

MEEWASIN EXPLORER

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2018

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Biobed For Herbicide Rinsate Project

This summer a biobed for herbicide rinsate was built for urban use by Meewasin's resource management and horticultural staff. Funding for the project was received by the South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards (SSRWSI) from the City of Saskatoon Environmental Grant. It was decided to construct the Biobed at the Meewasin field compound and horticultural greenhouse behind Patterson Gardens near the University of Saskatchewan. Herbicide and herbicide rinsate can contaminate soil, wetlands, holding ponds, waterways or wells which can pose a danger to citizens, livestock and nature. Biobeds speed up the herbicide natural breakdown processes by creating ideal habitat for microbes which breakdown herbicides to the point where they pose no further threat to the environment (Ag Canada and Agri-Food Canada 2015). The biobed constructed consists of two fertilizer totes, with the tops cut off. The first tote was then filled with a mixture of topsoil, compost/compost and straw. There is also a small storage tank to hold the rinsate which will then be slowly released into the biomix from a perforated hose.

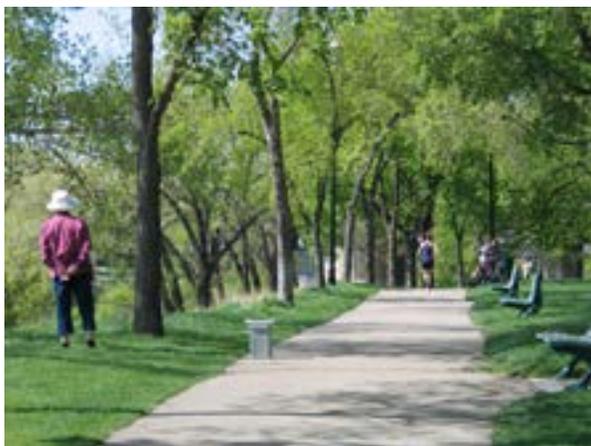


There are taps at the bottom of the totes to allow for removal of liquids should the system become saturated. The second tote will be filled with the biomix next spring. Liquid from the first tote will then be circulated through the second tote and mix for even greater adsorption of pesticides. Plants are growing on the first mixture and next year native grasses and shrubs will be planted by Meewasin. These plants will help with moisture control in the biobed. Meewasin staff built the biobed and will continue to maintain and manage the system.

Plans for a biobed are available from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. There are a variety of ways to build a biobed depending on funds available and if the use is agricultural or urban. There is also a biobed available commercially.

A "Show and Tell" was held on September 18th to explain the why and how of the biobed to interested parties. There were 23 people present from the University of Saskatchewan, City of Saskatoon, Agri-culture and Agri-Food Canada, RM Corman Park, Partners FOR Saskatchewan River Basin Council and Meewasin. The site is ideally situated for more demonstration days in the coming years for youth and the public.

Meewasin uses an integrated approach to invasive species management including various tools including targeted conservation grazing, prescribed burning, mechanical and hand control, biocontrol agents, and in some cases the use of selective herbicides. The use of a biobed for the herbicide rinsate from small-scale spraying equipment will help Meewasin reduce further impact to the environment. (This article was written by Kerry Lowndes of the South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards.)



Winter Bench Replacements An important notice for sponsored benches throughout Kiwanis Park

A number of benches in Kiwanis Park are slated for replacement this winter by the City of Saskatoon. The benches will be removed shortly and replaced with new ones in late winter. Any donors wishing to renew sponsorship of benches throughout the park that are at or nearing the end of their term should contact Meewasin at 306-665-6887.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MEEWASIN

A New Invader in the South Saskatchewan River: Flowering Rush

A new invader is moving into Saskatchewan along the South Saskatchewan River. This is not a killer fish or a clog-forming mussel, but an invasive aquatic plant that can have significant environmental and societal impacts to Saskatchewan's waterways.

Flowering Rush is a non-native, ornamental, aquatic plant species that has escaped home water gardens and has moved into natural water systems across North America. In Saskatchewan, one known population has been detected and controlled for the past decade by the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan near Watrous. However, in 2017, several plants were found along the South Saskatchewan River at the Alberta border.

Flowering Rush is classified as prohibited under the Weed Act of Saskatchewan. It can cause a reduction in water availability for drinking water intakes, inhibit recreational activities, impeded distribution of irrigation water, impact biodiversity of wetlands for wildlife, and can impact fish habitat. It will establish in a river channel and move into tributaries and irrigation canals. It spreads by rhizomes and pieces of rhizomes that break off and float downstream plus by bulbets and seed.



In 2017, the Alberta Invasive Species Council conducted a survey upstream of the Alberta / Saskatchewan Border and discovered thousands of established populations. Surveyors noted that Flowering Rush had established on the Saskatchewan side of the border. SaskEnergy provided funding to the South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards (SSRWSI) to conduct a survey of the South Saskatchewan River from the Alberta border to Highway 21 south of Leader to map the extent of Flowering Rush invasion into Saskatchewan. Volunteers from Meewasin Valley Authority, Swift Current Creek and Moose Jaw Creek Watershed Stewards, Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan and the Ministries of Agriculture and Environment assisted the SSRWSI in conducting this survey. August 15th and 16th 2018 they took to canoes

to survey for the plant. The canoers started from the old railway bridge west of Estuary Ferry which is approximately where the AISC ended their survey. They headed east making it to the Hwy 21 bridge on the first day detecting over 75 plants. On day two the crew made it to the Lemsford Ferry crossing finding only a few more plants.

The information collected was provided to the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Center's iMapInvasives provincial invasive species database and Meewasin Valley staff created a map of the Flowering Rush occurrences on the Saskatchewan side of the border. The SSRWSI will continue to raise awareness of the Flowering rush issue particularly in the west area of the watershed.

