



A World-Class Corridor. Naturally Beautiful, Uniquely Ours.

2014 - 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Meewasin 

Message from the Acting Chair & CEO



Charlie Clark, Acting Chair



Lloyd Isaak, CEO

Front Cover: "Spring Morning on the Meewasin Trail" photo courtesy Karen Edwards

What Is Meewasin: Created in 1979 by an Act of the Province of Saskatchewan, Meewasin is a conservation organization dedicated to conserving the cultural and natural resources of the South Saskatchewan River Valley. It is the means by which the three participating parties (the City of Saskatoon, the Government of Saskatchewan, and the University of Saskatchewan) have chosen to 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 was created by Founders of great vision who adopted Moriyama's *Meewasin Valley Project 100-Year Conceptual Master Plan*. Meewasin is currently in the 36th year of this plan and is loved by the general public who take great pride in their Meewasin Valley; a collection of links and nodes hosting parks, conservation areas, canoe launches, back shore connections, interpretive centres, paths of history and more than 80 km of Meewasin Trail.

This past fiscal year, Meewasin completed the second year of the Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign for the purpose of raising \$8 million to extend the Meewasin Trail 8 km in the northwest and 7 km in the southeast. By March 31, 2015 Meewasin had reached 96% of its goal.

Meewasin completed its work at River Landing Phase 2 with an adult outdoor fitness centre, and extended the Meewasin Trail to Wanuskewin Heritage Park with the official opening planned for early June 2015. Wayfinding signage was installed at Beaver Creek Conservation Area, and a number of other areas in the Conservation Zone that required attention were upgraded. A major review of existing Meewasin Trail infrastructure was also completed.

Meewasin's Planning and Conservation Department launched Meewasin's Strategic Plan, a vision for the next ten years. Meewasin continued to partner with the City of Saskatoon to develop the Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan and continued to work on modifications to the Conservation Zone.

The third aspect to Meewasin's mandate of Conservation and Development is Education. This past year, Public

Programs had contact with more than 72,000 participants. This took place at our two interpretive centres: Beaver Creek Conservation Area and the Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre, as well as at other locations in the valley, on the Meewasin Trail, in the parks and through outreach programs. Thousands enjoyed Meewasin's new website and interacted with us on social media.

It was a good year for Meewasin but with many changes. Meewasin regrettably saw Chair Jack Vicq retire from the board on June 30, 2014. However, we were fortunate to have Vice Chair Councillor Charlie Clark take on the role in an acting capacity. Charlie is a longtime supporter of Meewasin who "walks the walk". He undertook the role of Meewasin Chair until a new Chair could be appointed. On April 10, 2015, Toddi Steelman was appointed as the 9th Chair of the Meewasin Board.

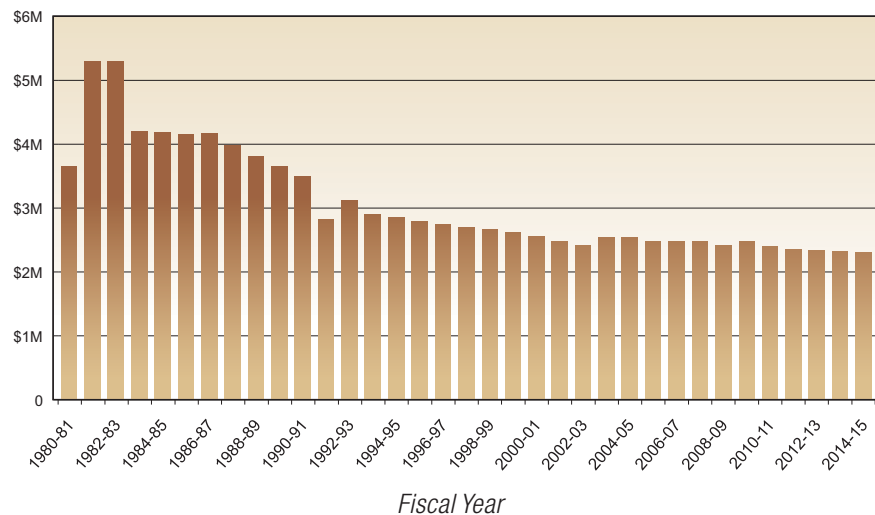
Meewasin had changes to other board positions as well and would like to extend a thank you to retiring board members: Jack Vicq, Ilene Busch-Vishniac, Randy Fernets and Marion Ghiglione. And in their place Meewasin welcomed new board members: Toddi Steelman, Gordon Barnhart, Leanne Nyirfa and Carmen Campbell.

Meewasin Funding Losing Pace

For Meewasin, it was a successful year, but one that continued to be fraught with concern. As has been reported in past annual reports, Meewasin's statutory funding has not kept pace with inflation. Meewasin continues to lose 1-2% of its purchasing power annually which affects Meewasin's ability to leverage outside support in the way of matching grants. Meewasin has

worked hard to communicate our funding dilemma to our participating parties and we were encouraged that the City of Saskatoon recognized our concern by providing a major funding increase for trail work. However, there is still concern that the levels of statutory funding received from the three participating parties have eroded our ability to meet future objectives. ♦

Statutory/Supplementary Funds to Meewasin Adjusted to Real Dollars (Millions) (CPI December)



Meewasin's Jurisdiction

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

Meewasin Appoints 9th Chair



Toddi Steelman

Toddi Steelman first joined Meewasin in November 2012, as a member of the Meewasin Conservation Advisory Committee. Steelman is the Executive Director of the School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) at the University of Saskatchewan. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from West Virginia University, a Master of Public Affairs from Princeton, and a Ph.D. from Duke University. She has

taught at both Princeton and Duke, as well as at the Universities of Colorado and North Carolina State. In 2008, Steelman was an associate professor and Fulbright Scholar at Simon Fraser University. She joined the School of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan in August 2012. She was appointed to the Meewasin Board as a University of Saskatchewan representative in July 2014. Steelman becomes the 9th Chair of the Meewasin Valley Authority.

