

38 Years Conserving the River Valley

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Meewasin 

Message from the Chair & Interim CEO



Colin Tennent, Chair



Doug Porteous,
Interim CEO

Created 38 years ago by wise people with great vision, the Meewasin Valley Authority is a partnership of the City of Saskatoon, Government of Saskatchewan and University of Saskatchewan who felt

they could best manage their riverbank lands with one organization. They agreed that each would support this organization by providing a percentage of the Meewasin annual budget with “statutory funding”. The mandate was to conserve the river valley, to develop it for free public access, to let the people have a say in how it was developed, and to educate people about it so that they knew the value of what they had. By all measures, after 38 years, the concept has been a tremendous success when you see what has been accomplished in the now 67 square km of the Conservation Zone.

As written by Paul Hanley in *25 Years in the Life of a River Valley* – by anyone’s measure, the Meewasin Valley Project – first envisioned by master planner Raymond Moriyama in 1978 – has been an outstanding success. Overcoming early opposition, Meewasin has grown to become one of the most popular and appreciated organizations in the Saskatoon region. Today, more than one million visits are made to the award winning Meewasin Trail annually. Features like Beaver Creek Conservation Area, Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Cranberry Flats, Gabriel Dumont Park, Meewasin Valley Centre, and Meewasin Riverworks Weir Redevelopment are treasured assets in a community shaped by the South Saskatchewan River. This is a story of extraordinary accomplishment Created by the Government of Saskatchewan, the City of Saskatoon and the University of Saskatchewan, shaped by dedicated directors and staff, and supported by an army of volunteers, taxpayers and donors, Meewasin has fulfilled its mission “to create a healthy and vibrant river valley with a balance between human use and conservation. And the story has just begun...

Since Meewasin published *25 Years in the Life of a River Valley* in 2004, Meewasin can add River Landing I and II to its accomplishments, trail extensions to Chief Whitecap Park and Wanuskewin Heritage Park, the Master Plan for the Meewasin Northeast Swale, ridding the valley of more than one million stems of European Buckthorn, providing public input to another 13 years of development in the river valley, and leveraging another \$15 million in non-statutory fund development. Indeed it is a story of “extraordinary accomplishment”.

The Meewasin Valley Project has been a tremendous success, but one that has continued to be fraught with concern. A long term decline in funding from our three participating parties (the City of Saskatoon, Government of Saskatchewan and University of Saskatchewan) led to a decision to close the Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre on July 1, 2016. March 22, 2017 a reduction of \$409,000 to Meewasin, coupled with an amendment to the Meewasin Valley Authority Act (1979), removing the statutory funding requirements of the Government of Saskatchewan and the University of Saskatchewan to Meewasin, resulted in Meewasin tabling its most difficult budget in 38 years. On May 5, 2017 Meewasin’s Board received a budget containing a 17% reduction in statutory funding for the fiscal year of April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018. Without a sustainable source of predictable funding, the concept of Meewasin that has been internationally recognized for its work in the Meewasin Valley for close to four decades is threatened. Although Government of Saskatchewan funding for Meewasin is down over last year, the government has still maintained more than one million dollars for Meewasin in 2017-18. The Government has also identified the importance of conservation activities on provincial Crown Land. The Government remains committed to its role as one of the three funding partners of the Meewasin Valley Authority.

At this time the three partners are working together to determine a plan for long term predictable funding that Meewasin can then use to enter the next 60 years of the *Moriyama 100 Year Conceptual Master Plan*. ♦



Meewasin's Jurisdiction:

Meewasin is centred in Saskatoon and runs approximately 80 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 almost 67 square km in the Conservation Zone.

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.

Leadership Changes

May 18, 2017, Meewasin announced two leadership changes. Colin Tennent was named as the 10th Chair of the Meewasin Valley Authority. Doug Porteous was named Interim Chief Executive Officer.

Thank you Toddi Steelman

Meewasin thanks Chair Toddi Steelman for her contributions during her tenure, first joining Meewasin in November 2012 as a Member of the Meewasin Conservation Advisory Committee, appointed to the Board as University of Saskatchewan representative in July 2014 and becoming Chair of the Board in 2015. As the Executive Director of the School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) at the University of Saskatchewan, Toddi was a tremendous asset for Meewasin due to her professional understanding of the need to conserve the natural and heritage resources of the Meewasin Valley, being a supporter and advocate of the Meewasin concept, and making presentations to Saskatoon City Council and other organizations on Meewasin's behalf.



Toddi Steelman



Lloyd Isaak

Thank you Lloyd Isaak

Lloyd Isaak first joined Meewasin as Manager of Design & Development in 2001, and was appointed Chief Executive Officer, January 1, 2013. He had a 16 – year career with Meewasin, and under the direction of the Meewasin Board had a significant impact on the Meewasin

Valley. His contributions include project planning and management of trail extensions, a new skaters' lodge, site and lighting improvements to the Vimy Memorial, the Meewasin Riverworks Weir Redevelopment, the Northeast Swale Master Plan, valleywide trail and resource management plans, remediation and reuse of the A.L. Cole Pumphouse, River Landing, and the commissioning of functional art, including the art gate at Bessborough Gardens, and the statue of Chief Whitecap in Chief Whitecap Park. During his tenure, significant funds were leveraged to develop these projects. He served on the Board of Wanuskewin Heritage Park and was also Managing Partner for Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin. ♦



Lloyd Isaak



Toddi Steelman*, Chair



Colin Tennent*, Chair



Tracy Arno



Mayor Don Atchison*



David Buckingham



Carmen Campbell



Charlie Clark

Meewasin Board of Directors April 1, 2016 – August 1, 2017

*retired



Bev Dubois



Zach Jeffries



Mairin Loewen



Leanne Nyirfa



Eric Olauson*



Roger Parent*



Peter Stoicheff



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.

Conservation Advisory

The Conservation Advisory Committee advises the Meewasin Board in its work to ensure the health of the Meewasin Valley. Committee members were Peter Goode (Chair), Fran Walley (Board Rep), Luc Delanoy, Darcy Henderson, Nadia Mori, Ron Jensen, Amber Weckworth, and Bert Weichel.

Development Review

The Development Review Committee is a statutory committee created under the *Meewasin Valley Authority Act (1979)* to provide professional and unbiased recommendations regarding the acceptability of proposed improvements with the Meewasin Valley. Committee members were Mitch Strocen (Chair), Rob Crosby, Terry Frank*, Bianca Hilbert, Paul Koopman, Al Mickelson, Anna Ringstrom*, Bill Schaffel*, Chris Schulz, and Terry Werbovetski.

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 environment. Committee members were Bianca Hilbert (Chair), Fran Walley (Board Rep), Luc Delanoy, Marilyn Gould, Danny Gray, Chris Schulz, and Natalie Walliser.

Education Advisory

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

Staff/Committee & Board Changes

At the time of the publication of this annual report; we want to welcome those Board and staff members who have joined us and thank those who have moved on.

