



# Teaming with Wildlife

2013-2014  
Annual Report

Meewasin 



# Message from the Chair and CEO



Chair, Jack Vicq



CEO, Lloyd Isaak

**Front Cover:** Saskatoon's Small Swale on the east bank of the South Saskatchewan River looking south to the Northeast Swale quickly becoming surrounded by the growing community.

**Below:** Meewasin staff paddle the Meewasin ten passenger voyageur clipper canoes on the South Saskatchewan River from Beaver Creek Conservation Area to Saskatoon for winter storage October 2013.

Having completed 35 years of the Moriyama 100-Year Plan, Meewasin continues to be an outstanding success loved by the general public. This past fiscal year, we counted nearly one million visits of walkers, runners and rollers on the Meewasin Trail. Thousands of river users accessed the boat launches and beaches at Fred Heal, Poplar Bluffs, Paradise Beach, Meewasin Park and the temporary one in Kiwanis Memorial Park. The Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @PotashCorp Plaza located in Kiwanis Memorial Park counted more than 21,000 skaters, many of whom celebrated with us at the Tim Hortons, PotashCorp and Cameco Skating Parties.

Meewasin continued to provide natural and cultural education programs to school students and the general public at Beaver Creek Conservation Area and the Meewasin Valley Centre. During this fiscal year this included the 2nd year pilot of a new interpretive cross-country ski program at Beaver Creek Conservation Area, and the 15th year of offering interpretive canoe tours in our ten-passenger voyageur clipper canoes on the South Saskatchewan River. Again, like the skating rink, these programs were free of charge to any non-profit group who programmed for youth and families.

This past year we added interpretive signage along the Meewasin Trail. Our Affinity Credit Union valley wide clean-ups counted more than 27,500 volunteers. In early June, we honoured our Meewasin Founders partnering with the Trans Canada Trail in celebration of International

Trails Day. And in late June, more than 700 participated in our annual Plant-A-Tree Dedication.

In July, we contracted Fast Consulting to conduct our five-year independent public opinion survey and found Meewasin had a 90% approval rating with the Saskatoon general public. During this time we worked on our visual identity and trail branding, and we assessed our trails.

In September, we celebrated the Meewasin Trail extension to the new South Bridge on the southeast side, while we launched an \$8 million capital campaign to extend our 64 km of trails another 16 km to Wanuskewin Heritage Park in the northwest and Chief Whitecap Park in the southeast. Having nearly completed River Landing, we continued to modify our Conservation Zone requirements while we worked with community groups and the city to identify new areas needing conservation, including a continued interest in the Northeast Swale where we continue to believe in protecting biodiversity and no net loss of habitat.

With all of this, we launched a new website, honed our skills in social media and consulted with our many stakeholders to complete a strategic plan for the next ten years, 2014-2024.

However, despite the positive nature of the foregoing, the accolades afforded Meewasin through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference hosted in Saskatoon, a continued record of annual awards, the latest

being the Tourism of Saskatchewan *Land of Living Skies* Award, Meewasin continues to be concerned about our statutory funding that has not kept pace with inflation. Since inception 35 years ago, our mandate has expanded significantly along with the population we serve.

This will have an impact on the future of Meewasin as we know it.

We are concerned reductions may affect one or all of our conservation, development or education deliverables in a major way. This is the reality of Meewasin's future. The province has acknowledged our concern and is conducting a funding review that will be completed in the next year. We are hopeful that this will result in a positive outcome for Meewasin.

We are all guardians of this precious resource of Meewasin that was created some 35 years ago by wise people with great vision. The return on investment over Meewasin's life span has been significant. Of \$109 million Meewasin has spent in the past 35 years, \$43 million or 40% has come from non-statutory funding sources (fund development). The return to the taxpayer has been significant.

Meewasin has always worked to balance a conserved river valley for free public access, a river valley developed with accessible trails, alternate transportation routes, amenities such as benches and water fountains, and educational programs that focus on the cultural and natural history of the river valley. If we want

this to continue, It is important that Meewasin statutory funding concerns be recognized so that Meewasin can continue as an effective non-profit organization. We encourage you to use whatever resources you have to support Meewasin. ♦



**Above: Meewasin Honours Founders** - International Trails Day - June 2013. LtoR: Former Mayor Cliff Wright, Former Meewasin Chair Peggy McKercher, Former Premier of Saskatchewan Roy Romanow.

**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 Province of Saskatchewan, and the University of Saskatchewan) have chosen to 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.

#### **Meewasin's Jurisdiction:**

Meewasin centres 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, the university lands, canoe launches, community links and more than 64 kilometres of Meewasin Trail. Including the South Saskatchewan River, there are more than 65 square kilometres (25 square miles) in the Conservation Zone.

#### **Our Mission Statement:**

To ensure a healthy and vibrant river valley with a balance between human use and conservation, and to conserve the natural and heritage resources of the river valley for present and future generations.