As Meewasin's newly appointed 9th Chair, Steelman commented: "What really inspires me about the Meewasin Valley Authority as an organization is the dedication of many to protecting, maintaining and investing in the river valley – an area that is so integral to the quality of life enjoyed in Saskatoon. I am honoured with this appointment and look forward to working as board chair with the diverse groups that care deeply about Meewasin and its importance as the heart and beauty of our city."

Operations

Meewasin Board of Directors

**retired board members*

***retired committee members*

Staff photo: Front Row L-R: Andrea Ziegler, Kenton Lysak, Sarina Gersher, Amber Burton, Lis Mack, Sue Bouchard, Betty Calvert, Eryn Tomlinson, Alan Otterbein, Kathy Thomas, Wayne Stus.

Back Row L-R: Fred Prokuski, Nola Stein, Lloyd Isaak, Andrew Rapin, Doug Porteous, Calvin Young, Teresa Duerr, Brenda Kramarchuk, Renny Grilz, Madelyn Perkins, Mike Velonas, Gillian May, Lauren Achtemichuk, Reed Lewko, Lauren Dyck, Gwen Charman.

Missing: Andrew Whiting, Amanda Bullin, Kat Eliason, Jamie Harder, Lennox Saunders, and Matthew Unruh.



Right: Meewasin Valley Centre Interpretive Staff;

L-R: Amanda Bullin, Kat Eliason, Andrew Whiting.



Meewasin Board of Directors

Jack Vicq (Chair), Charlie Clark (Vice Chair), Darwin Anderson, Mayor Don Atchison, Gordon Barnhart, Ilene Busch-Vishniac*, Carmen Campbell, Randy Fernets*, Marion Ghiglione*, Zach Jeffries, Mairin Loewen, Brent Martian, Leanne Nyirfa, Roger Parent, Toddi Steelman, and Colin Tennent.

Meewasin Committees

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

Resource Conservation Advisory

The Resource Conservation Advisory Committee advises the Meewasin Board in its work to ensure the health of the Meewasin Valley. Committee members were Darwin Anderson (Chair), Peter Goode, Margaret Hendry, Peggy Sarjeant, Janine Shadick, Toddi Steelman** and Bert Weichel.

Development Review

The Development Review Committee is a statutory committee created under the Meewasin Valley Authority Act to provide professional and unbiased recommendations regarding the acceptability of

proposed improvements within the Meewasin Valley. Committee members were Terry Frank, Moir Haug**, Jim McEwen, Al Mickelson, Elisabeth Miller**, Beatrice Regnier (Vice Chair), Anna Ringstrom, Bill Schaffel, Mitch Strocen (Chair), and Ryan Walker.

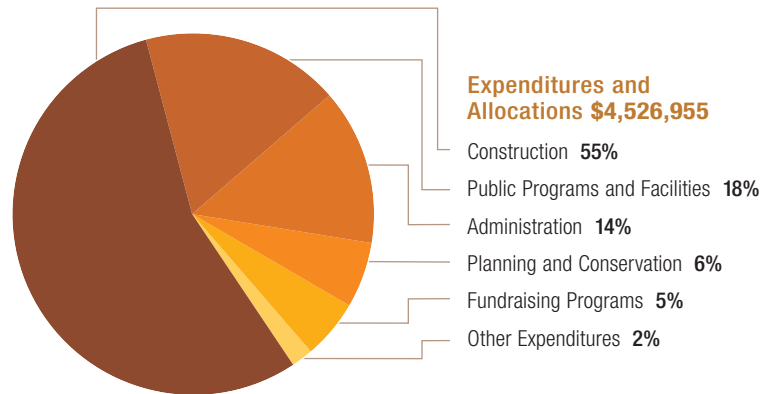
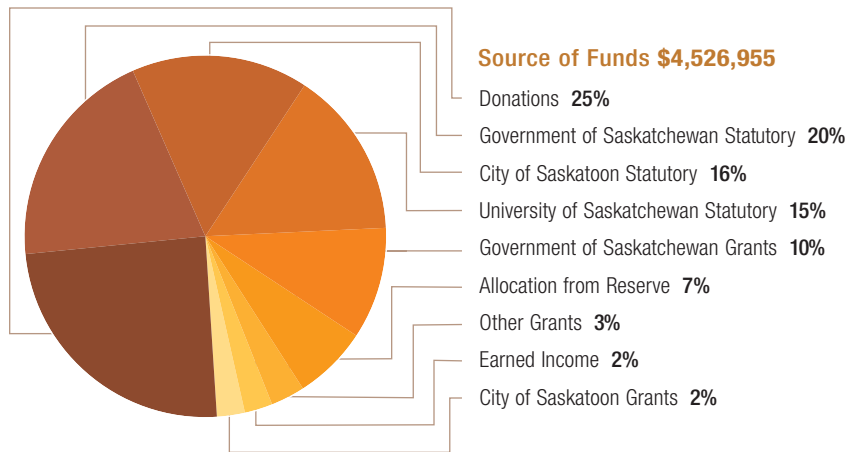
Design Advisory

The Design Advisory Committee assists the Meewasin Board in its work to develop opportunities for human interaction with the natural and cultural heritage resources of the valley by providing sensitive built environments in the context of the natural valley environment. Committee members were Danny Gray, Bianca Hilbert, Brent Martian (Chair), John Penner, Genevieve Russell and Natalie Walliser.

