

Meewasin Valley Authority

ANNUAL REPORT

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Meewasin 

Message from the CEO and Board Chair

After 43 years of continued hard work, dedication and support, we are grateful for the opportunity to have led Meewasin through this year. On behalf of the Board of Directors and management of Meewasin, we would like to thank everyone. As we continue to live with the effects of the pandemic, we have seen the importance and demand of natural spaces greatly increase. With more use of the Meewasin Trail, we know the importance of its development and the conservation of the precious habitat around it. This year, Meewasin completed a number of trail enhancements to support the ongoing need. We would like to thank everyone who was involved including the Meewasin staff, board, donors, advisory committees, volunteers and our community.

Meewasin strives to balance human use and conservation for the benefit of present and future generations. We 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. With the help of amazing partners we have piloted new experiences, made important trail enhancements and invested in the cultural and natural resources of the Meewasin Valley.

Meewasin relies on the amazing community where we work and live, and we thank you for your dedication to maintaining this vital space. Within the next year, Meewasin will continue to introduce new opportunities for our region driving thoughtfully and ambitiously 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; there are incredible times ahead!

Keep healthy and see you in the Valley!



Ryan Walker, Board Chair



Andrea Lafond, CEO

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**

Meewasin is the steward of the South Saskatchewan River Valley and humbly acknowledges the traditional caretakers of our land in Treaty 6 Territory and the homeland of the Métis.





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Gurpartap Kals
Nydia Pobran

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David Kirton, Councillor

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 participation in decision making is one of Meewasin's five guiding principles.

Development Review

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Ryan Walker
Sheri Willick

Resource Management Monitoring Framework

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

One highlight from the current resource management field season is water sampling. Meewasin has developed and implemented a water sampling program to monitor water quality indicator levels in various locations across the Valley. This year Meewasin is collecting and processing water samples from 13 sampling locations positioned at various wetlands, streams, and riverside areas throughout the Valley. The data gained through this water sampling program will contribute to site management decisions and inform long-term trends related to watershed health.

over
141,000
invasive species
controlled

56
water samples
taken at 13 aquatic
sampling plots





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.

In 2021, the Canadian Prairies Prescribed Fire Exchange and partners successfully conducted **12 prescribed fires** across Saskatchewan and Manitoba. During these events, **8 agencies** were present (thanks to newly signed Mutual Aid Agreements), 1 new fire boss was initiated into their role, and many new fire practitioners received mentorship.

CPPFE has developed and is delivering CPPFE 001: Introduction to Prescribed Fire in the Grassland Environment, a course that features two live deliveries with approximately 12 participants. CPPFE also developed a Prescribed Fire Workshop and delivered it to four groups across two provinces.

33.7
hectares

of land restored
by prescribed fire

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 29 years.

Our current programs delivered on behalf of City of Saskatoon (Yellow Fish Road™ and Prevent Irritable Sewer Syndrome) and Nutrien (Caring For Our Watersheds) empowers youth of all ages to make changes in order to ensure a healthy river system and healthy water sources.

Caring For Our Watersheds Program

Through the Caring For Our Watersheds program, students propose ways to improve the health of our watersheds in order to protect and conserve our precious resources. This past year, students from St. Augustine School in Saskatoon implemented numerous projects in their classroom with the help of implementation funding from Nutrien. Projects included indoor, hydroponic, and aeroponic gardens; vermicomposting; a rain barrel; and upcycling plastic bags into shopping bags. Congratulations to Mr. Stupnikoff's class on a job well done!



Trail Enhancements

In 2021, two enhancements to the Meewasin Trail were undertaken – 1.4 km in Meewasin Park adjacent to the River Heights neighbourhood, and 1.3 km in the South West, from the Sanatorium site to the Gordie Howe Bridge. Both of these projects filled significant gaps in the Meewasin Trail network. Both sites were open for use in the fall of 2021, with some minor work undertaken to complete them in 2022.

