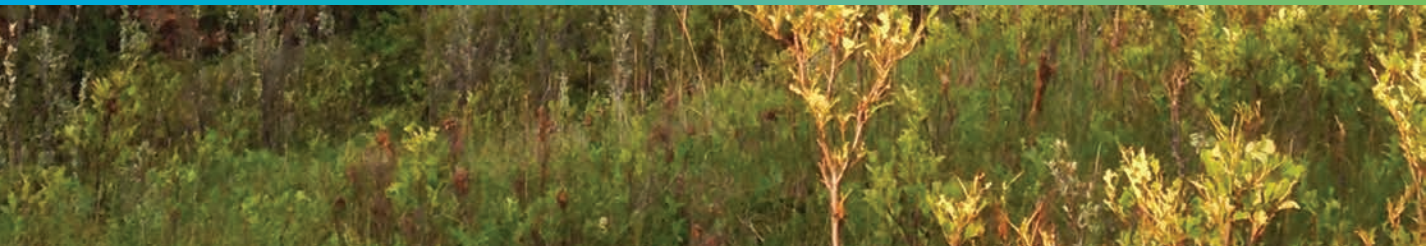




Conserve. Develop. Educate.

2018 - 2019 Annual Report



A message from the Chair and CEO

It is such an honour to lead Meewasin through its 40th year of providing leadership and stewardship to the Meewasin Valley. This partnership between the City of Saskatoon, the Province of Saskatchewan and the University of Saskatchewan would not have thrived over the past 40 years without the commitment of these partners and the dedicated support from the thousands of staff, volunteers and donors.

The Board of Directors and leadership team have been working very hard to create strategies that focus on creating optimal financial stability, growth and sustainability for the next chapter in Meewasin's history. There are plans to take the stewardship role in the valley to the next level with digitization, innovation, and industry leading initiatives for balancing economic growth with conservation of natural spaces. The three major goals for the next 5 years are to:

- Inform, lead and add value to land management decisions affecting the natural and cultural interests of the river valley corridor;
- Coordinate and endorse a broad range of seasonal opportunities for citizens and visitors to connect with the river valley, learn about its history and significance and enhance its use; and
- Maintain Meewasin's position as a leading expert and advocate for balanced urban development by furthering the relationships, innovation, expertise, advocacy and reconciliation necessary to steward the river valley corridor.

Meewasin continues to rely on the amazing community where we work and thank you for your continued dedication to maintaining this vital space. We need your help to support the corridor we are going to need strong partners to help perpetuate the message about the importance of this organization and the work that it does.



Meewasin CEO Andrea Lafond
and Board Chair Colin Tennent

Our Mission:

To ensure a healthy and vibrant river valley with a balance between human use and conservation by:

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

For the benefit of present and future generations.

Meewasin Board of Directors

April 1, 2018 - March 31, 2019



Sharon Tkachuk



Sarina Gersher



Bev Dubois



Zach Jeffries



Charlie Clark



Colin Tennent



Yanguang Bai



David Buckingham



Ryan Walker



Peter Stoicheff



Leanne Nyirfa

Meewasin Committees

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

Design Advisory

The Design Advisory Committee assists the Meewasin Board in its work to develop opportunities for human interaction within the natural and cultural heritage resources of the valley by reviewing sensitive built environments in the context of the natural environment. Committee members were: Bertrand Bartake, Tyson McShane, Luc Delanoy, Marilyn Gould, Jeff Howlett, Kendra Fisher.

Development Review

The Development Review Committee is a statutory committee created under the Meewasin Valley Authority Act (1979) to provide professional and unbiased recommendations regarding the acceptability of proposed improvements within the Meewasin Valley. Committee members were: Mitch Strocen, Terry Werbovetski, Alan Michelson, Twyla Bergstrom, Rob Crosby, Chris Schulz, Paul Koopman, Ian Judd-Henrey, Victoria Yong-Hing, Robyn Robertson.

Education Advisory

The Education Advisory Committee advises the Meewasin Board on its policy development in education. Committee members were: Brandon Bitz, Max Abraham, Mairin Loewen, Dean Newton, Terri Fradette, Melanie Elliot, Maurice Postnikoff, Michael Voralia, Bill Delainey, Courtney Tuck-Goetz.

