

MEEWASIN EXPLORER

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Meewasin Five Year Strategic Plan 2009-2013

The Five Year Strategic Plan for Meewasin is crafted from the foundations set by past generations including the Meewasin 100 Year Concept Plan 1979, the Meewasin Development Plan, extensive research on the State of the Valley, consultation with Meewasin's three participating parties (City of Saskatoon, Province of Saskatchewan, University of Saskatchewan), Meewasin advisory committees, and the general public.

"Focus" is the theme for the next five years on: conservation management, major asset refreshment and replacement, educating the community and visitors about Meewasin and the Meewasin Valley, expanding and updating the Meewasin Trail system, and improving Meewasin's capacity to meet its goals. **CONT'D pg.. 6**

Michael Williams

Meewasin Conservation Award 2009



The Meewasin Conservation Award is given annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the conservation of the heritage resources of the Meewasin Valley.

Saskatoon resident Michael Williams, a geological engineer, spent a career mapping and conducting mineral exploration from Labrador to the Yukon Territory. It was his love for the outdoors that had him choose a career as a field geologist. **CONT'D pg.. 2**

Biodiversity in the Meewasin Valley – The Prescribed Burn Program

Every year, Meewasin implements prescribed controlled burns for the purposes of enhancing biodiversity. Burns help control the spread of weeds, exotic species, and shrubs that are encroaching on the sensitive prairie.

This fall, several burns were implemented in the northeast area of Saskatoon where important remnant prairie ecosystems are being conserved for future generations. **CONT'D pg..... 5**

The Meewasin Skating Rink

Skating on an outdoor rink is considered a defining attribute of Canadian culture. It was appropriate then that one of the first Meewasin projects was a free outdoor skating rink on the riverbank in downtown Saskatoon. On January 5, 1980 Meewasin opened the outdoor skating rink in Kiwanis Memorial Park near the Bessborough Hotel. **CONT'D pg..... 5**

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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MEEWASIN

Continued - Meewasin Conservation Award 2009

Throughout that time he developed a growing appreciation for the beauty and the value of the natural world.

Now in his retirement years Michael wants to pass on to others what he has learned with the hope that he instills in them some of his enthusiasm for the natural world, the need for conservation, and the need for decision makers to make the right environmental choices.

Michael is a life member of the camera club. He was president in 1987/88. He has received several awards for nature photography. He has been a member of the Saskatoon Nature Society since 1984. He served as president 1992 and 1993. He has served on several committees including those connected with Meewasin: Silverspring Prairie Committee, Natural Areas Inventory Report, Valley Ecology Research Program, Meewasin Education and Conservation Advisory committees, and is currently on the Saskatoon Nature Society's Field Trip Committee.

Michael has published many articles contributing to "Nature Notes" in the Saskatoon Sun, and has been a contributing author to "Nature Viewing Sites in and Around Saskatoon" and to "Birds of the Saskatoon Area." He has conducted educational workshops on birding, and for many years volunteered to the Nature Society's bird counts in and around Saskatoon.

Michael has been a member of Nature Saskatchewan since 1986, the Canadian Nature Federation since 1987 and the North American Butterfly Association since 2003. He represents the Saskatoon Archaeological Society on the Saskatoon Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee.

Richard Nieman Friend of Meewasin Award

Richard Nieman recently retired from the volunteer position as the sixth Chair of the Meewasin Valley Authority after five years in the position. Dick has been a volunteer with Meewasin since 1987 when he joined the Education Advisory Committee. He served on various committees over time and in 1996 was appointed to the Meewasin board as a representative of the provincial government. He was elected Chair of the Meewasin board in 2005



For more than 20 years Dick has volunteered and been totally committed to the concept of Meewasin - that the three participating parties: the City of Saskatoon, the Province of Saskatchewan and the University of Saskatchewan have agreed that they can better conserve the cultural and natural resources of the South Saskatchewan River Valley through a single agency - Meewasin. He provided special leadership enhancing Meewasin's role in managing the Riverfront Development at River Landing, one of the most exciting riverbank projects in Saskatoon's 120 year history. Enhancing the riverfront has allowed for more public access to the river valley and has significantly enriched the quality of life for all residents and visitors to Saskatoon.