Trail enhancements at the Kinsmen Riverfront were underway in May of 2022. This site, between Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan and the Wonderhub includes enhancements to 300 meters of primary trail through the site, an upgraded riverfront connection (stairs and ramps) and 180 meters of secondary trail along the river heading north from the dock. This project includes new plantings of over 1,200 trees and shrubs, new seating and picnic opportunities, lighting and signage. The site will be open for use later in 2022.

Detailed design is also underway for the first phase of trail enhancements through the downtown, through Kiwanis Memorial Park South between the Bessborough Hotel and the Broadway Bridge. Construction is planned for 2023. Subsequent phases will proceed in the downtown area in future years, subject to funding.

92%

of respondents agree
that trails and natural
areas support physical
and mental health of
Saskatoon residents

2021, Insightrix

105+
km

of established
Meewasin Trail



- ✓ Complete
- ... Underway
- To come





Education in the Meewasin Valley

Working with students and teachers in the Meewasin Valley continues to be a highlight for our organization. Our education team worked closely with the Saskatoon Public and Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Divisions in 2021-22 to provide a variety of safe outdoor learning opportunities for students and educators. In addition to the longstanding Grade 5 program at Beaver Creek Conservation Area, we were delighted to bring back programming for Grade 3 students at the Northeast Swale and to offer programming for all grade levels at the Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @Nutrien Plaza.

These curricular-connected programs were delivered to over 3000 students during the 2021-22 school year. We are grateful to SaskPower for their major sponsorship of Beaver Creek programming and all other supporters of our education programs.

Beaver Creek Conservation Area continued to be a popular site with over 28,000 people visiting in 2021-22; the highest amount of visitation recorded over the past 7 years. This spot continued to be a hub for Meewasin's public outreach and featured programs such as EcoAdventure camps, grazing demonstrations, guided tours and volunteer events.

Digital Resources for Teachers

Demand consistently exceeds the availability of Meewasin's education programming. To address this need, Meewasin works annually with Saskatoon Public and Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Divisions to develop and deploy "grab and go" digital resources for both elementary and secondary-level educators.

These resources are designed to help teachers make curriculum connections to a section of content in the Meewasin App. The focus for 2021-22 has been **Indigenous Connections to the Northeast Swale** and includes links to other content designed to encourage teachers and students to take part in land-based activities throughout the Valley. Meewasin extends our gratitude to the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who shared teachings for the Meewasin App and which, in turn, laid the groundwork for the development of these new digital education resources. The goal is to continue to expand the content available through this platform.

28,257

visits to Beaver
Creek Conservation
Area in 2021

3,000+

students engaged
through Meewasin
programming

Tourism Experiences

With support from Discover Saskatoon, Tourism Saskatchewan, and Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan), Meewasin was excited to pilot our very first experiential tourism offerings in 2021-22. This is part of a larger strategy to support and participate in sustainable tourism which has many social, environmental and economic benefits.

Naughty by Nature provided guests with a light-hearted look at the birds and the bees after hours at Beaver Creek Conservation Area and featured partnerships with Black Fox Distillery, 9 Mile Brewery, Primal and Style & Graze. Sip & Skate took place at the Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @Nutrien Plaza and offered guests private small-group skating time paired with treats from LB Distillers and the Prairie Grazer.

The development and delivery of tourism offerings allows Meewasin to create unique experiences for new, non-traditional audiences and provides a platform to share information about our mandate. Tickets include a donation to support our ongoing education and conservation initiatives and highlights the local businesses and suppliers who partner with us to deliver these experiences. Approximately 250 guests took part in Meewasin's tourism experiences in 2021-22. These piloted events were such a success that we are busy planning for new and continued offerings in 2022-23!



The Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @Nutrien Plaza

This season, the rink opened on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 and closed for the season on March 13, 2022 for a total of 87 days of operation. The Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @Nutrien Plaza had **5793 visits**.

Sip & Skate provided an amazing opportunity for visitors to get an exclusive experience with added local food and beverage. We welcomed **87 visitors** to this experience and plan to continue next winter.

