

# Meewasin Valley Authority

---

2020 - 2021  
ANNUAL REPORT

Stewards of the river  
valley corridor.



Meewasin 



## A message from the Chair & CEO



On behalf of the Board of Directors and the management of Meewasin we would like to thank everyone for their hard work during the last fiscal year. The past year began very uncertain and while we are still in very challenging times during the pandemic, Meewasin is committed to providing support to people and the environment through quality outdoor spaces. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of natural spaces to our physical and mental health, with over 92% of Saskatoon's residents agreeing. Connection to nature has increasingly become the norm and we are so pleased to provide the backdrop for recreation, education and entertainment opportunities.

Our public opinion data from this year also showed that over 89% of residents feel that the Meewasin Valley corridor is

Saskatoon's most important attribute. The Board, staff, advisory committees and volunteers for Meewasin take our role as the steward of this space very seriously and hold this responsibility in high regard. We want to thank the public for their patience throughout the pandemic and their respectful behavior towards each other and our environment.

The Meewasin Valley is so important to all of us and we all need to do our part to take care of it. The next year holds amazing projects for our region with Meewasin as a key driver to expand benefits for citizens, tourists, educators and the environment. Reach out and learn more about how to volunteer, donate or get involved with upcoming projects.

Keep healthy and see you in the Valley!

Andrea Lafond, CEO

Colin Tennent, Board Chair

Meewasin is the steward of the South Saskatchewan River valley and humbly acknowledges the traditional care takers of our land on Treaty 6 Territory and the homeland of the Métis.

## Mission

The Meewasin Valley Authority exists to ensure a healthy and vibrant river valley, with a balance between human use and conservation for the benefit of present and future generations.

## Vision

A world class corridor.

*Healthy & Vibrant  
Sense of Community  
Protecting the Legacy*

## Board of Directors

### Government of Saskatchewan

David Buckingham, MLA  
Mark Feader  
Marv Friesen, MLA  
Leanne Nyirfa  
Sharon Tkachuk

### City of Saskatoon

Charlie Clark, Mayor  
Bev Dubois, Councillor  
Sarina Gersher, Councillor  
Zach Jeffries, Councillor  
David Kirton, Councillor

### University of Saskatchewan

Yuguang Bai, College of Agriculture and Bioresources  
Peter Stoicheff, President  
Colin Tennent, Board Chair  
Ryan Walker, College of Arts and Science

## Advisory Committees

The Meewasin Board of Directors is advised on matters of policy by five committees comprised of members of the public appointed by the board. Public ownership in decision making is one of Meewasin's five guiding principles.

### Development Review

Twyla Bergstrom  
Rob Crosby, Vice-chair  
William Hrycan  
Ian Judd-Henrey  
Paul Koopman  
Chris Schulz  
Mitch Strocen, Chair  
Terry Werbovetski

### Conservation Advisory

Yuguang Bai  
Luc Delanoy  
Peter Goode, Chair  
Ron Jensen  
Nadia Mori  
Amber Weckworth  
Bert Weichel

### Design Advisory

Bertrand Bartake  
Luc Delanoy  
Kendra Fisher  
Marilyn Gould  
Jeff Howlett  
Tyson McShane

### Fundraising

Jane Benjamin  
Dale Botting  
Robin Chapman  
Eric Cline  
Bob Halliday  
Evan Howlett

Susan Lamb  
Pauline Melis  
Dave Neuburger  
Sandi Schultz, Chair  
Michael Voralia  
Ryan Walker

### Education Advisory

Angie Caron  
Bill Delainey  
Melanie Elliott  
Terri Fradette  
Janet McVittie  
Dean Newton

Courtney Thorne-Goetz  
Sharon Tkachuk  
Michael Voralia  
Matt Wolsfeld



## Resource Management: Ecological Monitoring



Ecological monitoring is used by Meewasin to inform the current health of the Valley, to evaluate the effectiveness of resource management activities, and to adapt resource management activities to more effectively enhance the health of the Valley. Meewasin employs various techniques to collect ecological data including citizen science data collection events, wildlife surveys, breeding bird surveys, wildlife cameras, rare plant surveys, ecological health assessments, water quality monitoring, bat surveys, and many more techniques.

Meewasin has been collecting water samples from the Northeast Swale, Small Swale, Beaver Creek, and the South Saskatchewan River for several years, monitoring macroinvertebrates (any animal lacking a backbone and large enough to see without the aid of a microscope), phosphorous loading, nutrients, and oxygen levels. This information provides long-term trends in the health of the wetlands at the Northeast and Small Swales.

