

An aerial photograph of a park area. A large river flows through the upper left. A winding trail runs through the center. A building with a blue roof and a parking lot are visible in the middle. The landscape is green with some autumn-colored trees.

Conserving the Heritage Resources of our Meewasin Valley

**2015-2016
Annual Report**

Meewasin 

8 km of Meewasin Trail were added in the northwest to Wanuskewin Heritage Park, a world heritage site built by Meewasin.

Message from the Chair & CEO



Toddi Steelman, Chair



Lloyd Isaak, CEO

What Is Meewasin: Created in 1979 by an Act of the Province of Saskatchewan, Meewasin is a conservation organization dedicated to conserving the cultural and natural resources of the South Saskatchewan River Valley. It is the means by which the three participating parties (the City of Saskatoon, the Government of Saskatchewan, and the University of Saskatchewan) have chosen to best manage their riverbank lands. The creation of Meewasin is based on the concept that the partners working together through a single agency – Meewasin – can accomplish more than they could individually.

Our Mission Statement: To ensure a healthy and vibrant river valley with a balance between human use and conservation, by providing leadership in the management of resources, promoting understanding, conservation and beneficial use of the Valley; and undertaking programs and projects in river valley development and conservation for the benefit of present and future generations.

Meewasin was created by Founders of great vision who adopted Moriyama's Meewasin Valley Project 100-Year Conceptual Master Plan. Currently in the 37th year of this plan, Meewasin continues to be loved by the general public who take great pride in their Meewasin Valley, a collection of links and nodes hosting parks, interpretive centres, conservation areas, canoe launches, backshore connections, paths of history and more than 80 km of Meewasin Trail.

Meewasin celebrated many accomplishments this year including partnering with the Trans Canada Trail to extend the Meewasin Trail 15 km, coordinating approximately 30,000 volunteers to clean the river valley, hosting more than 40,000 visitors at our two interpretive centres to learn about the heritage resources of the river valley, including 2,400 Grade 3s at the Meewasin Valley Centre, and 2,400 Grade 5s at Beaver Creek Conservation Area, counting approximately 25,000 skaters at our outdoor rink in Kiwanis Memorial Park, counting more than one million users of the Meewasin Trail, promoting biodiversity in the 25 square

Meewasin's Jurisdiction: Meewasin is centred in Saskatoon and runs approximately 60 km along the river valley through Saskatoon and Corman Park, from Pike Lake in the southwest to Clarke's Crossing in the northeast. It encompasses conservation areas, parks, museums, interpretive centres, university lands, canoe launches, community links and more than 80 km of Meewasin Trail. Including the South Saskatchewan River, there are more than 65 square km (25 square miles) in the Conservation Zone.

miles of the river valley, completing River Landing Phase 2 with an outdoor adult fitness centre, reviewing 15 improvements in the Conservation Zone, partnering with the City of Saskatoon to write the Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan and the Chief Whitecap Park Master Plan, partnering with the Rotary Clubs of Saskatoon to recognize Nobel Peace Laureate Norman Borlaug at the Rotary International Peace Plaza and recognizing C. Stuart Houston with the Meewasin Conservation Award. Throughout all the recognition events and celebrations, recognizing donors and sponsors, the message was always to conserve the Meewasin Valley for now and future generations. By all measures it was a successful year, but as addressed in previous annual reports, one continued to be fraught with concern.

A long term decline in statutory and supplementary funding from our three participating parties (the City of Saskatoon, Government of Saskatchewan and University of Saskatchewan) resulted in the need to plan further modifications to Meewasin programs and service levels. And upon being advised that the chance of increased funding from the provincial budget for the coming fiscal year was unlikely, it was decided that if there was no increased funding for Meewasin, the Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre (MVC), located in the lower level of the Meewasin Valley Authority, would close effective July 1, 2016.

Closure of the MVC is only the beginning of further reductions for Meewasin. Without a recommitment by the three Participating Parties (City of Saskatoon, Government of Saskatchewan and University of Saskatchewan) to restore Meewasin funding through a new funding formula, or the provision of predictable and annual ongoing funding, further reductions to programs and services will take place. As for the future of Meewasin it is still uncertain. ♦



Chair, Toddi Steelman



Darwin Anderson*



Tracy Arno



Mayor Don Atchison



Gordon Barnhart*



Carmen Campbell



Charlie Clark



Zach Jeffries



Mairin Loewen



Brent Martian*



Leanne Nyirfa



Roger Parent



Peter Stoicheff



Colin Tennent



Fran Walley

Meewasin Board of Directors

*retired board members

**retired committee members

Meewasin Board of Directors

Chair Toddi Steelman, Darwin Anderson*, Tracy Arno, Mayor Don Atchison, Gordon Barnhart*, Carmen Campbell, Zach Jeffries, Mairin Loewen, Brent Martian*, Leanne Nyirfa, Roger Parent, Colin Tennent, and Fran Walley.

Meewasin Committees

Public ownership in decision making is one of Meewasin's five guiding principles. To that end Meewasin committees are invaluable to the work undertaken.

Resource Conservation Advisory

The Resource Conservation Advisory Committee advises the Meewasin Board in its work to ensure the health of the Meewasin Valley. Committee members were: Luc Delanoy, Peter Goode, Darcy Henderson, Margaret Hendry **, Ron Jensen, Nadia Mori, Peggy Sarjeant **, Janine Shadick **, Fran Walley (Board Representative), Amber Weckworth and Bert Weichel.

Development Review

The Development Review Committee is a statutory committee created under the *Meewasin Valley Authority Act* to provide professional and unbiased recommendations regarding the acceptability of proposed improvements within the Meewasin Valley. Committee members were: Rob Crosby, Terry Frank, Paul Koopman, Jim McEwen**, Al Mickelson, Beatrice Regnier**, Anna Ringstrom, Bill Schaffel, Chris Schulz, Mitch Strocen and Ryan Walker.

Design Advisory

The Design Advisory Committee assists the Meewasin Board in its work to develop opportunities for human interaction within the natural and cultural heritage resources of the valley by reviewing sensitive built environments in the context of the natural valley environment. Committee members were: Luc Delanoy, Marilyn Gould, Danny Gray, Bianca Hilbert, Brent Martian** (Board Representative), John Penner**,

Genevieve Russell**, Chris Schulz, Fran Walley (Board Representative), and Natalie Walliser.