Meewasin App

The first of its kind in our region, the focus of the Meewasin App is interpreting stories of First Nation and Métis People throughout the Meewasin Valley in an outdoor, urban setting. It provides interactive educational content to lifelong learners and tourists! New content is added regularly to help those explore the history and culture of the river valley. The app is available in the App Store, Google Play and online.



Scan the QR code to download the Meewasin App today!



Help Us Meet our Goals for the Next Five Years

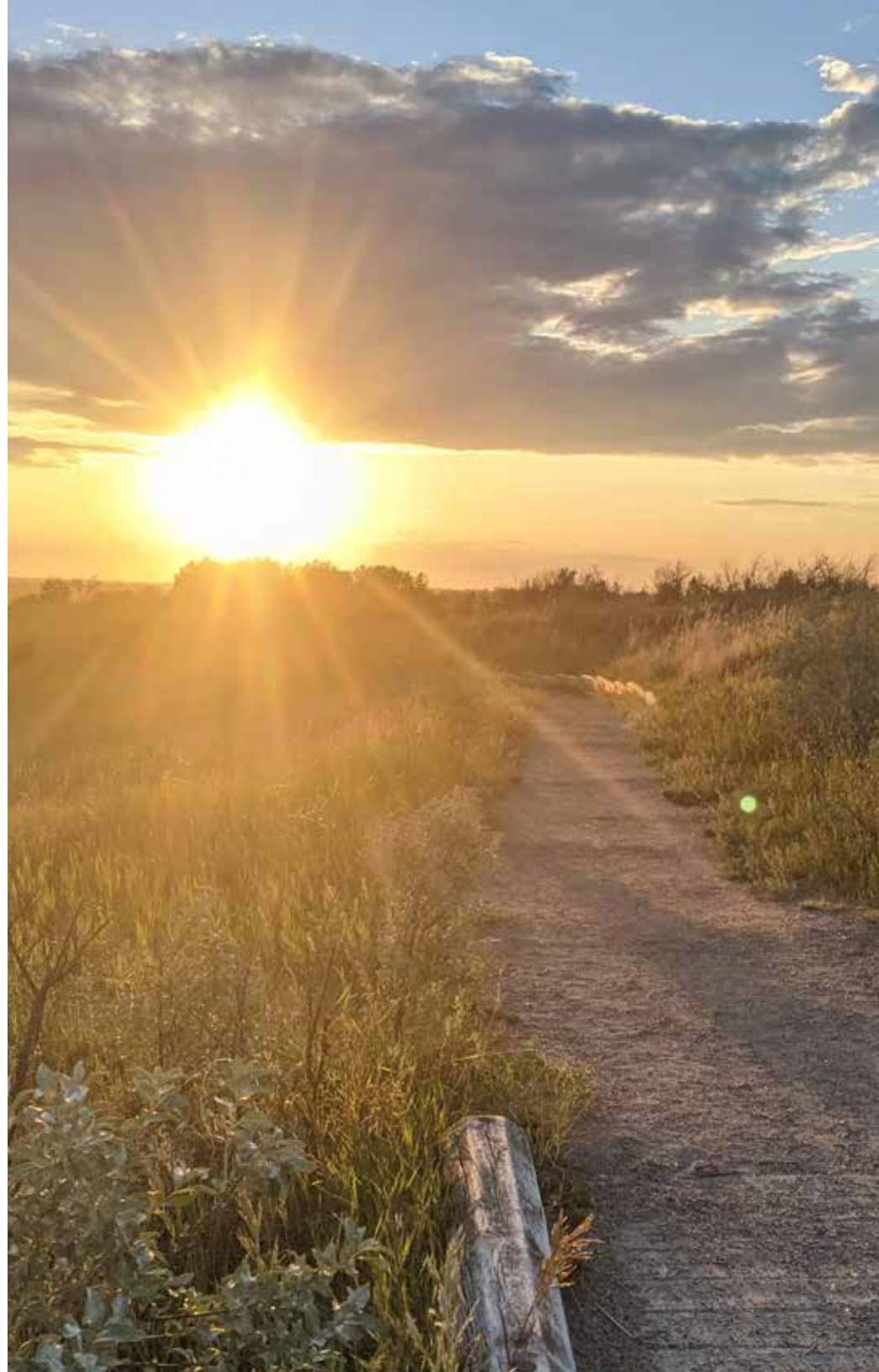


Meewasin is the heart of our region, and lives in the hearts of our citizens who stroll, roll, jog, play, cycle, paddle, ski and skate their way through the Valley. Families bond on the Meewasin Trail and at natural areas, delighting in the magic of chickadees in their palms, snowflakes on their tongues and the wildlife they discover. Graduations, marriage proposals, weddings and other celebrations and ceremonies happen on the shores of the river and in Meewasin green spaces.

Our community relies on our Meewasin Trail network, natural areas and educational programs to decompress from urban life, connect with friends and family, and relax in nature. Levels of use are increasing — in 2021 we saw 2.24 million visits to the Meewasin Trail. In the past 2 years we have all gained a new appreciation of the importance of outdoor experiences for our mental and physical health.