# Operations

## Meewasin Board of Directors



Chair, Jack Vicq



Darwin Anderson



Mayor Don Atchison



Ilene Busch-Vishniac



Charlie Clark



Randy Fernets



Marion Ghiglione



Lloyd Isaak



Zach Jeffries



Mairin Loewen



Brent Martian



Roger Parent



Colin Tennent

## 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 of Meewasin.

### Development Review Committee

The Development Review Committee is 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 Terry Frank, Moir Haug, Jim McEwen, Elisabeth Miller, Beatrice

Regnier, Anna Ringstrom, Bill Schaffel, Mitch Strocen, and Doug Tastad.

### Resource Conservation Advisory Committee

The Resource Conservation Advisory Committee advises the Meewasin Board in its work to ensure the health of the Meewasin Valley, and the conservation of its natural and critical assets. Committee members were Darwin Anderson, Peter Goode, Margaret Hendry, Peggy Sarjeant, Jan Shadick, Toddi Steelman, Brad Ashdown, Tammy Knuttila, and Gary Wobeser.

### Design Advisory Committee

The Design Advisory Committee assists the Meewasin Board in its work to provide professional and unbiased recommendations regarding the acceptability of proposed improvements within the Meewasin Valley. Committee members were Danny Gray, Bianca Hilbert, Brent Martian, John Penner, Anna Ringstrom, Genevieve Russell, and Natalie Walliser.

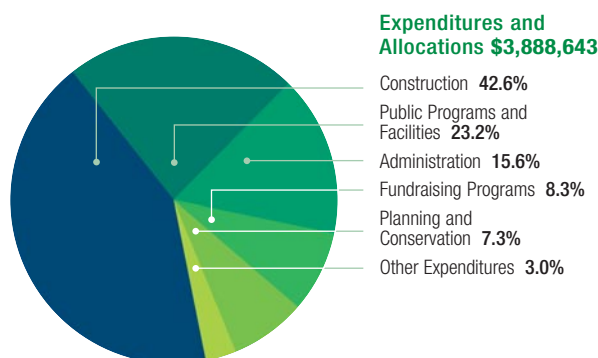
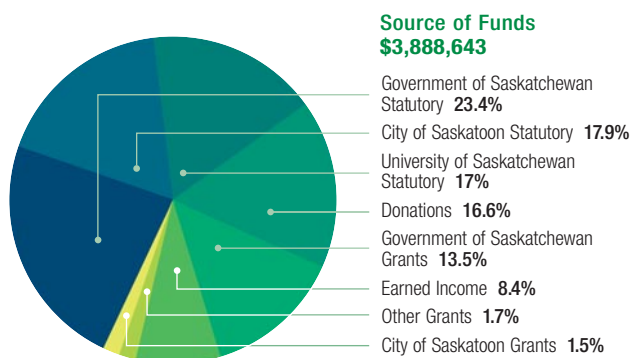
### Education Advisory Committee

The Education Advisory Committee advises the Meewasin Board on its policy development in education. Committee members were Max Abraham, Brendan Bitz, Elan Ballantyne, Bruce Bradshaw, Cindy Coffin, Corinne Daelick, Melanie Elliott, Marion Ghiglione, Scott Whiting, Lis Mack, and Maurice Postnikoff.

*Below: Chair Jack Vicq presents Deborah Apps, President & CEO Trans Canada Trail, with Meewasin Matters Capital Campaign sculpture. Forged by Rob Sexauer from Dragonfly Artistic Metals with metal harvested from the Traffic Bridge, the sculpture represents the river valley between Wanuskewin and Chief Whitecap Park. October 2013.*



## Meewasin Financial Highlights as of March 31, 2014



### Retirement of Chair Jack Vicq

Meewasin regrettably received the resignation of Chair Jack Vicq from the Board effective June 30, 2014. Bringing an extensive background in education, business governance, public finance and community involvement, Mr. Vicq has served on the Board for more than eight years as a University of Saskatchewan representative, the latter four years as Chair. Well-liked and respected by all and having provided excellent leadership, Jack and his wife Sylvia have been major donors to Meewasin. The Meewasin Linkage Committee, made up of a representative from each of the participating parties, City of Saskatoon, Province of Saskatchewan and University of Saskatchewan, has begun the process to select a new Chair.

### International Trails Day

International Trails Day is an annual celebration of recreation trails to promote trail development, the use of trails and the healthy lifestyle trails encourage.

Meewasin celebrated International Trails Day the weekend of June 1, 2013, and it proved to be a great success with more than 13,000 visits to the Meewasin Trail. Meewasin organized a number of walking, running, and rolling events along the Meewasin Trail, as well as hosting a Trails Day Headquarters in Friendship Park.

Programming in Friendship Park ran from 12–4 p.m. and included formal recognition of Meewasin Founders represented by former Meewasin Chair Peggy McKercher, former Premier Roy Romanow and former Mayor Cliff Wright. Trans Canada Trails President and CEO, Deborah Apps, attended and participated in many of the events including the early morning Zumba Dancing at River Landing and the Saturday afternoon program in Friendship Park where she brought greetings from TCT. Participating in a number of the media events, Deborah fostered a positive relationship between Meewasin and the Trans Canada Trail organization.

