

# MEEWASIN EXPLORER

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## Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre Closed Effective July 1, 2016

The Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre (MVC), located in the lower level of the Meewasin Valley Authority building located at 402 Third Avenue South, is closed effective July 1, 2016. The closure is a result of a long term erosion of Meewasin's statutory funding from its three participating parties.



Wise people with great vision created Meewasin 37 years ago; a partnership of the City of Saskatoon, Province of Saskatchewan, and University of Saskatchewan who felt they could best manage their riverbank lands through one organization. The public wanted a conserved river valley, with free public access, and public involvement in decision making. And, by all measures Meewasin has been an outstanding success.

Saskatoon and Saskatchewan are known internationally for the Meewasin Valley: 25 square miles of conserved riverbank land made up of parks, conservation areas, interpretive centres, canoe launches, and more than 80 km of Meewasin Trail.

The Meewasin Conservation Zone ranges from Corman Park's Pike Lake in the southwest to Corman Park's Clark's Crossing in the northeast.

The Moriyama Plan mandate is for Meewasin to conserve the river valley's resources, develop them for free public access, and educate people about it, as conservation is best realized through education rather than enforcement. The Moriyama Plan then has three pillars: Conservation, Development, and Education.

Today, 37 years later after Meewasin was established, we see a conserved river valley; and we see development. The world renowned heritage site Wanuskewin was a Meewasin creation.

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There is the Riverworks Weir development, River Landing I and II, the outdoor skating rink, the two interpretive centres, the Rotary International Peace Plaza, Road Runners Association Seating Node, the Kiwanis Memorial Park Irrigation Project, Path of History and Vimy Memorial Improvements, the addition of 15 km of trail this past year now totalling 80 km, the conservation of Saskatoon Natural Grasslands, the master plan development for the Meewasin Northeast Swale, the canoe launches and much more.

These improvements to public access of the river valley did not happen without a Meewasin plan, public input, fund development and construction. Meewasin has spent \$100 million in its three mandated areas in the past 37 years, \$18 million has come from the City of Saskatoon, \$20 million from the province, and \$15 million from the university. The balance of \$43 million has come from fund development; corporate, government grants, service clubs, and private donations.

One of the pillars in the Moriyama Plan is Education, to educate the public as to what we have and why it is important. The Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre is key to fulfilling that mandate as young and old learn about the history of Saskatoon, about the Meewasin Valley and about the future of the Meewasin Valley.



Open 363 days a year since 1988, more than 400,000 have had contact with the Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre through visitation and outreach programs, including 70,000 Grade 3 students as part of their social studies program. The MVC has been a destination in downtown Saskatoon since 1988, providing weekend interpretive programming, walking tours of Downtown Saskatoon, Broadway, and River Landing. It is a holiday and weekend site for Tourism Saskatoon, providing information and pointing tourists in the right direction. It supports the work of other organizations such as the Marr Residence Board, the Saskatoon Heritage Society, Heritage Festival, and many other groups and events.

The interpreters take outreach programs to seniors and care homes, groups, day programs, and schools. The MVC coordinates the annual month long clean-up of the river valley, this past year counting 30,000 participants. The Centre provides a space for local artists to show their work on a bi-monthly basis. It is a rest stop for users of the Meewasin Trail. Three permanent interpretive staff are affected with layoff notices, affecting many relationships with other organizations including MAPS (Mapping Avian Productivity and Survivorship), as Meewasin can no longer be one of three bird banding stations in the province.



Interpretive Centre photos courtesy Tourism Saskatchewan



And the bottom line is that closing the Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre does not solve the Meewasin funding dilemma. If the funding formula provided by the three participating no parties is not resolved, further cuts to Meewasin's programs and projects will occur in the future. We are anxious to participate in the Provincial review of Meewasin, however the statement that future provincial funding to Meewasin is "on the table" is cause for great uncertainty and the very existence of Meewasin is at risk.

For more information on how you can help, contact Meewasin.