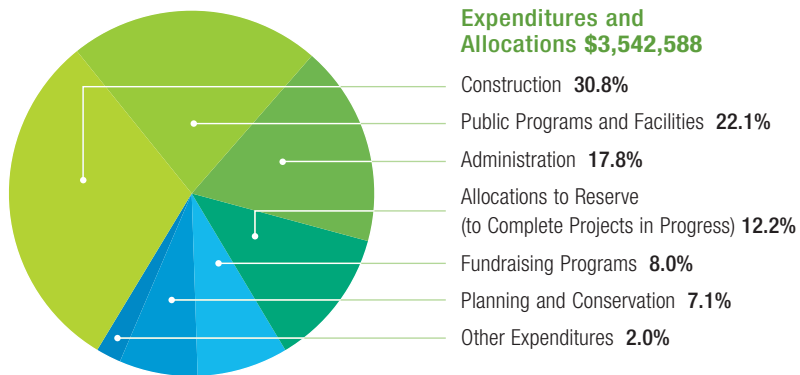
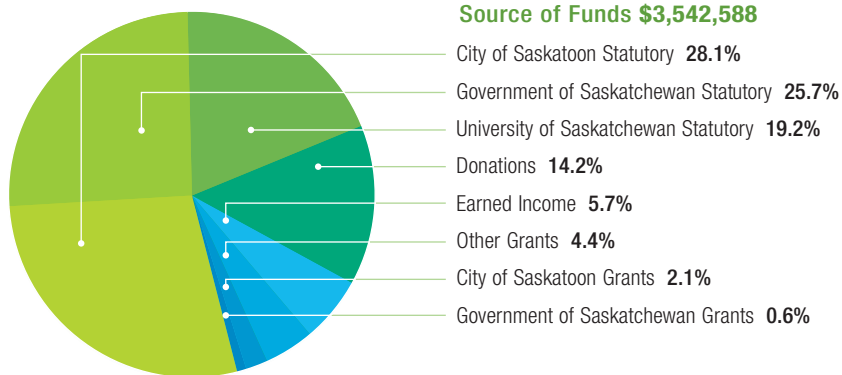
New members to the Meewasin family include Bev Dubois, Eric Olauson, Executive Secretary/Office Manager Janet Dzik, Accounting Officer Sherry Luther, Communications Officer Jessica Flahr, Design Assistant Stephanie Pitre, and GIS Analyst Rik Anaka.

Board Members no longer serving include Chair Toddi Steelman, Mayor Don Atchison, Eric Olauson and Roger Parent. Roger Parent was a member of the Legislative Assembly representing the Government of Saskatchewan. Roger passed away November 29, 2016.

Staff members who have moved on from Meewasin include Chief Executive Officer Lloyd Isaak, Director of Operations Gwen Charman, Interpreter Amanda Bullin, Interpreter Karlee Vizer, Interpreter Canoe Guide Gillian May, GIS Analyst Sarina Gersher, Accounting Officer Calvin Young, Accounting Officer Dan Guggenheimer, and Receptionist Teresa Duerr.

Operations

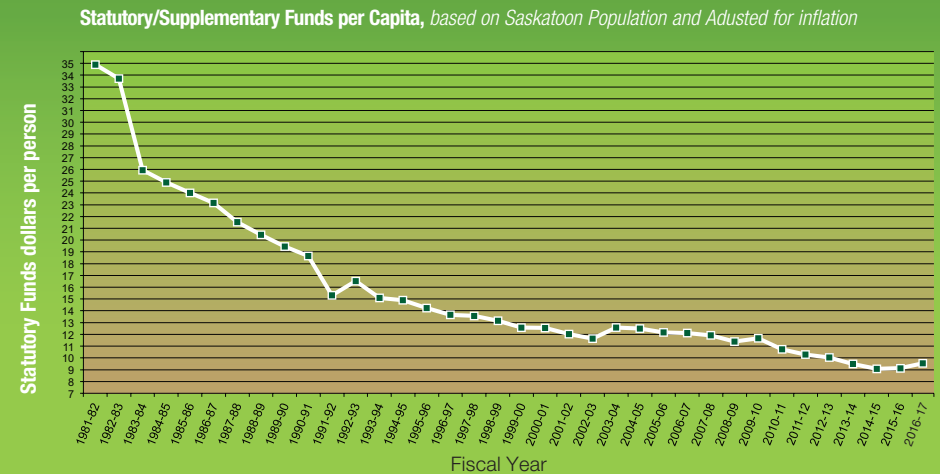
Meewasin Financial Highlights as of March 31, 2017



Endowment Funds

The endowment funds, for the benefit of Meewasin, are owned and managed by the Saskatoon Community Foundation. At December 31, 2016, the endowment funds and balances were as follows: Meewasin Naturally Fund \$830,067.

Wes Bolstad Fund \$18,741 and Susan Lamb Fund \$23,099. Audited financial statements are available by request.



The 2017 elimination of statutory funding obligations for the University of Saskatchewan and the Government of Saskatchewan as outlined in the March 22, 2017 Saskatchewan government budget means **funding to Meewasin becomes discretionary**. At this time, the three participating parties are optimistic that working together they can avoid tabling a 2017-2018 budget that would see a further 60% decrease in Meewasin programs and services; and that is by showing the value of Meewasin to the economic prosperity of not just Saskatoon but all of Saskatchewan.

Meewasin statutory /supplemental funds per capita, despite a much expanded Conservation Zone, **have declined from \$38 per person in 1981-82 to less than \$10 per person in 2016-2017**.

Of the **\$100 million** that Meewasin has invested in conservation, development and education of the river valley over the past 38 years, just **\$18 million** has come from local property tax. **The leveraging effect for Saskatoon has been 5 to 1.**



Meewasin Staff – May 2017 **BRLR:** Wayne Stus, Doug Porteous, Fred Prokuski Renny Grilz, Rik Anaka, Brenda Kramarchuk, Alexander Acton, Terry Saunders, Karen Gillies, Alan Otterbein, Mike Velonas, Sue Bouchard, Nola Stein, Lis Mack, Jessica Flahr. **FRLR:** Janet Dzik Betty Calvert, Ashley Mills, Morgan Kanak, Sheridan Popenia, Kathy Thomas Andrew Sollosy, Jamie Harder, Eryn Tomlinson, Andrea Ziegler, Lennox Saunders, Verity Moore-Wright, Sherry Luther, Stephanie Petrie. **Inset photos:** **LtoR:** Kenton Lysak, Andrew Whiting.

Conservation

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, vibrancy and balance.