Education Advisory

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

Meewasin Financial Highlights as of March 31, 2015



Endowment Funds

The endowment funds, for the benefit of Meewasin, are owned and managed by the Saskatoon Community Foundation. At December 31, 2014, the endowment fund balances were as follows: Meewasin Naturally Fund \$783,037, Wes Bolstad Fund \$17,989, and Susan Lamb Fund \$20,518. Audited financial statements are available by request.



“Meewasin Founder” Cliff Wright

Considered to be one of Meewasin's Founders, Cliff Wright, passed away on December 9, 2014. Cliff was the Mayor of the City of Saskatoon from 1976 to 1988 and served on the Meewasin Board for most of that time. Cliff was a respected citizen and contractor who played a key role as Mayor initiating the Meewasin concept to City Council, the business community and Saskatoon as a whole. He was a respected advocate for Meewasin. Among many positive directions, he played a key role in passing a motion that a percentage of Meewasin's annual budget should go into riverbank, park and trail development for the benefit of the general public. Meewasin honoured founders Cliff Wright, Peggy McKercher and Roy Romanow on Meewasin International Trails Day, June 1, 2013. Meewasin has also developed signage recognizing its Founders from “grass roots” people like the late Joanna Miller, who helped to initiate the concept and recognize the great vision to create the Meewasin Valley Authority. Meewasin will be planting a tree in the valley to commemorate Cliff Wright and his contribution to the valley.

Above, left to right: Attorney General Roy Romanow, University of Saskatchewan Principal (President) Bob Begg, Mayor Cliff Wright, Architect Dr. Raymond Moriyama at a Meewasin planning meeting, late 1970s.

Conservation



Dr. Raymond Moriyama, Architect

2014-2015 Conservation, Development and Education

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

Meewasin's Mandate

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

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

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

Development Review

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

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, 2015, Meewasin reviewed 15 proposed improvements to the river valley Conservation Zone. The applications included the following:

- Traffic Bridge Replacement;
- North Commuter Parkway;
- Beaver Creek Conservation Area Wayfinding Signage;
- Meewasin Trail Northwest Extension and Southeast Donor Plaza;
- River Heights Community Association Sign;
- Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan Extension;
- RUH Generator Plant Proposal;
- 15th Street Storm Outfall Restoration;
- Diefenbaker Park Recreation Facility;
- Shakespeare/Mendel Shoreline Armoring;
- Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan Concept;
- Zhongshan Ting – Victoria Park;
- Seasonal Commercial Enterprise in Parks Policy;
- Rotary Park Lift Station Restoration Work; and
- Gordie Howe Bowl Upgrades.



Above: Luc Delanoy, Meewasin Resource Management Officer, and volunteers identify plants at the Meewasin Northeast Swale.



Above: Shepherd Jared Epp at the Saskatoon Natural Grasslands interprets the predator-prey relationship of his Border Collies and sheep, and the importance of sheep grazing in promoting biodiversity in natural areas. Meewasin first used sheep grazing to mimic natural disturbance to the land in 2004.

Conservation continued

Securing Lands of Interest

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



Enhancing Biodiversity

Meewasin strives to protect and enhance biodiversity in the Meewasin Valley through grazing, prescribed controlled burning, removing exotic species and noxious weeds, clean-ups, seed collecting and planting of native grasses and wild flowers.

Valley Stewardship

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



Top: Western Red Lily – Tiger Lily.

Bottom: Fritillary Butterfly.

Meewasin Northeast Swale

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

Within Saskatoon city limits and the Municipality of Corman Park, the Greater Swale supports historically significant natural and cultural resources that are managed within Meewasin's Conservation Zone.

Working with the City of Saskatoon, Meewasin is developing a Master Plan for the Meewasin Northeast Swale. It includes the interpretation and education of these resources within the city. The Swalewatchers, a valued volunteer group, have played an important role in advising Meewasin and the City on direction for the Swale.

River Users Meeting

Each spring Meewasin coordinates a meeting of a variety of river users, including representatives from the City, and emergency services who meet to discuss summer river recreation. The River Users Meeting in 2014 was held on May 14.

Strategic Plan 2014-2024

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

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



Left: Luc Delanoy, Resource Management Officer, supervises a controlled burn in the Peggy McKercher Conservation Area for the purpose of promoting biodiversity.

Below: The Meewasin Valley is recognized as a provincial resource. A visitor pictured below experienced snow for the first time in the Meewasin Valley, ice skating for the first time at the Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @PotashCorp Plaza and sledding for the first time at Pest Hill. She is pictured here at the Capilano Lookout December 2014.



Left: Volunteer stewards plant trees at the Peggy McKercher Conservation Area – Summer 2014.

Development



Top: River Landing Phase 2.

Bottom: Meewasin summer construction staff install signage at the Meewasin Northeast Swale.

Managing Resources in the 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

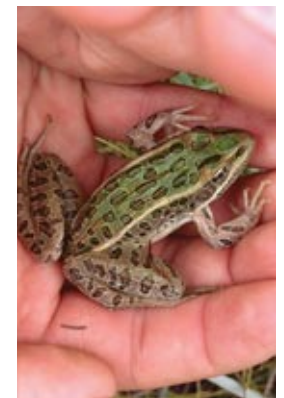
- Ongoing construction and landscape restorations in River Landing Phase 2 (west of the Senator Sid Buckwold Bridge) including trail connections directly below Avenue C, down to the Meewasin Trail;
- Completion and opening of the Adult Fitness Area;
- Installation of all site furniture and tree grates; and
- Ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the bioswale at the water play area.