Education Advisory

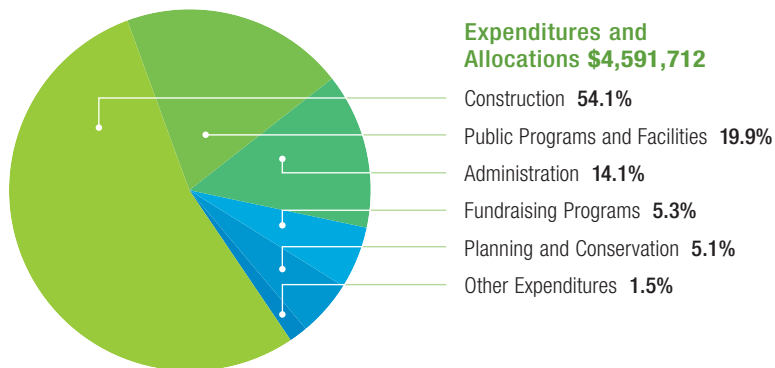
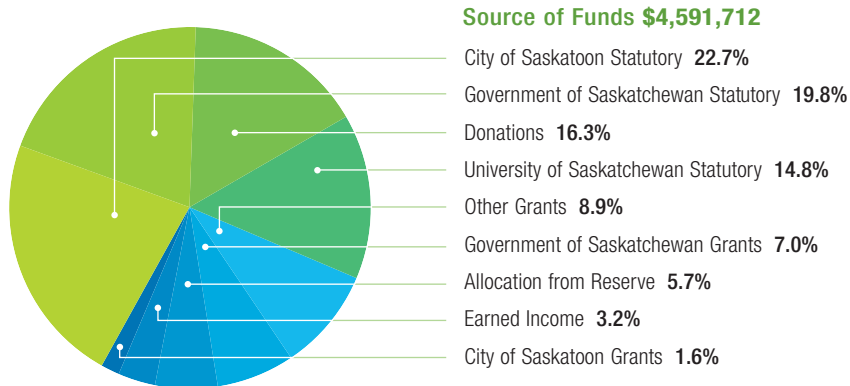
The Education Advisory Committee advises the Meewasin Board on its policy development in education. Committee members were: Max Abraham, Brendan Bitz, Bruce Bradshaw, Melanie Elliott, Terri Fradette, Kara Lackie, Mairin Loewen (Board Representative), Maurice Postnikoff, Michael Voralia and Scott Whiting.

Staff/Committee & Board Changes

As this fiscal year ends we want to thank those Board members and staff who have moved on: Board Members Darwin Anderson, Brent Martian and Gordon Barnhart, and staff members Luc Delanoy and Kat Eliason; and we want to welcome those Board members and staff who have joined us: Board members Peter Stoicheff and Fran Walley, and staff members Verity Moore-Wright, Renny Grilz, Eryn Tomlinson and Karlee Vizer.

Operations

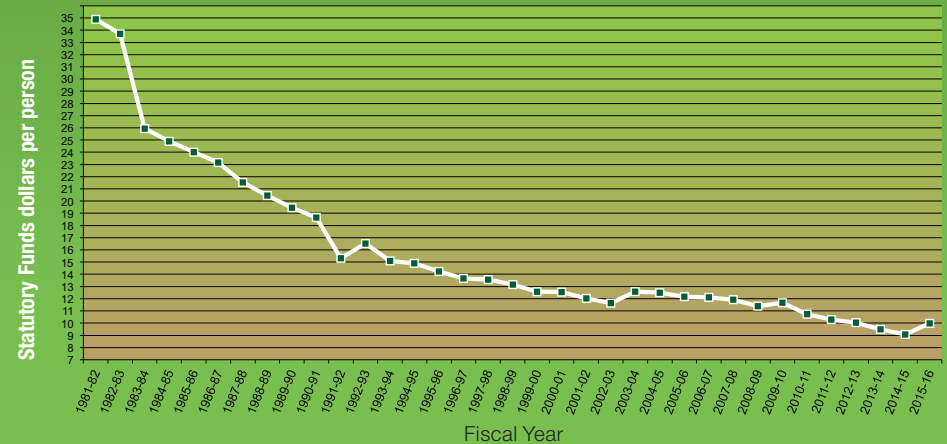
Meewasin Financial Highlights as of March 31, 2016



Endowment Funds

The endowment funds, for the benefit of Meewasin, are owned and managed by the Saskatoon Community Foundation. At December 31, 2015, the endowment fund balances were as follows: Meewasin Naturally Fund \$793,774, Wes Bolstad Fund \$18,192, and Susan Lamb Fund \$21,593. Audited financial statements are available by request.

Statutory/Supplementary Funds per Capita, based on Saskatoon Population and Adjusted for Inflation



This fiscal year of April 1, 2015 – March 31 2016, **Meewasin borrowed \$500,000 from our capital reserve** to maintain present programs and balance the budget. With the reserve depleted this borrowing option **will no longer be available**.

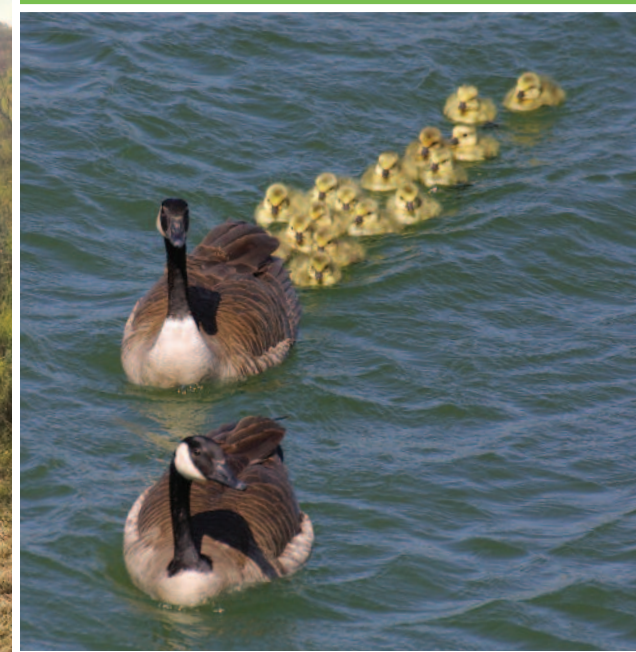
Meewasin continuously reaches out to grantors and donors on an ongoing basis to supplement core funding **attracting almost 50% of its annual budget from non-statutory sources**.

Of the \$100 million that Meewasin has invested in the conservation, development and education of the river valley over the past 37 years, just **\$18 million** has come from local property tax. **The leveraging effect for Saskatoon has been 5 to 1.**

While the City of Saskatoon provided an **additional \$250,000 this past year** directly targeted toward maintenance, enhancement and new construction of the Meewasin Trail, the statutory funding formula used to determine annual funding from the three participating parties **has remained unchanged**.



Staff photo: Front Row L- R: Andrea Ziegler, Kenton Lysak, Sarina Gersher, Amber Burton, Lis Mack, Sue Bouchard, Betty Calvert, Eryn Tomlinson, Alan Otterbein, Kathy Thomas, Wayne Stus. **Back Row L-R:** Fred Prokuski, Nola Stein, Lloyd Isaak, Andrew Rapin, Doug Porteous, Calvin Young, Teresa Duerr, Brenda Kramarchuk, Renny Grilz, Madelyn Perkins, Mike Velonas, Gillian May, Lauren Achtemichuk, Reed Lewko, Lauren Dyck, Gwen Charman. **Right inserts top to bottom:** Andrew Whiting, Amanda Bullin, Kat Eliason. **Missing:** Jamie Harder and Lennox Saunders.



Lower left: Sheep Grazing - Meewasin Northeast Swale.

Below: Canada geese and goslings.

Conservation



Dr. Raymond Moriyama, Architect

2015-2016 Conservation, Development and Education

Meewasin is guided by *The Meewasin Valley Project 100-Year Conceptual Master Plan*, drafted in 1978 by Raymond Moriyama, the foundation document for Meewasin's current Development Plan. Meewasin initiatives strive toward the outcome of health, fit, balance and vibrancy.

Meewasin's Mandate

Meewasin's mandate is to ensure a healthy and vibrant river valley for the benefit of present and future generations, with a balance between human use and conservation by:

- Providing leadership in the management of its resources;
- Promoting understanding, conservation and beneficial use of the valley; and,
- Undertaking programs and projects in river valley development and conservation; for the benefit of present and future generations.

