

# MEEWASIN EXPLORER

JULY - AUGUST 2018

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## Meewasin Welcomes New CEO, Andrea Lafond.



Born and raised in Saskatoon, Andrea has over 18 years of progressive leadership experience in profit and non-profit organizations. Andrea's passion is to lead teams to long term success and sustainability while meeting stakeholder needs through strategy. She has primarily aligned her leadership in the non-profit sector, most recently in the capacity of Vice-President Operations with SIIT (Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies) and also with Wanuskewin Heritage Park Authority as well as Metis Employment and Training.

Her CAFM designation and combined experience has garnered many opportunities to strategically lead multiple areas including: finance, human resources, governance, marketing and communications and information technology.

As a Metis woman, Andrea believes strongly in mentorship to support positive transition to employment and movement through to leadership, she dedicates time as a mentor through Leadership Saskatoon.

In her downtime Andrea prioritizes her family, they enjoy travelling. As a mother of four in many activities, including dance and hockey, she volunteers her time as a hockey manager.

## Meewasin Trail Upgrades - Act II

Meewasin trail upgrades began in 2017 with Phase 1A, from Duke Street (south end of The Weir), to Queen Street adjacent to Spadina Crescent. Phase 1B will be completed in 2018, continuing from Queen Street down to the parking lot east of the Children's Discovery Museum (CDM). Phase 2 covers a significant section of trail, continuing where Phase 1 left off and heading south, through Kinsmen Park and the downtown area, ending at River Landing.

Given the significant length and cost to implement Phase 2, it will need to be broken up into smaller sections, to be completed as funding becomes available. When determining the development priorities for Phase 2, we consider accessibility and safety issues as the most important factors, along with budgetary considerations.

One such potential partnership has presented itself at Kinsmen Park. Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan is embarking on a significant project on their site, referred to as **Staging the Future**. This ambitious project includes upgrades to their facilities and structures, with implications for the surrounding area. After reviewing their preliminary plans and discussing it with them, it became evident that a cooperative and integrated approach to address their development plans, and Meewasin's trail upgrades program, would be a benefit to both parties.

Based on a collaborative process, Meewasin will undertake site design work, integrating trail upgrade and Shakespeare site design, while Shakespeare focuses on facility design and development. Both organizations would collaborate to develop the site and performance area as a cohesive unit. Timelines from both parties align, with design work planned for 2018, and construction beginning in 2019.

You can help **Green the Meewasin Valley** with:

- a monthly or annual gift to Meewasin's Green Circle or 500 Club;
- dedication of a tree, brick, bench, or the Memorial Forest to honor a special person in your life;
- a conservation easement on your land;
- a planned gift in your will; or
- a gift to Meewasin's endowment

For more information, visit our website [www.meewasin.com](http://www.meewasin.com) or call/email our office @ 306-665-6887 or [donations@meewasin.com](mailto:donations@meewasin.com).



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**Meewasin** 

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MEEWASIN

## Fire, Fire, everywhere. The difference between a prescribed fire and wildfire.



Grass fires are inevitable in Saskatchewan, as seen by the fires recently in the Dundurn and Lumsden areas. The landscape that defines this prairie province is dry and windy. Wildfires can start a number of different ways and are frightening, dangerous and potentially destructive. Prescribed fires, however, are a relatively safe way to manage a natural ecosystem in Saskatchewan.

Fires were a larger part of life on the prairies before roads and fields broke up the sea of grass that is the prairies. Early settlers did their best to protect their homes and family from wildfires. Indigenous peoples used fire to influence bison movement.

Research has shown that during the roughly 10,000 years before colonization, fire happened every five years to about every 12 years. Many factors have led to a significant reduction in the number and size of wildfires in Saskatchewan in the last 100 years. Annually cropped fields that do not burn as readily have replaced much of our native

grasslands. Saskatchewan's 150,000-plus kilometres of gravel roads reduce the spread of fires that do start. Livestock producers have been key stewards of the prairie and without them more native prairie would already have been converted to crop land. Most remaining grasslands are managed for annual livestock grazing which removes grass and reduces the likelihood of wildfire.

New research is showing that Saskatchewan grasslands require a combination of grazing and fire to maintain its health for its plants and animals. Without regular five-to-12-year disturbances, some birds and plants that prefer vegetation structure created by fire are decreasing in abundance. Native prairie is considered the most endangered ecosystem in the world and many species that call grasslands home are endangered or at risk.