Dr. Raymond Moriyama,
Architect

State of the Valley: Every five years Meewasin collects data by looking at health, fit, balance and vibrancy to produce the State of the Valley Report. **Based on 2013 data, the 2016 report can be found at meewasin.com.**

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 the 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* (1979) 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, 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, 2017, Meewasin reviewed 20 proposed improvements to the river valley Meewasin Conservation Zone. The applications included the following:

- River Landing Parcel YY – Development Plan Amendment;
- River Landing Parcel YY – Concept and Site Plan;
- Kinsmen Park Festival Site Improvements;
- Meewasin Trail Upgrades – Mendel Site to Riverworks Weir;
- Water Treatment Plant Sludge Removal;
- River Landing Parcel YY – Site Development;
- Saskatchewan Crescent East & 16th Street Slope Remediation;
- Meewasin Land Policy;
- Kinsmen Park Festival Site;
- North Commuter Parkway – Central Avenue and McOrmond Lighting;
- North Commuter Parkway – Superstructure;
- Traffic Bridge Superstructure;
- City of Saskatoon Active Transportation Plan;
- North Commuter Parkway Fish Habitat Offset;
- River Landing Parcel YY – East Tower;
- Meewasin State of the Valley 2013;

- River Landing Parcel YY – Hotel and Condo;
- North Commuter Parkway – McOrmond Drive and Stormwater Infrastructure; and
- Meewasin Valley-wide Resource Management Plan.

Securing Lands of Interest

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

Meewasin Valley-wide Resource Management

Meewasin is recognized world-wide for its leadership in conserving the natural resources of the 6,700 hectares of the Meewasin Valley. Meewasin sites and areas are home to more than 200 plant species, 100 bird species, amphibians, reptiles and animals. Conservation of these lands and ecosystems require a varied approach using an integrated resource management plan including grazing and prescribed burns, as well as restoration for the purpose of eradicating invasive species. In 2016, Meewasin conducted prescribed burns on a total of 15 hectares of land at Beaver Creek Conservation Area, Cranberry Flats Conservation Area and Meewasin Northeast Swale.

February 2017, Meewasin was recognized for its resource management program, and was presented with the inaugural Native Prairie Restoration and Reclamation

Award by the Saskatchewan Conservation Action Plan.

Meewasin Valley-wide Resource Management Plan

In 2015, Meewasin secured funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada to create a conservation action plan called the *Valley-wide Resource Management Plan (RMP)* for the Meewasin Valley, which will guide Meewasin's conservation efforts over the next decade. Approved by Meewasin, March 3, 2017, the plan was developed in partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and engaged more than 50 stakeholders with representatives from all levels of government.

The RMP identified four conservation targets: rivers and creeks, swales, native grasslands and wetlands. Threats were assessed and ranked, with the largest threat to the Meewasin Valley identified as invasive species. Other highly ranked threats included dams and storm water management, runoff of pesticides and fertilizers, suburban development, trespass issues, fire and fire suppression and regional climate change.

The RMP also identified more than 180 key conservation actions by Meewasin. Partnerships with like-minded organizations were identified as key to attacking the problems.

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 was held on May 31, 2017. Participants included Mike Velonas of Meewasin and representatives from Shearwater Marine Services, City of Saskatoon Water Treatment Plant, Saskatoon Fire & Protective Services, City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon

Rowing Club, Riverlights Festival, Transport Canada, Saskatoon Police Service, Saskatoon Canoe Club, FMG Events, WakeRide, Graham Commuter Partners, South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards Inc, On Purpose Leadership, and CanoeSki. Minutes of the meeting are available upon request.

Strategic Plan

In 2013, Meewasin undertook an extensive process with stakeholders to develop a 10-year strategic plan. The plan enables Meewasin to reflect on 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. ♦



Above: Saskatoon Natural Grasslands. Instructor Melanie Elliott and University of Saskatchewan Ecology Camp for Kids.



Left: Meewasin's Eryn Tomlinson – Prescribed Burn. **Top right:** Saskatoon Fire & Protective Services Water Rescue pass beneath Saskatoon's Broadway Bridge on the South Saskatchewan River. **Middle right:** River users tubing to Saskatoon from the Fred Heal Canoe Launch. **Bottom right:** Ginger Explores the South Saskatchewan by Canoe.

Development



Top: Two joggers cross CPR Bridge Saskatoon.

Middle: PotashCorp Wintershines Skating Party

Bottom: Tim Hortons Twinkle Lights Skating Party.

Included in Meewasin's mandate is the conservation and development of heritage resources within the Conservation Zone. Maintenance and Development projects for the 2016 to 2017 fiscal year include the following:

- Painting of the Maple Grove White House;
- Installation of donor recognition plaques at the Factoria seating node;
- Meewasin Trail site furniture replacements, trail counter installations, furniture replacements at Meewasin Park and the Capilano Lookout, printing and installing new trailhead signs;
- Design upgrades for Meewasin Trail;
- Final inspection and turnover to the City of the southeast section of the Meewasin Trail from Diefenbaker Park to Chief Whitecap Park;
- Finalizing an agreement with the City of Saskatoon for designing the Aspen Ridge Greenway;
- Site safety audit for the Meewasin Trail from the University Bridge to the CPR Bridge;
- Lower level closures of the Meewasin Valley Centre;
- Replacing air conditioning units at Beaver Creek Conservation Area;
- Resurfacing trails in the Saskatoon Natural Grasslands;
- Completing construction of Chief Whitecap Park parking lot;
- Pruning the Meewasin Trail at Sutherland Beach;
- Developing a re-vegetation plan for the slump at 16th Street East in Cosmopolitan Park;
- Developing a re-vegetation plan for the shoreline at the Water Treatment Plant;

- Developing an agreement with the City of Saskatoon for naturalized planting at the Remai Modern Art Gallery of Saskatchewan.;
- Repairing the lift at Beaver Creek Conservation Area;
- Repairing the lift at Meewasin Valley Centre; and
- Completing a detailed design for Phase One of the Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan.

Meewasin Northeast Swale

The Meewasin Northeast Swale 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.

The Swale supports historically significant natural and cultural resources.

During the past two years, Meewasin, working with the City of Saskatoon, has 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.

Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan & Phase 1 Trails & Fencing

The Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan is a City of Saskatoon and Meewasin approved master plan for the Meewasin Northeast Swale. It will be implemented in 5 phases in concert with adjacent neighborhood development in Silverspring, Evergreen, Aspen Ridge and

Development continued

University Heights. There will be pedestrian access points at Zary Road (Evergreen), Konihowski Road (Silverspring), as well as at the corner of Fedoruk Drive and Central Avenue with future trails connecting to Aspen Ridge. The overall goal of the Master Plan is to balance human use with conservation.

Phase 1 of the Meewasin Northeast Swale Development includes a trail system and amenities in the Recreation Zone, and wildlife area fencing along the Aspen Ridge Greenway/Ecological Core edge.

The Recreation Zone is approximately 49 hectares in size, and commences at the corner of Fedoruk Drive and Central Avenue. It is an area that is ecologically sensitive and is intended to be used for passive recreation and self-guided tours. Dogs on leash will be allowed.