Trail Work

- Completing the majority of work on the Meewasin Trail in the northwest from 71st Street to Wanuskewin Heritage Park with some landscape restoration and drainage work remaining;
- Completing the majority of work on the Meewasin Trail in the southeast from the Circle Drive South Bridge to the SaskPower lands with some landscape restoration remaining;
- Beginning the Southeast Donor Recognition Plaza at Diefenbaker Park including connections to the existing Meewasin Trail at Diefenbaker Park, with stairs and concrete work to be completed in 2015; and
- Collecting and assessing the results of the Trail Study, highlighting trail infrastructure repair, replacement needs and gaps in the network, including estimates of future trail use and capacity.

Horticulture/Construction & Design

- Installation of site furniture (benches, trash units, and trailhead signs);
- Supporting the Meewasin Plant-A-Tree program, installing bricks and plaques;
- Assisting and directing volunteer groups with tree and shrub plantings;
- Providing tree and shrub plantings for City of Saskatoon infrastructure restoration projects in Cosmopolitan Park;
- Construction and installation of new information and wayfinding signage at Beaver Creek Conservation Area;
- Managing the St. Joseph School site through resource work;
- Providing teaching and classroom time for students from Saskatchewan Polytechnic (formerly SIAST);
- Repair and maintenance of the Poplar Bluffs canoe launch site and access trail;
- Construction of new shade structures adjacent to the Meewasin shop and greenhouse to support ongoing greenhouse operations including the removal of a number of unhealthy/hazardous trees;
- Demolition and clean up of abandoned out-buildings at Maple Grove;
- Ongoing clean-up and repair of trailhead and vandalized interpretive signage; and,
- Resource management support at the Meewasin Northeast Swale including the installation of site signage.



Above: Northern Leopard Frog
– Meewasin Northeast Swale –
Summer 2014.

Left: Jonathan Behnke,
Meewasin intern, tries out the
new adult fitness area in Victoria
Park - Summer 2014.



Above: White-tailed deer – Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

Below: Cameco Family Day Skating Party – Cameco Meewasin Rink @PotashCorp Plaza – February 2015

Development continued

Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan

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

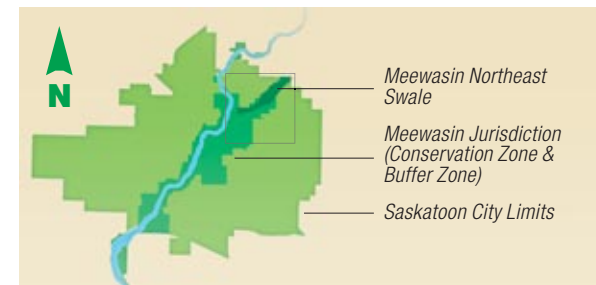
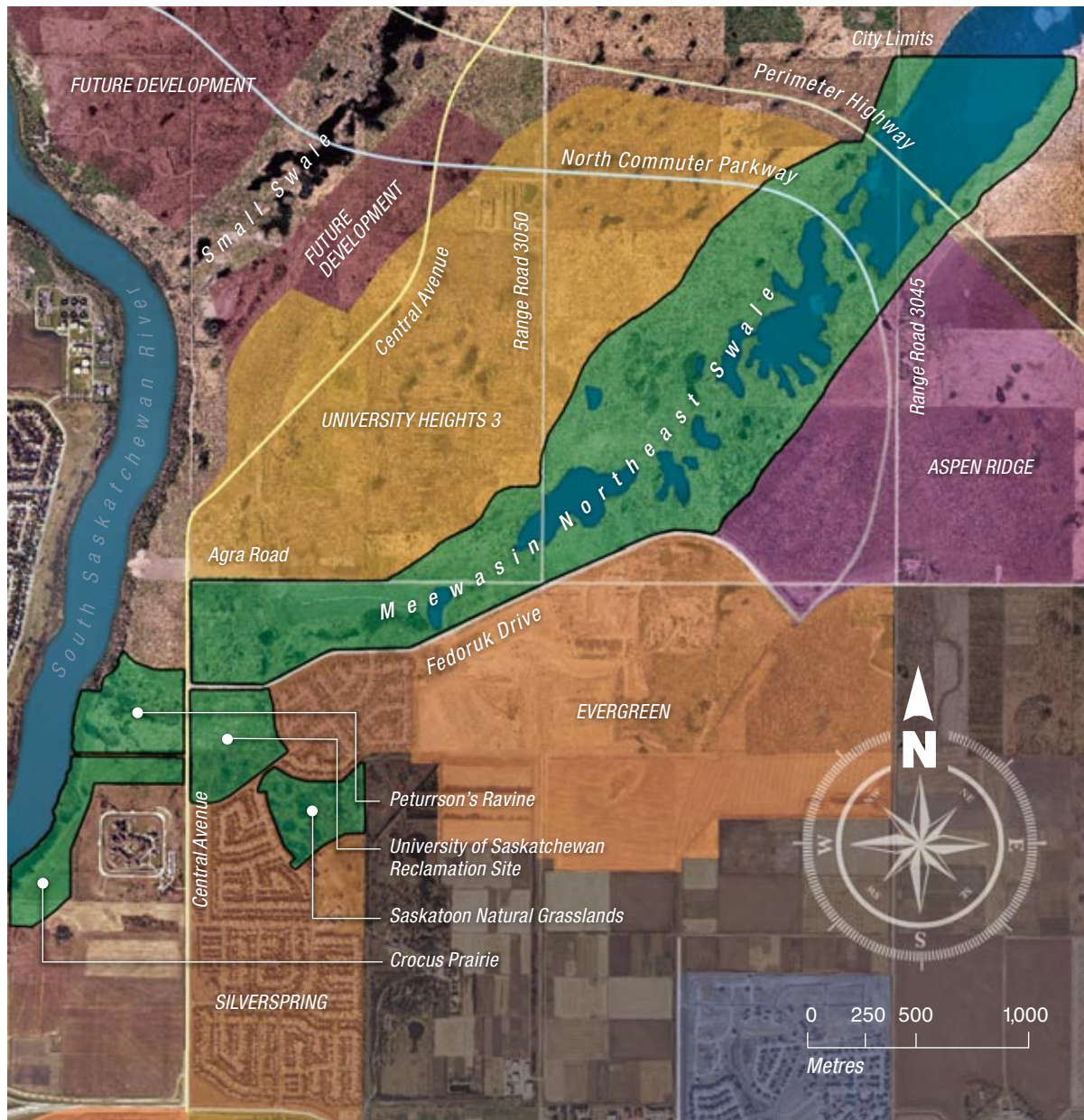
The process to complete the Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan included a design charrette, committee work, site data collection, stakeholder consultation, public open house and presentations. The report will be

