



Meewasin Valley Authority
402 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K3G5
Phone (306) 665-6887 Fax (306) 665-6117

NEWS RELEASE

for immediate release

Fire Near Beaver Creek Conservation Area

April 19th, 2021

Yesterday afternoon, the Saskatoon Fire Department (SFD) received a report of a fire that was out of control and a large area of grass was on fire 10 miles south of Saskatoon on Highway 219 at the entrance to Beaver Creek. Meewasin did a perimeter check of the conservation area and no damage within 200m was found. This fire was not connected to Beaver Creek Conservation Area and not part of the Meewasin Prescribed Fire Program.

Any fires conducted by Meewasin requires a permit through the Saskatoon Fire Department where a plan is presented which includes where, when and how the burn will be conducted along with considered conditions. These conditions include wind speed, wind direction, days since precipitation, fuel moisture and relative humidity among other factors. Meewasin's prescribed fires are all planned and supervised by an experienced fire boss with assistance from trained staff and volunteers. The weather conditions on April 18th would have not met Meewasin's safety criteria.

When Meewasin conducts prescribed fires, the process takes months (and in some cases years) to plan, prepare and carry out. This involves waiting for the opportune time for weather conditions to become available that meet the very specific prescription for the burn. "The prescribed fire season each spring and fall tends to be quite short, so we need to take action when we can. Weather at this time of year and the non-green make a perfect mix of conditions for burning safely", explains Meewasin's Resource Management Officer, Renny Grilz. Ideal conditions for prescribed fires is moderate humidity, lower temperatures and low winds from a consistent direction to blow smoke away from neighborhoods and key roads.

Meewasin also directs another program entirely focused on training and procedures surrounding the use of prescribed fire called the Canadian Prairies Prescribed Fire Exchange. They have a 15 hour course that can be taken by anyone and are finishing up a an online version that helps landowners, staff and volunteers to learn more about how to safely use fire as a positive land management tool.

Learn more about Canadian Prairies Prescribed Fire Exchange at www.grasslandfire.ca

Prescribed fires are part of Meewasin's overall resource management plan to conserve natural areas and the native plants and animals that make their homes there. Less natural fires have led to a loss of grassland ecosystems, a loss of suitable habitat, and a decrease in plant and animal

biodiversity. Prescribed fire and grazing are both natural processes that Meewasin uses to decrease the build up of fuel that leads to uncontrollable wildfires. Dead vegetation, which is the fuel, can easily catch fire naturally or by human interaction. We are able to contribute towards healthy and productive prairies, which in turn provide food, habitat and countless other benefits to us and those with whom we share this planet.

**For more information, contact Andrea Lafond at alafond@meewasin.com
or (306) 665-6887**

-30-



About Meewasin Valley Authority

The Meewasin Valley Authority exists to ensure a healthy and vibrant river valley, 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,*

for the benefit of present and future generations.

There are 67 square kilometers of land and over +105km of established trail, which has seen up to 2.24 million trail visits per year, in the Meewasin Valley. The area also features sites that help people to connect to nature through experiences such as Beaver Creek Conservation Area, the Northeast Swale, Saskatoon Natural Grasslands, the River Landing Spray Area, and the Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @Nutrien Plaza. Meewasin is a non-profit organization that relies on donations and volunteers for sustainability. To get involved or learn more visit www.meewasin.com