Saskatoon Wintershines 2009

Join the fun at the Market Square at River Landing. From Saturday Jan. 23, 2010 to February 7, 2010 celebrate Saskatoon's local culture. There will be entertainment under the event tent throughout the two-week festival. For more information contact (306) 384 - 6044 or visit the Wintershines web site at www.wintershines.ca

MEEWASIN VALLEY CENTRE

INTERPRETING SASKATOON'S BUILT CULTURAL HISTORY

Weekend Programs start at 2 p.m. There is a \$2 fee for all Programs and Crafts. Please call 665-6888 for details and to register. For more information visit: www.meewasin.com

On Display in January and February – "Flow" by Monique Martin (Carried Over)

January "The Start of a New Year"

January 3 - Pioneer's New Beginnings

Come and learn what Pioneers did their first winters out in the new land and how they had "Snow" much fun. Winter games outdoors (weather permitting). Warm up hot chocolate to follow.



January 10 - New Year Rhythm

Get your feet tapping and 'warm up to winter'. Make a Rain stick or noisemaker and join in the fun.

January 17 - Winter Blahs

Beat the winter blahs by being creative. We'll dig out our craft supplies for you to make a "Winter Blah Beater". Anything goes! Stop in anytime between 1 and 4 p.m.

January 24 - Skating Party

Bring your skates and join us at the Meewasin Skating Rink for a Skating Party as part of Wintershines! You can warm up in the skate change warm up shelter, while enjoying hot chocolate and cookies (for a small cost). If you don't have skates don't worry! The rink shelter has a wide variety to borrow.



February "Heritage Month Celebrations"

February 7 – Heritage Festival of Saskatoon (12 - 5 p.m.)

Come visit us at the Western Development Museum (at 2610 Lorne Avenue South) and learn more about Saskatoon's rich and varied natural and cultural heritage.

Over 25 local cultural and natural historical organizations, including Meewasin, gather for a heritage festival. Displays, heritage demonstrations, and children's activities!



Free admission.

February 14 - Victorian Valentines

Valentines Day is just around the corner and what better way to celebrate this special day than with a home made Valentine for a loved one?

February 15-19 - Pioneer Games & Crafts

Each day, the Meewasin Valley Centre will offer a different program with pioneer games or crafts. For information and to register please call 665-6888. Check out the fun programs being offered:

Monday, Feb. 15 - Pioneer Outside Games

Tuesday, Feb. 16 - Apple Dolls

Wednesday, Feb. 17 - Spool Knitting

Thursday, Feb. 18 - Sock Puppets

Friday, Feb. 19 - Shadow Puppets

February 28 – Paper Making

Who were the original paper makers? Find out the answers to this and other paper making questions during this program where you will learn the history of paper, work through the paper making process, and take home some beautiful hand-made paper.

Programs are for the general public. If your group wishes to participate, please call 665-6888 to book a separate time. A nominal fee may be charged.

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BEAVER CREEK CONSERVATION AREA

INTERPRETING SASKATOON'S NATURAL HISTORY

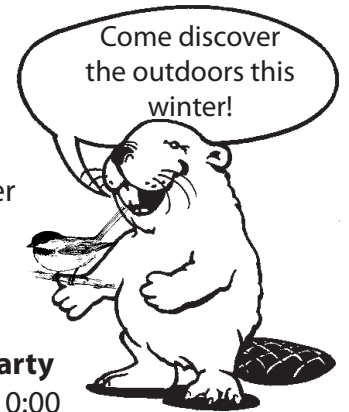
Beaver Creek Programming

Sundays in January and February at Beaver Creek

Discover more about our feathered friends, their winter adaptations and Project Feeder Watch each Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

February Break 15-19 - Chips Winter Lodge Party

Join Chip and all his winter friends during the school break for **Chip's Winter Lodge Party February 15-19, 2010**. Enjoy come & go - indoor & outdoor activities available from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day.