Conservation Advisory

The conservation Advisory Committee advises the Meewasin Board in its work to ensure the health of the Meewasin Valley. Committee members were: Peter Goode, Bert Weichel, Luc Delanoy, Amber Weckworth, Nadia Mori.



Conservation

2018 - 2019 Resource Management Activities

Meewasin has developed, and is in its 2nd year of following a 10 year plan for stewardship of the Meewasin Valley. Utilizing industry leading tactics within ecological monitoring, implementing and reporting, in 2018, the team completed 57 vital resource management activities to maintaining the health of the Meewasin Valley. Some of the goals include **controlling invasive species, preventing habitat loss, and reversing the effects of slumping.**

To reach these goals, Meewasin leads activities that return natural disturbances like grazing and burning to prairie areas such as Beaver Creek Conservation Area and Saskatoon Natural Grasslands. This enhances habitat, biodiversity and augments the environment for species at risk. These prairie areas have evolved under these conditions, and these methods manage invasive species including non-native grasses and forbs, as well as to reduce shrub cover.

Since 2008, Meewasin has managed 152 ha of native prairie by using prescribed burns, and 21 ha have been managed in 2018/19 (that's just under the size of 26 football fields in one year!)

2018 is the 20th year of battling one of the most invasive species in the Meewasin Valley, European Buckthorn. This species is an extremely aggressive plant that can potentially change a forest's ecosystem. It tends to take over fruit bearing trees and replaces it with thorny shrubs that don't provide proper nutrients for humans or animals.

1.64 million Stems of European Buckthorn have been removed since 1998 with 128,968 stems removed in 2018/19.

To help maintain a healthy and vibrant river valley, Meewasin operates a greenhouse that is used to grow native species to replant and rehabilitate the land.

Over the year, Meewasin has also involved the public to develop new stewards of the Meewasin Valley by engaging them through:

- **Meewasin's Annual Clean Up Campaign** – initiated approximately *30,000 Saskatoon and area residents* to donate their time and effort to clean an area of the Meewasin Valley in the spring.
- **Bioblitzes** - Over *322 participants* in these events that use citizen science data to improve the understanding of the flora and fauna that exists in different Meewasin sites to give guidelines for future conservation work.
- **Tours** - 28 tours with volunteers, general public, professionals with *764 people* in attendance, learning about Meewasin's work.
- **Presentations** - 25 educative presentations to *1003 people* at several events and initiatives.
- **Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference** – 4 posters and 3 presentations; with *450 people* in attendance.

continued...



- **NatureCity Festival** – 1040 participants in several events around the city to introduce people to the nature that exists within the city.
- **Partnerships**– Meewasin worked with over 462 people from the University of Saskatchewan in regards to education and training.

One of the main projects of the year was working with the Plant Science classes on creating Resource Management Plans for Meewasin managed sites such as Maple Grove and Peggy McKercher. These included some guest lectures, training labs, and of course tours and work out in the Meewasin Valley as a living lab.

- Other outreach activities at Saskatoon Natural Grasslands, the Meewasin Northeast Swale, Provincial and Regional Parks as well as Schools totaled over 6,000 participants!

Since 2008, Meewasin has managed 69.5 ha of native prairie by using targeted grazing, and 6.25 ha have been managed in 2018/19 (that's 325 sheep grazing the equivalent of almost 8 football fields in one season!)

Meewasin Valley-wide Resource Management Plan 2018-2019 Update

Year 2 of 10 Completed



Priority Ecosystems

Native Grasslands
Rivers & Tributaries
Swales
Wetlands

All conservation targets rated in fair health.

Threats

Invasive Species
Climate Change
Dams & Water Management
Fire & Fire Suppression
Runoff of Pesticides & Fertilizers
Stormwater
Suburban Development
Tresspass Issues
and more...