### Meewasin Matters Trails Campaign Friends & Family Celebration

As part of the International Trails Day celebrations, the Trails Campaign Friends and Family Subcommittee headed by former Meewasin CEO Susan Lamb and former Meewasin Board Member Patricia Roe organized a reception on Friday, May 31. It was attended by "Friends of Meewasin". A message from the Campaign Co-Chairs Darlene Bessey and Ken Pontikes urged attendees to support the Meewasin Matters Capital Campaign for the purpose of trail development. ♦

### The Meewasin Endowment Fund

is managed by the Saskatoon Community Foundation and as of December 31, 2013 stood at \$678,196, the Wes Bolstad Fund at \$16,700 and the Susan Lamb Endowment Fund at \$19,221. Audited financial statements are available upon request.

### Below: International Trails Day

Zumba Dancing at River Landing - CTV Reporter Stephanie Massicotte, Instructor Alicia Seidle, TCT President & CEO Deborah Apps & Meewasin Staff and Construction Crew – June 2013.



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## 2013-2014 Conservation, Education & Development Highlights

Each year Meewasin is guided by Raymond Moriyama's 100-Year Plan drafted in 1979, the foundation document for the Meewasin Development Plan today. Meewasin initiatives strive toward the outcomes of health, fit, balance and vibrancy.



*Dr. Raymond Moriyama, Architect*

## Conservation

### Meewasin's Mandate

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

- 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.

Meewasin fulfills this mandate by undertaking development review, securing lands of interest, and by nurturing conservation, development and education.

### Development Review

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

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

- Consistency with the Meewasin Development Plan;
- Conservation, preservation and interpretation of significant natural habitat;
- Slope stability and good drainage practices;
- Design aesthetics complementary to the natural setting of the river valley; and,
- Provision for public access.

In the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014, Meewasin reviewed eight proposed improvements to the river valley Conservation Zone. The applications included the following:





*Geum triflorum*, (three-flowered avens, old man's whiskers, or prairie smoke) is a spring perennial herbaceous plant of North America from northern Canada to California and east to New York. Some Plateau Indian tribes used three-flowered avens to treat tuberculosis.

The descriptive name, *Prairie Smoke*, comes from its unusual feathery mauve seed heads that resemble plumes of smoke.

- Saskatchewan Crescent & 17th Street East Slope Remediation;
- Aspen Ridge Neighbourhood Improvements;
- University Heights Sector Plan;
- Commemorations & Memorials in Riverbank Parks;
- The Banks – Parcel “A” River Landing Phase II;
- SaskTel Cell Tower and Small Equipment Building – Forestry Farm;
- SaskTel Cell Tower and Small Equipment Building – J.F. Cairns Ball Field;
- Spadina Lift Station Bypass Building; and
- War of 1812 Monument.



## Conservation *continued*

*Below: Viceroy butterfly in Snowberry. The Viceroy (Limenitis archippus) is a North American butterfly with a range from the Northwest Territories along the eastern edges of the Cascade Range and Sierra Nevada mountains, southwards into central Mexico.*

*Note: It is different than the Monarch butterfly found on page 20.*

*Symphoricarpos, with common names in English of Snowberry, Waxberry or Ghostberry, is a small genus of about 15 species of deciduous shrubs in the honeysuckle family.*

### Securing Lands of Interest

The original concept for Meewasin was to create a ribbon of green with the river as a spine. The 2009 State of the Valley assessment highlighted the addition of 9 kilometres of publicly-accessible shoreline to the Meewasin Valley in the preceding five years. As well, 227 hectares (561 acres) of habitat were added, creating wildlife corridors, buffers for source drinking water and improved opportunities to experience a natural setting.

Meewasin continues to seek opportunities to secure long-term stewardship of land with conservation value. Stewardship may be secured through public ownership or conservation easements.

### Enhancing Biodiversity

Meewasin strives to protect and enhance biodiversity in the Meewasin Valley through grazing, prescribed controlled burns, removal of exotic species and noxious weeds, clean-ups, seed collection and planting of native grasses and wildflowers.

### Valley Stewardship

Many volunteer groups including the Saskatoon Nature Society, school students, corporate volunteers and others assist with the conservation work. These volunteer stewards usually come as part of a group with their own supervisor to work with our valley stewards.

### Northeast Swale

Saskatoon's Northeast Swale is an ancient river channel. It begins at Peturrson's Ravine and carves a 26 km long path adjacent 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, the Swale supports historically significant natural and cultural resources. Culturally, the Swale contains a remnant section of the Moose Woods-Batoche Trail, which played an important role in the settlement of Saskatoon and area in the later 1800s before the railway was extended to Saskatoon. The Batoche Trail was also used during the Saskatchewan Resistance of 1885. Trail remnants are still visible in the Swale and provide an opportunity for interpretation as they provide insight into the transportation systems used during various time periods and by different groups in the area including First Nations, Métis and early Saskatoon-era settlers.

The Northeast Swale also contains limestone quarries and kilns. The glacial river that formed the Swale deposited large limestone boulders which were used for building parts of the





University of Saskatchewan. Limestone boulders are used in building for mortar, for the actual stone and for fertilizer. Boulders with intact splitting pins and drill holes can be found within the Swale. Two limestone kilns have also been found just north of Petursson's Ravine.

