

Beauty contest for trees gets underway

By Kristy Hoffman

It's time to branch out and root around for tall trunks, lush leaves, and beautiful bark: Nominations for Manitoba's best trees are now being accepted for the second annual Amazing Tree Quest.

The quest stems from a partnership between Rivers West and the Manitoba Forestry Association, and it seeks to find the biggest, oldest and most striking trees — or simply ones that are community favourites.

"The quest is designed to get people out and exploring and finding their amazing trees," said Andrea Kraayeveld of the Manitoba Forestry Association.

That's just one objective. Strengthening knowledge and awareness of the role trees play in Manitoba's history, providing information that supports stewardship, conservation and knowledge of trees and engaging people in an initiative that supports physical activity are others.

"If people are looking for trees, they're thinking more about them, and

they're more apt to take care of these trees," Kraayeveld said. "It's an awareness sort of campaign."

Trees eligible for nomination must be located along the Red River Corridor, which Kraayeveld described as spanning "from Emerson right up to Lake Winnipeg."

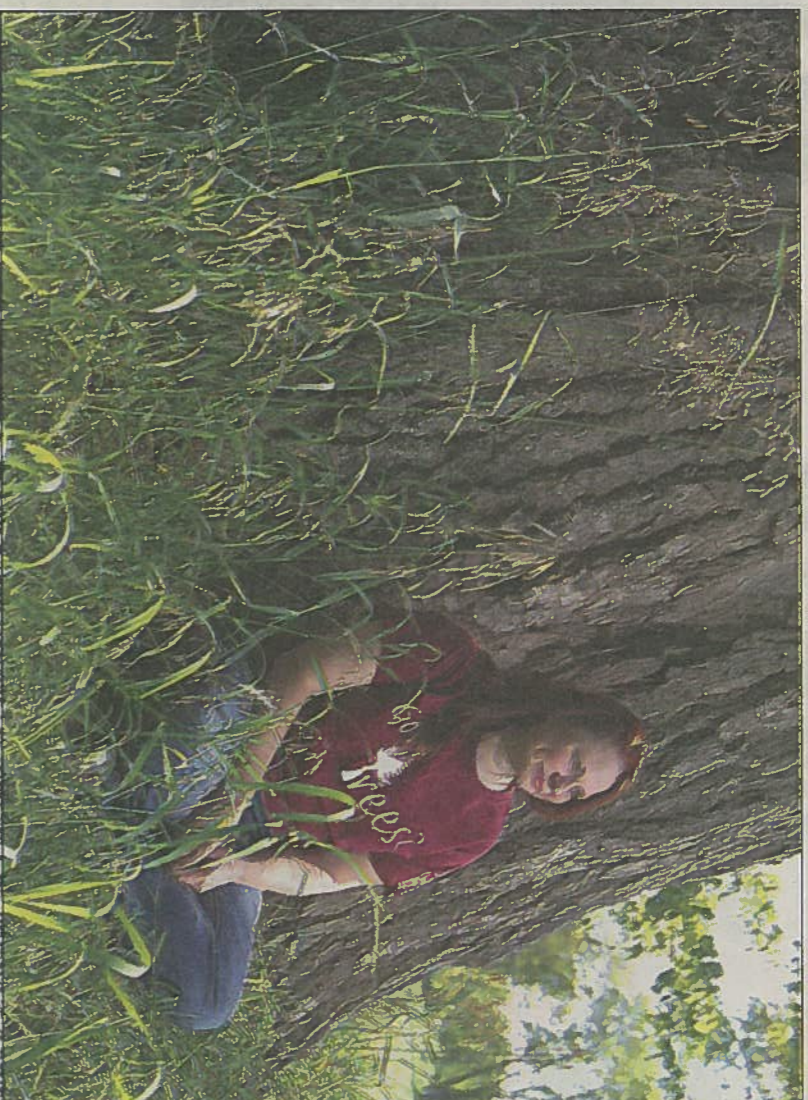
To nominate a tree, participants must guess its height, take a photo of it and provide a description of the tree's location, preferably through Global Positioning System (GPS) co-ordinates.

Nomination forms and photos are due by Sept. 4, and the forms are available on the websites for Rivers West (riverswest.ca), Routes on the Red (routesonthered.ca) and Think Trees (thinktrees.org; click on News & Events).

Winning trees will be announced during National Forest Week Sept. 22-29.

They will be featured in newsletters around the city and on a website dedicated to recognizing heritage trees (heritagetreeswards.ca).

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The Manitoba Forestry Association's Andrea Kraayeveld sits under an Elmselkirk tree nominated in the Amazing Tree Quest. At the top of the Red River Corridor Emerson in the south to Lake Winnipeg is eligible for nomination. Winning trees will be announced during National Forest Week Sept. 22-

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