



kinnaturalizationprojects@gmail.com

May 6, 2024

Dear Mayor Craig, Deputy Mayor Clarke and Members of Council,

RE: Riggin Park Tree Destruction

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As you are no doubt aware, our group donates trees, other vegetation, bird/bat houses, and the labour to plant/install them, on unused public spaces. To date we have planted over 1500 trees in the Municipality of Kincardine ("MOK"). We only partner with public sector and public interest organizations because it is our view (and that of our sponsors) that they will be good stewards of the natural resources we provide.

It is unfortunate then, that we find ourselves writing this letter to express our disappointment with MOK in respect of certain May 2, 2024 Riggin Park tree removals which harmed mature trees and a 2021/22 KNP naturalization project. It is our understanding that a contractor hired by the municipality felled the trees, some of which appeared to be healthy (though we acknowledge not being aware of whether an arborist assessment was done to justify the removals). The KNP plantings/installations suffered significant collateral damage as a result of the contractor's actions. The attached presentation, "Damage at Riggin Park" provides an illustration of the impact on the Park.

We visited the park several times on May 2 and 3, observing a heartbreaking scene. We saw large and medium trees lying on the ground with their branches hacked off and the debris left on top of many small trees and saplings planted by KNP and our community volunteers in 2022. At least two bird houses donated by KNP had been knocked over as well. The contractor appeared to have completely ignored the existing trees in Riggin Park, and we understand it did not adhere to the instructions of MOK staff as well. The mess left behind was appalling and unprofessional, although a silver lining may be that staff will be more careful cleaning up the site than the contractor would have been.

At this time, we would like to express our appreciation for the reaction of the staff members and Councillors we discussed this matter with. Our distress was met with remorse, apologies, and a commitment to make the situation right by planting new oak trees in Riggin Park after the cleanup. While we are totally satisfied on that account, we do have concerns about the internal MOK processes which led to this situation. It is clear to us that the contractor removed far more vegetation than was intended by staff, that staff instructions regarding the method of removal were not followed, and that no one was supervising the contractor. In the short term, we strongly recommend that MOK review its processes, including requiring a written contract for every undertaking and an onsite attendance by staff at the beginning of each contract to ensure the instructions are understood and obeyed. In the longer term, our group has long been in favour of hiring an in-house municipal arborist, and we restate that position now.

Finally, while we acknowledge the contractual relationship between MOK and the contractor is a private matter, we urge the contractor to do the right thing – please consider refunding any fees paid by the municipality and donating funds to restore what you destroyed.

Sincerely,

Doug McCallum, Blair Brajuha, Linda Peebles, Andrea Peebles  
Board of Directors, Kincardine Naturalization Projects



**DAMAGE  
AT  
RIGGIN PARK**

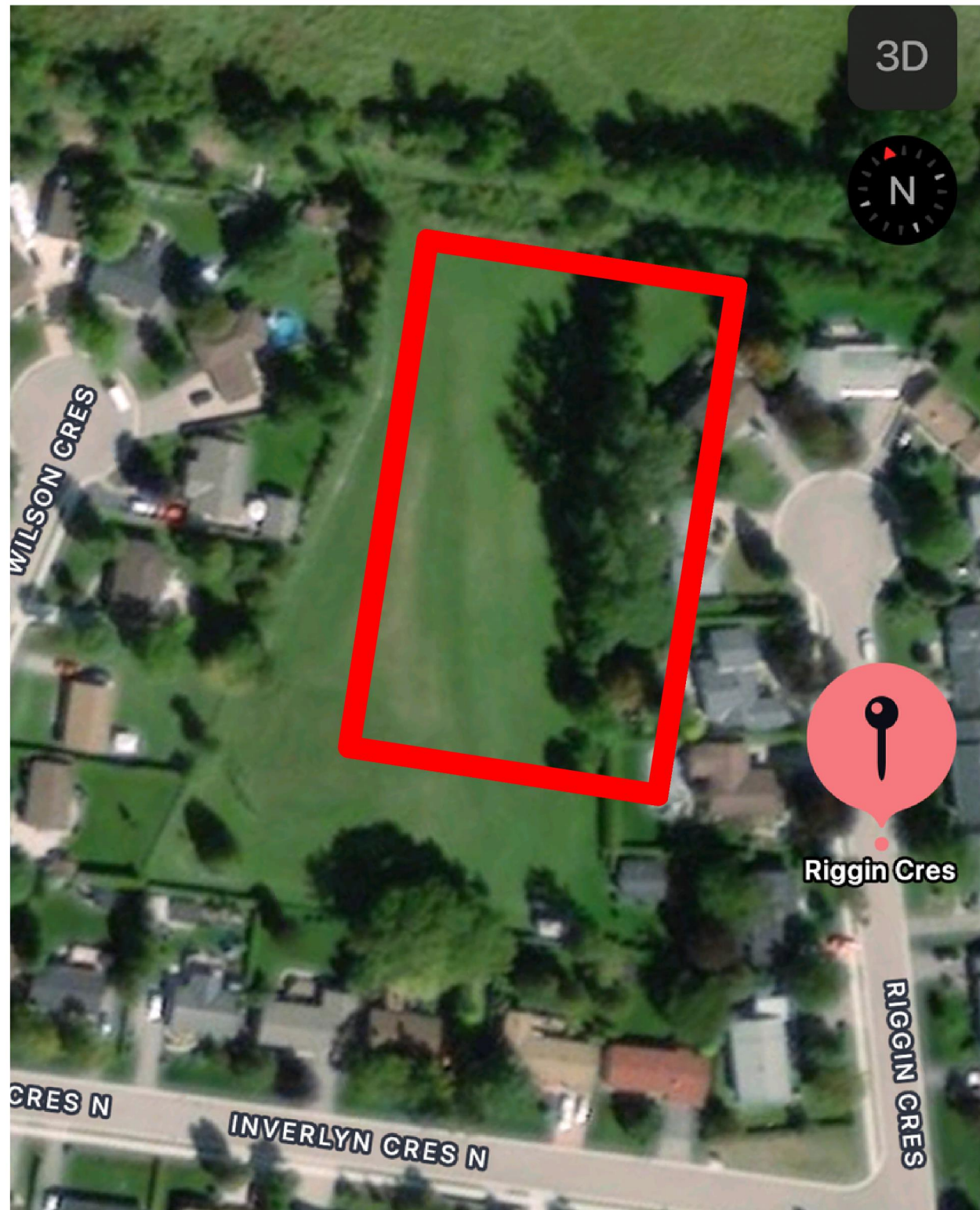


# DAMAGE AT RIGGIN PARK

- mature trees dropped directly onto newly planted forest East to West; destroyed 8-10' trees and birdhouses from 2021/ 2022.
- machinery also drove over trees and birdhouses.
- at least 20 trees destroyed completely; valued around \$200 each.
- reckless destruction with heavy machinery.
- totally unnecessary and avoidable.



# DAMAGE AT RIGGIN PARK





# 2021/ 2022





# 2021/ 2022





# 2021/ 2022







# 2021/ 2022





**2021/  
2022**



**2024**



**2021/  
2022**



**2024**



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