We are preparing to respond to demand. Our current fundraising campaign supports all three of our pillars to conserve, develop and educate through necessary trail enhancements, a new greenhouse and seed bank facility and upgrades to programming supplies. Our goal is to build capacity to satisfy future stewardship responsibilities so our river valley and community can thrive.

*Saskatoon wouldn't be the place
we know and love without the
Meewasin Valley*



Donors we thank you!

2021-2022 Donors (over \$250)

Patricia Albers
Lauren Allen
G.N. Arnott
Sue Ashburner
Cheryl Avery
B.E. Burbridge Medical PC Inc.
Krista Babiuk
Joanne Bahr
Yuguang Bai
Darrell Balkwill
Balloontish
Scott & Tracy Banda
Ernest Barber
Scott Bell
J. Richard Bellamy
Jocelyn Bilodeau
Beth Bilson
William Black
Anne Blakeney
Ron Boden
Erin Bokshowan
Estate of Wes Bolstad
Dale & Rose Botting
Jeff Braid
Tisha Bremner
Cameron Broten
Caitlin Brown
Donna Bruce
Patricia Buckley
Nola Buhr & James Romanow
Colleen Burke Ewanchyna
Samuel Butler
Cameco Corporation
Daniel Campbell
Derek & Amberlea Chabot
Randall Chapman
Robin Chapman & Ian
Judd-Henrey
Gwen & Guy Charman
Karen Chazez
Lisa Clark
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CNH Industrial
Colliers McClocklin Real Estate
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Kim Cory
Ann & Ewen Coxworth
Rob & Judy Crosby
Melissa Cunningham
Yvonne Cuttle
Danielle Davis
DCG Philanthropic Services Inc.
Luc & Sue Delanoy