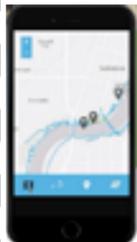
Prescribed fire is a management tool designed to recreate some of the effects of fire while minimizing the risks. Prescribed fire, as its name implies, achieves specific results under specific conditions. Organizations like Meewasin Valley Authority, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Saskatchewan Parks Service, Environment and Climate Change Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service, University of Saskatchewan, and Parks Canada (Grasslands National Park and Prince Albert National Park) use prescribed fire to improve wildlife habitat, control unwanted plants and reduce the risk of wildfire.

Prescribed fires are successful because of planning, training and equipment. Agencies planning a prescribed fire look at the amount of grass in an area, the direction of the winds, nearby infrastructure, where the smoke will go and many other factors, depending on the desired outcome. Fireguards of mowed grass and wetted grass help control the spread of fire, in addition to natural guards like wetlands. Fires are lit only during very specific wind and moisture conditions. Each planned burn unit has a specific outcome in mind and precise weather factors that will achieve that outcome. These measures dramatically reduce the chance of fire escaping. The result is often a very precise square of burned grass exactly where it was intended.

Due to the current dry weather conditions in Saskatchewan, we are postponing our burn plans until we receive rain. We will only use prescribed fire when the exact burn plan parameters are met. It is important to remember as we travel across our province this spring and we see plumes of smoke that not all fires are the same. Prescribed fires are controlled burns set under specific conditions to safely achieve very specific goals, often with conservation in mind. Wildfires are started unintentionally or escape accidentally. Saskatchewan grasslands evolved under thousands of years of large variations in annual precipitation, grazing and fire.

Braun, M. Nature Conservancy of Canada (Saskatchewan Region), Grilz, R. Meewasin Valley Authority (2018, May 15). Prescribed burns maintain health of grasslands. *Saskatoon Star Phoenix, Regina Leader Post.*

### MEEWASIN TRAIL MAP - ONLINE (AND IN YOUR POCKET)!



Exploring the Meewasin Trail is easy! Chart your adventure and access information along the way. Find out what events are happening along the Meewasin Trail, where the nearest dog parks, water fountains and washrooms are. Simply go to [www.meewasin.com](http://www.meewasin.com), click the map and the fun begins!

Prefer your map in your pocket? A special thanks to the Saskatoon Road Runners for sponsoring the new print edition of the compact Meewasin Trail Guide now available for pick up at the MVA office and Tourism Saskatoon!

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MEEWASIN

## Meewasin Plant-A-Tree Dedication Ceremony



Photo credit Christian Kozak

The 32nd annual Meewasin Plant-A-Tree Dedication Ceremony was held on Saturday, June 9, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. in Boomtown at Saskatoon's Western Development Museum.

Meewasin would like to thank the more than 400 people, including families,

groups of friends and colleagues who came together in the last year to green the Meewasin Valley. These donors made gifts to honour the special people and events in their lives. Donors looked to the Meewasin Plant-A-Tree program, which also includes brick and bench sponsorships, to honour the memories of those most dear to them and to celebrate the joyous milestones in their lives, such as weddings, births, graduations and anniversaries.

The afternoon program offered selections by the Saskatoon Choral Society and The Honor Song by the Scout Singers, as well as words of greeting by His Honour The Honourable W. Thomas Molloy, Saskatoon Mayor Charlie Clark, Meewasin CEO Andrea Lafond and a message from Green Circle Donor Robert Halliday.

The 2018 program included the placement of more than 100 trees and shrubs, Meewasin Trail benches, seating blocks and bricks.

## Educational Programs in the Meewasin Valley

Meewasin would like to thank the Saskatoon Public School Division, Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division and the Prairie Spirit School Division for taking part in our educational programs again this past school year. Hundreds of students



from all three school divisions participated in the long-standing Grade Two program learning about the ecology of the Saskatoon Natural Grasslands, took part in pond dipping in the wetlands for aquatic insects at the Northeast Swale, and learnt about the flora and fauna out at Beaver Creek Conservation Area through the Grade Five Environmental Education Program. Have a great summer and we look forward to seeing you all again in the fall!

## 2018 Pelican Watch Contest Winners

The first pelican to touch down between the CPR Bridge and the Weir did so, Wednesday, April 18 at 1:54 p.m. as observed by the official spotters from the Saskatoon Nature Society. Thank you to all who participated and congratulations to this years' winners:



Photo courtesy of Kirk Hunt

- Grand Prize Bike - Kodi Hiller
- Ice Cream Party - Karson from St. Philip School
- Nature Viewing Pack - Poppy Hudye Baranesky
- Wildlife Watching Pack - Shiann from St. Philip School
- Wildlife Watching Pack - Wesley from St. Philip School
- Wildlife Watching Pack - Lily from Ecole Sister O'Brien School
- Wildlife Watching Pack - Obaid from Saskatoon Misbah School
- Wildlife Watching Pack - Darasimi from Ecole Cardinal Leger
- Wildlife Rehabilitation Membership and Pack - Rylan from St. Philip School



## Don't let them loose!

Never release aquatic plants and pets or dump aquarium water into streams, ponds, lakes, rivers or storm sewers.