The Ecological Core has been less impacted by human activity. It will have more controlled access and will support passive recreation, research and education. Dogs will not be allowed in this area.

Work in the Recreation Zone will include 2.1 kilometres of 3 metres wide trail constructed of granular material. There will be 4 access points along Central Avenue, and will include seating nodes, waste receptacles, wayfinding signs and interpretive panels. The area will have no lighting as artificial lighting interferes with natural sleep, eating and mating cycles of plants and animals.

Wildlife Friendly Fencing will be installed providing access control. The fence is designed to allow safe passage for wildlife over the top and underneath.

Funded by the City of Saskatoon, construction of Phase 1 by Meewasin and sub contracted crews is set to

begin July 2017 with a completion date in October. For more information, the full master plan is available on the Meewasin website at meewasin.com, or call Meewasin at 306-665-6887.

The Meewasin Online Map and Meewasin Trail Map

In a partnership to promote Saskatoon and the Meewasin Valley, Tourism Saskatoon, Territorial and Meewasin have entered the second year of a three year project to develop an online map to encourage the use of the Meewasin Trail and other attractions throughout the valley.

Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @ PotashCorp Plaza

The Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @PotashCorp Plaza opened to the public on December 14, 2016 and ran until March 15, 2017 for a total of 91 days. There were 26,864 skaters this season 2,864 more than last, which meant an average of 296 per day. Last season the rink operated for 80 days with 24,000 users. \$1067 was collected by the donation box, \$1200 less than last year.

Set up operations began on October 2, 2016 with moving the building to Kiwanis Memorial Park. Once the warm-up facility was in place, Meewasin began installing lights on the grove of evergreen trees. By November 22, the rink boards were up and ice making had begun. Rink attendants this season were Jordan Pyakutch, Robert Gaida, Devin Ostlund and Jeff White. Andrew Rapin and Christopher Anderson were part time attendants. Vehicle parking for rink staff was again provided by the Delta Bessborough.

The *Tim Hortons Twinkle Light Ceremony* celebrated the official start to the skating season on December 16, 2016. Other major event days included: the *PotashCorp Skating Party* on January 29, 2017, and the *Cameco Family Day Skating Party* on March 5, 2017. The Canada 150 Celebration was held on New Year's Eve. With thanks to On Purpose Leadership, it turned out to be the busiest rink day of the season. The Tim Hortons Sprinter Van catered to all events serving free cups of hot chocolate and coffee. Thank you to the Delta Bessborough for opening its doors to the general public providing warm-up and refreshments; and thank you to the City of Saskatoon for allowing the closure of the Broadway Bridge as a base to set off the *Saskatoon Canada 150 Fireworks*. Saskatoon was one of seven Canadian cities to celebrate Canada 150 on New Year's Eve.

Meewasin rink bookings from local schools, businesses, church groups and family parties were in abundance again this year. The Saskatoon Highland Dancers were in attendance on the afternoon of January 28, 2017 for the *Third Annual Sir John A's Great Canadian Kilt Skate*. Photos and videos of the event can be found at kiltskate.com. The Meewasin Rink was declared "Kilt Skate Capital of Canada" during the previous skating season.

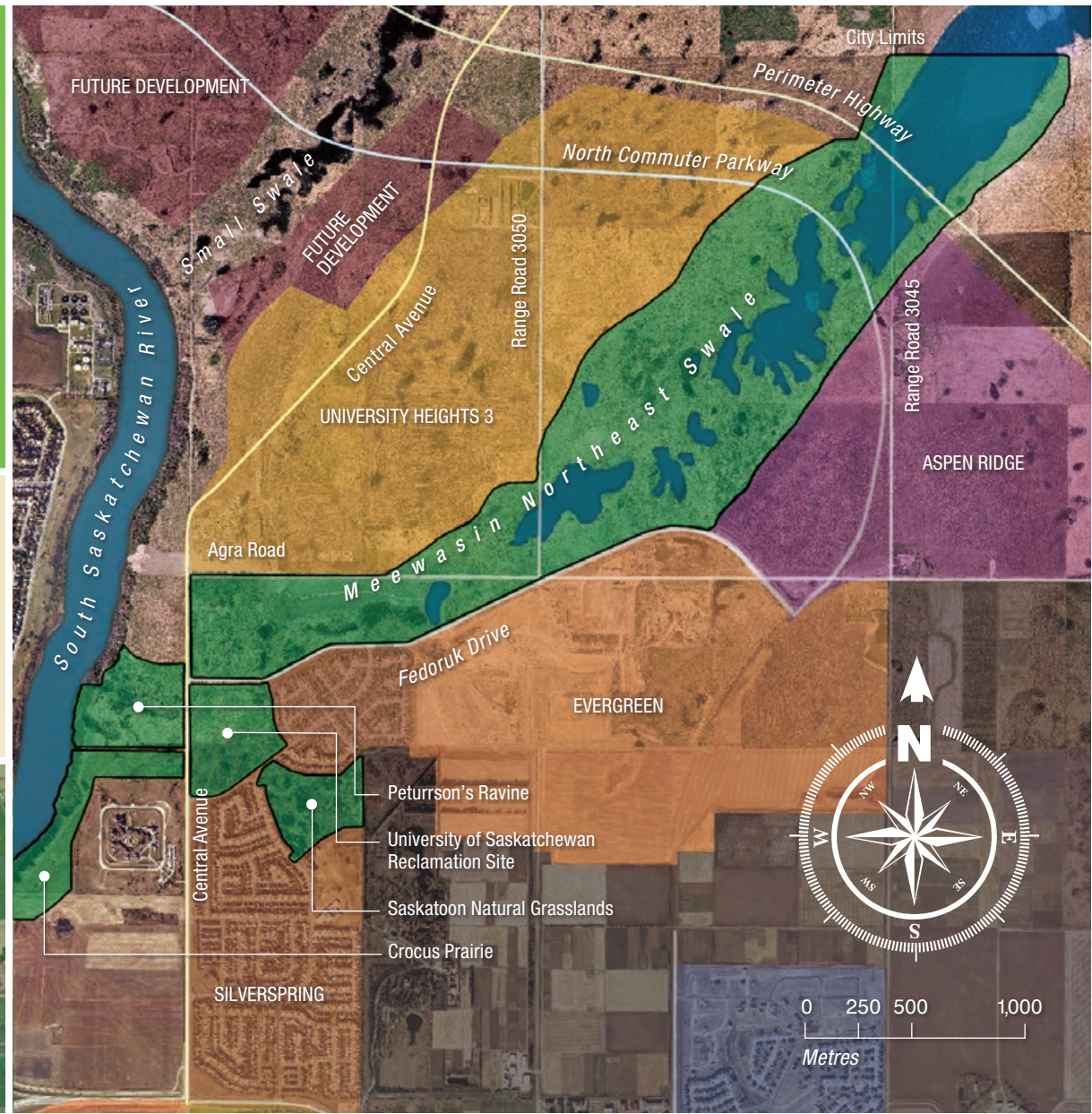
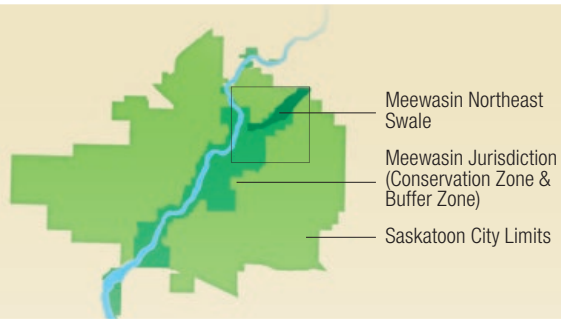
This past winter of 2016-2017 the Meewasin rink was as busy as usual. Fluctuating temperatures kept attendants scrambling, requiring night flooding to keep up with the demands.

