

Submitted: Tue, 06/30/2026 - 09:57

Delegation information

Committee you want to address

Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)

Item 1 – Establishing Policies for the Protection of Waterways

Support or oppose recommendations

I support the recommendations

Register as a delegation_checkbox

Register as a delegation

Register as a delegation

Via zoom

Submit comments in writing_checkbox

Submit comments in writing

Comments

To the Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Diane Bousquet. I am a Métis citizen, community advocate, and researcher who has spent the last several years walking Winnipeg's landscapes—not simply as green spaces, but as places where history, ecology, culture, and memory intersect.

When I first began advocating for the protection of Lemay Forest, I believed I was trying to save an urban forest. What unfolded became something far greater.

My journey became one of following fragmented stories.

A map led to an archival record.

An archival record led to a forgotten report.

A report led to family histories.

Family histories led to ceremony.

Ceremony led back to the land.

Again and again, I discovered that the landscape held pieces of a story that no single document could tell.

Over time I came to understand that our waterways and riverbank forests are not simply environmental assets. They are living archives. They carry ecological knowledge,

Indigenous histories, settlement histories, wildlife corridors, medicines, ceremonial spaces, and stories that remain incomplete.

One of the greatest lessons I have learned is that the absence of documentation does not mean the absence of history.

Some histories survive in written records.

Some survive in oral tradition.

Some remain buried within archaeological reports that few people ever read.

Others remain held only by the land itself.

Protecting these places requires us to acknowledge that we do not yet know everything they contain.

This is why policies protecting Winnipeg's waterways matter.

Healthy river corridors protect biodiversity, improve water quality, reduce flooding, and create resilient communities. At the same time, they preserve opportunities for future generations to continue learning about the people, cultures, and ecosystems that have shaped this place for thousands of years.

Throughout my own work, I have witnessed how easily significant places can be overlooked when decisions are made before the full story has been understood.

As Council develops policies for protecting waterways and riverbank forests, I respectfully encourage you to adopt an approach that recognizes these landscapes as interconnected ecological and cultural systems.

This means valuing Indigenous knowledge alongside scientific and historical evidence, recognizing that cultural significance may not always be fully documented, and exercising caution where uncertainty exists.

My own journey has taught me that fragmented stories can eventually become a fuller understanding but only if the landscapes that hold those stories are still there.

Once they are gone, those opportunities disappear with them.

The land remembers, even when we do not.

I hope these policies reflect that understanding and ensure Winnipeg protects not only its waterways, but the living landscapes that surround them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Bousquet

Métis Citizen

Treaty One Territory

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.

Yes

Personal information

First name

Diane

Last name

Bousquet

Organization title (optional)

Warming Souls With Soup