University of Saskatchewan Plant Science class



Prescribed Burning



Targeted Conservation Grazing



Development

Meewasin Trail Highlights

87% of the population in the Saskatoon region agrees that Meewasin improves the quality of life for residents, and 68% of respondents first thought of the riverbank and trails when thinking of Meewasin. (2019 Public Opinion Survey)

Noteworthy advancements have been made in the Meewasin Valley in the last year! Using daily in-house expertise as well as consultants and contractors on larger projects, the Meewasin Trail design, developments and management are executed to help the residents and visitors to the Saskatoon area to safely access and learn about natural areas around the river valley.

Some of these include:

- Construction of the section of trail from Queen Street to the Nutrien Wonderhub.
- Conceptual design of trails between the Nutrien Wonderhub and Shakespeare, with ongoing collaboration with Shakespeare to integrate trail connections with their planned upgrades.
- Installation of new site access gates at Fred Heal, Poplar Bluffs, and Paradise Beach.
- Installation of fencing and signage at Chief Whitecap Park off-leash area.
- Upgrades of site amenities at Cosmopolitan Park
- Repairs to the Bowerman House, a municipal heritage site that was originally built in 1907.
- Designed and installed an interpretive panel about the wreck of the SS Medicine Hat under the Traffic Bridge.
- Completed repairs to the Beaver Room at Beaver Creek Conservation Area.

Plus many native flora planting projects for the purpose of naturalizing areas and/or repairing slumping in the valley.

In 2018, over 10,800 horticulture plantings have successfully been planted in the Meewasin Valley!



(2019 Public Opinion Survey)

1979

The *Meewasin Valley Authority Act* is created.

1980

Meewasin Outdoor Skating Rink Opens in Kiwanis Park

First Development Review Applications reviewed

Meewasin purchased first property, Poplar Bluffs

Beaver Creek nature park trails built

1981

Meewasin Park Trail established

First annual Clean Up Campaign removes 10 tonnes of litter

1982

Trail built at Kiwanis Memorial Park, Meewasin Riverworks (Weir) and Spadina Crescent

1984

University Bridge and trail built

Beaver Creek Interpretive Centre opens

Wanuskewin Heritage Park Master Plan developed

1986

Trail at Beaver Creek and Victoria Park built

Plant-A-Tree Program launched

First Meewasin Conservation Award received by Maureen DuWors

Junior Naturalist Program launched

Wanuskewin Heritage Park declared National Historic Site

1987

Meewasin Valley Centre opens in Friendship Park

1989

Trail established at the Mendel Site

1999

First efforts made to eradicate European Buckthorn, an invasive species

2001

Trail links established at the Saskatoon Zoo and Forestry Farm as well as Innovation Place

Prince Charles dedicates Prince of Wales Promenade at the Weir

2002

Silverspring trail connection built

2003

Friendship Park, Sanatorium site, Saskatoon Natural Grasslands and Sutherland Beach trails built

Grand opening of Meewasin Riverworks (Weir)

2004

Maple Grove trail established

7000 trees and shrubs planted at Gabriel Dumont Park

2006

Rotary Park Peace Plaza trail built

Meewasin Skating Rink voted Best Outdoor Skating Spot in Canada - Readers Digest

2008

River Landing Phase 1 established

SPRA Member of the Year for outstanding achievement in the improvement of parks and recreation in Saskatchewan



1990

Beaver Creek North Trail built

Meewasin walking tours begin

1991

Cranberry Flats and Wanuskewin Trail built

Wanuskewin Heritage Park opens

1993

Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin formed

Saskatoon Natural Grasslands transferred to Meewasin

Meewasin awarded Canadian Parks Service Heritage Award in recognition of exceptional and significant contribution to Canada's heritage

1994

Cosmopolitan Park trail built

1995

Kiwanis WW II Memorial Fountain reconstructed

Meewasin coordinates first Yellow Fish Road Program

1996

Attridge Drive link and CPR to Circle Drive North Bridge trail built

Meewasin Pelican Watch Contest launched

PFSRB presented The Canadian Healthy Environment Award

1997

Rotary Park trail built

541 ha restored to public use and conservation since 1979

1998

Trail connections at Preston Crossing and Gabriel Dumont Park developed

International Peace Plaza in Rotary Park constructed

Fred Heal Canoe Launch established

First State of the Valley Report produced

2009

Silverspring trail built

2010

River Landing Phase 2 and Warman Road connections built

2011

Trails built at Factoria as well as Peggy Mckercher Conservation Area

2012

Silverwood Park trail built

The Meewasin Valley totaled 23 out of the Star Phoenix 52 Reasons to Love Saskatoon