The Greater Swale which includes land outside Saskatoon, also contains signs of human habitation over the past centuries with the site of the telegraph line that linked North America to Europe by way of Russia, the site of the old town of Clarkboro, and tipi rings from the encampments of the original residents of the Saskatoon area.

Ecologically, the Northeast Swale is a beautiful site abundant with biodiversity. Natural resources include the following rare, endangered and culturally significant species: Plants – Crowfoot Violet, Western Red Lily, Narrow-leaved Water Plantain, Sweet Grass; Birds – Sprague's Pipit, Barn Swallow, Loggerhead Shrike, Horned Grebe, Short-eared Owl, Common Nighthawk; and Amphibians – Northern Leopard Frog. In addition, more than 200 plant species, more than 100 birds, mammals (such as moose, deer and beaver), amphibians, reptiles and insects are present in the Swale on a regular basis.

#### *Meewasin Valley Summer*

*Students L-R: Taylor MacPherson, Eryn Tomlinson, Curtis Theoret, Brandi Postma – Northeast Swale – Summer 2013.*





## Conservation *continued*

These natural and cultural resources are managed within Meewasin's Conservation Zone. Meewasin is currently preparing a Master Plan for the Northeast Swale. It shall include the interpretation and education of these resources. There will be opportunities for public consultation in the future. For more information please visit Meewasin's website at **meewasin.com**.

### Environment Canada and the Northeast Swale

In 2009, the Environment Canada EcoAction program provided Meewasin with funds to manage the Northeast Swale over a two-year period. With Government of Canada EcoAction support and with the help of volunteers, Meewasin undertook a program of habitat improvement that included the following:

- Removal of (exotic) non-native species;
- Seeding and planting native species in disturbed areas and road right-of-ways;
- Restoration of wetlands;
- Clean-up of illegally dumped materials;
- Restriction of all-terrain vehicle access;
- Development of interpretive signage;
- Posting warning signage at wildlife corridors;

- Construction of wildlife friendly fencing;
- Implementation of a communication strategy enlisting residents and contractors working on adjacent neighbourhood development;
- Development of a resource management plan;
- Completion of an EcoBlitz to gain knowledge about the resources to advocate for protection and active management;
- Supporting the creation of a volunteer group know as the Swalewatchers; and
- Creation and promotion of a documentary about the EcoBlitz for public education purposes: *The Meewasin EcoBlitz of the Northeast Swale*.

### The Meewasin EcoBlitz of the Northeast Swale Documentary

Written and narrated by Meewasin's Doug Porteous and produced by Tom Simes of Tommy Book Creations, the 24-minute documentary has been shown at movie houses in Saskatoon, the Robin Smith Memorial Lecture and nationally on Shaw Cable for the 2013 Earth Day programming. The trailer can be found on YouTube by searching Bioblitz, Saskatoon, Meewasin.

### River Users Meeting

In the spring of 2013, Meewasin coordinated a meeting of a variety of river users, as well as representatives from the city, fire and police who

*Students Water Study at  
Saskatoon's Northeast Swale.*







*The white throated sparrow is a native bird species that is commonly found in the river valley and is included in the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) study.*

met to discuss the summer river recreation. Among topics discussed were the following:

- Infractions occurring on the river should be reported to the Saskatoon Police Service traffic unit. Witnesses are advised to log all relevant information and descriptions of the vessels involved.
- Saskatoon Police Service has the authority to close the river to all vessels in the event of unsafe conditions.
- Dragon Boat Festival and River Lights Festival are partnering in 2013.
- Transport Canada announced that they are willing to help with signage and regulations reminding that the river is a shared waterway for use by all.

## Strategic Plan 2014-2024

In 2013, Meewasin undertook an extensive process with stakeholders to develop a strategic plan that will guide Meewasin over the next ten years. The plan will enable Meewasin to reflect its core mandate, its past work and to consider emerging opportunities. The final 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, articulates three major themes and identifies key directions to achieve the vision. It is also supported by a 5-year Operational Plan that provides greater implementation considerations. The final plan will be approved by the Meewasin Board of Directors and announced publicly in June 2014. ♦

*Below: MAPS Bird Banding.*





## Education

### Conservation of the Meewasin Valley's Heritage Resources

Meewasin offers a number of educational programs that focus on conservation of the heritage resources of the valley, facilitate the appropriate use and enjoyment of those resources, and allow the public to experience and learn about them.

These programs include stewardship and celebration, river festivals, in-services, Trail Ambassadors and volunteers, interpretive canoe tours and partnering with other organizations that have similar goals. Meewasin accomplishes this through our two interpretive centres, the Meewasin Valley Centre and Beaver Creek Conservation Area, off-site programs, publications, audio-visual resources, a website (meewasin.com), media commercials, public service announcements and appearances at special functions.

### The Meewasin Valley Centre (MVC)

The Meewasin Valley Centre focuses on the original areas of urban development in Saskatoon. It is a place to learn about the Meewasin Trail, Saskatoon history, the South Saskatchewan River, and the future of the Meewasin Valley. In 2013-14, the centre had 12,027 visitors who toured the facility, sought information or participated in the interpretive programming ranging from the annual Founder's Day celebrations to three evenings of PotashCorp River Cinema.

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 spring contest.