Destinate Group Ltd.
Division of Respiriology
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Cindi Gaucher
Allen Geeraert
George Jeerakathil Law
Sarina Gersher & Aaron Gaudet
Ann Giesbrecht
Gladys Hall Fund
Aditi Grag & Chris de Jong
Grandey Family Foundation Inc.
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Jason Harrison
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Karen Heise
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Ken Howland & Marcia Clark
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HTFC Planning and Design
Steven Huntley
Infrastructure Canada
- Investing in Canada Infrastructure
Program
Innovation Credit Union
Todd Jarvis
Dr. Ivan Jen & Dr. Suzanne Yip
JLA MPC
Amy Josephson
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Jenn LePage
Steve Levy
Estate of Allan Leyland
Lincoln R. Crooks Legal Prof. Corp.
Amanda Loewy
James Lokken
Bruce & Marlene Loraas
Loraas Disposal Services Ltd.
Joyce Loraas
Malcolm Lucy
Lynne MacDonald
Joni & Neil Mackay
Brett & Christine Magneson
Christine Manning
Yann Martel & Alice Kuipers
Brent Matkowski
Estate of Lynn S. McLean
Janet McVittie
Pauline Melis & Eric Cline
Douglas Milne
Lawrence Mitchell
MLT Aikins LLP
MNP LLP
Cindy Moleski
Terence Monteith
Moore-Ching Family Fund
Jennifer Morgan
Justin & Julie Mutch
The Nasser Family
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David Nielsen & Paula Schwann
Elva Nixon
Hanna Northey
Nutrien
Vera Oleniuk
On Purpose Leadership Inc.
Alan Otterbein
P. Machibroda Engineering Ltd.
Estate of Vetha Paine
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Estate of Patricia Parnell
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Shaunt Parthev
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Glen Penner
Deena Persaud
Pinter & Associates Ltd.
Erin Placatka
Diane Pontikes
Ken Pontikes & Darlene Bessey &
Zoe Pontikes
Janet & Art Postle
Estate of Frank J. Roy
Carrie Ruep-Hildebrand
SaskPower Corporation
Saskatchewan Blue Cross
Saskatoon Community of Mindful
Living
Saskatoon Road Runners
Association

SaskEnergy
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Krista Schreiter
Sandra Schultz
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Arnie & Linda Shaw
Jade Shmon
South Saskatchewan River Watershed
Stewards Inc.
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Nancy Upton
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Jack & Sylvia Vicq
Michael Voralia
Ryan Walker & Saache Heinrich
Amy Wall
Christopher Wall
Wei Wang
James & Sharon Werbicki
Christopher & Jill White
Lin Whitworth
Lloyd & Shirley Widenmaier
Rosa Wilger
Thomas Wilson
Kevin Wilson
Barry Woytowich
Andrea Ziegler
Gail Zink

Participating Party Funding

City of Saskatoon
Government of Saskatchewan
University of Saskatchewan

Grants

ASUPCA
City of Saskatoon
Community Foundations of Canada
Community Initiatives Fund
Environment and Climate Change
Canada (Eco Action)
Gabriel Dumont Institute
Government of Canada
(Summer Jobs)
Government of Saskatchewan (ICIP)
Nature Canada
Parks Canada
RBC Foundation
Saskatoon Community Foundation
TD Friends of the Environment
Tourism Saskatchewan
Trans Canada Trail
Tree Canada
Prairies Economic Development
Canada (PrairiesCan)
- Canada Community Revitalization
Fund
- Canadian Experiences Fund
- Tourism Relief Fund
Weston Family Foundation

Special Friends & Planned Givers

Dr. Darwin Anderson
Ina & the late John Brockelbank
Gwen & Guy Charman
Susan & Ron Lamb
Anita & Graham Langford
Terri Lemke
K.W. & Dora Nasser
On Purpose Leadership Inc.
Paul Lavoie & Bill Peterson
Saskatoon Road Runners
Association
Jack & Sylvia Vicq





Friends of the Meewasin Valley Volunteer Program

Our volunteers are an integral part of this organization, and their involvement is the key to building the strong and connected community we celebrate everyday.

Volunteer involvement at Meewasin is personal. It shapes relationships in both the community and the natural environment we live in. We are all connected, and in that vein, we are all friends, working towards a common goal of learning, developing and conserving.

And so, in 2022, we are proud to officially call Meewasin's volunteers Friends of the Meewasin Valley. This program has been generously supported by the Grandey Family Foundation and the coordination of this work could not take place without this funding. We want to thank the Grandey Family for their support of this program and all of their great work in the community.

If you are interested in volunteering with Meewasin we offer a variety of opportunities for all skill levels and abilities. [Scan the QR code to sign up for our volunteer newsletter.](#)



580
volunteers

participated in events such as willow staking, tree wrapping and more



41st Annual Clean Up Campaign Presented by Nutrien

Every year, Meewasin's Clean Up Campaign makes a difference to the health of the community and ecosystems within it. Just under 3,000 participants took part in the 2021-22 campaign to clear litter from our natural areas!