Meewasin fulfills this mandate by undertaking Development Review, securing lands of interest, leading and participating in short term and long range land use planning, and by nurturing conservation, development and education.

Development Review

The *Meewasin Valley Authority Act* enables coordination and control over the development, conservation, maintenance and improvement of land within the Meewasin Conservation Zone. Meewasin is advised by a statutory committee of professional planners, architects, landscape architects, geotechnical engineers and/or professional geoscientists.

Meewasin's Development Review process is complementary to other environmental or heritage review permitting processes. It focuses on the following parameters:

- Consistency with the Meewasin Development Plan;
- Conservation and interpretation of significant natural systems, and natural and cultural heritage;

- Slope stability and good drainage practices;
- Designs complementary to the natural setting of the river valley; and,
- Provision for public access.

In the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016, Meewasin reviewed 15 proposed improvements to the river valley Meewasin Conservation Zone. The applications included the following:

- Traffic Bridge Replacement;
- Meewasin Southeast Trail Extension Alignment;
- Meewasin Northwest Donor Plaza;
- City of Saskatoon North Sector Plan;
- Chief Whitecap Parking Lot;
- North Commuter Parkway - Early Works;
- North Commuter Parkway - Berms, Piers, and Girders;
- North Commuter Parkway - Central Avenue;
- Traffic Bridge – Pier Improvements;
- Traffic Bridge – Abutments;
- Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan;
- Spadina Lift Station, Meewasin Trail Upgrades;
- Shearwater Dock Replacement;
- Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan Extension; and
- Holiday Park Golf Course Upgrades Extension.

Securing Lands of Interest

The original Meewasin concept aims to create a ribbon of green through the city with the river as a spine.



Shepherd Jared Epp & Shaw Cable's Janella Hamilton - Meewasin Northeast Swale - August 2015. The native prairie is continuously being overrun and out competed by invasive and non-native plant species. Management techniques include mowing, spraying, and controlled burning as well as sheep grazing. Sheep grazing is an effective method for controlling invasive plant species helping native plants to re-establish.

Conservation continued



Top: White Crocus - Meewasin Northeast Swale

Top: Mallard Nest - Meewasin Northeast Swale

Right: Meewasin Crew - Fencing Meewasin Northeast Swale

Meewasin continues to look for opportunities to seek long term stewardship of land with conservation value. Stewardship may be secured through public ownership, inclusion in Meewasin's jurisdiction or conservation easements. Meewasin will continue to invest in partnerships with the City of Saskatoon to bring new shoreline added to city limits into the Conservation Zone.

Valley Stewardship

Many volunteer groups including the Saskatoon Nature Society, school students and corporate employees volunteer to assist with Meewasin's conservation work. These volunteer stewards normally participate as a group with their own supervisor to work under the direction of Meewasin staff.

River Users' Meeting

Each spring, Meewasin coordinates a meeting of a variety of river users, including representatives from the City, and emergency services who meet to discuss summer river recreation. The River Users' Meeting in

2015 was held on May 27, 2015. Participants included: Mike Velonas of Meewasin, Kara Lackie of the City of Saskatoon, Mike Napper of Wakeride, Darcy Deforest of FMG Dragon Boat Festival, Ann Popoff of the Saskatoon Canoe Club, Mike Steckhan of Shearwater Marine Services and Dave Bykowsky and Anthony Tataryn of Saskatoon Fire & Protective Services. Minutes of the meeting are available upon request.

Strategic Plan 2014-2024

In 2013, Meewasin undertook an extensive process with stakeholders to develop a ten-year strategic plan. The plan enables Meewasin to reflect its core mandate and past work, and to consider emerging opportunities.

The strategic plan is titled: *A World-Class Corridor, Naturally Beautiful, Uniquely Ours. A Vision for the Meewasin Valley 2014-2024*. It defines an overarching vision for the Meewasin Valley and articulates three major themes and key directions to achieve the vision. The Meewasin Strategic Plan 2014-2024 was approved by Meewasin and announced publicly in June 2014. ◆





Top left: Prescribed Burn - Meewasin's Cranberry Flats.
Top Right: Prescribed Burn - Meewasin's Beaver Creek Conservation Area. **Bottom Left:** Meewasin's Eryn Tomlinson fills the trough.
Bottom Right: Peggy McKercher Conservation Area.

Development

Below: Wilco's Blair Sivertson, and Meewasin's Nola Stein and Alan Otterbein survey the Meewasin Northeast Swale.

Meewasin Northeast Swale

The Meewasin Northeast Swale is within the Greater Swale. It is an ancient river channel that begins at Peturrson's Ravine and carves a 26 km long path parallel to the South Saskatchewan River. It is one of the largest pieces of unbroken prairie and riparian wetland in the Saskatoon region with patches of rare fescue grassland. The Swale is home to several rare, endangered and culturally significant species.

Within Saskatoon city limits and the Municipality of Corman Park, the Greater Swale supports historically

significant natural and cultural resources that are managed within Meewasin's Conservation Zone.

This past year, working with the City of Saskatoon, Meewasin developed a Master Plan for the Meewasin Northeast Swale. It includes the interpretation and education of these natural and cultural resources within the city. The Northeast Swale Watchers, a valued volunteer group, have played an important role in advising Meewasin and the City of Saskatoon on direction for the Swale.

The process to complete the Master Plan included a design charrette, committee work, site data collection, stakeholder consultation, a public open house and presentations highlighting:

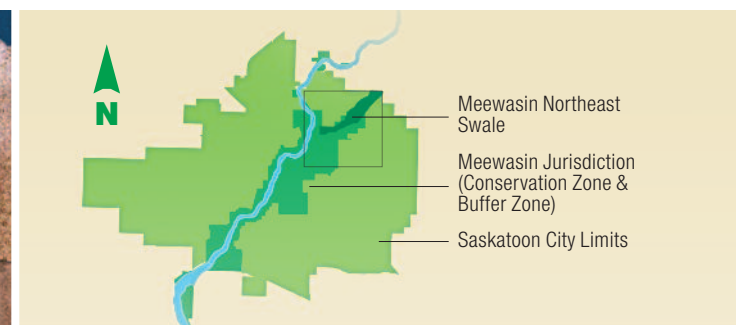
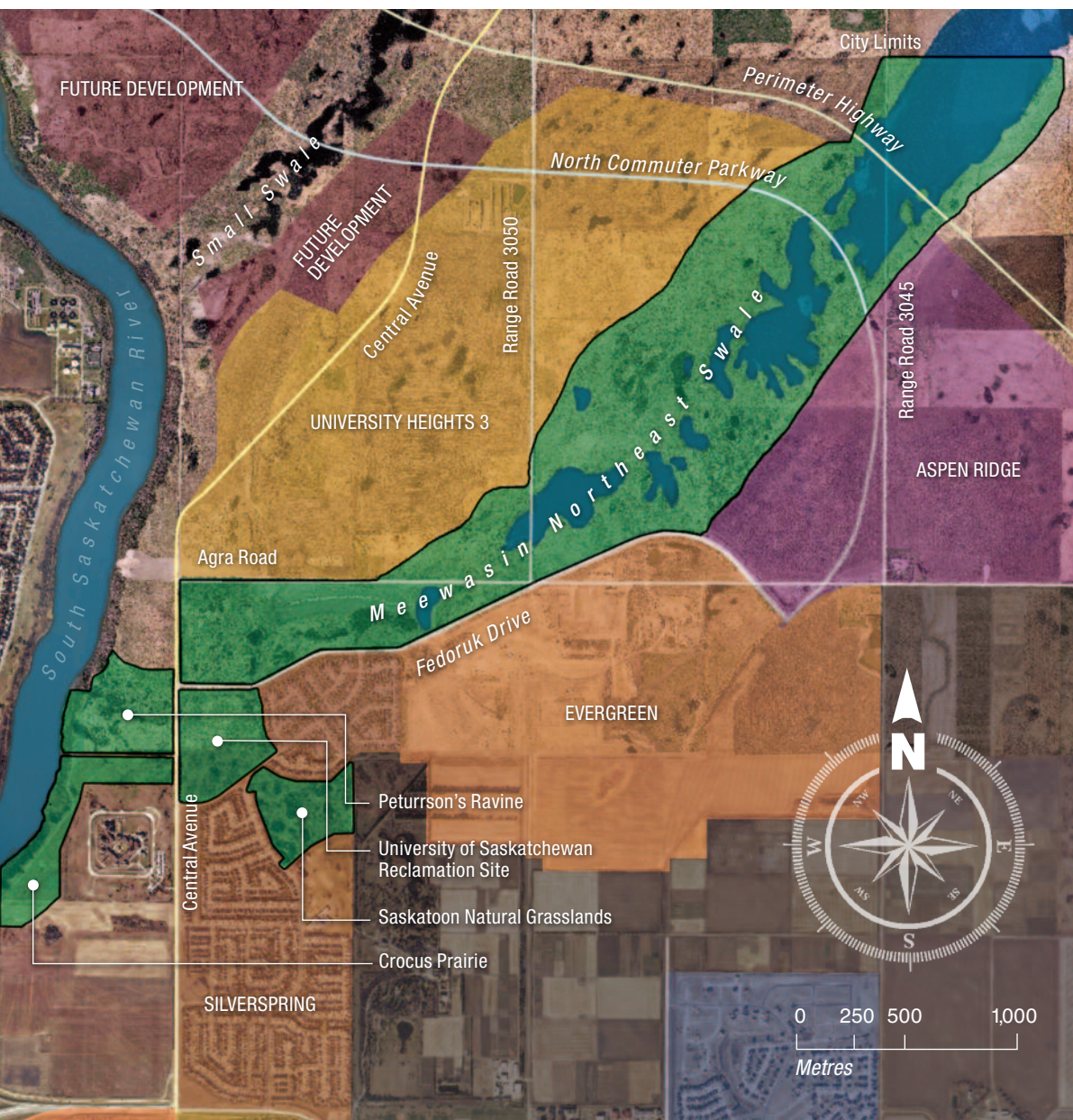
- Proposed improvements in the Ecological Core, buffer zones and recreation zones;
- Greenway and trail design including pathways, site access and connectivity to adjacent land uses, adjacent neighborhoods and crossing features;
- Amenity design for safety and comfort, including site furniture and signage; and
- Site design to support resource management, interpretation and programming.

The report was finalized in 2015 and approved by the City and Meewasin as a guide for future direction.

Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @PotashCorp Plaza

The Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @PotashCorp Plaza opened for the season on December 17, 2015 and ran until March 5, 2016 for a total of 80 days. There were 24,000 users, an average of 300 skaters per day. The rink was closed for two days, one due to cold weather, and the other due to mild weather. \$2,272 was collected in donations.





Top right: Context map of Meewasin Northeast Swale.

Left: Location map of Meewasin Northeast Swale and adjacent area plans. Aerial imagery courtesy of the City of Saskatoon and the Saskatchewan Geospatial Imagery Collaborative

Bottom right: In this aerial photo looking north, the Meewasin Northeast Swale runs between Silverspring, Evergreen, Aspen Ridge and the future University Heights 3 neighbourhoods. In Saskatoon, it connects to the South Saskatchewan River at Peturrson's Ravine. It also connects to the river in the Rural Municipality of Corman Park and in the Rural Municipality of Aberdeen. Aerial photo data: Google Earth, Digital Globe

Development continued



Above: Meewasin's Horticulturalist Foreman Kathy Thomas, "Willow Staking" as part of the armoring of the Shakespeare Site on the South Saskatchewan River

Setup operations began on October 29 as Turner Transport moved the building to Kiwanis Memorial Park from the Meewasin Preston shop location. Urban Camp correctional workers set up the decks and ramps. By November 23, the rink boards were up and ice making had begun. Rink attendants this season were: Jordan Schultz, Jordan Pyakutch, Robert Gaida, Devin Ostlund, Aryn Murray, Crystal LaPierre and Desiny LaPierre. Vehicle parking for attendants was again provided by the Delta Bessborough.

On December 17, 2015 the *Tim Hortons Twinkle Lights Skating Party* officially opened the skating season. The *PotashCorp Skating Party* kicked off *PotashCorp Wintershines* Sunday, January 24, 2016, and was followed a week later by the *Saskatoon Highland Dancers Kilt Skate* January 31. The *Cameco Family Day Skating Party* was held Monday, February 15, 2016 and featured the Saskatoon Blades who gave away autographed mini hockey sticks and helped with ice clearing. New this year was the Tim Hortons Sprinter Event Van serving complimentary hot chocolate and coffee to patrons.

Group bookings from schools, businesses, church groups and families continued. New Year's Eve 2015 was one of the busiest ever with families showing up prior to the noon hour opening, and staying well past midnight. Open for 15 hours, the rink counted 1500 skaters on December 31.

The new ice sweeper and skate sharpener performed well, as did the new ventilation fan donated by our service contractors Wyatt Plumbing & Heating and Sommerfeld Electric. Thank you to Saskatoon Co-op and Tim Hortons for their donation toward operational expenses. Again City of Saskatoon Parks and Facilities

personnel were helpful and supportive, maintaining and operating the nearby public washrooms.

Although the season was short due to mild weather, all rink events and activities were well attended. Thank you to donors and sponsors.

The Meewasin Online Map

In a partnership to promote Saskatoon and the Meewasin Valley, Tourism Saskatoon, Territorial and Meewasin have embarked on a three year project to develop an online map to encourage use of the Meewasin Trail and the attractions throughout the valley. The initial public release of the map is scheduled to occur in early 2016. It is the completion of the first phase in this three year project, and will also coincide with updates to the Meewasin website.

Meewasin is dedicated to improving its brand through online and social media presence. The development of this online map is one more way to encourage Meewasin Trail users to learn more about what the valley has to offer.

The online map is a web application that has been designed for the mobile user. It can be accessed from a smart phone or tablet, as well as a desktop. It provides layers of information about the Meewasin Trail and its features, as well as major attractions nearby. It also provides predetermined walking, running or cycling routes. One can chart their adventure and access information along the way allowing the user to explore and discover the secrets of the Meewasin Valley by going to **meewasin.com/map**.

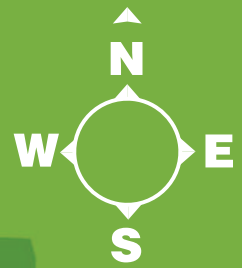
Phase two and three of the project will add additional site information, amenity layers, increased user functions and events that occur within the valley. Links to each event will be provided for more information. ♦



Top Left: Beaver Creek Conservation Area accessible trail to the SaskEnergy Beaver Room. **Bottom Left:** Diefenbaker Park Meewasin Trail Seating Node. **Top Middle:** Cameco Family Day Skating Party - February 2016.