finalized in 2015 and presented to City Council and Meewasin for board approval.

Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @PotashCorp Plaza

The Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @PotashCorp Plaza opened for the season on December 6, 2014 and closed March 8, 2015; a duration of 93 days. It was in operation for 84 days, closing for 7 days due to extreme cold (-31 C), and 2 days due to extreme warm weather. Users for the 84-day skating season totaled 29,410. The rink hosted four skating parties: the Tim Hortons Twinkle Lights party (600 users), the TELUS Skate (700 users), the PotashCorp Wintershines Party (1500 users) and the Cameco Family Day Skating Party (1800 users). ♦





Top right: Context map of Meewasin Northeast Swale.

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

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

Meewasin Trail

Trail Use

Enjoy the trail. Be safe.
Be aware of your surroundings.
After dark be smart.



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

Pedestrians

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

Dogs on the Trail

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

Cyclists

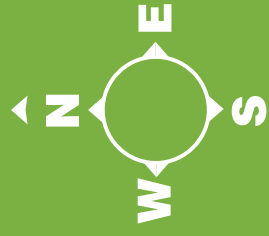
- Pedestrians have the right of way on The Meewasin Trail.
- Keep to the right except to pass.
- Pass slowly when clear on the left.
- Use a bell to alert others of your presence
- Go slow (suggested maximum 15 km/hr).
- Keep single file and obey all pavement markings.
- Watch for blind spots and unexpected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

City of Saskatoon

LEGEND

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

0 0.5 1km



Development continued





- 1 Peggy McKercher Conservation Area
- 2 Crocus Prairie
- 3 Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (SNG)
- 4 Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo
- 5 Sutherland Beach
- 6 University of Saskatchewan
- 7 Cosmopolitan Park and Lookout
- 8 Rotary Park and Lookout
- 9 The Marr Residence
- 10 Gabriel Dumont Park

- 11 Western Development Museum
- 12 Diefenbaker Park and the Pioneer Cemetery
- 13 Factoria
- 14 Meewasin Park
- 15 Capilano Lookout
- 16 G.D. Archibald Park
- 17 Meewasin Riverworks (Weir)
- 18 Mendel Site and Island Sanctuary
- 19 Kinsmen Park
- 20 The Ukrainian Museum of Canada

- 21 Kiwanis Memorial Park
- 22 Friendship Park
- 23 Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre
- 24 River Landing and The Farmers' Market
- 25 Victoria Park and The Boathouse
- 26 Bowerman House
- 27 Sanatorium Site
- 28 Saskatoon Landfill
- 29 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 Chief Whitecap Park
- 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: Student volunteers participate in the Meewasin & Affinity Credit Union Clean-up Campaign.



Bottom: Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre staff interpret the history of the river valley using green screen technology and puppetry.

Education/Interpretation

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, volunteers, interpretive canoe tours, interpretive cross-country skiing and partnering with other organizations that have similar goals. Meewasin accomplishes this through our two interpretive centres, the Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre and Beaver Creek Conservation Area, off-site programs, publications, audio-visual resources, a website, media commercials, social media, public service announcements and speaking appearances.

The Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre (MVC)

The Meewasin Valley Interpretive Centre focuses on the original areas of urban development in Saskatoon. It is a place to learn about Meewasin, the Meewasin Trail, Saskatoon history, the South Saskatchewan River and the future of the Meewasin Valley. In 2014-15, MVC recorded 16,500 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 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 contest.

Meewasin staff supported other organizations and their mandates throughout the city including the Heritage

Festival of Saskatoon, the Marr Residence Management Team, the Saskatoon Heritage Society, Doors Open Saskatoon, the Saskatchewan Marathon and the Saskatoon CERT (Community, Experiences, Resources and Tours) committee.

The MVC continued to provide interpretive programming to Grade 3 students in Saskatoon. Participation totaled 2050 students from the Saskatoon Public, Catholic and regional schools. The Meewasin Art Gallery continued to host bi-monthly shows by local artists and photographers. The Meewasin Gift Shop provided unique items for those looking for something naturally and culturally special. Including visitations to the centre of 16,500, and the Meewasin & Affinity Credit Union Clean-up Campaign of 28,000, the MVC hosted more than 44,500 participants in its 2014-15 programs.