2013

Diefenbaker Park trail developed

Meewasin awarded Saskatchewan Tourism Land of Living Skies Award honoring a business that respects the three pillars of sustainable tourism development - economic viability, environmental sustainability and cultural appropriateness

2016

Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan developed

2017

Meewasin awarded Native Prairie Restoration Award from Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan

2019

Meewasin's 40th Anniversary



Education

In 2018, Meewasin was able to benefit over 3,775 *students* with industry leading approaches to experiential learning, engaging students on the value of the natural world. When asked for feedback about school programs, participants had positive comments, including this educator:

“As a citizen of Saskatoon, an educator in the city, and a parent, I deeply value the sites and resources provided through the MVA. It is so important for our students to have opportunities to build connections with nature and to experience the natural world in a variety of authentic ways. The MVA plays an essential role in this for the children of Saskatoon.”

– Educator (2019 School Program and Site Survey)

Meewasin is always looking at ways to improve our programs which is why we administer a survey to gain an understanding of how to work efficiently with educators. Educators described the value of these education programs, *“Keep it going. It is critically important to maintain a healthy natural environment within the urban landscape!”* while another noted *“...They do a great job at delivering curriculum in an experiential and hands-on way.”*

(2019 School Program and Site Survey)



Meewasin Northeast Swale

Meewasin Northeast Swale is a gem located both inside and outside of city limits that offers a diversity of environments, allowing a large variety of living species to flourish.

There are over 200 plant species, more than 100 birds, mammals such as deer, coyotes, beavers, ground squirrels, amphibians, reptiles and insects present in the Meewasin Northeast Swale on a regular basis. The swale is home to several rare, endangered or culturally significant species, including: 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, Sharp Tailed Grouse and amphibians like the Northern Leopard Frog.

In the last year, Meewasin engaged over 1000 *students* to educate them on this truly unique ecosystem within our city. Activities included putting up bird houses for our local flying friends, pond dipping in the wetlands for aquatic insects, and monitoring the native flora and fauna that call the site home.

Through partnerships with Meewasin and other partners, Sylvia Fedoruk School has developed a Northeast Swale resource room to provide teachers with information all about the Northeast Swale and the species that call it home. The interpretive room houses numerous artifacts and biofacts collected from and about the Meewasin Northeast Swale.

87% of people agree that promoting healthy living is a positive attribute that describes Meewasin. (2019 Public Opinion Survey)

“Because the Meewasin programs are so well done, they also connect beyond specific curricular outcomes in terms of practicing science skills (citizen science activities, ethical component of science, etc.)”

– Educator (2019 School Program and Site Survey)



Students benefited from Meewasin Educational Programs

Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (SNG)

The Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (SNG) site is a true success in conservation within the City of Saskatoon!

Located in the middle of the developed neighbourhood of Silverspring, SNG is a thriving fescue grassland 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.

Meewasin leads a grade two program at SNG where over *50 classes (1323 students in total!)* visit the site to learn about the natural history, the ecology, and the success of the site as a conservation area within our city. Students learn about why the grasslands are an important ecosystem, how humans effect the environments around them, and what sustainable practices we can implement in our daily lives to aid in conserving these important habitats.

New this year is a refresh to the program by digitizing online teacher resources; which include self-guided educational activities, program information and site maps.

“Thank you for all the programming that you offer- these provide valuable opportunities for students to connect to nature, and to hopefully continue to be good stewards of our precious river valley, swale, and grasslands.”

– Educator (2019 School Program and Site Survey)



Beaver Creek Conservation Area

Beaver Creek Conservation Area (BCCA) is an outdoor oasis boasting natural beauty and intrigue for the public to enjoy nature and appreciate wildlife, with over *270km of natural creek area*. The BCCA facilities are located where the prairie creek meets the prairie river.

Total visitation to BCCA in 2018 was 21,447, where visitors have the chance to engage with interpreters about the neat facts and findings at Beaver Creek all year round!