Top Right: Saskatoon Blades skate at Cameco Family Day Skating Party - February 2016. **Bottom Right:** Cameco Family Day Skating Party - L to R: Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo Snowman, Ice Queen, Snow Princess, Meewasin's Cran and Tim Hortons Sprinter Van Host.

Meewasin Trail



Trail Use

Enjoy the trail. Be safe.

Be aware of your surroundings.

After dark be smart.



It is every trail user's responsibility to ensure the safety of themselves and others.

Pedestrians

- Keep to the right, except to pass.
- Check over your shoulders before crossing the trail.
- Watch for small children. Explain to them any potential dangers.
- Avoid walking on ski paths during the winter months.

Dogs on the Trail

- Keep dogs on a leash.
- Clean up after your dog.

Cyclists

- Pedestrians have the right of way on The Meewasin Trail.
- Keep to the right except to pass.
- Pass slowly when clear on the left.
- Use a bell to alert others of your presence.
- Go slow (suggested maximum 15 km/hr).
- Keep single file and obey all pavement markings.
- Watch for blind spots and unexpected traffic.

City of Saskatoon

LEGEND

- Meewasin Trail
- Trans Canada Trail
- Future Meewasin Trail
- Eco-Canoe Trail
- Backshore Link
- Point of Interest

0 0.5 1km

Development continued



- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1 Peggy McKercher Conservation Area | 11 Gabriel Dumont Park | 21 The Ukrainian Museum of Canada |
| 2 Meewasin Northeast Swale | 12 Western Development Museum | 22 Kiwanis Memorial Park |
| 3 Crocus Prairie | 13 Diefenbaker Park and the Pioneer Cemetery | 23 Friendship Park |
| 4 Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (SNG) | 14 Factoria | 24 Meewasin Valley Centre |
| 5 Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo | 15 Meewasin Park | 25 River Landing and The Farmers' Market |
| 6 Sutherland Beach | 16 Capilano Lookout | 26 Victoria Park and The Boathouse |
| 7 University of Saskatchewan | 17 G.D. Archibald Park | 27 Bowerman House |
| 8 Cosmopolitan Park and Lookout | 18 Meewasin Riverworks (Weir) | 28 Sanatorium Site |
| 9 Rotary Park and Lookout | 19 Mendel Site and Island Sanctuary | 29 Saskatoon Landfill |
| 10 The Marr Residence | 20 Kinsmen Park | 30 Queen Elizabeth Power Plant |

Walk, Run Or Roll The Meewasin Trail

- 11.0 km Senator Sid Buckwold Bridge to Stew Uzelman Pedway
- 9.0 km Broadway Bridge to Stew Uzelman Pedway
- 7.0 km Broadway Bridge to CPR Bridge
- 3.0 km Wanuskewin Heritage Park to Chief Whitecap Park
- 25.0 km Wanuskewin Heritage Park to Chief Whitecap Park

Note: All distances are approximate.

Meewasin

Education

The Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre (MVC)

The Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre focuses on the original areas of urban development in Saskatoon. It is a place to learn about Meewasin, the Meewasin Trail, Saskatoon history, the South Saskatchewan River and the future of the Meewasin Valley. In 2015-2016 MVC recorded 14,000 visitors to the Centre who toured the facility, sought information or participated in the interpretive programming.

The MVC was also responsible for the organization and delivery of the annual Meewasin & Affinity Credit Union Clean-Up of the river valley, and for the annual Pelican Watch contest.

Below: Puppets at the Marr -
Interpreter Karlee Vizer



MVC staff supported other organizations in their mandates throughout the city including the Heritage Festival of Saskatoon, the Marr Residence Management Team, the Saskatoon Heritage Society, Doors Open Saskatoon, the Saskatchewan Marathon and the Saskatoon CERT (Community, Experiences, Resources and Tours) Committee.

The MVC continued to provide interpretive programming to Grade 3 students in Saskatoon and area. Participation totaled 2353 students from the Saskatoon Public, Catholic and regional schools. The Meewasin Art Gallery continued to host bi-monthly shows by local artists and photographers. The Meewasin Gift Shop provided unique items for those looking for something naturally and culturally special. Including visitation to the MVC of 14,000, and the Meewasin & Affinity Credit Union Clean-Up of 28,900, the MVC hosted more than 42,900 participants in its 2015-16 programs.

Meewasin & Affinity Credit Union Clean-Up Campaign

2015 marked Meewasin's 35th annual Clean-Up Campaign. The kick off for the event took place April 14, 2015, at Caroline Robins School. It was the 15th year that Affinity Credit Union sponsored the event. The 30 minute school assembly featured greetings from Caroline Robins School, Affinity Credit Union, Loraas Disposal Services, AREVA and Meewasin. As a commitment to conservation, participants engaged in a ceremonial signing of the official Meewasin & Affinity Credit Union Clean-Up Campaign garbage bag, and then all headed outside for a clean-up of the Caroline Robins school grounds and neighboring park. This media event kicked off the official month long clean-up of the entire river valley, including city parks and neighbourhoods.



Top Left: Walking Tour Old Saskatoon - Land Titles Office - Interpreter Kat Eliason.

Top Right: Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre Gargoyle Program. **Bottom Left:** River Landing Walking Tour - Interpreter Amanda Bullin.

Bottom Right: Affinity Credit Union Clean-Up.



Education continued



Top: Weekend Crafts - Beaver Creek Conservation Area



Bottom: Northern Leopard Frog - Beaver Creek Conservation Area

Participants included schools, community groups, businesses and individuals who represented more than 28,900 volunteers throughout Saskatoon. Thank you to Affinity Credit Union for sponsoring the Clean-Up Campaign, Loraas Disposal Services for placement of garbage and recycle bins throughout the valley, 7-Eleven stores for permission to use their dumpsters, and the City of Saskatoon who collected garbage bags piled high by volunteers at designated locations to be collected and transported to the city landfill.

Beaver Creek Conservation Area (BCCA)

Located 13 km south of Saskatoon off Highway #219, Beaver Creek Conservation Area was established in 1979; the interpretive centre opened in 1984. A microcosm of the Meewasin Valley, BCCA is located where a prairie creek meets a prairie river. It contains one of the few remaining uncultivated short grass prairie sites in Saskatchewan. The beavers that live there play an important role in keeping the creek habitat teeming with wildlife. Beavers build dams that flood waters upstream creating beaver ponds. Many plants and animals make their homes in these sheltered ponds. The BCCA interpretive centre and staff provide opportunities to discover nature during all seasons along a selection of nature trails.

BCCA continued to provide interpretive programs to Grade 5 students in 2015 from Saskatoon and area schools totaling 2,405 students. General public visitation totaled 21,600 guests who sought information, explored the site on their own or who participated in public programming that included conservation and biodiversity events, star gazing nights, interpretive canoe tours, discovery activities in the interpretive centre,

interpretive cross-country skiing and self-guided activities. With help from the RBC Blue Water grant, the BCCA staff developed two new citizen science projects. This provided an opportunity for more than 1,300 students to collect information on the water quality and local biodiversity within the Meewasin Northeast Swale, the South Saskatchewan River and Beaver Creek Conservation Area. Partnering with Ducks Unlimited Canada and RBC, the staff also created the Saskatoon Dark Sky Initiative, a project aimed at monitoring light pollution and educating more than 900 students about the importance of nocturnal species within the Meewasin Valley.