## Canadian Prairies Prescribed Fire Exchange



The Canadian Prairies Prescribed Fire Exchange (CPPFE), in collaboration with its many partners, aims to increase the capacity for agencies and landowners alike to use fire as a grassland and parkland ecosystem management tool. The CPPFE's objectives are to help increase the use of prescribed fires, share fire science, equipment and effective planning, and lead safe practices through training courses.

Meewasin is honoured to be one of the organizations selected to lead and collaborate on this initiative to conserve and protect our remaining native grasslands, thanks to the Weston Family Foundation.



### 2020-2021 Resource Management Report Card

**127,500**

Square metres of  
land restored by fire  
and grazing

**397,361**

Invasive species  
controlled

## Floating Treatment Wetlands

In fall of 2020, Meewasin partnered with the City of Saskatoon and the South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards Inc. with the help of a grant from the RBC Tech for Nature Fund to bring the first ever floating treatment wetland to Saskatoon now available for public viewing at the Evergreen Storm Water Pond located at the Northeast Swale.

Wetlands are essential to keeping fresh water healthy. A floating treatment wetland (floating wetland) imitates a natural wetland and helps purify the water that flows to the South Saskatchewan River by creating a terrestrial habitat in aquatic environments. Native aquatic plant roots below the water line provide habitat for microscopic bacteria that do the work of cleansing the water. This floating wetland, which is a specialized floating raft structure, was planted with locally sourced native aquatic plant species that include sedges, rushes, and aquatic flowering plants.



## 2020-2021 Plantings

Every year dedicated Meewasin staff propagate, grow and plant locally sourced material for restoration, site enhancements and development projects. Planting is a very important component of Meewasin's conservation work to fulfill our mandate. Sometimes, based on project needs, nursery grown plants are used to augment the locally sourced supply. In some instances, we also salvage plants for relocation.

In the 2020-2021 planting season, Meewasin planted 1,540 trees and shrubs, 1,635 grass plugs, and 285 aquatic plants throughout the valley.







## Trail Development

25km

Trail completed in the last ten years

## Development Highlights

The Design & Development team is made up of a design team, a construction crew, and a horticulture crew, whose purpose is to design, build and manage the natural environment and public open space with projects ranging from significant park and trail developments to minor projects such as bench and sign replacements. This team implements projects identified in the Meewasin Development Plan, maintaining high standards of landscape and architectural design that are aligned with public need and the natural environment and heritage resources.

In 2020-2021, project phases were focused on preparing detailed design plans and working drawings, and communicating design intent through engagement with the public and key stakeholders on projects including the Kinsmen Riverfront, Meewasin Park/River Heights, Southwest Trail and Downtown Trail. In all cases the work involved enhancements to existing trail or development of new trail, including new seating opportunities, signage, lighting, planting and other amenities. In total this includes over 4.5 km of trail. All of these projects will be underway in 2021.

## Trail Enhancements

### Chief Whitecap Park

In 2020, consistent with the Chief Whitecap Park Master Plan, Meewasin developed 2.7 km of new primary Meewasin Trail / Trans Canada Trail through the site, with new site amenities such as signage, and expanded parking lots on the north and south ends of the site.

### Meewasin Trail near Aspen Ridge

Construction of the Meewasin Trail and grassland establishment along the south edge of the Northeast Swale (along Fedoruk Drive) was completed in the fall of 2020, with seeding ongoing in the spring of 2021. This section of the Meewasin Trail totals 3.8 km, starting at Central Avenue, heading east along Fedoruk and through the Greenway to McCormond Drive at the east end. The trail distances can be broken down to 1.2 km from Central Avenue to Zary Road, 1.4 km from Zary to the Greenway, and 1.2 km of Meewasin Trail in the Aspen Ridge greenway.

2x

### Did you know?

Trail use **doubled** during the COVID-19 pandemic on some of the busiest sections of trail.



## Infrastructure Funding



Four key sections of the Meewasin Trail will see upgrades over the next three years, thanks in part to funding from the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP), specifically through the COVID Resiliency Stream. This program provides over 70% of project costs for a projected \$5.5 M in upgrades to the Downtown, Kinsmen Riverfront, Southwest and Meewasin Park/River Heights sections of Meewasin Trail.