Meewasin & Affinity Credit Union Clean-up Campaign

2014 marked Meewasin's 34th annual Clean-up Campaign. The kick-off for this annual event took place Friday, May 9, 2014 at Wildwood School. It was the 14th year that Affinity Credit Union sponsored the event. The 30 minute school assembly featured greetings from Wildwood School, Affinity Credit Union, Loraas Disposal Services and Meewasin. As a commitment to conservation, participants engaged in a ceremonial signing of the official Meewasin & Affinity Credit Union Clean-up Campaign garbage bag, and then all headed outside for a clean-up of the Wildwood school grounds and neighboring park. This media event kicked off the official month long clean-up of the entire river valley, including city parks and neighbourhoods. Participants included schools, community groups, businesses, and individuals who represented more than 28,000

*A Red Squirrel prepares for winter – Beaver Creek
Conservation Area – Fall 2014.*



volunteers throughout Saskatoon. Thank you to Affinity Credit Union for sponsoring the Clean-up Campaign, to Loraas Disposal Services for placement of garbage and recycle bins throughout the valley, 7-Eleven Stores for permission to use their dumpsters, and the City of Saskatoon who collected garbage bags piled by volunteers at designated locations to be transported to the city landfill.

Beaver Creek Conservation Area (BCCA)

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



***Above:** Grade 5 students on an interpretive tour of Beaver Creek
Conservation Area; where a prairie creek meets a prairie river.*

discover nature during all four seasons along a selection of nature trails.

BCCA continued to provide interpretive programs to Grade 5 students in 2014-15 from Saskatoon and area schools totaling 2750 students. General public visitation totaled 18,900 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 activities.

Pelican Watch

The first pelican to touch down between the CPR Bridge and the weir did so Sunday, April 20, 2014 at 3:15 pm, as observed by the official spotters from the Saskatoon Nature Society.

Saskatoon residents have special visitors each summer. April through October, pelicans gather by the weir to fish. These birds, once on the endangered species list, have been a beautiful sight on the South Saskatchewan River since the late 1970s. For Saskatoon residents their arrival is a harbinger of spring.

This was the 19th year of the Meewasin Pelican Watch Contest. Previous arrival times have been between April 4, 2012 and April 18, 2003. April 20, 2014 was the latest time recorded in the history of the contest.

The grand prize winner of the contest and mountain bike courtesy of Realty Executives Saskatoon was Tianna Senger of St. Augustine School, with an arrival time guess of April 20, 3:20 pm, five minutes off the official time. 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

Education continued



Black-capped Chickadee – Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

Saskatoon, Homestead Ice Cream, Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Saskatchewan, Pelican Market and the Meewasin Gift Shop for donations of prizes.

Interpretive Cross-Country Skiing & Chip's Lodge

Since 1979, cross-country skiing has been encouraged at Beaver Creek Conservation Area, but never actually facilitated with equipment, instruction and groomed trails. In late fall 2011, the old skating rink facility was moved to BCCA for a three-year pilot to provide a warm-up shelter and additional facility space for programming.

During the winters of 2012-13 and 2013-14, a total of 13



Above: Vesper Sparrow – Beaver Creek Conservation Area

Far upper left: Meewasin Pelican Watch Awards - June 2014.

Far lower left: Brodie Zuk of Realty Executives presents a mountain bike to Tianna Senger of St. Augustine School. Tianna was the winner of Meewasin's Pelican Watch 2014.

Left: Interpretive Cross-Country Skiing at Beaver Creek Conservation Area winter 2014/15.

Education continued

cross-country ski pilots were conducted. This past winter (2014-2015) the program saw 17 groups (450 skiers) participate in the program. Another 6 groups (150 registrants) found it necessary to cancel due to six days of extreme winter weather.

Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS)

Beaver Creek Conservation Area has participated in MAPS, (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship), for seven summers. It is a bird-banding program developed by The Institute for Bird Populations in California. Data from monitoring stations including BCCA, are integrated into the North American MAPS database to better understand changes in the abundance, distribution, and ecology of bird populations. Information is collected from six banding sessions which are held annually between June 10 and August 8. To date, 37 different species of birds have been banded at Beaver Creek Conservation Area with a total of 1,013 individual birds. This past summer's sessions recaptured and released one bird originally banded in 2010, three birds banded in 2011, and three from 2012. Protecting nesting destinations and maintaining urban green spaces all help provide birds with important habitat. Volunteers are important to the success of this banding project. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Beaver Creek at 306-374-2474.

The Saskatoon Natural Grasslands

The Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (SNG) is a 13.8 hectare (34 acre) parcel of native Saskatchewan grassland persisting in a nearly natural condition. It is located within the Silverspring neighbourhood (northeast sector of Saskatoon) 8 km from the city centre along the South Saskatchewan River. This fescue grassland is not just



Top: MAPS Bird Banding, Beaver Creek Conservation Area - Summer 2014.

Bottom: Meewasin River Cinema, Friendship Park - August 2014.

Upper Right: Meewasin voyageur clipper canoe navigates Beaver Creek paddling to the South Saskatchewan River – Summer 2014



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 programs provided by the University of Saskatchewan Centre for Continuing and Distance Education, the Saskatoon Nature Society, the City of Saskatoon, the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division, the Saskatoon Public School Division and the stewardship of the Silverspring community which assist the SNG to continue 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 program conducted Grade 2 hikes at the SNG in May and June, recording 23 public school classes, totaling 581 children and 69 adults. September and October 2014 recorded 24 public school classes, totaling 72 adults and 622 youth.

During July and August 2014, 117 youth enrolled in the U of S Ecology Camp for Kids. These participants toured the SNG, Meewasin Northeast Swale and Beaver Creek Conservation Area. With the support of Meewasin, the young stewards planted vegetation plugs and participated in seed collection.

Through these experiences, 1461 children and adults learned that the disappearance of native prairie means the disappearance of thousands of years of natural history.