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MEEWASIN

## Invasive Plant Spotlight - What's growing in your yard?



**Common Burdock** is an invasive biennial plant and designated as noxious in Saskatchewan by the Ministry of Agriculture. Being designated as noxious means that landowners, both urban and rural, have a duty to control these plants on their property. As the inspiration for velcro, it is easy to see how the burrs (the seed) can spread this invasive species. Common Burdock forms basal rosettes in the first year and can grow from 1-3 m tall in its second year of growth. Leaves are heart-shaped, large, hairy underneath, and a dark shade of green (resembles rhubarb leaves). Purple flowers appear atop spiky green balls, which turn to burrs as seeds mature. Mature plants produce 6000-16000 seeds! The burrs can cause damage (both economic and health) when they get caught in the fur of livestock and pets. There are even cases of fatalities resulting from smaller animals getting caught in the burrs who were then unable to escape (bats, birds). If you find Common Burdock in your yard, you can prevent its spread by minimizing disturbance to the landscape, ensuring the plant has competition by planting native plants, preventing the plant from going to seed and removing burrs from clothing or fur. To control this plant, you can repeatedly hand-pull or dig, cut back repeatedly before flowering, or cultivate (Common Burdock is intolerant of cultivation).

Meewasin does not currently have Common Burdock on any of their sites, though it has been spotted in various locations throughout the South Saskatchewan River valley in Saskatoon and the RM of Corman Park. Meewasin's Resource Conservation crew is actively monitoring for this plant on their sites and alerting the appropriate weed inspector when spotted throughout Meewasin's Conservation Zone.

Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area

**St Barbe Baker**

environment  
clean up

EcoFriendly Sask.ca

**Saturday July 9, 2016**  
**8:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.**

**Meet at**  
**South West Off Leash Dog Park**  
**On Cedar Villa Road**  
**West of the Civic Operations Centre**

<http://rbarbebaker.wordpress.com>

## Honouring Through Meewasin



Sponsor a Meewasin seating bench or block in memory, recognition, or celebration of a loved one.

Let Meewasin help you celebrate memories!

- \* Sponsor a bench for a 10-year term - \$3,000
- \* Sponsor a permanent concrete seating block - \$5,000
- \* Tax receipt issued for full amount of donation

*Thank you for your support and for including Meewasin in celebrating your memories!*

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## Meewasin Plant-A-Tree Dedication Ceremony



Meewasin's 30th Plant-A-Tree dedication ceremony was held Saturday, June 18, in Boomtown at the Western Development Museum. (Pictured from L to R: M.C. Wayne Dyck, Dr. Gordon Barnhart, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan Vaughn Solomon Schofield, Meewasin Board Chair Toddi Steelman, and Piper Brad Fenty)

The Plant-A-Tree, Memorial Forest and brick/bench sponsorship programs are successful fundraising activities for the purpose of greening the river valley for free public access. Donations are made for a number of reasons: weddings, graduations, births, anniversaries, birthdays and in memory of those who have touched our lives.

Since 1988, Meewasin has planted 4,018 sponsored trees and shrubs in the valley and since 2000 there have been 182 donations to the Memorial Forest in Gabriel Dumont Park. The 2016 program included the sponsorship recognition of 92 trees and shrubs, 7 Meewasin Trail benches, 3 seating blocks, 11 bricks at the Saskatchewan Road Runners Seating Node, 3 bricks at the Saskatoon Community Foundation Plaza at River Landing, 1 brick at the new Factoria Seating Node and 7 bricks at the International Peace Plaza in Rotary Park, the latter including one red granite brick recognizing the Nobel Peace Laureate Norman Borlaug.

There is no place in the world that recognizes loved ones, marathon winners and Nobel Peace Prize Laureates as we do in Saskatoon through Meewasin.

# BEAVER CREEK CONSERVATION AREA

INTERPRETING SASKATOON'S NATURAL HISTORY

## Beaver Creek Programming

At this time, Beaver Creek Conservation Area remains open July and August, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., 7 days a week. Call 306-374-2474 for program information.

Please visit Beaver Creek Conservation Area throughout the season to enjoy the natural area and Interpretive Centre.

Find Meewasin on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter @meewasin



## About Beaver Creek Conservation Area



Beaver Creek Conservation Area offers the general public and schools opportunities to discover the wonders of nature. Hands-on activities in the Interpretive Centre give children the opportunity to learn more about Saskatchewan's wildlife. Their experience is enhanced through creative play such as the puppet theatre, and the SaskEnergy Beaver Pond. A selection of four nature trails are available year-round for all ages to enjoy.

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

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