Meewasin staff supported other organizations 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 programs to all Grade 3 students in Saskatoon. Participation totaled 2055 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 or culturally special. Including visitations to the centre of 12,057, and the Affinity Credit Union Clean-up Campaign of 27,500, the Meewasin Valley Centre totaled 39,527 participants in its 2013-14 programs.

### Meewasin Affinity Credit Union Clean-up Campaign

2013 marked the 34rd annual clean-up campaign. The campaign began April 19th when snow was still on the ground. Schools, community groups and individuals braved the weather and carried out their clean-up efforts around the river valley, city parks and neighbourhoods. They continued cleaning until the end of May. We had a record number of participants this campaign totaling more than 27,500.

In addition to the individuals, families and school groups who participated in this program, a special thank you is extended to the corporate groups who also cleaned along the river bank, including Cameco, Federated Co-op, BHP Billiton, Brainsport, Plastic Smart Saskatoon, and SaskEnergy. Thank you to our major sponsor Affinity Credit Union which has committed \$10,000 a year for a number of years to be lead sponsor of the annual clean-up.

### Pelican Watch

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.

*Below: Pelican at the Weir*



*Above: Interpreter Kat Eliason interprets the development of Saskatoon with Grade 3 students - 2013.*

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 metres. 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 140 km round trip daily. In late fall, the Saskatoon pelicans migrate to sites in California, Florida, Mexico and even Guatemala.

This was the 18th year of the Meewasin Pelican Watch Contest. Previous arrival times have been between April 4, 2012 and April 18, 2003. The first pelican to touch down between the CP Bridge and the weir did so Monday, April 15, 2013, at 3:40 p.m., as observed by the official spotters from the Saskatoon Nature Society.

Grand prize winner of a mountain bike courtesy of Realty Executives Saskatoon was Henos Ghebrezghabier Grade 5, St. Augustine School, with an arrival time guess of Monday, April 15th, 2013 of 3:40 p.m. More than 2500 entries were received from schools and the

general public. Thank you to Realty Executives, Don's Photo Shop, White Pelican Bed & Breakfast Saskatoon, Homestead Ice Cream, Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Saskatchewan, Pelican Market and the Meewasin Gift Shop for donations of prizes.

## Beaver Creek Conservation Area (BCCA)

Located 13 km south of Saskatoon off Highway #219, Beaver Creek Conservation Area was established in 1979. An 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 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 interpretive centre and staff provide opportunities to discover nature during all four seasons along a selection of nature trails.

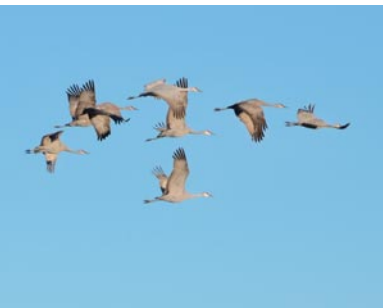
*Top: Tree Planting BCCA.*

*Bottom: Beaver Creek Conservation Area's Red Trail Bridge – University of Saskatchewan Students – Fall 2013.*





## Education *continued*



**Top: Monarch Butterfly** – Note:

*It is different than the Viceroy butterfly found on p. 10 – Beaver Creek Conservation Area – Summer 2013.*

**Middle: Sand Hill Cranes,**  
*Beaver Creek Conservation Area - Summer 2013.*

**Bottom: Saskatoon Natural Grasslands** –  
*Mother Teresa School.*

BCCA continued to provide interpretive programs to Grade 5 students in 2013-14 from Saskatoon and area schools totaling 2,631 students. General public visitation totaled 12,435 guests who sought information, explored the site on their own or who participated in public programming that included Canada Day Heritage Hoopla, interpretive canoe tours, come-and-go discovery stations, cross-country skiing, and self-guided trail activities. Including all programs, visitation to Beaver Creek Conservation Area totaled 19,902 visitors.

### Chip's Lodge and Cross-Country Skiing

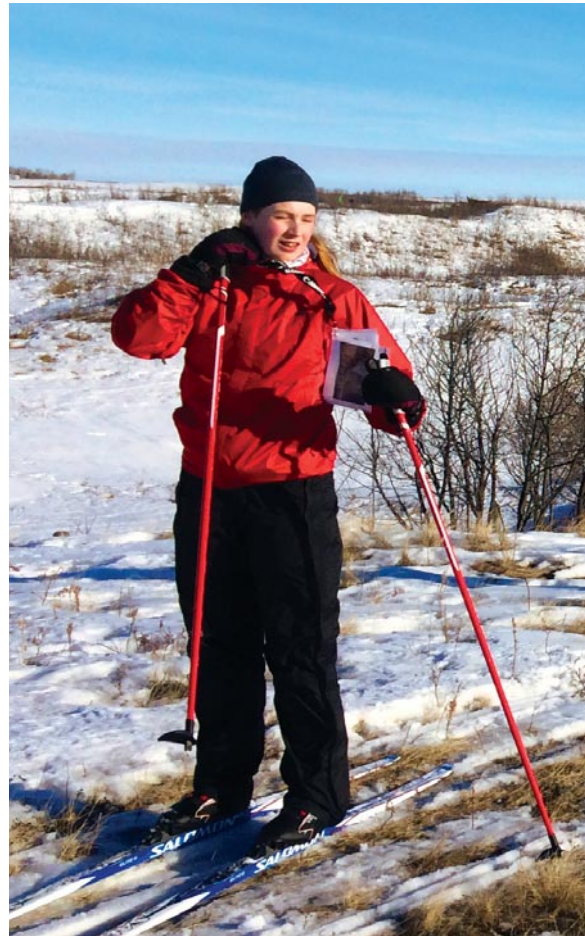
Since 1979, cross-country skiing has been encouraged at Beaver Creek Conservation Area, but never facilitated. In 2010, with the building of the new Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink warm-up facility, the old warm-up facility was moved to the Exhibition Grounds where it sat for two years. In late fall 2011, the building was moved to BCCA for a three-year pilot to provide additional facility space for programming and as a warm-up facility for winter activity.