The Interpretive Cross-Country Ski Program

The 2015-2016 cross-country ski program counted 17 groups, totaling 469 students. Due to an early loss of snow, an additional three groups came out for a day of hiking. The program had an overwhelmingly positive response from participants, with many teachers and their students returning having participated in previous years. The interpretive ski program pairs physical activity with curriculum education outcomes to provide a unique learning experience.

Pelican Watch 2015

The first pelican to touch down between the CPR Bridge and the weir in 2015 did so Friday, April 17, 2015 at 12:40 pm, as observed by the official spotters from Meewasin and the Saskatoon Nature Society.

Saskatoon residents have special visitors each summer. April through October, pelicans gather by the weir to fish. These birds once on the endangered species list have been a beautiful sight on the South Saskatchewan River

since the late 1970s. For Saskatoon residents their arrival is a harbinger of spring.

The American White Pelican is one of the largest birds on the continent weighing 7-10 kg and having a wing span of up to 3 m. Breeding birds develop an orange horn on their bill that falls off after nesting season. The breeding birds seen at the weir have likely flown to Saskatoon from Redberry Lake, the site of the nearest nesting colony. They make the 160 km round trip daily. In late fall, our Saskatchewan pelicans migrate to sites in California, Florida, Mexico and even Guatemala.

This was the 20th year of the Meewasin Pelican Watch Contest. Previous arrival times have been between April 4 and April 20.

Thank you to all who participated, the Saskatoon media and all of the businesses that have supported the contest with prizes including: Realty Executives Saskatoon, Don's Photo Shop, the Pelican Market, the White Pelican Bed and Breakfast, Pelican Media, Houghton-Boston, the Meewasin Gift Shop, Homestead Ice Cream, Wild Birds Unlimited Saskatoon, the Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Saskatchewan, the Saskatoon Nature Society and Saskatoon Public and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

Note: The first official pelican to touch down between the CPR Bridge and the weir during the fiscal year of April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017, did so Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 6:15 am.

Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS)

Beaver Creek Conservation Area has participated in MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship), for nine summers. It is a bird-banding program developed by The Institute for Bird Populations in



Left: South Saskatchewan River - photo courtesy Karen Edwards. **Top and bottom right:** Interpretive Cross-Country Skiing Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

Education continued

Top Left: Vesper Sparrow - Beaver Creek Conservation Area.
Top Right: Sheep Grazing - Beaver Creek Conservation Area.
Bottom: Saskatoon Natural Grasslands - Mother Teresa School.



California. Data from monitoring stations, including BCCA are integrated into the North American MAPS database to better understand changes in the abundance, distribution and ecology of bird populations. Information is collected from six banding sessions which are held annually between June 10 and August 8.

This fiscal year of April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016, Beaver Creek Conservation Area saw the banding of 136 birds with 19 different species represented. The species banded include: American Goldfinch, American Redstart, American Robin, Black-capped Chickadee, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Clay-coloured Sparrow, Eastern Kingbird, Gray Catbird, House Wren, Least Flycatcher, Orange-crowned Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Song Sparrow, Spotted Towhee, Tennessee Warbler, Veery, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Yellow Warbler.

Recaptured birds from previous years are one of the highlights of the banding season. This fiscal year recaptures included: 3 American Redstarts (all banded in 2014), 2 Black-capped Chickadees (1 from 2011 and 1 from 2014), 4 Gray Catbirds (1 from 2010, 1 from 2012, and 2 from 2014), 1 Least Flycatcher (2014), 1 Song Sparrow (2014), 1 Veery (2012), 10 Yellow Warblers (1 from 2010, 2 from 2011, 4 from 2012, and 3 from 2014).

In addition to providing important data, the MAPS program is an excellent education tool offering an opportunity for the practice of citizen science and public participation in scientific research (PPSR). Meewasin was fortunate to enjoy the participation of many volunteers this year, each contributing to the success of the bird monitoring and the educational component. Thank you to all who volunteered throughout the summer including: Kristin Alm and family, Chantal Banda

and family, Elizabeth Bekolay, Katie Buettner, Adam Crane, Jan Eliason, Kat Eliason, Greg Fenty, Shelly Fisher, Danielle Fulawka, Colin French, Jacqui Gelineau, Madison Harder, Sienna Harder, Alice Hiller, Kodi Hiller, Nicole Michel, Chris Nicholiuk, Brooke Sawatzky, Vienna Sawatzky, Kathleen Schroeder-Bass and family, Saskatoon Regional Health Youth Resource Centre, Hayes Vermette and family, and Brandon Wiebe, as well as visitation from Ecology Camps for Kids. Thank you!

Protecting nesting destinations and maintaining urban green spaces all help provide birds with important habitat. Volunteers are important to the success of this banding project.

The Saskatoon Natural Grasslands

The Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (SNG) is a 13.8 hectare (34 acre) parcel of native Saskatchewan grassland persisting in a fairly natural condition. It is located within the Silverspring neighbourhood of Saskatoon, 8 km from the city centre along the South Saskatchewan River. This fescue grassland is not just grass, but an ecosystem – a complex association of grasses, flowering and non-flowering plants, birds, animals and insects representing 10,000 years of natural history since the last glaciers receded.

Thank you to programs provided by the University of Saskatchewan Centre for Continuing and Distance Education, the Saskatoon Nature Society, the City of Saskatoon, the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division, the Saskatoon Public School Division and the stewards in the Silverspring community who assist the SNG to continue to provide habitat, aesthetic and recreational opportunities, soil protection and a gene pool for future medical and agricultural needs.

During May and June 2015, Melanie Elliot of the



University of Saskatchewan Continuing and Distance Education *Ecology Education and Ecology Camp for Kids* conducted tours of the SNG for 22 Grade 2 classes, school staff and parents totaling 626 participants. July and August saw 9 summer day camp tours totaling 119 participants. September and October 2015 counted 25 Grade 2 classes with a total of 738 participants. In all, 1483 participants were educated as to the importance of conserving natural areas through their visit to Meewasin's Saskatoon Natural Grasslands.

Meewasin thanks Melanie Elliott for providing the SNG stewardship program. Meewasin also recognizes that in 2015, Melanie also delivered tours and hikes of the Meewasin Northeast Swale. 10 hikes at the Swale,

totalled 240 youth and 25 adults that learned about the importance of the need to conserve our natural areas.

Meewasin Interpretive Canoe Tours

Meewasin interpretive canoe tours provide an opportunity for the novice canoeist to learn about the South Saskatchewan River from the river in Meewasin's ten-passenger voyageur clipper canoes. Mid-May through August, tours depart from Beaver Creek Conservation Area to paddle onto the South Saskatchewan River for two to three hour experiences, allowing the adventurers to see the river of the early voyageurs. Adult groups normally paddle upriver to the Berry Barn, while youth and family groups canoe both

Education continued



Top: L to R: Verity Moore-Wright, C. Stuart Houston, Mary Houston (seated), Sarah Williams and Doug Porteous

Bottom: Meewasin Northeast Swale

Beaver Creek and the South Saskatchewan River. Paddles, lifejackets, canoes, and safety training are provided by certified Meewasin interpreter canoe guides. Adult charters cost \$200 per canoe. Non-profit groups may access the program free of charge using sponsorship money from the Association of Urban Parks & Conservation Agencies (ASUPCA), Sask Lotteries, Federated Co-operatives Ltd, RBC Blue Water Project, the Saskatoon Community Foundation and Meewasin.