Thank you again to all donors and sponsors that continue to contribute and support Meewasin's Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @PotashCorp Plaza, once declared "the best outdoor skating spot in Canada" by Readers' Digest (2006). ♦

Meewasin Northeast Swale

Middle left: Context map of Meewasin Northeast Swale.

Bottom 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. **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.



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.

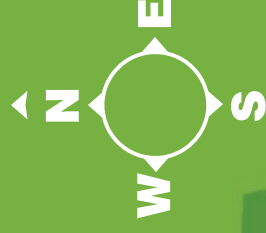
Dogs on the Trail

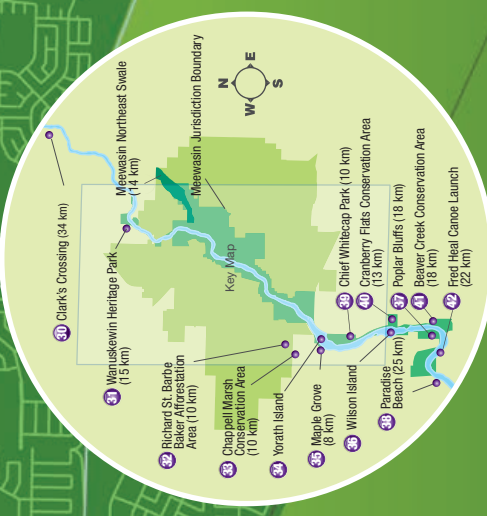
- Keep dogs on a leash.
- Clean up after your dog.

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





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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Peggy McKercher Conservation Area 2 Meewasin Northeast Swale 3 Crocus Prairie 4 Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (SNG) 5 Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo 6 Sutherland Beach 7 University of Saskatchewan 8 Cosmopolitan Park and Lookout 9 Rotary Park and Lookout 10 The Marr Residence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 Gabriel Dumont Park 12 Western Development Museum 13 Diefenbaker Park and the Pioneer Cemetery 14 Factoria 15 Meewasin Park 16 Capilano Lookout 17 G.D. Archibald Park 18 Meewasin Riverworks (Weir) 19 Mendel Site and Island Sanctuary 20 Kinsmen Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21 The Ukrainian Museum of Canada 22 Kiwanis Memorial Park 23 Friendship Park 24 Meewasin Valley Centre 25 River Landing and The Farmers' Market 26 Victoria Park and The Boathouse 27 Bowerman House 28 Sanatorium Site 29 Saskatoon Landfill 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



Top left: Students biked along the Meewasin Trail to the Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre. **Bottom left:** Thank you to Affinity Credit Union for its 16 year sponsorship of the Meewasin Affinity Credit Union Clean-Up Campaign.

The Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre

The Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre (MVC), located in the lower level of the Meewasin Valley Authority building at 402 Third Avenue South closed July 1, 2016. The closure of the MVC was a result of the long term erosion of Meewasin funding.

The MVC opened February 1988 and since that time has provided Saskatoon residents and tourists with opportunities to learn about Saskatoon's early history, the South Saskatchewan River and the future of the Meewasin Valley. Open 363 days a year, it provided walking tours of downtown Saskatoon, River Landing and Broadway. It served as an affordable weekend and holiday destination to Saskatoon residents and guests providing not only family heritage activities but also tourist information. It was home to an art gallery where local artists displayed their work on a bi-monthly basis. It was a place to learn about Saskatoon's early history, with interpretation and displays and out-reach programs to seniors' homes and schools. More than 70,000 Grade 3 students from Saskatoon and area schools had visited the MVC over the years as part of their outdoor education social studies curriculum. The MVC also participated in a number of Meewasin programs including coordination of the annual spring clean-up of the river valley, Pelican Watch, skating parties at the Meewasin outdoor skating rink, events in Friendship Park and the Marr Residence, and other celebrations in the Meewasin Valley. It served as a year round rest stop for the general public and was located at kilometre 0, the heart of the Meewasin Trail.

The closure of the MVC resulted in the loss of employment positions of three full time and four casual

Meewasin interpreters, all who either retired or found full time employment elsewhere.

Meewasin & Affinity Credit Union Clean-Up Campaign

2016 marked Meewasin's 36th annual Clean-Up Campaign. The kick off for the event took place on Earth Day, Friday, April 22, at St. Edwards Schools. It was the 16th and last year that Affinity Credit Union sponsored the event. The 30 minute school assembly program featured greetings from St. Edward School, Affinity Credit Union and Meewasin.

Meewasin extends its gratitude to Loraas for the donation and placement of dumpsters and recycle bins throughout the valley, 7-Eleven Stores for permission to use their dumpsters, Pizza Hut for the donation of prize coupons, and the City of Saskatoon who collected garbage bags piled by the curb of any park location. Meewasin also thanks the more than 30,000 persons who participated to clean garbage to make Saskatoon Shine.

Beaver Creek Conservation Area (BCCA)

Located 13 km south of Saskatoon off of 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.



Top left: Cameco staff annually volunteer to clean the Meewasin River Valley. **Bottom left:** Guest from London, England enjoys a fall afternoon at Beaver Creek Conservation Area. **Top right:** Canadian Beaver in the creek at Meewasin's Beaver Creek Conservation Area. **Bottom right:** Senior Interpreter Andrew Whiting and Meewasin Interpreter Lennox Saunders work on a display at Beaver Creek Conservation Area.



Education continued

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 2016 from Saskatoon and area schools totaling 2,965 students. General public visitation totaled 17,459 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 Project, the BCCA staff continued to deliver the second year of citizen science projects. This provided an opportunity for more than 1,000 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, RBC and the Royal Astronomical Society, the interpretive staff also created the Saskatoon Dark Sky initiative, a project aimed at monitoring light pollution and educating more than one thousand students on the importance of nocturnal species within the Meewasin Valley.

BCCA Interpretive Cross-Country Ski Program

The 2016-2017 cross-country ski program counted 16 groups, totaling 465 participants. The program had an overwhelming response again this past winter, with many teachers and students returning having participated in previous years. The interpretive ski program pairs physical activity with curriculum education outcomes to provide a unique learning experience.

