



Meewasin Valley Authority  
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# Meewasin

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**Backgrounder**

**for immediate release**

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## Highlights of the Meewasin Board Meeting Friday, April 7, 2017

### Meewasin Budget Frequently Asked Questions

**1. What does a reduction of this nature mean to Meewasin in terms of dollars and current programs and projects?**

The reduction from the Government of Saskatchewan is \$409,000. A 5% reduction is as expected from the University of Saskatchewan (\$34,073) for a total of \$443,073 or a 17% reduction in statutory funding.

This type of reduction is significant to Meewasin as many of our programs and projects are funded by grants that require matching money. Significant changes to operations must be undertaken to implement this type of funding change.

**2. Will Meewasin continue to operate with this kind of reduction?**

Meewasin is currently working with its Board of Directors to explore ways to work with the Participating Parties to ensure the health, vibrancy and biodiversity of the river valley remains a priority, now and for future generations.

**3. What is the City of Saskatoon's Contribution to Meewasin?**

Meewasin receives statutory and supplementary funding from the City of Saskatoon. The funding for 2017 - 2018 is expected to be \$1,003,071 (however \$258,149 of this money is required to be spent on trail infrastructure upgrades).

**4. What is Meewasin's annual budget?**

It varies from year to year depending on capital budget; but has typically been \$3.6 million, \$2.6 million Statutory Funding and \$1 million that must be raised. The 2017-2018 Budget is \$3,997,453 which includes an allocation of \$25,000 from reserve. \$2,150,971 is statutory funding received from the Participating Parties.

**5. Does Meewasin receive funding from any other sources?**

Meewasin applies for numerous grants each year to support its programs and projects. Not all of these are successful. Meewasin also has a Fund Development Department which focuses on private donors and sponsors.

**6. What is the annual cost to operate and maintain Paradise Beach, Fred Heal Canoe Launch and Poplar Bluffs Canoe Launch?**

The cost is approximately \$60,000 in total or \$20,000 per site.

**7. What is the annual usage of Meewasin's river access sites?**

Usage is dependent upon river flows (the lower the flow release from the Gardiner Dam, the greater the amount of beach area), the weather (hot sunny days have greater usage) and the day of the week (weekends and holidays having higher usage).

On peak, hot, sunny, low flow weekends, Paradise Beach will see approximately 500 users; Fred Heal 500 users, and Poplar Bluffs 100 users a day.

**8. What is the cost of the interpretive canoe tour program?**

The program had approximately 700 participants last year and cost Meewasin \$21,000 to deliver. Offsetting the cost was grants of \$5,000 from ASUPCA, and \$5,000 from a private donor.

**9. What is the annual cost of the annual Meewasin Pelican Watch Contest?**

The contest costs \$7,000 a year to deliver, not counting in-kind sponsorship from the media. Meewasin receives approximately 2,500 entries annually.

**10. What is the total staff reduction to Meewasin this fiscal year?**

Meewasin staff reductions in this budget are 3 summer student staff and 2 full time equivalent staff in Public Programs. Staff reductions have been an ongoing trend over the last few years. In 2013 Meewasin had 33 full time staff equivalents. This 2016-2017 fiscal year Meewasin will have 26 full time staff equivalents, a reduction of 7 staff since 2013.

**11. What is the annual cost to interpret and deliver education programs at the Saskatoon Natural Grasslands and Meewasin Northeast Swale?**

The community stewardship program reaches 3000 students in the 6 schools in the neighborhoods, 30 schools outside the neighbourhoods (1,000) and has direct interpretive contact with 1,500 members of the general public. = 5500. The cost to deliver the program is \$60,000.

**12. What is the annual cost to deliver the interpretive and public programs at Beaver Creek Conservation Area?**

Beaver Creek Conservation Area counts 21,000 visitors to the site annually. The cost to operate the program last year was \$235,000. This year with a reduction in days and hours open, Meewasin is budgeting for \$205,000.

**13. What is the annual cost to deliver Development Review?**

\$100,000

**14. What is the annual cost to deliver resource conservation to the valley, ridding the value of intrusive plants, promoting biodiversity?**

\$400,000

**15. What is the annual cost of shoreline armoring at the Mendel?**

\$520,000

**16. What is the amount of the two unclaimed grants from Trans Canada Trail?**

\$60,000 for engineering (50%) and \$71,500 for construction (20%).

**17. What is the cost of the Meewasin Trail Brochure?**

\$12,000

**18. What are the fee for service contracts that Meewasin is providing the City of Saskatoon ?**

Meewasin has a partnership with the City of Saskatoon to do plantings at the Water Treatment Plant, Cosmopolitan Park and Remai Modern Art Gallery. In addition, Meewasin will be the Project Manager of the construction of the Aspen Ridge Greenway, implement the Meewasin Northeast Swale Phase I (\$350,000), and restore the stormwater dry pond at he Swale (10 year plan - \$150,000 – year one \$14,000).

**19. What are the other consequences of changes to the Act?**

The Meewasin Valley Authority Act requires that one-third of the core funding (statutory and supplementary) must be spent on construction. Should there be any great change to funding this requirement must be considered. We are aware of a proposed change to the Act that would remove this requirement.

**20. What will Meewasin be able to accomplish with this change?**

Meewasin is currently working with its Board of Directors to explore ways to work with the Participating Parties to ensure the health, vibrancy and biodiversity of the river valley remains a priority, now and for future generations. The outcome will determine Meewasin's operations to move forward.

**21. Will Meewasin continue to exist? What will happen to the trails? Beaver Creek? The Swale? The Rink?**

Meewasin will exist, however the details of Meewasin's ongoing operations and their extent is under review with the Board of Directors.

**22. Is this change a result of the review that the Government of Saskatchewan undertook of Meewasin?**

Meewasin received a copy of the report produced by MNP; however have not yet had the opportunity to discuss the findings with either the writers or the Government of Saskatchewan.

**23. How can the public help?**

Meewasin has been dealing with a 1-2% annual decline in purchasing power for decades. We believe it is important for this community to know that unless a substantial long term funding model is undertaken, further impacts to Meewasin programs and projects will occur. While Meewasin has been successful in fundraising it will be critical to understand what long term predicable funding is available in order to plan with any certainty.

**24. Next Steps?**

Meewasin is committed to the river valley and will continue to explore ways in which we can work with the participating parties to ensure the health, vibrancy and biodiversity of the river valley remains a priority, now and for future generations.

For more information contact Lloyd Isaak or Doug Porteous at Meewasin 306-665-6887