River Cinema

2014 marked Meewasin's 20th River Cinema. The family outdoor entertainment took place August 1-3 in Friendship Park. Beginning at dusk, family friendly movies were shown on FreshAirCinema's large screen. Total attendance over the three evenings was more than 2000. Our 2014 River Cinema Scotiabank sponsor handed out promotional items and free popcorn to the first 300 patrons. Meewasin provided a small concession

of popcorn, pop, coffee, hot chocolate, bags of candy and free water from Culligan. Beginning twenty years ago as a small event in Friendship Park, Meewasin's River Cinema has brought many families to the river valley for free outdoor evening entertainment. River Cinema has grown in popularity to the point where it now requires a bigger venue and major sponsor.

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 hour experiences allowing the adventurers to see the river of the early voyageurs. Adult groups usually paddle upriver to the Berry Barn, while youth and family groups canoe both the creek and the river, stopping on a sandbar for interpretive games. Paddles, lifejackets, canoes, and safety training are provided by certified Meewasin interpreter canoe guides. Adult charters cost \$200 per canoe. Non-profit groups may access the program free of charge using sponsorship money from the Association of Urban Parks & Conservation Agencies (ASUPCA), the Saskatoon Community Foundation and Meewasin.

During the summer of 2014, canoe access to the South Saskatchewan River was delayed due to increased river flow from the release of the Gardiner Dam as well as unpleasant weather. However, the heightened water level in the creek allowed for an alternative program giving participants a unique canoe view of the creek ecosystem. 500 novice voyageurs participated in the program for a total of 62 tours.



Top: Montreal based Ocean Television films the predator-prey relationship and the importance of Meewasin sheep grazing to promoting biodiversity.

Bottom: Paul Hanley, Meewasin Conservation Award Recipient 2014, speaks at the St. Barbe Baker signage dedication - Summer 2014.

Education continued

Non profit organizations that received tours at no cost include: school groups, the Ecology Camp for Kids, Radius, Big Sisters, Big Brothers, Youth Resource Centre, Zoo Camp, Learning Disabilities Camp, Open Doors Society, Egadz, and Saskatoon Craft Council.

Conservation Award 2014

Paul Hanley was the recipient of the 2014 Meewasin Conservation Award presented annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the natural heritage resources of the Meewasin Valley.

Paul has been an advocate for conservation of the natural world since his teens. A longtime advocate for ecological agriculture, he was a founding member of Earthcare, and the editor and co-author of the book *Earthcare, Ecological Agriculture in Saskatchewan*. This regional bestseller was an important tool for the emerging organic farming movement in the 1980s. His work in this area was acknowledged with the receipt of the Organic Connections' Pioneer Organic Communicators Award in 2006.

Paul has published four books and 1500 articles on the environment and related topics. He has consistently raised awareness of conservation through his newspaper column in *The StarPhoenix*, published weekly since 1989. Numerous columns supported the work of the Meewasin Valley Authority, Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin and other local, national and provincial conservation efforts.

Paul also wrote Meewasin's story, *25 Years in the Life of a River Valley*, used extensively by Meewasin to share its story with the world.

Hanley's most recent book, *ELEVEN*, published in the fall of 2014, deals with the social-ecological impacts of peak population and cultural transformation. It has received critical acclaim by leading writers and environmental scientists.

Paul's advocacy for environmental protection was previously recognized by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, from which he received a Canadian Environment Award in 2006.

To recognize his achievement Paul received a tree planted in the valley through the Meewasin Plant-A-Tree program.

St. Barbe Baker

In 2013, the Baha'i Community of Saskatoon partnered with Meewasin to install signage at Saskatoon's Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area and on the U of S campus at the site of St. Barbe Baker's last tree planting.

Richard St. Barbe Baker, known as the "Man of the Trees", was a visionary forester devoted to conservation and the environmental health of the earth. Born in Hampshire, England in 1889, he campaigned tirelessly to promote tree planting and desert reclamation in more than 100 countries. St. Barbe Baker launched the Man of the Trees, one of the first environmental organizations, in 1922. Inspired by the Baha'i Faith, of which he was an early adherent, St. Barbe Baker's life exemplified ideals of a world embracing vision and selfless service to humanity and the Earth. In 1978, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire from Queen Elizabeth II.

St. Barbe Baker travelled to Saskatchewan in 1909 to study at Emmanuel College and became a member of

the university class of 1910, the second class in the history of the University of Saskatchewan. In 1912, as a student, he applied for a homestead south of Saskatoon. He abandoned his claim in 1913 to pursue his studies.

St. Barbe Baker returned to the University of Saskatchewan on June 5, 1982 on World Environment Day when he planted his last tree near the Diefenbaker Centre. It was the last of millions he was responsible for planting. He died four days later and is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery. His archives are housed in the University Library.

Yellow Fish Road

Since 1999, thousands of Canadian youth have participated in the Yellow Fish Road program, learning about their water supply. Painting the storm sewers with yellow fish and distributing the fish-shaped yellow brochures is a reminder of the importance of clean water and the proper disposal of hazardous waste. The program reinforces the concept that whatever goes into the storm sewer flows directly into the river.

Meewasin, the Girl Guides of Canada (Saskatoon), Brightwater and Trout Unlimited Canada with the support of the City of Saskatoon have partnered to promote the program in Saskatoon and area since 1994.