In the last year, the facilities at Beaver Creek have undergone significant improvements to better facilitate visitors and educational opportunities such as presentations; while balancing time where animals can have their space.

Additional spaces have been opened to further engage in interpretive, educational and recreational activities. The “Red Trail” which had been closed, has been reopened with a trail through the forest to explore the southern portion of the prairie-forest habitat.

Programs at BCCA have been successful in engaging more than *435 youth* with the Saskatoon Boys and Girls Clubs (summer) and *255* in the Cross Country Ski and Nature Study Program (winter).

A Purple Martin bird house has been placed at BCCA and has been instrumental in improving visitor and animal experiences. In our third year of having a purple martin house, we were lucky to find nine pairs nesting; our highest number yet! Purple Martins entertain visitors with their boisterous, gurgling courtship song and their quick, agile flight. The Purple Martin is North America's largest swallow and is known as an aerial insectivore, feeding midair on flying insects. Aerial insectivores have experienced steep population declines over the past few decades and they need our help! After the breeding season, Purple Martins make their long journey back to their wintering grounds in South America, such an incredible feat! We look forward to their return next spring!

“I had the opportunity to explore Cranberry Flats and Beaver Creek Conservation Area this afternoon... The trail and river system is why I love Saskatoon so much and why we can enjoy nature anytime of the year. It is why I am a nature photographer.”

- Marian Jennifer Holmes

Dark Skies at the Creek

Saskatoon Dark Sky Initiative 'sheds light' on the negative effects of light pollution on nocturnal wildlife within Saskatoon through a monitoring and educational program. The program engages the public and students of all ages through in-class programming, Dark Skies public awareness events, and citizen science projects. These initiatives are aimed at collecting valuable information about local light pollution within the Meewasin Valley

"The Dark Skies presentation was fantastic; Kenton Lysak was so engaging! This presentation had a huge impact on (the students') knowledge of light pollution. I hope that programs like this continue to be available in the classroom." – Educator (School Program and Site Survey 2019)

On October 28th, BCCA held the annual Dark Skies at the Creek event. The interactive planet-building activities, guest speaker, and telescope viewing made for a successful evening with over *500 people* visiting the site! Participants learned all about the importance of dark skies for nocturnal wildlife, the negative effects of light pollution, and what Meewasin is doing to actively monitor light pollution within the Meewasin Valley.

Annual Dark Skies event at Beaver Creek Conservation Area



Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin



Sustainability and stewardship of the international watershed - the Saskatchewan River Basin, has been the main priority of Partners of the Saskatchewan River Basin (PFSRB) for over 26 years!

The motivation has been getting younger generations to have a deeper understanding of how human interactions have an effect on our planet, how watersheds work and the cycle of our storm drainage, sanitation, and river systems.

In the last year, youth education programs lead such as Caring For Our Watersheds™ and Yellow Fish Road™ engaged 765 students!

These programs support students in their creation and implementation of their ideas for conservation within their community.

One group of students from Martensville worked hard to get a water bottle filling station put in their school in 2018, lowering the amount of water wasted in their school.

Martensville students implementing their plan



Fund Development

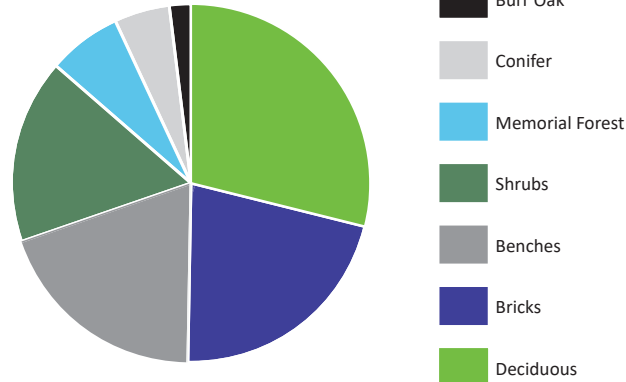
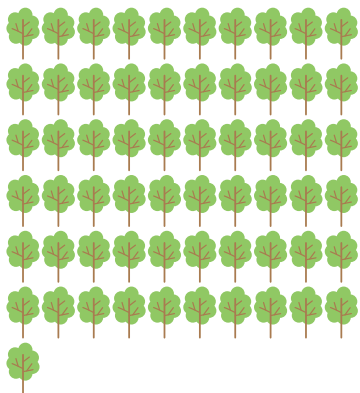
Fundraising Programs