The efforts made a tremendous difference, with **7,000 kg in garbage** and **4,080 kg of recycling material** recorded during Loraas Disposal pickups! This means a total of 11,080 kg of litter was diverted from areas such as endangered or sensitive habitat, wetlands and rivers! For comparison, in 2021, we collected 6,492 kg (4,663 kg in waste and 1,829 kg in recycling material).

Meewasin acknowledges the amazing partners who helped make the 2021 Clean Up Campaign possible – Nutrien, Loraas Disposal, Trans Canada Trail and the City of Saskatoon.

Honouring the Life and Legacy of Gladys Hall

From trees to plaques on benches and many other items throughout the Valley, Meewasin is pleased to help the community find ways to memorialize their loved ones in the Meewasin Valley. That includes working with a variety of community partners to create special memorials to honour incredibly special people.

Gladys Hall was a respected and cherished member of the community. Her tireless work benefited a number of charities, including CNIB, Autism Services, the Western Development Museum, Ronald McDonald House, YWCA Saskatoon, Saskatoon Interval House, and Meewasin. In 2001, the Saskatoon Community Foundation helped Gladys establish a fund to help support these same organizations in a long term way.

After Gladys passed away in October 2017, plans to memorialize her began. Since she loved spending time in the Meewasin Valley, a bench has been placed and dedicated to her on Spadina Crescent between 22nd and 23rd Streets.

Dedication Highlights

17

benches

16

trees

22

bricks

+ a variety of other shrubs & grasses

We celebrate, offer our gratitude and look forward to the future of our vibrant river valley; a place that everyone can feel welcome!





National Urban Park Designation

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

A steering committee was formed in January 2022 to discuss the consideration of a potential national urban park in the Saskatoon 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 to date has included early engagement with key stakeholders and industry experts. We learned from this engagement that the Meewasin model of conservation, development and education is a strong basis for potential structures of a national urban park. We also heard that local leadership, Indigenous leadership, and the stewardship of natural and cultural spaces throughout the Valley are critical. We are using this feedback to shape our next steps.

We anticipate that designation of a potential 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 by 2025.

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

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.

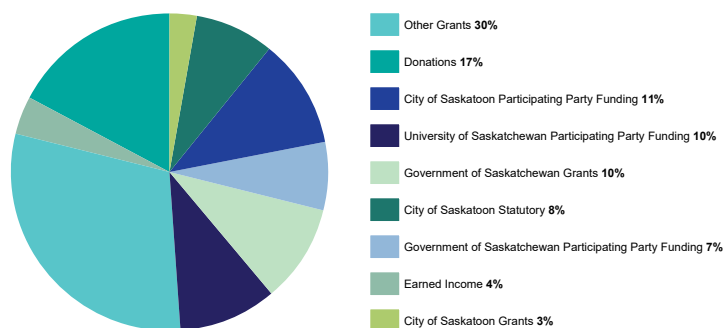


Financial Highlights

Statutory and Participating Party funding for Meewasin remained relatively steady for the 2021-22 fiscal year. This amount has seen an overall decline from \$39 per person in 1981-82 to less than \$8 per person in 2021-22*. 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, but increased resources would help Meewasin to keep up with capacity challenges. There is a strong government relations strategy in place to support the continuation of consistent and predictable funding for Meewasin core operations, as well as additional investments into infrastructure.

*adjusted for inflation

Meewasin **Source of Funds** \$6,853,972 for the year ended March 31, 2022



Endowment Funds

The endowment funds for the benefit of Meewasin are managed by the Saskatoon Community Foundation. At December 31, 2021, the endowment funds and balances were as follows: Meewasin Naturally Fund \$1,247,766; the Susan Lamb Fund \$37,037; and Wes Bolstad Fund \$27,778; for a total of \$1,312,581. 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.

Meewasin **Expenditures** \$6,853,972 the year ended March 31, 2022