The Girl Guides held their annual Yellow Fish Road event in Saskatoon on May 3, 2014. The number of youth who participated totaled 40. There were 50 adults including 12 students from the U of S. 83 storm drains were painted and approximately 300 door hangers distributed. Thank you, Girl Guides of Canada (Saskatoon). ◆



Above: Robert White and Paul Hanley unveil the St. Barbe Baker sign located on the Meewasin Trail close to the Diefenbaker Canada Centre near the last tree (1982) that St. Barbe Baker planted - Summer 2014.

Fund Development



Top: Plant-A-Tree Dedication: L To R: Doug Porteous, Darlene Bessey, Zoe Pontikes, Ken Pontikes, and Jack Vicq (Meewasin Chair) - June 2014.

Above: Craig Campbell of CHOO-IT presents a cheque to Cran and Meewasin's Doug Porteous in support of the Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign - Spring 2015.

Meewasin is a registered charity. Approximately 35% of its revenue for 2014-15 came from non-statutory sources to support conservation, development and education initiatives. Meewasin Matters because:

- If you wanted a pill to cure 70% of ills in today's society, it would be to 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 \$100 million that Meewasin has spent in conservation, development and education for the past 35 years, only 18% is represented by City of Saskatoon statutory/supplemental funding. The leveraging effect for the Saskatoon tax payer is 82%;
- 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 locally, regionally and internationally on numerous occasions, three times a finalist for the prestigious Thiess Riverprize awarded annually in Brisbane, Australia.

Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign

In October 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 approximately 15 km to the Meewasin Trail system as well as the Trans Canada Trail which runs along the Meewasin Trail through Saskatoon. As of March 31, 2015, \$7,670,690 of the \$8 million or 96% 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 Trail Campaign, and the many donors and sponsors who continue to keep the Meewasin dream alive.

Plant-A-Tree Dedication

The 28th annual Meewasin Plant-A-Tree Dedication was held Saturday, June 21, 2014 in Boomtown at the Saskatoon Western Development Museum.

Meewasin's Plant-A-Tree, Memorial Forest, and bench sponsorship programs are successful fund-raising activities for the purpose of greening the river valley for free public use. Donations are made for weddings, graduations, births, anniversaries and in memory of those who have touched our lives.

The 2014 Plant-A-Tree event recognized that since 1988, Meewasin has planted 3760 trees and shrubs in the valley sponsored by individual donors and groups. Since 2000, there have been 145 donations to the Memorial Forest in Gabriel Dumont Park. The 2014 program included the sponsorship recognition of two "grass roots" donations, nine donations to the Memorial Forest in Gabriel Dumont Park, the sponsorship of 52 trees, 39 shrubs, 19 benches and seating blocks, 11 bricks at the Rotary International Peace Plaza, 7 bricks at River Landing, 78 bricks at the Saskatchewan Road Runners Seating Node (including 70 in recognition of past Saskatchewan Marathon champions) and a bequest of \$10,000 from the estate of the late Carmelle Toner to Meewasin's Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

Bringing greetings from the Meewasin Board was Chair Jack Vicq; guest speakers were Darlene Bessey and Ken Pontikes. The Orpheus 60 Choir performed.



Above: The Saskatoon Road Runners Association at the Saskatoon Road Runners Seating Node are photographed with the \$100,000 cheque they presented to the Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign – May 2014.



CHOO-IT

In support of the Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign, Craig Campbell of CHOO-IT donated \$.25 from all 125 gram bags and \$.50 from all 225 gram bags of CHOO-IT Bites (Meewasin Edition) sold from retail outlets within Saskatoon and area. Funds received by Meewasin totaled \$1310.



Far Left: Lloyd Isaak (Meewasin CEO) presents Lorrie Dobni (President) and Tom Stack (Treasurer) of the Saskatoon Road Runners Association with an artist's rendition of the river valley fabricated with steel from the decommissioned Traffic Bridge.

Left: The Viceroy Butterfly looks very much like the Monarch Butterfly.



Above: Meewasin 80 Ale produced by Prairie Sun Pub & Brewery.



Above: Doug & Anne Porteous sponsor a brick in honour of Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk, Nobel Peace laureates 1993, at the Rotary International Peace Plaza – September 2014.

Photo courtesy Montreal Gazette.

Fund Development continued

Prairie Sun Pub & Brewery Launched 2nd Batch of Meewasin 80 Ale

In 2014, the Young Entrepreneurs, a campaign committee chaired by Clay Sparks, hosted a fundraising event and launched Meewasin 80 Ale with Prairie Sun Pub & Brewery. As a result of sales and a promotional event, Prairie Sun Pub & Brewery raised \$5100 for the Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign. On Friday, April 10, 2015 Prairie Sun Brewery launched a 2nd batch of Meewasin 80 Ale using plant ingredients found along the Meewasin Trail. Proceeds will go to the Meewasin Matters Trail Campaign. Thank you to Heather Williams at Prairie Sun Pub & Brewery and all of her staff for their support of Meewasin.

Rotary International Peace Plaza

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

The red granite bricks recognize the contribution of the peace laureates and promote the Rotary International Peace Plaza as a Saskatoon destination for citizens and tourists. To date, the Peace Plaza recognizes Mother Teresa, Lester B. Pearson, Desmond Tutu, the Red Cross of 1917, the UN Commission for Refugees and in 2014 a brick sponsored by Anne and Doug Porteous in honour of Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk who were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 "for their work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime, and for laying the foundations for a new democratic South Africa."

Association of Saskatchewan Urban Parks & Conservation Agencies (ASUPCA)

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

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

The only voluntary carbon offset program in the province, was created by ASUPCA. Through ASUPCA, an individual or an organization can mitigate their own greenhouse gas emissions by voluntarily purchasing tax-deductible carbon offsets. Visit carboncreditcanada.ca for more information.

Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin (PFSRB)

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

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