The summer of 2015 was characterized by extremely low water levels; that limited canoeing on the river during the months of July and August. However, the program did see large growth in May and June with 19 canoe tours totaling 491 youth participants. There were 26 trips cancelled between July and mid-September due to low water levels. With the program modified, the RBC Blue Water Project still continued with another 170 participants including 35 adults. Participants in the canoe tour program throughout the summer totaled 696.

Conservation Award 2015

Dr. C. Stuart Houston was the 2015 recipient of the Meewasin Conservation Award, presented annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the natural heritage resources of the Meewasin Valley.

Born in North Dakota in 1927, and growing up in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, Dr. Houston obtained a Doctor of Medicine (MD) from the University of Manitoba in 1951. He practiced medicine in Yorkton with his parents, both MDs, and moved with his family to Saskatoon in 1960. In 1964, he joined the University of Saskatchewan became head of Radiology (1982 to 1987). Dr. Houston retired in 1996.

In addition to a distinguished career in medicine and raising a family with his wife Mary, Dr. Houston has been involved in ornithology since his early teens. In high school in Yorkton, he learned the study of birds from Isabel Priestly, a trained botanist who wrote the nature column in the Yorkton Enterprise. A few years earlier while convalescing at home after a leg injury, and having been taught touch typing by his mother, young Stuart typed the stencils and mimeographed the Blue Jay, still a Saskatchewan nature magazine. During those early years, Ducks Unlimited recognized Stuart's talents and arranged for an under-age bird banding permit. It was something that both he and a young Farley Mowat could take pride in later in life, as they were the only two "under-age bird banders" in North America.

Beginning as a bander of ducks for Ducks Unlimited in 1943, Dr. Houston today is recognized as one of the leading authorities on birds in Canada. He has published extensively, including 12 books, three of them the journals of officers with the first arctic exploring expedition. Besides raising four children, three of them also Medical Doctors, Stuart and Mary have banded more than 150,000 birds of 211 species. He has received many awards including the Doctor of Letters degree, the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, Fellow of the American Ornithologists Union and Officer of the Order of Canada.

Some time next year, the beautifully illustrated and fact-filled two-volume *Birds of Saskatchewan* compiled by Al Smith, Frank Roy, C. Stuart Houston and hundreds of contributing authors will be in print.

Meewasin is honored to have Dr. Houston as the recipient of the 31st Meewasin Conservation Award, an award his wife Mary Houston received in 1996. ♦

Fund Development



Top: Meewasin Board Members Charlie Clark & Darwin Anderson holding Dragonfly Artistic Metals metallic representation of the Meewasin Valley made by Rob Sexauer. **Bottom:** Meewasin Matters Capital Campaign Co-Chair Ken Pontikes receives a campaign donation from James Briens Co-Owner of Eb's Source for Adventure. Thank you James Briens and Kevin Robinson.

Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign

Meewasin launched the Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign in October 2013, for the purpose of extending the Meewasin Trail 8 km in the northwest to Wanuskewin Heritage Park, and 7 km in the southeast to Chief Whitecap Park. On June 5, 2015, Meewasin announced it had reached the first of the two milestones as it officially opened the northwest connection linking 71st Street to Wanuskewin Heritage Park.

Friday, October 16, 2015 Meewasin announced the completion of the second milestone, adding 7 km of Meewasin Trail in the southeast, linking Diefenbaker Park to Chief Whitecap Park. To help celebrate the opening, Meewasin invited the Eco Justice Class of St. Edward School to be the first to officially cycle the new trail.

The northwest trail link to Wanuskewin Heritage Park and the southeast trail link to Chief Whitecap Park are all part of the Trans Canada Trail. These links add another 15 km to the Meewasin Trail and Trans Canada Trail, giving Saskatoon and area residents and guests more than 80 km of Meewasin Trail. Thank you to donors and supporters, the Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign was a success, extending the Meewasin Trail 15 km. Rollers, runners and walkers are now able to walk, run and roll the Meewasin Trail from Chief Whitecap Park to Wanuskewin Heritage Park.

Meewasin Manager of Fund Development

Meewasin's annual budget varies from year to year depending on monies generated for capital developments, but would normally be approximately \$3.6 million, \$2.6 million Statutory Funding from the three Participating Parties, and \$1 million that has to be raised.

Up until 1997, Meewasin had a Foundation with a full time coordinator and administrative assistant charged with the mandate to raise this portion of the annual budget. This relationship between the Meewasin Board and Foundation changed after 1997 with the dissolution of the Foundation Board, the Administrative Assistant reporting directly to Meewasin.

In the following years, Meewasin carried on with the original Foundation fundraising programs, retaining fundraising companies for major projects such as the Riverworks Weir Redevelopment, River Landing 1 and 2, Meewasin Trail expansion and the improvements to the Meewasin skating rink.

August 2015, Verity Moore-Wright became Meewasin's first Fund Development Manager. Verity has been working in fundraising for more than 20 years, most notably with the University of Saskatchewan, College of Medicine and School of Physical Therapy and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Saskatchewan.

Verity has been given the task of developing an effective Meewasin Fund Development Department. Together with Donations Officer Betty Calvert and a volunteer Fund Development Cabinet to be chaired by Gordon Barnhart, former Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, they will determine where Meewasin should be heading with fund development, what has been effective and what should continue. Verity began by following up with donors to the Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign.

Plant-A-Tree Dedication 2015

The 29th annual Meewasin Plant-A-Tree Dedication was held on Saturday, June 20, 2015 at 1:00 pm in Boomtown at Saskatoon's Western Development Museum.

Fund Development continued

Meewasin's Plant-A-Tree, Memorial Forest and Brick/Bench sponsorship programs are successful fundraising activities for the purpose of greening the river valley for public use. Donations are made for a number of reasons: weddings, graduations, births, anniversaries and in memory of those who have touched our lives.

Since 1988, Meewasin has planted 3926 trees and shrubs in the valley that have been sponsored by individuals and groups. Since 2000 there have been 169 donations to the Memorial Forest in Gabriel Dumont Park. The 2015 program included the sponsorship recognition of 78 trees and shrubs, 13 donations to the Memorial Forest, 4 Grassroots donations, 1 seating block, 21 Meewasin Trail benches, 9 bricks at the Saskatoon Road Runners Seating Node, 15 bricks at the Saskatoon Community Foundation Plaza at River Landing, Meewasin's first donated brick at the new Factoria Seating Node, and 7 bricks at the Rotary International Peace Plaza, including one red granite brick donated by Anne and Doug Porteous recognizing Nobel Peace Laureates Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk.

The 2015 event received Her Honour, the Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, soloist Katharyn Walker, accompanist Vivian Dyck, piper Brad Fenty, Meewasin Board representative Dr. Gordon Barnhart, and Friend of the Valley Speaker, Paul Hanley.

RBC Blue Water Project

The RBC Blue Water Project contributed \$40,000 to Meewasin for the promotion of biodiversity and clean water in the valley. The \$40,000 cheque was presented to Meewasin at a news conference at Beaver Creek Conservation Area, Wednesday, June 10. The program

included student groups, and a sheep grazing demonstration with Shepherd Jared Epp and his border collies. Presentations were made by Meewasin interpreters demonstrating how the grant will be used to promote biodiversity and clean water in our river valley.

Representing RBC was Doug Matheson, Vice-President RBC Dominion Securities and Phil Klein, RBC Vice-President of Commercial Financial Services. Representing Meewasin was Board Member and Saskatoon City Councillor, Mairin Loewen.