BCCA SaskPower Solar Project

In 2015 Beaver Creek Conservation Area received a grant for \$50,000 over two years from SaskPower to install a solar panel system and create an energy conservation program. Currently, the energy conservation program has been delivered to more than 800 students with great success and positive feedback from the educational community. A total of fifteen solar panels will be installed near the facility this summer and will be a tied to a grid system allowing the centre to educate visitors on the benefits of solar power to provide visitors with a unique educational experience.

Pelican Watch 2016 & 2017

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 pelicans migrate to sites in California, Florida, Mexico and even Guatemala.

The fiscal year, April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017, was the 21st year of the Meewasin Pelican Watch Contest. Previous arrival times have been between April 4 and April 20. The first official pelican to touch down between the CPR Bridge and the weir in the 21st year of the contest

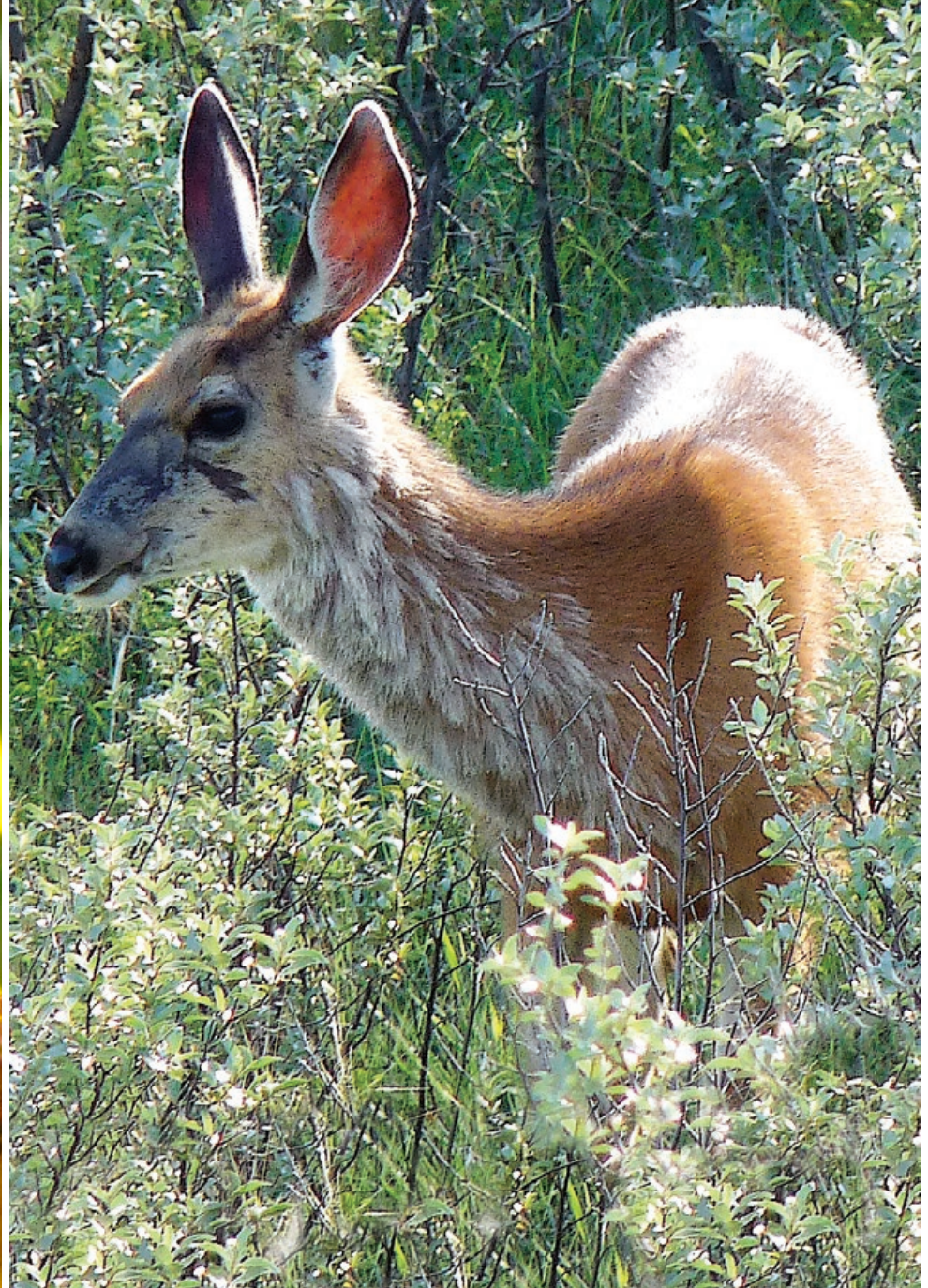
did so Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 6:15 am. The winner of the contest was Naomi Tschetter with an arrival guess of 6:00 am, April 14th.

As the 22nd Meewasin Pelican Watch is launched within the calendar year of this annual report, it reported that the first pelican to land between the CPR Bridge and the weir in the 22nd year of the contest, as witnessed by an official observer from the Saskatoon Nature Society was Sunday, April 2, 2017 at 6:25 pm. The winner of this latter contest was Grade 2 student Jackson Crowder with a guess of 6:00 pm. Realty Executives Sales Manager Terry Butler presented Jackson with a mountain bicycle at a news conference May 4, 2017, held on the Realty Executives Boardwalk at the Saskatoon Riverworks Weir.

Thank you to all who participated in Meewasin Pelican Watch, the Saskatoon media and all of the businesses that have supported the contest 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 catholic schools.

Interpretation of the Meewasin Northeast Swale

The 2016 fall programming season at the Meewasin Northeast Swale concluded with more than 400 elementary students exploring the uniqueness of this important ecosystem. In conjunction with the RBC Blue Water Program, students explored the site through interpretive hikes, learned how to collect biological information through citizen science projects, and contributed to the health of the ecological community



Left: America Gold Finch – Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

Right: Mule Deer – Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

Education continued

through stewardship activities. Planting native grasses, building bird boxes and studying aquatic insects were some of the highlights. Fall programming culminated in a week long Bioblitz supported by TD Friends of the Environment, where more than 120 participants came out for hands-on experiences in Meewasin's conservation work at the Meewasin Northeast Swale. Visitors were invited to contribute to a biological inventory of the area by identifying local plant and animal species while they hiked through the Swale. Interpreters from the Meewasin Community Development unit presented their results from both projects at the recent Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin annual conference titled, *Every River Has a Story... What's Yours?* Conference attendees shared their support and excitement for the uniqueness of these projects. Stewardship activities continue at the Swale with both Silverspring School and Mother Teresa School committing to use both the Meewasin Northeast Swale and the Saskatoon Natural Grasslands as outdoor classrooms. Teacher candidates from the University of Saskatchewan also toured the site in order to understand the importance of natural areas in nature-based learning, and what opportunities are available for teachers in environmental education

The Saskatoon Natural Grasslands

Within the northeast sector of the City of Saskatoon lies the Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (SNG), a 13.8 hectare (34 acre) parcel of remnant native fescue prairie. Part of the Northeast Swale Complex, it represents one of the most endangered ecosystems in the world. The site is defined as fescue grassland which incorporates a wide variety of highly-specialized native species, including numerous grasses, wildflowers, trees, shrubs, birds, insects, and mammals endemic to the area.

