



Urban Forest Renewal in Waskesiu: FAST FACTS

The Waskesiu Community Council (the Council) and Prince Albert National Park are working together to ensure the continued health and ongoing renewal of Waskesiu's iconic white spruce forest.

The changing forest

Trees live so long compared to people that we start to believe that the forest has always been and will always be the same as we see it now. Historic photos show that this forest has changed since the park was established in 1927.

Forest composition and structure change slowly through time. Today's white spruce forest gradually replaced a deciduous mixed forest over the decades. Now the forest is shifting into a new phase, as many of the mature white spruce trees in town are in turn approaching the end of their lives.

Many of the large trees in the town site are now old, have heart rot and are suffering the effects of root exposure and insect damage which make them hazardous and susceptible to being knocked down in strong winds. Human activities have added to these stresses for many trees as well.

The Waskesiu Vegetation Management Plan

Nearly every spruce tree in the core area of Waskesiu has been planted there. Unless we continue to manage our forest, which includes planting trees, Waskesiu's spruce forest will gradually be lost, like the aspen and birch forest it replaced.

Building on the Waskesiu Community Plan, the Waskesiu Vegetation Management Plan was developed in 2003. Recognizing the value of the white spruce forest to the community, the Waskesiu Vegetation Management Plan uses a co-operative, consultative approach.

Prince Albert National Park monitors spruce health annually and reports to the Council, recommending management options each year depending on the state of the forest. ***Maintaining a mature white spruce tree canopy is a key goal of all parties.***

Three-point strategy

To achieve this goal, Prince Albert National Park and WCC developed a three-point strategy:

- 1)** plant a variety of small and large trees that are less vulnerable to disease;
- 2)** be diligent in cutting down trees that pose a potential hazard to the community; and
- 3)** monitor tree health and defoliation.



2011 Spruce Health Management Actions

In 2010 and again in 2011, Prince Albert National Park and Waskesiu Community Council agreed on actions for 2011 which included:

- Plant young trees: a random planting of a minimum of 30 trees that are 3 m (10 feet) high; Arbour Day planting and fencing of a mix of deciduous and conifer trees 1-2 m (3-5 ft) high, and planting of spruce seedlings in nursery at old compound site. 275 spruce seedlings were planted in August 2011.
- Monitor and assess trees and remove any on Park lands found to be hazardous. Residents are responsible for removing hazardous trees on their leaseholds. Prince Albert National Park carries out a hazardous tree assessment on leaseholds upon request.
- Monitor spruce health in fall 2011. Results will be reported to Council in October 2011 and will be publicly available.
- Prince Albert National Park will continue to work with the Council to develop and carry out plans that will ensure the continuation and renewal of Waskesiu's beautiful white spruce forest.