*"The Meewasin Trail network is built with goals for the lowest possible environmental impact and highest standards for safety and accessibility. Meewasin recorded almost two million visits in 2020, seeing increased demand during the pandemic. The planned enhancements are invaluable outdoor spaces where community members and future visitors can stay active, learn about the environment, and experience nature that supports physical and mental wellbeing."*





## Beaver Creek Conservation Area

The 2020-2021 year was certainly different. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on Meewasin's education programming and sites, and resulted in a 5-month closure of Beaver Creek Conservation Area. During the site closure, many enhancements were made to the Beaver Creek Interpretive Centre, trails and amenities. This included removal of invasive plant species and revegetation of disturbed natural areas to increase the overall biodiversity of native flora in the area.

We were delighted to re-open our doors at Beaver Creek in early September 2020 to welcome visitors and school groups back to the site, with a reduced schedule and safety guidelines in place. The public found a new appreciation for nature and the beauty of the Meewasin Valley rediscovering many of its unique natural places. This resulted in a significant increase in visitation at Beaver Creek during 2020-2021 with the site seeing an estimated 22,732 visitors. This a 28% increase over the previous year and includes a 5-month closure.



## Digital K-12 Resources

In summer of 2020, Meewasin's team worked in partnership with two very skilled and knowledgeable educators from the Greater Saskatoon Catholic and Saskatoon Public School Divisions to develop a comprehensive series of individual curricular-linked lessons for Kindergarten through Grade 12. The aim of these resources is to help educators achieve curriculum outcomes in an outdoor environment, and to instill stewardship in youth of all ages in a safe and accessible way.

These resources have since been recognized by RCE Saskatchewan (Regional Centres of Expertise, Education for Sustainable Development) with the Lyle Benko Future Generations Award. This special award recognizes an individual or group in the K-12 system for outstanding contributions to Education for Sustainable Development in Saskatchewan. Based on the success of this initiative we plan to continue this partnership for years to come.

Educators can request access to these resources through Meewasin's website at [www.meewasin.com/education](http://www.meewasin.com/education).

## School Programming

Meewasin strives to offer leading experiential, nature-based learning that engages students deeply in the natural world, and highlights the conservation efforts and unique ecosystems in the Meewasin Valley. Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and in accordance with public safety guidelines, Meewasin paused its Grade 2 and 3 programs at the Northeast Swale and Saskatoon Natural Grasslands and focused on offering Grade 5 programming at Beaver Creek.

The Grade 5 program featured themes such as seasonal ecology, prairie-creek ecosystems, migration and hibernation, and a cross-country ski program in the winter season. COVID-19 presented a variety of challenges in the delivery of safe in-person programming, and we were very pleased with the interest and uptake by schools. The Grade 5 program reached a total of 728 participants in 2020/2021.

Feedback from teachers was overwhelmingly positive and many expressed gratitude that Meewasin's programming continued to be an option for their classrooms when so many other offerings were affected by the pandemic. We are very proud that Meewasin's interpretive team were able to continue to deliver quality programming in a pandemic environment.

## Public Programming

5,780

Students/  
Tourism Groups  
Engaged

6,813

Visitors to the  
Cameco Meewasin  
Skating Rink @Nutrien Plaza



***Meewasin's outdoor sites and activities  
serve the community by offering a healthy  
outlet when so many other opportunities  
are impacted by the pandemic.***





Partners FOR  
the Saskatchewan  
River Basin

Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin (PFSRB) has a mission to promote awareness, linkages, stewardship, knowledge, and respect for the Saskatchewan River Basin ecosystem and heritage that will encourage sustainable use of the basin’s natural resources and nurture cultural values. PFSRB has been delivering programming, professional development, and has supported individuals and organizations in maintaining the health of the Saskatchewan River Basin for over 28 years.

Supported by the City of Saskatoon, a new program called Prevent Irritable Sewer Syndrome was introduced and delivered this year, which is aimed at teaching youth Grades 5-8 about where our tap water comes from, what happens to the water in our homes after we are done with it, and steps we can all take to ensure a healthy system and water source. Similar to the other programs currently offered by PFSRB (Yellow Fish Road™ and Caring For Our Watersheds), an informative PowerPoint and interactive model presentation is available to supplement the knowledge presented.



Caring For Our Watersheds

Through Caring For Our Watersheds, students are constantly coming up with ways to reduce our water consumption in order to protect and conserve this precious resource. This past year, a team from Martensville identified one such way and put their plan in action.