Placed beside the present interpretive centre, on already disturbed ground, the old shack was refurbished. Canon Evergreen provided \$5,000 to re-vegetate the site. The Saskatoon Community Foundation provided a Quality of Life Grant of \$5,000 to go towards the purchase of 36 pairs of cross-country skis. A donation of \$10,000 from the estate of Carmelle Toner was used to support the development of year-round programming.

During the winter of 2012-13, Meewasin conducted three cross-country ski pilots with students from the Greater Catholic and Saskatoon Public School systems. This past winter of 2013-14 ten pilots were conducted totaling 195 participants.

### Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS)

Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) is a bird monitoring program established



by the Institute of Bird Population based in California. Data collected from more than 500 participating sites throughout Canada, Mexico and the continental United States are used to understand trends in land bird populations. Meewasin's Beaver Creek Conservation Area (BCCA) is one of three monitoring stations operating in Saskatchewan.

Meewasin did not participate in MAPS in the summer of 2013. However, the summer of 2014 program is well underway.

### The Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (SNG)

The Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (SNG) is a 13.8 hectare (34 acre) parcel of native Saskatchewan grassland persisting in a natural condition. It lies within the area known as





Silverspring (located in the northeast sector of Saskatoon, 8 kms 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 glaciers receded.

Thank you to the education 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, Meewasin, and the stewardship of the Silverspring community, the SNG continues to provide habitat, aesthetic and recreational opportunities, soil protection and a gene pool for

future medical and agricultural needs.

Coordinated by Melanie Elliott, the University of Saskatchewan Continuing and Distance Education conducted Grade 2 hikes at the SNG: May and June, 21 classes, 704 children and adults; and, September and October, 27 classes, 800 children and adults. In total 1504 students learned that the disappearance of native prairie means the disappearance of thousands of years of natural history. This resource can never be replaced. The only way that the area can be conserved is with the support and ownership of the community. The students learned that as the decision makers of the future, it was important to take care of the grasslands and other natural areas afforded them and it was important to educate others of their value.



*Top and Bottom: Cross Country Skiing – Beaver Creek Conservation Area – Winter 2013.*



## Education *continued*

### U of S Ecology Camp for Kids

July and August, 177 children enrolled in the U of S Ecology Camp for Kids. They toured the SNG, Northeast Swale, and/or Beaver Creek Conservation Area. With the support of Meewasin the young stewards planted vegetation plugs and participated in seed collection.

### PotashCorp River Cinema

PotashCorp River Cinema ran for three nights August 2, 3 and 4, 2013 in Friendship Park. This

was the second year that the outdoor family movie event had a major sponsor in its 19-year history. The PotashCorp sponsorship allowed Meewasin to contract Fresh Air Cinema and its large screen and projection equipment. The visitation for the three nights totaled 1,150 patrons.

### 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 paddling out onto the South Saskatchewan River for two to three hours allowing the paddlers to experience the river of the early voyageurs. Adult groups usually paddle upriver to the Berry Barn, while youth groups canoe both in the creek and on the river, stopping on a sandbar for interpretive games and a snack. Paddles, lifejackets, canoes and safety training are provided by Meewasin National Lifeguard, Paddle Canada certified interpreters. Adult charters cost \$200 per canoe. Non-profit groups may access the program free of charge using

**Right: Meewasin PotashCorp**  
River Cinema – Friendship Park  
– August 2013.



**Below: Mule Deer –**  
Beaver Creek Conservation  
Area – Winter 2014.





sponsorship money from ASUPCA (Association of Saskatchewan Urban Parks & Conservation Agencies), the Saskatoon Community Foundation, and Meewasin.

During the summer of 2013, the program faced many weather related challenges; however, canoe guides were able to turn them into opportunities. Despite high waters Gillian May and Andrew Rapin were able to take groups up the creek for a special look at the conservation area from the beaver's point of view. There were 543 participants on 119 tours, much higher than would normally be expected for a year with such high river flows.

Non-profit groups that received the tours at no cost included: Saskatoon French School, Saskatoon Tourism Media Group, Yellow Quill First Nation School, Strathclair School (Manitoba), U of S Extension Ecology Camp, the Ready Program, Ebenezer Baptist Youth Group, Recreation Youth Resource Centre, Egadz, Open Doors Society, Saskatoon Zoo Camp, Radius Community Centre and the Calder Centre.