Appreciation and pride are the most common emotions that residents express when they think about Meewasin. Other positive emotions include happy, relaxed, protective and calm. (2019 Public Opinion Survey)

Meewasin is uniquely positioned to leverage core funding with grants, donations, capital campaigns, sponsorships and special projects at a rate of 5:1 over the past 40 years! Meewasin successfully continues partnerships with many partners who fundraise on our behalf such as the Saskatoon Road Runners Association who has given more than \$275,000 to Meewasin for trail development. Individual donors, corporations and associations' commitment to Meewasin is crucial in its success and we thank everyone who is so committed to the mission and mandate of our organization.

The Dedication Program is a major funding source for Meewasin through which citizens can dedicate benches, trees, bricks, and a variety of other items in the name of a special place, person or event in Meewasin Valley. These items are not only special reminders of cherished memories but also provide amenities and greenery to the Valley for everyone to enjoy.

61 Tree Dedications



4214 Tree Dedications since 1988

Meewasin Conservation Award 2018



Congratulations to Max Abraham, the 2018 recipient of the Meewasin Conservation Award; which is presented annually to an individual who has contributed significantly to the value that the Meewasin Valley brings to the community and raises awareness of the importance of taking care of natural spaces.

We are so pleased to award Max as the recipient of the 34th Meewasin Conservation Award. With a background in Renewable Resource and Education, he moved from teacher into the role of Vice Principal and then Principal. In these roles he excelled, influenced and pursued outdoor and environmental education,

collaborating with the Ministries of Environment and Education. Max was also the lead writer for the "Out-Of-School Education Concept Plan" which focused on future systems and school sponsored outdoor experiences for all students.

Max spoke about what receiving the Meewasin award means to him,

"I am honoured to receive the 2018 Meewasin Conservation Award. I have always believed in and worked towards creating quality learning experiences for children in our natural world. Such learning experiences are fundamental to building an ecologically aware, knowledgeable and committed citizenry and for a sustainable world. I want to thank the Meewasin Valley Authority for its dedication to education and to protecting and preserving the natural and cultural heritage of our outstanding river valley"

Max has been significantly involved in fulfilling Meewasin's core mission providing stewardship to the Meewasin Valley. He has a substantial background in advocating for outdoor education, representing the importance for nature and conservation on multiple associations, societies, and committees, and we could not think of anyone more deserving of the Meewasin Award!

Recognizing the occasion, a tree was planted in Max's name in the Meewasin Valley.

Operations

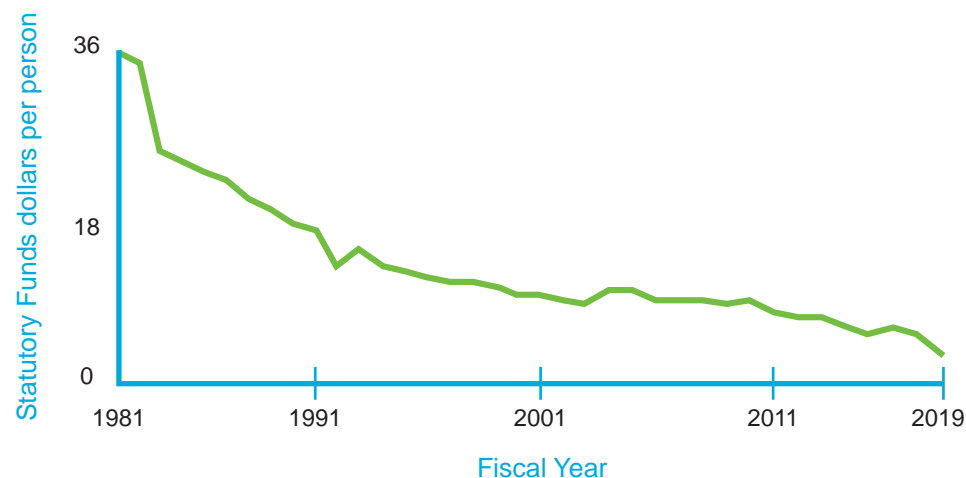
Meewasin Financial Highlights as of March 31, 2019