Congratulations to Corben Schnurr, Kaden Shumay, Kazden Mathies, and Tyson Goguen from Venture Heights School in Martensville for replacing six water fountains at the Martensville Arena in Spring 2020 with six water bottle fillers, with assistance and support from City of Martensville and Nutrien, Ltd. Since it was during COVID-19 restrictions, the work done to replace the fountains with fillers was not disruptive to the usual arena activities. These water bottle fillers will save on the water wasted from athletes and the public trying to fill their water bottles through conventional water fountains.

Cleaning Up  
Saskatoon's  
Backyard

Every year, Meewasin’s Clean Up Campaign makes a difference to the health of the community and ecosystems within it. Although postponed to the fall of 2020 to ensure proper safety precautions and instructions were in place for participants, over 1,700 community members took part in the 2020 campaign to clear litter from our natural areas!

The efforts made a tremendous difference, with 4,663 kg in garbage and 1,829 kg of recycling material recorded during Loraas Disposal pick ups! This means a total of 6,492 kg of litter was diverted from natural areas such as endangered or sensitive habitat, wetlands and rivers!

Meewasin acknowledges the amazing partners who helped make the 2020 Clean Up Campaign possible - Loraas Disposal, City of Saskatoon, Clean Canada Together/Glad Canada, Trans Canada Trail, Pizza Hut, Tim Hortons PITCH-IN Canada and Downtown Saskatoon.



2020 Clean Up Statistics

6492 kg  
combined total of  
waste and recycling  
picked up

1767  
volunteers from schools,  
families, work groups  
and organizations  
participated







## A Million Steps For Mental Health

Everyone knows that getting fresh air is great for your mental health. For one avid Meewasin Trail lover, spending time outdoors is about much more than being outside - it is about building connections in a socially distanced, pandemic world. Starting in March 2020, Frances Sreedhar began to recognize the essential part that moving on the Meewasin has played in her mental health, and later set a goal to walk a million steps on the Meewasin Trail in support of two local community agencies: the Meewasin Valley Authority and the Canadian Mental Health Association, Saskatoon Branch.

Frances' goals with the 1 Million Steps for Mental Health initiative were to raise awareness about the links between physical and mental health, highlight the importance of the Meewasin Valley and encourage others to make their own goals, and raise \$10,000 for the non-profits, one step at a time.

In total, Frances walked 1,111,111 steps, and with plans for an even more exciting future, the 2021 initiative raised an amazing total of \$3,555 for Meewasin and the Canadian Mental Health Association Saskatoon. Thank you Frances for leading such a wonderful community initiative and thanks to everyone who participated, followed along, and donated to this campaign.

## Dedication Program Highlights

Through Meewasin's established Dedication Program, we are able to offer numerous ways in which our donors can remember and honor their loved ones through the sponsorship of benches, bricks, trees and many other items.

At Meewasin, we listen to our donors and work with them to help create meaningful memorials. When Dean Sproat expressed a wish to remember his beloved late wife Diana - an avid marathon runner who loved the trails - we suggested a new digital trail counter, never before seen in Saskatoon. The trail counter was placed in Riverlanding in the Spring of 2021, counting both daily and yearly walkers and bikers. With a photo and quote from Diana, it stands beautifully for trail visitors to see, while at the same time representing Diana's love for the community and trails.



Diana Sproat

## 2020 Dedication Program Numbers



24	Trees
12	Bricks
13	Benches
2	Seating Blocks
5	Memorial Forest
3	Northeast Swale Hectares
2	Shrubs
2	Special Dedications

## Honouring a Beautiful Soul in the Meewasin Valley

"My oldest son, Brennen Shirley, passed away in 2020, the dreaded year of COVID-19. Due to pandemic restrictions, we have been unable to gather for a formal service for Brennen to allow everyone that loves him to come together to celebrate his life. This grief process has been tremendously hard.

I was looking for a way to honour Brennen as we wait for restrictions to be lifted. Brennen loved the Meewasin Valley, spending time on the trails with his friends. Brennen worked as glazier with two of his best friends, Eric Therres and Cody Ptolemy, and installed glass in the following buildings: Remai Arts, RBC East, Midtown Plaza and was about to start on the Nutrien building.