## Conservation Award 2013

Bert Weichel was the 2013 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.

Bert is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan and principal in the environmental consulting partnership of Johnson and Weichel. For the past three decades he has volunteered to promote environmental sustainability. He has served on the board of the Saskatchewan Environmental Society, often as president. He was a member of the Saskatchewan Round Table on Environment and the Economy, and the Saskatchewan Environmental Assessment Review Commission. He was a founding director of the Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council and chaired its board for 20 years. In 1998 Bert joined the board of the Saskatchewan Association for Resource Recovery Corporation and currently serves as its secretary-treasurer.

As an environmental consultant, Bert has worked throughout the province in the areas of natural heritage protection, land and resource management, and park and protected areas planning. In the Saskatoon vicinity his work has contributed to Wanuskewin, the Silverspring Prairie and the Northeast Swale.

To recognize his achievement Bert chose to receive a tree through the Meewasin Plant-A-Tree program dedicated in memory of "an inspirational teacher of his and many others", the late Marjorie Benson. ♦



*Top: Sheep Graze Beaver Creek Conservation Area to promote biodiversity – Summer 2013.*

*Bottom: Conservation Award Recipient Bert Weichel.*





# Development

## Managing Resources in Meewasin Valley

The work of the Design & Development Department this past fiscal year was to manage the resources in the river valley. These included the following:

### River Landing

- Ongoing construction at River Landing Phase 2 (west of the Senator Sid Buckwold Bridge). The stairs and the ramps beside the old A.E. Cole pumphouse were completed and opened for public use;
- Commencement on the adult fitness area in Victoria Park;
- Decommissioning of containment cells for soil testing; and
- Ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the River Landing bioswale.

### Trails

- Northwest from Adilman to Kinnear Avenues – the landscape restoration adjacent to the trail was complete. A new drinking fountain was installed;
- Southeast from Gabriel Dumont Park to the Circle Drive South Bridge – the trail connection was completed and opened during the winter;
- Southeast from Circle Drive South Bridge to Chief Whitecap Park - ongoing coordination with SaskPower to determine an optimal route through the site; and
- Data collection and assessment for all sections of existing Meewasin Trail, to draft a trail study to report on trail conditions and recommend improvements based on existing condition, use, safety and projected use.

### Horticulture/Construction/Design

- Conducting trail counts and user surveys;
- Installing site furnishings (e.g. benches) and trailhead signs;

- Supporting the Meewasin Plant-A-Tree program, installing bricks, plaques on benches; seating nodes and planting trees;
- Re-vegetating a small section of riverbank slope in Cosmopolitan Park that was disturbed due to sewer repairs;
- Maintaining new plant material at the Thompson Belvedere;
- Enhancing river valley views and pruning at Cosmopolitan Park;
- Beaver Creek trail edge plug planting, bridge restoration and aspen grove planting;
- Beaver Creek wayfinding signage design;
- St. Joseph School site resource management work at the new garden plots;
- Planting bed for TD Bank / Tree Canada stewardship at Peggy McKercher Conservation Area;
- Northeast Swale sourcing plugs for eco-grant;
- Stewardship groups plantings: Grade 4 and Lion's Club;
- Greenhouse roof replacement;
- Improvements to drainage at the Meewasin Nursery and Shop site;
- Mendel site bench upgrades;
- Robin Smith Memorial Garden (Forestry Farm) bench replacement;
- Maple Grove site clean-up following river flooding; and
- Maple Grove demolition of the train shed.

## Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @PotashCorp Plaza

With the arrival of early snow the rink building was moved from the Preston Avenue shop to Kiwanis Memorial Park on November 12th. The widening and re-aligning of the entrance into the Preston compound made the building easier to maneuver and transport.



*Top: Manager of Design and Development Alan Otterbein and Meewasin staff inspect the southeast trail connection to the Circle Drive South Bridge – October 2013.*



*Bottom: Wayfinding River Landing.*





#### **Meewasin Staff October**

**2013. BLR:** Teri Danchak , Lloyd Isaak, Wayne Stus, Erin Akins, Skye Ketilson, Doug Porteous, Brenda Kramarchuk, Alan Otterbein, Luc Delanoy, Andrew Whiting, Fred Prokuski. **FLR:** Andrea Ziegler, Kat Eliason, Sarina Gersher, Lis Mack, Sue Lessmeister, Jamie Harder, Kathy Thomas, Elizabeth Bekolay, Calvin Young, Amanda Bullin. **Missing:** Gillian May, Betty Calvert, Tara Akins, Mike Velonas, Nola Stein, Lennox Saunders and Gwen Charman.



Cameco Family Day @PotashCorp Plaza – February 2014



## Development *continued*



**Right: Cameco Family Fun Day**  
Volunteer Cameco Staff wearing  
Family Fun Day Balloon Hats –  
February 2013.

The Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @PotashCorp Plaza opened to the public on November 30, 2013, the earliest day on record, just one day earlier than last season. The rink closed March 11, 2014 mainly due to a water-main break on Spadina as the Saskatoon weather stayed well below freezing until April 1. Meewasin counted a total of 21,000 skaters, 9,000 fewer than last year. This was mainly due to the extreme cold weather as the rink was closed for a total of 16 days, 12 more than the previous year.