Statutory funding for Meewasin remained steady for the 2018-2019 fiscal years. This amount has seen an overall decline from \$36 per person in 1981-82 to less than \$7 per person in 2018-2019. Based on the growth in population within the conservation zone Meewasin has to increasingly rely on donations, grants and opportunities to generate revenue. This has been a major strength of Meewasin, especially in regards to capital projects and campaigns. There is a strong government relations strategy in place to support the continuation of consistent and predictable funding for Meewasin core operations.

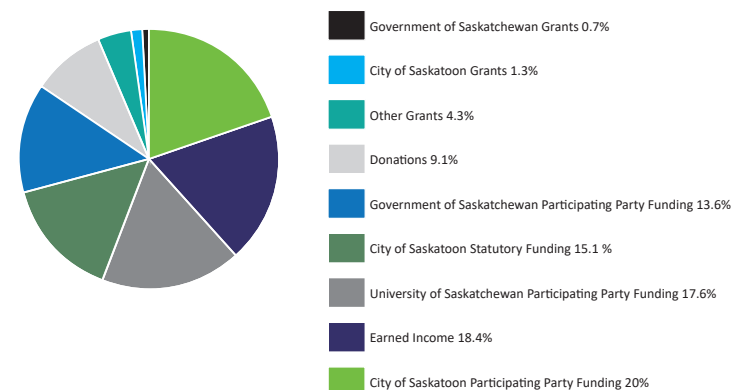
Endowment Funds

The endowment funds for the benefit of Meewasin, are owned and managed by the Saskatoon Community Foundation. At December 31, 2018, the endowment funds and balances were as follows: Meewasin Naturally Fund \$1,011,036, the Susan Lamb Fund \$25,986 and Wes Bolstad Fund \$20,541 for a total of \$1,057,563. Revenue from endowment funds for Meewasin are currently being used to support strategic operations and priorities in our three mandate areas.

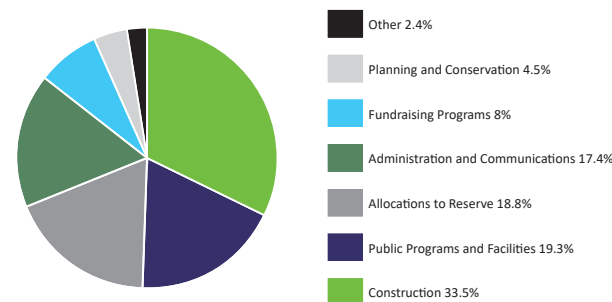
Statutory/Supplementary Funds per Capita



Source of Funds \$3,685,465



Expenditures and Allocations \$3,685,465



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

Participating Party Funding

City of Saskatoon
Government of Saskatchewan
University of Saskatchewan

Corporate Sponsorships

Cameco Corporation
Nutrien
Tim Hortons
Downtown YXE
Tourism Saskatoon

Grants

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City of Saskatoon
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Canada Habitat Stewardship
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From the Ground Up
Community Initiatives Fund
Saskatoon Community Foundation
SaskEnergy
Saskatoon Nature Society
Service Canada -
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Foundation
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Trans Canada Trail
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2018-2019 Meewasin Donors (over \$250)

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Betty Calvert	Suzanne Mahaffey
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Parks Naturalization Program
Ducks Unlimited Canada
Environment & Bioresources
Students Association
Environment & Climate Change
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Loraas
Native Plant Society of
Saskatchewan
Northeast Swale Watchers
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Stewards
Royal Astronomical Society of
Canada Saskatoon Centre
Saskatchewan Invasive Species
Council
Saskatchewan Light Pollution
Abatement Committee
Saskatchewan Prairie
Conservation Action Plan
Saskatoon Nature Society
Saskatoon Public School Division
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University of Saskatchewan,
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School of Environment &
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SASKATCHEWAN



Government of
Saskatchewan

Meewasin 