I contacted the Meewasin Valley Authority to find a tree to dedicate and honour my son. I was put in contact with Joanne and she went above and beyond to assist me. I had requested a tree specifically in the area where Brennen had built these magnificent buildings and to have the tree in time for his birthday (a mere 13 days from my request). Joanne found two Scots Pine trees to choose from. Easton (Brennen's brother) and I went down and chose the perfect tree for Brennen. Joanne completed the request just three days before his birthday!

Now everyone has a physical place to go and visit my boy to say hello and pay their respects. Brennen will enjoy the view and the sunsets to follow with his tree. We are so very grateful for his tree and to Meewasin for making it all happen"

- Angie Johnson



Brennen Shirley



## Financial Highlights

Statutory funding for Meewasin remained steady for the 2020/2021 fiscal year. This amount has seen an overall decline from \$36 per person in 1981-82 to less than \$7 per person in 2020/2021. Based on the growth in population within the Conservation Zone Meewasin has to increasingly rely on donations, grants and other opportunities to generate revenue. This has been a major strength of Meewasin, especially in regard 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 and for additional investments into infrastructure.

## Endowment Funds

The endowment funds for the benefit of Meewasin, are owned and managed by the Saskatoon Community Foundation. At December 31, 2020, the endowment funds and balances were as follows: Meewasin Naturally Fund \$1,174,679, the Susan Lamb Fund \$33,129 and Wes Bolstad Fund \$25,442 for a total of \$1,233,250. These funds continue to grow through generous contributions from individuals and planned gifts. Revenue from endowment funds for Meewasin are currently being used to support strategic operations and priorities in our three mandate areas.



## Donors, we thank you!

### Participating Party Funding

City of Saskatoon  
Government of Saskatchewan  
University of Saskatchewan

### Corporate Sponsorships

Cameco Corporation  
Downtown Saskatoon  
Nutrien  
Tim Hortons

### Special Friends & Planned Givers

Dr. Darwin Anderson  
Ina and the late John Brockelbank  
Gwen and Guy Charman  
Susan and Ronald Lamb  
Anita and Graham Langford  
On Purpose Leadership Inc.  
Terri Lemke  
K.W. & Dora Nasser  
Paul Lavoie & Bill Peterson  
Estate of Frank J. Roy  
Saskatoon Road Runners Association  
Jack & Sylvia Vicq  
Estate of Patricia Parnell  
Estate of Gladys Hall  
Estate of Wes Bolstad  
Estate of Vetha Paine

### 2020-2021 Donors (over \$250)

Patricia Albers  
Dr. Darwin Anderson  
Len Andres  
G.N. Arnott  
Yuguang Bai  
BalloonFish Marketing  
Scott Banda  
Benevity Fund  
Jane Benjamin  
William Black  
Ann Blakeney  
Ron Boden  
Doug Borrowman  
Cameron Broten  
Caitlin Brown  
Samuel Butler  
Barbara Campbell  
Randall Chapman  
Robin Chapman  
Gwen & Guy Charman  
Linda Clifford  
Joe Colistro  
Melissa Cunningham  
Yvonne Cuttle  
Luc & Sue Delanoy  
Bev Dubois  
Lorne & Laurel Duczek  
Empty Arms Perinatal Loss  
Gayleen Erfurt  
Estate of Bernice Eileen Harrison  
Estate of Frank Roy  
Estate of John F. Chaplin  
Estate of Patricia Parnell  
Estate of Valerie Scrivener  
Tom & Jane Evans  
Ray & Helen Fast  
Mark Feader  
Margaret Finney  
David Forbes  
Lorna Fox  
Kelli Fredlund  
Dale Gaston  
Ashlyn George  
Gladys Hall Fund  
Gerald & Bettina Grandey  
Grandey Family Foundation Inc.