CN EcoConnexions Tree Planting

Meewasin received \$25,000 from the 2015 CN EcoConnexions From the Ground Up program for the purpose of planting more than 2000 trees and shrubs in the Meewasin Valley to enhance restoration of disturbed riverbank and contribute to biodiversity. Meewasin staff assisted 125 volunteers in the plantings on Friday, June 12. The plantings were in Diefenbaker Park by the Circle Drive South Bridge. Participants included: Earth Rangers (Caroline Robins School, Grade 5 Class) Roland Michener School, Humanity First; and staff from CN, Tree Canada and Meewasin.

During a formal program, CN EcoConnexions presented a cheque for \$25,000 to Meewasin to be recognized in the *Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign*. In recognition of this grant, Meewasin presented CN EcoConnexions From the Ground Up representatives with a sculpture created by Rob Sexauer of Dragonfly Artistic Metals. The metal for the sculpture was harvested from the decommissioned Traffic Bridge. The sculpture represents the river valley between Wanuskewin Heritage Park and Chief Whitecap Park.

Rotary International Peace Plaza

The Rotary Club of Saskatoon Nutana, in partnership with Meewasin, offers the opportunity to sponsor a brick in honour of past recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize. Bricks are dedicated annually on or near September 21 at a ceremony in Saskatoon's Rotary Park to mark the International Day of Peace.

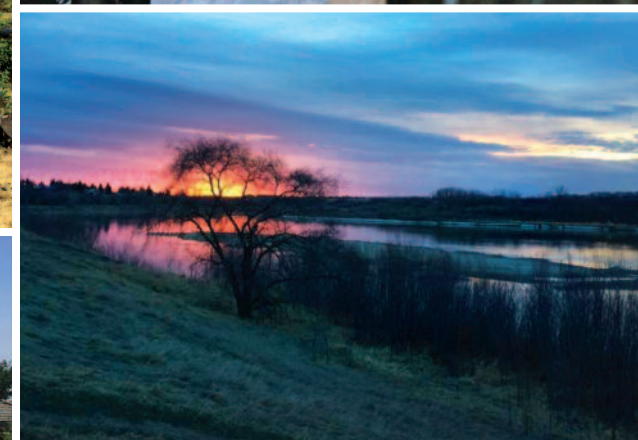
The red granite bricks recognize the contribution of the peace laureates and promote the Rotary International Peace Plaza as a Saskatoon destination for citizens and tourists. To date, the Peace Plaza recognizes Mother Teresa, Lester B. Pearson, Desmond Tutu, the Red Cross of 1917, the UN Commission for Refugees, Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk and in 2015 a brick to recognize Nobel Peace Prize Recipient Norman Borlaug in 1970 for the central role he played in the Green Revolution. Through plant breeding and enhanced production techniques, Norman Borlaug helped vastly increase food production, thereby making an important contribution to world peace.

Saskatchewan Marathon

The Saskatoon Road Runners have been an important partner. Since 2010 the Saskatoon Road Runners have given more than \$200,000 for trail development. The Saskatoon Road Runners Seating Node and fountain are now an important destination and meeting place along the Meewasin Trail.

Yellow Fish Road™

During the spring of 2016 the City of Saskatoon approached Meewasin for the purpose of developing a partnership to promote understanding that what goes into our storm sewers impacts our lakes and rivers. Included in the partnership are the City of Saskatoon,



Top Left: CN EcoConnexions Tree Planting - Diefenbaker Park - June 2015. **Bottom Left:** RBC Blue Water News Conference - Beaver Creek Conservation Area. **Top Right:** Clay Sparks taps the Keg of Meewasin 80 Ale at Fionn MacCools. **Bottom Right:** South Saskatchewan River - photo courtesy Karen Edwards.

Fund Development continued

Meewasin, Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin (PFSRB), Trout Unlimited (Yellow Fish Road™) and the Girl Guides of Canada.

The City contracted Meewasin and PFSRB to deliver a storm water/sanitary water public awareness program. The program involves a spring awareness campaign. More than 20,000 bookmarks have been created and distributed to libraries and schools. A half page ad was put in the Saskatoon StarPhoenix for World Water Day (March 22). Poster packages were distributed to all school librarians following the spring break. The program was highlighted at the Meewasin Affinity Credit Union Clean-Up Campaign kickoff on Earth Day (April 22) hosted by the Eco Justice Class at St. Edward School. A news conference was held in early summer which included youth painting yellow fish on a storm sewer. In late September 2016, recognizing World Rivers Day, attention will be brought to have the general public understand the proper use of sanitary sewers through a public awareness program.

Prairie Sun Pub & Brewery Launched 3rd Batch of Meewasin 80 Ale

In 2014, the Young Entrepreneurs, a volunteer Meewasin Fund Development Committee chaired by Clay Sparks, launched Meewasin 80 Ale with Prairie Sun Pub & Brewery. As a result of sales and promotional event, Prairie Sun Pub & Brewery raised and donated \$5100 to the Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign. On Friday, April 10, 2015 Prairie Sun Brewery launched a 2nd batch of Meewasin 80 Ale using plant ingredients found along the Meewasin Trail. Proceeds again went to the *Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign*. On Friday, April 1, 2016, Prairie Sun Brewery launched a 3rd batch of Meewasin 80 Ale,

this time at Fionn MacCool's in downtown Saskatoon. Volunteer Chair of the Meewasin Young Entrepreneurs Clay Sparks was given the honour of tapping the keg. As pictured here, Clay was inexperienced at the art of tapping a keg. Clay not only basked in the limelight but in the beer, as did all who sat near. This was all to the delight of the Fionn MacCool patrons. Thank you to Heather Williams at Prairie Sun Pub & Brewery, and her partners and staff for their ongoing support of Meewasin. Thank you also to Clay Sparks for his leadership of the young entrepreneurs.

Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin (PFSRB)

Founded in 1993 by then Meewasin CEO Fred Heal, the national award winning PFSRB is a non-profit organization with a mandate to increase understanding, awareness and stewardship of the Saskatchewan River Basin. Its mission is to promote watershed sustainability through awareness, linkages and stewardship. It is governed by a board of directors with members from the three prairie provinces. For more information on its activities visit: saskriverbasin.ca

Association of Saskatchewan Urban Parks & Conservation Agencies (ASUPCA)

Meewasin is a member of ASUPCA, a non-profit organization dedicated to sharing expertise and pride in conservation, development and education for the purpose of supporting the work of each member organization. Included are: Battlefords River Valley, Battlefords; Chinook Parkway, Swift Current; Pehonan Parkway, Prince Albert; Tatagwa Parkway, Weyburn; Wakamow Valley, Moose Jaw; Wascana Centre, Regina;

and the Meewasin Valley Authority, Saskatoon.

Together, ASUPCA member agencies represent 60% of the population of the province. They have chosen to conserve their parks and conservation zones, educate the public about them and to develop them for free public access. They have three things in common: an urban water body, an independent board and a master plan.

The June 1, 2016 Saskatchewan provincial budget announcing that five ASUPCA urban parks in Saskatchewan have lost their provincial funding and that Meewasin and Wascana (Regina) are under review has significant implications for the future of ASUPCA. ASUPCA will be meeting in Saskatoon June 9 and 10, 2016 for the purpose of discussing its future. ♦



Above: Western Red Lily - Saskatchewan's floral emblem.

A special thank you to our many sponsors, donors and supporters

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Compiled & Written by Doug Porteous.
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7 km of Meewasin Trail were added in the southeast to Chief Whitecap Park.