barbe Baker ^[3]

On-site or Outdoor Activity:

1. Sit near 'your' tree and imagine their roots under the ground, holding on to the water, safe from the cold winter weather that is on it's way. We call this dormancy and it is one way that plants survive the winter.

Draw or write a poem or story about this tree surviving the winter. (If you are writing, try to include any new words you learned from Richard's story— Making Dreams a Reality).

Richard St. Barbe Baker had a mission to develop a 'tree sense' in every citizen, and to encourage all to plant, protect and love their native trees. This is his Message of the Trees.

Be like a tree in pursuit of your cause,
Stand firm, grip hard, thrust upward to the sky
Bend to the winds of heaven.
And learn tranquility.

Take this stance and feel the effect in your body.

In School 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 write out a list of species that live at the afforestation area. Choose a different plant and animal to learn more about. What are they doing in this season?

Plant:

English Name:

French Name:

Indigenous Language Name:

Scientific Name:

Animal:

English Name:

French Name:

Indigenous Language Name:

Scientific Name:

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

2. Describe how your plant has adapted to survive the winter. (Seeds, dormancy, both?)

3. Describe what your animal is doing to prepare for winter. How have they adapted? (Staying active, hibernating, or migrating?)

Story: Making Dreams a Reality

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

Do you dream of visiting other places and going on adventures? Richard St. Barbe Baker formed his dream of coming to Canada when he was 10 years old in 1899. It is good that he learned to work really hard because it took a lot of difficult work for his dreams to come true. Luckily, he enjoyed most of it.

At the age of 12 Richard began keeping bees and learning how to process honey. By the age of 16 he had 16 hives producing 240 pounds of honey each season! When he turned 20, he sold his hives to purchase a ticket to Canada. He had maintained his vision, put in the effort to make it happen, and succeeded in fulfilling his plans. He travelled by boat to the East Coast of Canada.

From there he took a train to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan where he registered for classes at the University of Saskatchewan. He was one of the first 100 students to attend.

Richard didn't have very much money and there was little housing available, so he and some friends built a shack on campus that was considered the first student residence of the time. To pay his bills he got a job as a part-time sports writer for the newspaper.

Baker had always loved horses. He began riding and training them at a young age. So as another side job he traded with Indigenous people for horses that he trained and then sold. He was often looking for deals and sometimes found himself in risky circumstances, like when a farmer offered him a horse as a gift if he could catch and ride it.

I had already broken in wild cayuses and secretly fancied myself as a bronco-buster. In England, before I could walk, I could ride.^[2]

The hard way of training a horse by force "breaking" the horse creating fear. The horse, a prey animal, feels that the rider on its back is a lion or tiger attacking them. Richard liked to build

trust with the horse, and “gentle” train them or “start the horse” as this approach is called today. This was also Richard’s approach to nature, to “be gentle—gentle—gentle to the tree .”^[4]

Quickly, I roped and hauled him onto the rails where I tried, at first in vain, to quieten him. At last, when he seemed quietened, I pitched my stock saddle on his back and he bucked high in the air. The saddle buckled higher. I pitched it on again, clung to the girth and managed to clinch it. In a second I tore the ropes clear of the rails and flung myself on the horse’s back. He lunged forward and the bit slipped on the left side. Flat on my back, I gazed at the sky.

My audience of cowpunchers guffawed loudly. Their laughter hurt; it was the spur I needed. I got back in the saddle and away went the bronco, bucking, cavorting, furiously snorting and whinnying. With all my strength I pulled backward and quickly slipped to one side. Down he went in the deep snow, greatly surprised but unhurt. As he scrambled to his feet, I caught the saddle horn and off we went again, he on his equine fandango with me desperately trying to hold on and think ahead of him. Bored by the dance, suddenly he accelerated into a wild pencil straight gallop, fast as the wind it seemed, unheeding of the man on his back. I held on. Out of the corral and for about twenty miles his career continued and then the pace slackened. He was utterly exhausted when I hauled on the reins outside another farm.^[2]

Throughout his life Richard had big dreams and worked hard to make them a reality. His work would eventually inspire people to plant trees and take care of forests across the globe. It all began with observing and bonding with the natural world.

Reflection:

1. Richard was writing the story about horses 80 years ago. Does he use words that are unfamiliar to you?

Can you list those words and find their definition?

2. Goals and dreams are attained one step at a time. Write out two life-goals and the steps you may have to take to get there.

Dream 1:

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Dream 2:

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