Unfortunately, grassland ecosystems and the species that call them home are significantly at risk due to the loss of grasslands within Saskatchewan and across Canada. It is estimated that less than 20% of Saskatchewan's native prairie remains intact, with less than 5% of fescue prairie remaining, and the loss of these vital prairie systems continues today. These prairie ecosystems are essential to the survival of countless flora and fauna, many of which are threatened due to the loss of habitat.

Thank you to programs provided by the University of Saskatchewan College of 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 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 2016, Melanie Elliott of the University of Saskatchewan Continuing and Distance Education Ecology Education and *Ecology Camp for Kids*, conducted tours of 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 2016 counted 25 Grade 2 classes with a total of 728 participants. In all, 1473 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 2016, Melanie, in addition to her programming at the SNG, delivered tours and hikes of the Meewasin

Northeast Swale, counting 10 hikes to the Swale, totaling 240 youth and 25 adults that learned about the importance of the need to conserve our natural areas.

Meewasin Conservation Award 2016

The late Joanna Miller was the 2016 recipient of the



Joanna Miller

Meewasin Conservation Award which is presented annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the heritage resources of the Meewasin Valley.

Known for her work with UNICEF and the Peace Movement, Joanna Miller is less well known for a piece of activism which has had a lasting impact on Saskatoon, and has helped change the City of Saskatoon's relationship with its South Saskatchewan River; that is, the creation of the Meewasin Valley Authority.

Born May 18, 1926 in Vancouver, Joanna Miller grew up on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia. She moved to Vancouver for high school and on to the University of British Columbia where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in English. While at university, Joanna met her husband Len. They were wed in 1949, moving to Saskatoon in 1961 where Len became the chair of the philosophy department at the University of Saskatchewan.

Joanna had a passion to help other people and to make the world a better place. In 1974, the threat of private development along Saskatoon's riverbank prompted concern by citizens. The Saskatchewan Environmental Society campaigned to protect the riverbank area between the Saskatoon Riverworks Weir and what is

now Meewasin Park. Private citizens led by Joanna Miller organized a petition. It all resulted in a public hearing with the City of Saskatoon where it was made clear that the public was unwilling to allow development along the river inhibiting public access to the river valley.

On September 23, 1974, Saskatoon City Council passed a motion asking the Government of Saskatchewan to enter into an agreement with Saskatoon similar to its agreement with Regina for Wascana Centre that would bring university, provincial and city lands under one management body. It took a few years and much planning; however, September 4, 1979, the *Meewasin Valley Authority Act* was passed by the Government of Saskatchewan. Today we acknowledge that this all happened because of the activism and leadership of private citizens represented today by Joanna Miller.

Meewasin Interpretive Canoe Tours

The Meewasin Interpretive Canoe Tour program was characterized by two warm dry months (May and June 2016) followed by two wet months (July and August 2016). The warm and dry June led to an increased number of bookings in July and August. Because groups were able to reschedule, the program had only 6 cancellations over the season with 901 paddlers on 110 tours. 809 of those paddlers represented youth. The additional interest in the program was a result of the added component of the RBC Blue Water Program which attracted a greater number of science teachers. The program supported teachers in realizing educational outcomes found difficult to reach in the confines of a classroom. Youth services also had an increased interest in the interpretive canoe tour program due to the added educational value of the RBC Blue Water program. ♦



Top left: Former staff Sarina Gersher and Canoe Guide Gillian May walk the Meewasin Trail at Diefenbaker Park. **Top right:** Female Melissa Blue Butterfly (Plebejus melissa) – Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

Bottom: Bridging 125 – September 21, 2007. Saskatoon City Council. South Saskatchewan River Saskatoon.



Fund Development



Meewasin Plant-A-Tree Dedication 2016

The 30th annual Meewasin Plant-A-Tree Dedication was held on Saturday, June 18, 2016 in Boomtown at Saskatoon's Western Development Museum.

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

Above: Meewasin Fund Development Team – Manager Verity Moore-Wright and Donations Officer Betty Calvert. **Below:** Royal Bank of Canada Volunteers, Team RBC plant and mulch in the Meewasin Valley.

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 4,018 trees and shrubs in the valley that have been sponsored by individuals and groups. In addition, 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 Saskatoon 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



Top right: Meewasin Plant-A-Tree Dedication June 2016.

LtoR: Emcee Wayne Dyck, Chair of the Meewasin Plant-A-Tree Committee, former Lieutenant-Governor Gordon Barnhart, Lieutenant-Governor the Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield, Meewasin Chair Toddi Steelman, and Piper Brad Fenty.

bricks at the Rotary International Peace Plaza, including one red granite brick donated to recognize Nobel Peace Laureate Norman Borlaug, recipient in 1970 for the central role he played in the Green Revolution.

The event was emceed by Plant-A-Tree Chair, Wayne Dyck, and featured the Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield, SOV, SVM, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, the Orpheus 60 Chorus, Piper Brad Fenty, Meewasin Board Chair Toddi Steelman and Friend of the Valley former Lieutenant-Governor Gordon Barnhart. In attendance were approximately 500 donors, sponsors and Friends of the Valley.

Saskatchewan Marathon

Years ago wise people with great vision created the Meewasin Valley Authority, a partnership of the City of Saskatoon, Government of Saskatchewan and University of Saskatchewan who felt they could best manage their riverbank lands through one organization. Now, 38 years into the Moriyama 100 Year Conceptual Master Plan, Meewasin has developed more than 80 km of trails in the river valley, with more than 67 square km in the protected Meewasin Conservation Zone. All of this could not have been possible without the support of private and public organizations, one being the Saskatchewan Road Runners Association (SRRA), an organization that has contributed more than \$275,000 to Meewasin, and an organization that has hosted the Saskatchewan Marathon for as long as Meewasin has existed. Meewasin thanks the SRRA and its guests to Saskatoon for hosting and participating in this classic event on Sunday, May 29, 2016, Meewasin hosted a water table on Spadina Crescent near the Saskatoon Legion and a music station featuring the Paddlewheelers at the Meewasin Valley Centre.