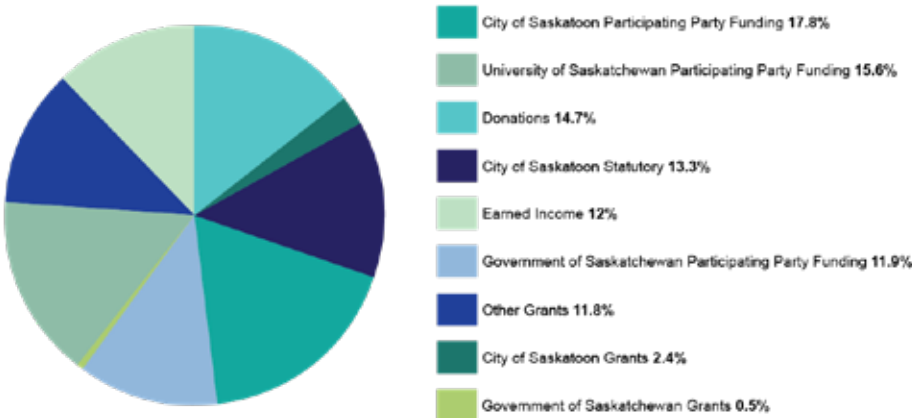
Doug Hassard  
David Hastings  
Geraldine Healey  
Kathleen Heffron  
Karen Heise  
Stephen Hellier  
Michael Hernberg  
Janet Hill & David Palmer  
Angie Johnson  
Donna Jones  
Brenda Kennedy  
Christopher Kent  
John King  
Lance Kjellgren  
Kim Kohlenberg  
John & Doretha Kowalishin  
Gordon Laliberte  
Ron & Susan Lamb  
Malcolm Leggett  
Lenz Family  
Steve Levy  
Daryl Lindsay  
Helen Lowry  
Malcolm Lucy  
Jo-anne Lund  
Gabriel Mahlberg  
Christine Manning  
Harold May  
Diane McPherson  
Peter McPherson  
Janet McVittie  
Lawrence Mitchell  
Cindy Moleski  
Motif Marketing Inc.  
Justin & Julie Mutch  
Dave & Nan Neuburger  
Leanne Nyirfa  
Vetha Paine  
Glen Penner  
Dan Pennock  
Bill Peterson  
Diane Pontikes  
Ken Pontikes & Darlene Bessey  
Raymond James Canada Foundation  
Scott Richardson  
Elizabeth Richert  
John & Helen Riggs  
Cindy Romuldietz  
Rotary Club of Saskatoon Nutana

Lloyd & Heather Rowson  
Saskatchewan Health Authority  
Saskatoon Community Foundation  
Saskatoon Road Runners Association  
Sandra Schultz  
Tanya Sinnett  
Tim & Stacey Sirois  
SOS Tree Coalition  
Kelly & Fern Stockdale  
Robert Taylor  
Sara Tetland  
Dorothy Thompson  
Patrick Timmons  
Transalta Corp  
United Way Community Funds of Saskatoon  
Lesley Voellmecke  
Daymond Volk  
Ryan Walker  
James and Sharon Werbicki  
Christopher & Jill White  
Colin Whitfield  
Lloyd Widenmaier  
Laurie Ann Williams  
Kevin Wilson  
Thomas Wilson  
Rob Woods  
Dr. Suzanne Yip & Dr. Ivan Jen  
Gail Zink

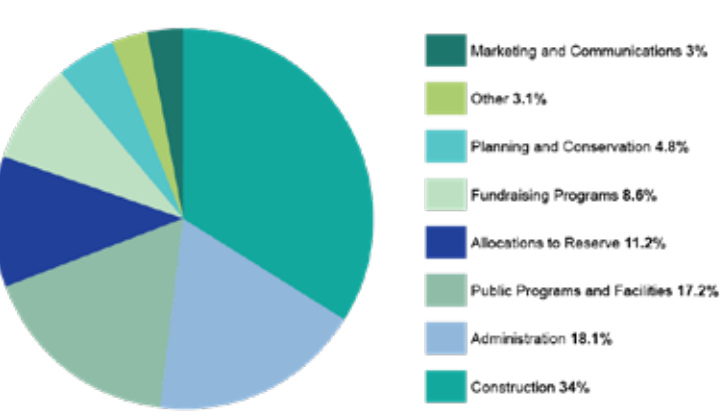
### Grants

ASUPCA  
City of Saskatoon  
Gabriel Dumont Institute  
Government of Canada  
RBC Foundation  
Saskatoon Nature Society  
Service Canada - Canada Summer Jobs  
SK Community Initiatives Fund  
South SK Community Foundation  
TD Friends of the Environment  
Tourism Saskatchewan  
Trans Canada Trail  
Tree Canada Foundation  
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Meewasin **Source of Funds** \$ 4,196,143 for the year ended March 31, 2021



Meewasin **Expenditures** \$ 4,196,143 for the year ended March 31, 2021







Saskatchewan!

 *City of*  
**Saskatoon**

 **UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN**

**Meewasin** 