### It is illegal.

Aquarium fish that are not native are often more aggressive than native species, consuming their food and taking up their space. They can also spread disease, kill local species and damage natural habitats.

Aquarium pets such as snails and turtles can also be extremely harmful to native species and the environment. Aquarium plants choke waterways and can inhibit recreational activities.

Report any incidents to your local Ministry of Environment office, or call the TIP line.

saskatchewan.ca/tip | 1-800-667-7561 | Sasktel cell #5555



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HOURS: TUESDAY TO SUNDAY 9 A.M. TO 5 P.M. CLOSED MONDAYS

# BEAVER CREEK CONSERVATION AREA

INTERPRETING SASKATOON'S NATURAL HISTORY

## Beaver Creek Conservation Area (BCCA)

The July - August public program will be presented from Chip's Lodge and is designed to engage audiences from day camp programs, families, children, and adults through activities, displays, and information. The primary topic is the exploration of natural systems versus human systems regarding food waste and recycling. In today's world humans are creating a significant amount of food waste and are having major challenges developing efficient recycling programs. Natural systems have some tips and tricks it can teach to incorporate into our home lives, to improve our use of food, and the energy and money spent to produce it.

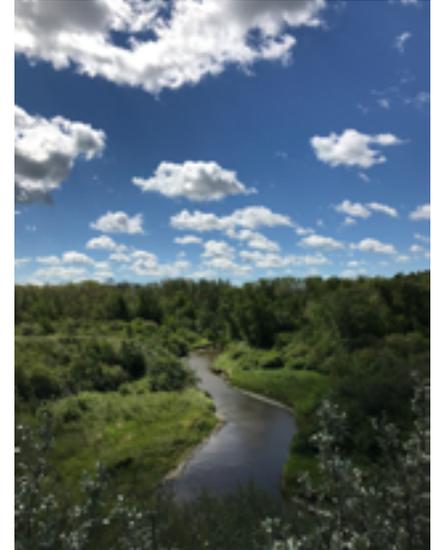


Photo courtesy of Karen Edwards

## Beaver Creek Conservation Area (BCCA) Hours of Operation

In response to the public desire to have BCCA open weekends, the hours are:

- July through October - Open Tuesday to Sunday 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Closed Mondays.
- November and December - closed on weekends as in previous years.

## A Creek Forming A Valley; A Valley Forming Habitats

BEAVER CREEK CONSERVATION AREA - FOLLOW LORNE AVENUE SOUTH 13 KM ON HIGHWAY #219

CHIP'S HOT LINE: 306-374-2474 FAX: 306-665-6117 E-MAIL: MEEWASIN@MEEWASIN.COM MEEWASIN.COM

## UPCOMING EVENTS



Meewasin will be hosting a series of Mini-BioBlitz events throughout summer 2018. These BioBlitz' are designed to be targeted, short events to engage citizen scientists on collecting specific flora, fauna and wildlife at various Meewasin sites including the Meewasin Northeast Swale. TD Friends of the Environment has once again provided generous support to Meewasin to deliver BioBlitz activities.

BioBlitz events planned for 2018 include searching for rare plants, observing grassland birds, documenting wildlife occurrences and conducting ecological health assessments. Volunteers who have experience or who would like to learn about the natural environment are encouraged to participate. Information regarding the events will be posted on the Meewasin website and social media.



**Pets in the Park July 8, 2018** - Spend the day in the sun with your on-leash pets in Kiwanis Park North.

**Taste of Saskatchewan July 17-22, 2018** - Located in Kiwanis Park between the Delta Bessborough Hotel and the Bandshell, Taste of Saskatchewan features some of Saskatoon's finest restaurants and entertainment.

**Saskatoon Rotary Rib Fest August 3-6, 2018** - Diefenbaker Park is host to a weekend filled with all the ribs you can eat.

**Rock the River August 17-19, 2018** - Spend the weekend in the Meewasin Valley listening to classic bands like Nazareth and Trooper at the Rock the River music festival located in the Delta Bessborough Gardens.

For more information on all Meewasin events, visit our website at [meewasin.com/events](http://meewasin.com/events).

### Explorer eNewsletter

Help us reduce our paper consumption and sign up for our Explorer eNewsletter today! Receive the same great newsletter in a more eco-friendly format. Phone 306-665-6887 or email [meewasin@meewasin.com](mailto:meewasin@meewasin.com) and provide us with your name and email address.



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