

Meewasin Northeast Swale

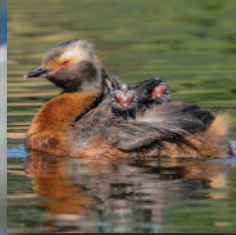
A Connection to the Past and Future

Teaming
with Wildlife

Meewasin 

Meewasin Northeast Swale

A Connection to the Past and Future



Top: Horned Grebe with Chicks,
Photo Courtesy of May Haga

Middle: Northern Leopard Frog,
Photo Courtesy of Shannon Dyck

Bottom: Crowfoot Violet

Find Meewasin on Facebook
Follow us on Twitter @meewasin
Follow us on Instagram meewasinvalley

Canada



RBC
Blue Water
Project

Meewasin

Meewasin Valley Authority

402 Third Avenue South, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G5

Ph: 306-665-6887 Fax: 306-665-6117

meewasin@meewasin.com meewasin.com

Find Meewasin on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter @meewasin

Follow us on Instagram meewasinvalley

Teaming
with Wildlife

Meewasin

Extending north from Peturrson's Ravine in Saskatoon to the Rural Municipality of Aberdeen, the Meewasin Northeast Swale is a channel scar that is approximately 26 kilometres long and covers 2,800 hectares. It provides significant ecological services as a diverse, connected network of rare native prairie, riparian areas and wetlands, all within reach of the Saskatoon area.

The greater Swale has signs of human habitation and use over the past several centuries, including a remnant section of the Moose Woods – Batoche Trail, Middleton's staging camp on the trek to the Battle of Batoche, the site of the telegraph line that linked North America to Europe by way of Russia, the site of the old town of Clarkboro and tipi rings from the encampments of the original residents of the Saskatoon area. More recent archaeological remains are the lime kilns near the Swale and the holes left by the movement of large limestones used to build parts of the University of Saskatchewan.

Importance of the Swale

The Meewasin Northeast Swale is a connection to the past and future of Saskatchewan. This carefully conserved, endangered region is a snapshot of Saskatchewan's beginnings. With less than 5% of Plains Rough Fescue grasslands remaining in the world, the Swale landscape is unique to both Saskatchewan and worldwide. The Swale contains considerable areas of native prairie grasslands and offers high quality biodiversity, proximity to urban areas, economic benefits for education and recreation, and a natural filter for our air and

water. The Swale's wetlands also provide flood control for the surrounding community. Meewasin's partnerships and ongoing conservation work will ensure this connection to the past will exist for future generations.

Sharp-tailed Grouse, Photo Courtesy of May Haga



Biodiversity

Biodiversity is seen as an irreplaceable asset for humanity and the biosphere. Maintaining biodiversity within the Swale is crucial to maintaining resilience in this ecosystem which faces human induced and natural stresses. Biodiversity provides social, cultural and economic value through biological resources as well as a host of key ecological processes such as nutrient cycling, soil building, management of water and air purification.

Biodiversity is a measure of health and value. Like the South Saskatchewan River without water, the Swale without biodiversity is no longer an amenity.

A diversity of environments offer a large variety of plant species (more than 200), birds (more than 100), mammals, amphibians, reptiles and insects that are present in the Swale on a regular basis. Some of these rare, endangered or culturally significant species include:

Plants: Crowfoot Violet, Western Red Lily, Narrow-leaved Water Plantain and Sweet Grass.

Birds: Sprague's Pipit, Barn Swallow, Loggerhead Shrike, Horned Grebe, Short-eared Owl, Common Nighthawk, Western Grebe, Yellow Rail and Sharp-tailed Grouse.

Amphibians: Northern Leopard Frog and Tiger Salamander.

Mammals: Little Brown Bat and American Badger.

Peturrson's Ravine connects the Swale to the South Saskatchewan River. It contains a unique marl bog which is a rare ecosystem due to its water chemistry, nutrient properties, and unique floral community.

What We're Doing About It

Meewasin has collaborated with the City of Saskatoon and a wide variety of stakeholders throughout the community to develop plans which integrate this sensitive natural area into an urban context.

The *Northeast Swale Development Guidelines* (2012) are intended to ensure minimal impact from adjacent development, roads and infrastructure. Meewasin, the City of Saskatoon, a consultant and experts from the community worked together to create this document.

The *Northeast Swale Resource Management Plan* (2013) includes educational and research opportunities and appropriate passive recreational activities. It also describes management techniques appropriate to a natural area including prescribed burning and grazing to manage invasive species and to protect and enhance biodiversity.

The key ideas that guide the *Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan* (2015) are conserving biodiversity (including the accommodation of ongoing resource management), accommodating educational programming, interpreting cultural and natural history, supporting a communications plan and supporting passive recreation activities. To meet the goals of the design program, proposed amenities include: the Greenway, trails, boardwalks, parking, facilities and amenities, signage, fencing, access control and lighting. The Master Plan refers to the portion of the Swale within Saskatoon city limits, which is approximately 5 kilometres long covering 300 hectares. It is scalable to include the entire Meewasin Northeast Swale and similar sites, such as the Small Swale.

Remember

The disappearance of native prairie and wetlands means the disappearance of thousands of years of natural and cultural history. This resource can never be replaced. The Meewasin Northeast Swale can be conserved with the support and stewardship of Meewasin, the City of Saskatoon and the surrounding community. Please take care of your Meewasin Northeast Swale and educate others as to its value.



Students Pond Dipping, Photo Courtesy of DAFT



Prescribed Burn

Pinned Rock

How You Can Help

Conserving the Meewasin Northeast Swale cannot be done without the stewardship of the community.

In the Swale, please:

- Remove litter.
- This is a nature viewing site; please leave your dogs at home. (No dogs in the Ecological Core).
- Do not use all-terrain vehicles.
- Do not pick plants; rather photography is encouraged.
- Bikes are allowed only on developed pathways.
- Do not use snowmobiles.
- Volunteer with Meewasin. Visit meewasin.com/get-involved/.
- Do not dump garbage including soil, sod and compost.
- If you live near the Swale, consider planting native species on your property and using dark sky friendly lighting.

Please tread lightly.

Want More Information?

For more information on the Meewasin Northeast Swale please visit meewasin.com and view the 24 minute documentary the *Meewasin EcoBlitz of the Northeast Swale*, the *Northeast Swale Resource Management Plan*, the *Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan*, call Meewasin 306-665-6887 or visit the Northeast Swale Watchers on Facebook.



The proposed amenities shown in the Master Plan are not yet constructed. Contact Meewasin if you would like to visit the Swale, as it is not yet ready for public access.