The Tim Hortons Twinkle Lights Ceremony kicked off the skating season on the evening of December 11th with the lighting of the tree. The PotashCorp Skating Party, the first day of PotashCorp Winter Shine, was held on a cold Sunday, January 26, 2014, and had approximately 350 participants. The Cameco

Family Day Skating Party was held on a warmer Monday, February 17, 2014, and counted approximately 2500 participants.

Despite the cold weather, bookings totaled 45, the same as last year. These included groups from in and out of town including school groups, church groups, student groups from the university, international exchange programs, birthday parties and wedding parties. One challenge the rink staff had this year was to coordinate the bookings due to the many cancellations and postponements.

The Meewasin rink does not charge for skating or for the use of skates. Donations this season totaled \$2098, compared to \$2992 last season. 50 pairs of skates were loaned to Credit Union Centre for their staff skating party. In return, they donated \$200 to Meewasin. ♦



## Fund Development

Meewasin is a registered charity. Approximately 35% of its revenue for 2013-14 came from non-statutory sources to support conservation, development and education initiatives. Some reasons to support Meewasin include the following:

- If you wanted a pill to cure 70% of ills in today's society, it would be exercise in a clean nurturing environment;
- More than 90% of the general public in Saskatoon and area support the work of Meewasin and want it to continue;
- Of the more than \$109 million that Meewasin has spent in conservation, education, park and trail development, and delivering conservation programs for the past 35 years, only 18% or approximately \$20 million has come from the local tax payer;
- The Meewasin Valley concept is known and studied around the world as to what a community can do to conserve a river valley for the purposes of health and enjoyment; and

- Meewasin has been recognized internationally on numerous occasions, three times a finalist for the prestigious Thiess Riverprize awarded annually in Brisbane, Australia.

### Meewasin Matters Capital Campaign

September 2013, Meewasin launched an \$8 million capital campaign for the purpose of expanding the Meewasin Trail in the northwest to Wanuskewin Heritage Park, and in the southeast to Chief Whitecap Park. This will add 16 kms to the Meewasin Trail system as well as the Trans Canada Trail which runs along the Meewasin Trail through Saskatoon. As of March 31, 2014, \$6,909,253 of the \$8 million or 86% of the amount needed to complete the project had been committed. Thank you to Darlene Bessey and Ken Pontikes, Co-Chairs of the Meewasin Matters Capital Campaign, and the many donors and sponsors who continue to keep the Meewasin dream alive.



**Above: Tear drop banner**  
developed for Meewasin  
Matters Capital Campaign.

**Right: PotashCorp's Lee**  
Knafelc, Vice-President Human  
Resources & Administration  
PotashCorp presents \$500,000  
cheque to Meewasin Matters  
Capital Campaign Co-Chairs  
Darlene Bessey & Ken Pontikes  
– October 2013.





## Fund Development *continued*

**Top Left:** Rotary Club of Saskatoon President Karen Jones and Queen Elizabeth School- International Day of Peace Dedication September 2013.

**Top Right:** Plant-A-Tree Chair Wayne Dyck speaks at Meewasin Plant-A-Tree Dedication – Western Development Museum, Boomtown June 2013.



### 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. Each year the Rotarians place brick(s) at the Peace Plaza in Saskatoon's Rotary Park and dedicate them at a ceremony marking the International Day of



Peace on or near September 21. These double-size red granite bricks recognize the contribution of the Peace laureates, inspire others to follow in their footsteps and promote the Peace Plaza as a destination for citizens and tourists. To date, the Rotarians have recognized Mother Teresa, Lester B. Pearson, Desmond Tutu, the Red Cross of 1917, and in 2013 the UN Commission for Refugees 1954 sponsored by Asit & Ila Sarkar. The dedication in September 2014 is for a brick donated by Anne and Doug Porteous honouring the late Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Clerk, recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize 1993.

### Plant-A-Tree Dedication

The 27th annual Meewasin Plant-A-Tree Dedication was held Saturday, June 15th, 1:00 p.m. in Boomtown at the Western Development Museum Saskatoon.

The Plant-A-Tree, Memorial Forest and brick/bench sponsorship programs are several successful fund-raising activities at Meewasin 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 3760 trees and shrubs in the valley that have been sponsored by individual donors and groups. Since 2000 there have been 145 donations to the Memorial Forest in Gabriel Dumont Park. The 2013 program included the sponsorship recognition of 76 trees and shrubs, 14 Meewasin Trail benches, 10 bricks at the Rotary International Peace Plaza, 9 bricks at River Landing, 9 bricks at the Saskatchewan Road Runners Seating Node and a bequest of \$10,000 from the estate of the late Carmelle Toner to Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

The event this past year featured the Ecole Henry Kelsey Grade 5 choir and the 96th Highlands Pipe & Drum Band. ♦



**Above:** Mike Delaine Regional Vice President of RBC presents Meewasin's Chair Jack Vicq \$30,000 to support Meewasin RBC Blue Water conservation in Saskatoon's Northeast Swale – Summer 2013



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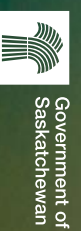
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