Early detection and rapid response is needed to stem the spread of Flowering Rush in the South Saskatchewan River watershed. Mapping the current extent is the first step in this process. There are limited control options for Flowering Rush and under the Saskatchewan Weed Act, it must be eradicated. The information that was collected will be used to develop a management strategy for its control and eradication along the South Saskatchewan River. (This article was written by Kerry Lowndes of the South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards)

Newly Upgraded Meewasin Trail Opens



The newly upgraded 720 metre section of the Meewasin Trail on the west side of the South Saskatchewan River, from Duke Street to the Children's Discovery Museum is now officially open. This two phased trail enhancement was supported by the Government of Canada through the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program delivered by Western Economic Diversification Canada, as well as by the City of Saskatoon and TransCanada Trail.

This portion of the Meewasin Trail is one of its busiest sections, and is projected to see close to 500 people per hour in peak periods by 2043. In 2016, more than 215,000 visits were reported along this section of the Trail.

This upgrade focused on widening the trail and regrading to improve accessibility and safety for all users. This portion of the Meewasin Trail is also part of The Great Trail, the longest network of recreational trails in the world.

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An update on Black Ash Trees in the Meewasin Valley

Meewasin has been receiving some calls from donors asking what has happened to their sponsored ash trees. In answer to those questions, first we offer a summary review of the process for tree and shrub sponsorship through Meewasin:

- Meewasin plants the trees as we do design and development of the paths and parks within the Meewasin River Valley. The trees are planted first and sponsored later.
- The trees are usually planted as small whips. Meewasin staff nurture the young trees, giving them extra care and water for the first 2 - 3 years, until they are well established and able to survive on their own. This is a cost to Meewasin of well over \$500 per tree; this is the extent of the commitment of Meewasin; and this is the point at which the trees become available for sponsorship.

Trees, like any other plant or animal species, are susceptible to pests and diseases. Saskatoon's urban forest is home to thousands of trees and shrubs, including native and ornamental varieties. They are present in our natural areas and have been planted as the city has grown. With changes in our climate there is the potential for new and deadly threats to our trees.

Recently, there have been a significant number of ash trees removed by the City of Saskatoon due to cottony ash psyllid, a pest that has migrated into Saskatoon. Affected trees quickly decline in health and eventually die. These pests feed on Mancana Ash and all black ash varieties. It is believed these tiny pests are thriving here due to warmer winters and drier conditions and they could impact up to 7,000 trees in the parks and boulevards of Saskatoon. Presently, the City of Saskatoon cannot keep up with residents' demands to remove impacted trees. This pest has significantly affected black ash populations throughout North America.

The City, with whom Meewasin partners in the sponsorship of the Plant-A-Tree Program, is presently removing over 2,000 diseased trees. They will be removing 3,000 to 4,000 ash trees in the next two to three years, meaning the city could lose half of its black ash trees.

It is unknown at this point if the City of Saskatoon will be able to replace those trees or not, or the time frame for replacement. A large number of these trees have previously been dedicated. As this is a new and evolving issue, the scope, response and timeline to address it remain to be fully understood. Significant financial and human resources will be required to respond to this issue.

Conserve Our River Valley

With a gift for those you love

- Shrub \$50 • Tree \$150 • Brick \$250
- Bench \$3000 • Seating Block \$5000

Tax receipts issued. For more information contact Betty at Meewasin at 306-665-6887 meewasin.com

Meewasin

Enter to WIN CASH

Answer this: **How can you improve your watershed?**

- Sask. Grade 7-12 students only
- Propose a realistic solution to an environmental concern
- Top 10 win cash prizes, and schools get matching amounts
- Implementation money available
- Fulfills water curriculum objectives
- Free watershed presentations and mentorship are available
- Now booking

Contact Sue Bouchard: sbouchard@saskriverbasin.ca or 306-665-6887. CaringForOurWatersheds.com

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

BEAVER CREEK CONSERVATION AREA

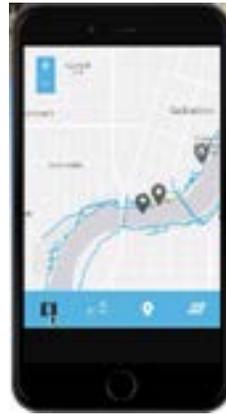
INTERPRETING SASKATOON'S NATURAL HISTORY

Visit Beaver Creek Conservation Area during the holidays

From December 26, 2018 to January 6, 2019 Beaver Creek Conservation Area will be open from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Hike a trail, try the winter scavenger hunt activity and don't forget to feed the black-capped chickadees!



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, 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!

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



Tim Hortons Twinkle Lights Skating Party December 18, 2018 -

The Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @Nutrien Plaza located in Kiwanis Memorial Park will have it's official opening ceremony on December 18, 2018. The celebrations will include a tree lighting ceremony, hot chocolate, baked goodies and free giveaways courtesy of Tim Hortons. Check meewasin.com and Facebook for more details closer to the event.

Christmas Bird Count for Kids at Beaver Creek Conservation Area December 27, 2018 -

Thursday, December 27, 2018 BCCA will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. From 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the top of each hour join a guided bird hike to count and learn about the winter birds at BCCA. The bird count numbers will be sent to the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts. Between bird hikes there will be cookies and hot chocolate. Come for one bird hike or stay for as many bird hikes as you want. The event is free and is open to everyone.

Christmas Bird Count for Kids is presented by the Saskatoon Nature Society, Saskatoon Zoo Society and Saskatoon Young Naturalists.

For more information on all Meewasin events, visit our website at 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 and provide us with your name and email address.



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