Rotary International Peace Plaza

It was December of 2010 when Meewasin and the Rotary Club of Saskatoon first discussed bringing greater attention to this Peace Plaza by honouring Nobel Peace Laureates with red granite bricks. Since its dedication in 1967, Rotary Park has been a popular riverbank park in Meewasin's Conservation Zone, and Meewasin has played a key role in its continuing development collaborating with the Rotary Clubs of Saskatoon, Nutana Community Association, and Sask Energy to develop the Rotary International Peace Plaza, Peace Pole and SaskEnergy Flame, partnering in such events as the original opening in 1998, rededicated again in June 2002 and then again on SaskEnergy's Hear the Children Peace Day in 2002.

Since then a number of peace laureates have been recognized: Mother Teresa, Lester B. Pearson, Desmond Tutu, the Red Cross of 1917, the UN Commission for Refugees, Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk, Norman Borlaug and this year, sponsored by the Eco Justice class at St. Edward School, Malala Yousafzai, in recognition of her work in the area of children's rights and education for girls. It is a case of youth recognizing youth.

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. ♦



Top: Meewasin Water Station, Saskatchewan Marathon 2013.

Middle: Interpretive Cross-Country Skiing – Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

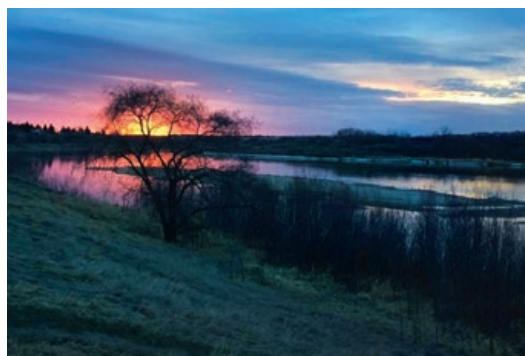
Bottom: Prairie Crocus – Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

Fund Development continued



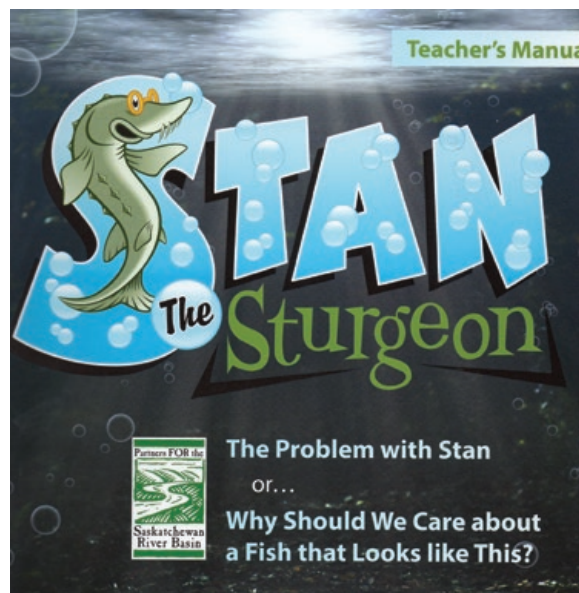
Top and bottom left: St. Edward School Eco-Justice Class sponsor a peace laureate brick in recognizing Malala Yousafzai in recognition of her work in the area of children's rights and education for girls. **Top right:** In 2014 Anne & Doug Porteous sponsored a brick in Rotary International Peace Plaza recognizing Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk who were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on December 10, 1993. Contact Betty Calvert at Meewasin or the Rotary Club of Saskatoon Nutana for more information on Rotary International Peace Plaza brick sponsorships, the only location in the world where Nobel Peace Laureates are recognized in such a manner.

Affiliations



Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin (PFSRB)

Founded in 1993 by Meewasin, the national award winning PFSRB is a nonprofit organization with a mandate to increase understanding, awareness and stewardship of the Saskatchewan River Basin. The mission of PFSRB is to promote watershed sustainability through “awareness, linkages and stewardship” throughout the Saskatchewan River Basin. PFSRB is governed by a board of directors with members from the three Prairie Provinces. Meewasin acts as managing partner.



Top left: Meewasin River Valley. **Middle left:** One of Meewasin's Trail Ambassadors, Karen Edwards, early morning photos along Spadina Crescent on the Meewasin Trail. **Bottom left:** Meewasin Trail Ambassadors 2001. **Above:** Stan the Sturgeon Fish Habitat Program – Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin.

PFSRB worked together with Agrium Inc. to deliver *Caring for our Watersheds*, a competition for Grades 7 to 12 students in Saskatoon and area that asks: “What can you do to protect your watershed?” Through a written proposal and then a final top ten oral presentation, students compete for \$6,000 in cash prizes and the opportunity to implement their projects with matching funds provided by Agrium Inc.

PFSRB with the support of Meewasin has been contracted by The City of Saskatoon to deliver the *Yellow Fish Road Program™* for three years beginning in 2017. PFSRB is excited to present this national environmental education project that was introduced by Trout Unlimited Canada to Saskatoon in 1991. The program educates the public about the impacts of pollution entering urban storm drains. It is targeted at youth ages 5 to 18.

Moopher's Amazing Journey to the Sea is a fun educational board game for children age 5-12+. The main game board contains a map of the Saskatchewan River System. The goal of the game is to help Moopher get from the Mountains to the Sea by traveling along the Saskatchewan River Basin. Moopher has proven to be popular with youth as they learn about the Saskatchewan River Basin. Youth and others learn about the geography, geology, hydrology and cultural history of the Saskatchewan River system, while having fun and working together as a team.

The most recent version of *Moopher's Amazing Journey to the Sea* contains three languages: English, Michif and Cree. It provides students with a greater learning experience. While the teachers' instruction booklet are in English, portions of the game board, the trivia cards and the matching cards will be in the other two languages. Students will learn about the history of the Prairie

Affiliations continued

Provinces, while learning important words and phrases of three languages.

The *Stan the Sturgeon Fish Habitat* program teaches youth about water and fish health in the Saskatchewan River Basin. The program has been written to fulfill the teacher requirements of the Grade 8 curriculum water units, although the program can easily be used by students from Grades 7 to 12. An important portion of the program is the role-playing scenarios where students have the opportunity to work together as a group to discuss a problem and find a solution that affects the watershed. With this portion of the program expanded to include three more scenarios, all four scenarios have been translated into French. They are now available on the PFSRB website at www.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.

Funded by Saskatchewan Lotteries through the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, 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.

In order for ASUPCA to become better known, on April 1, 2016, as an April Fool's joke, the organization made a public service announcement advising that in order to promote biodiversity, the seven member agencies would be releasing 50 pair of Australian Red Kangaroo to the Saskatchewan prairie. The announcement suggested that the kangaroo would be adopted by local residents. Interviewed on CTV by Stephanie Massicote,

Meewasin's Doug Porteous advised that among many attributes, the Australian Red Kangaroo was a very intelligent animal and would either jump a four-lane highway or read and follow deer crossing signs. One year later, Porteous still receives calls and questions from people in Saskatchewan and beyond who felt the pilot project was not a good idea. Porteous even received a call from an American who shared that on April 1, 2017, Dubois, Wyoming announced a similar kangaroo release. ♦

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