



Meewasin Valley Authority
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NEWS RELEASE

for immediate release

Meewasin Continues Work to Explore Designation as Saskatchewan's First National Urban Park

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With participation from a regional steering committee Meewasin continues work with Parks Canada to explore the potential for designation as a national urban park.

On August 4, 2021, the Government of Canada launched a new program to support the creation of a network of national urban parks. Meewasin is partnering with Parks Canada in the Saskatoon region for this project. Meewasin has begun early work with Parks Canada and local partners, and will be taking further steps in the coming year.

A steering committee was formed in January 2022 to discuss the consideration of a potential national urban park in the region. The steering committee has representation from Meewasin, Parks Canada, Government of Saskatchewan, City of Saskatoon, RM of Corman Park, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, University of Saskatchewan and Wanuskewin Heritage Park.

Work completed has included early engagement with a key stakeholders and industry experts. We heard from this engagement that the Meewasin model for conservation, development and education is a strong basis for potential structures of a national urban park. We also heard that local leadership and decision-making, Indigenous leadership and involvement, and increased stewardship of natural and cultural spaces throughout the Valley are critical. We are using this feedback in planning as we move forward.

We anticipate that the designation of a national urban park in the Meewasin Valley will be governed under a version of the existing model used by the Meewasin Valley Authority. The park's vision, boundaries and governance, the role of Parks Canada, and other key considerations related to the operations of a national urban park, will be informed by close collaboration with local partners and stakeholders. The process is anticipated to be completed and a decision on whether to move forward with designation of a national urban park by 2025.

Meewasin is leading on four major components of work planned for the coming year, building on what we heard through early engagement:

- governance research to support the ongoing discussion with the steering committee,

- resource management plans for key ecological and cultural spaces throughout the Meewasin Valley, including Wanuskewin Heritage Park and Beaver Creek Conservation Area,
- continued planning with our steering committee and launching a digital platform to further share project details and updates with the public as they arise, and
- a series of targeted workshops with key stakeholders.

As part of the project’s commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, Indigenous governments and Parks Canada are also working together in a nation-to-nation relationship. This includes Indigenous-led engagement about the potential park’s vision, boundaries, governance, as well as programming and operational considerations.

“We are so excited to continue partnership with Parks Canada and are thankful for the support of the steering committee. This is a huge opportunity for Meewasin and our region to better conserve important ecosystems, advance reconciliation, to increase tourism reach, and improve community engagement and access to nature,” explained CEO for Meewasin Andrea Lafond.

More information will be available through an online engagement platform to be released in fall 2022. This will help the public to learn more and stay updated.

**For more information, contact Andrea Lafond at (306) 665-6887
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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 more than 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