Did you know?

The Black-Capped Chickadee sometimes hides its food! Each item, like a seed or insect, is placed in a different spot and the chickadee can remember thousands of hiding places! This comes in handy since they stay in our area right through winter!

Come visit Beaver Creek to feed Chickadees, and learn more about other animals who stay and adapt for winter!

About Beaver Creek Conservation Area



Beaver Creek Conservation Area is located 13 km south of Saskatoon. A sheltered creek, river valley, and prairie habitat offer a diversity of flora and fauna for visitors. It is the microcosm of the Meewasin Valley, and contains one of the few uncultivated short grass prairie sites in Saskatchewan. An interpretive centre and staff provide opportunities to discover nature during the four seasons along a selection of four nature trails.

Conservation areas like Beaver Creek are set aside to protect and manage important natural and cultural heritage resources. They are maintained for your enjoyment and education, as well as for future generations.

As the seasons change, the plants and animals of the Beaver Creek Conservation Area respond with their own unique life cycles. Winter is a time of Hibernation for some animals, and staying active for others. Come visit us in the snow to see what animal signs you can find!



BEAVER CREEK CONSERVATION AREA - FOLLOW LORNE AVENUE SOUTH 13KM ON HIGHWAY #219

CHIP'S HOT LINE: (306) 374-2474 FAX: (306) 665-6117 E-MAIL: MEEWASIN@MEEWASIN.COM

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Trail Development at the Regional Psychiatric Centre Prairie

This fall Meewasin added a 3.2 km section of trail through the Regional Psychiatric Centre prairie to formalize the intentional footpath on the site and support recovery of numerous informal braided trails on the important high quality prairie that remains at that location. The primary trail width will facilitate increased use of the site anticipated as neighbourhoods spring up in northeast Saskatoon.



This section of trail, accessible from the Silverspring neighbourhood or a parking lot located on Central Avenue, is an important link in the Meewasin Trail system. Once studies are complete at Sutherland Beach, the last critical link in the current Northeast Trail Plan will be finished. An updated Meewasin Trail Plan is anticipated in 2010.

The introduction of trail has already been positive for the management of the high quality native prairie. As Meewasin cored the trail it caused cut and fill opportunities that helped speed the treatment of a few emerging weed and non-native vegetation issues. Meewasin continued its efforts to lead in sustainability initiatives by incorporating recycled crushed concrete on the trail. The project has received funding support from the National Trails Council.

Continued - The Meewasin Skating Rink - One of the Best Outdoor Skating Spots in Canada

For the past 29 years the rink has been open daily December through March, weather permitting. On-site amenities include a warm-up facility, free use of skates and skate sharpening. This past winter the rink recorded 8745 users from all parts of the world as well as many local groups and schools. One visitor from Ukraine volunteered to calibrate the rink skate sharpener sharing that such work was his profession before immigrating to Canada. In the past few years wedding parties have used the rink for post nuptial activities.



Following 29 years of use and annual relocation for the off season, the rink warm up facility is now in need of replacement with an all accessible new skate change, skate sharpening, washroom, concession and hot water flooding facilities. The \$349,000 grant from the Government of Canada, and \$349,000 matching grant from the Government of Saskatchewan through the Recreational Canada (RinC) Program will allow that need to become a reality, allowing the "best outdoor skating spot in Canada" (Reader's Digest, 2006) to continue to be a defining attribute of Canadian culture.

Meewasin has begun the design and build process and the facility will be completed for the 2010/2011 winter season.

Continued - Enhancing Biodiversity in the Meewasin Valley – The Prescribed Burn Program

While the post-burn prairie may look startling, prescribed burns do not destroy the native vegetation, but instead promote the health and vigor of native grasses and wild flowers which have adapted to a history of wildfires.

We invite you to visit the upland prairies in the Meewasin Valley next growing season to witness the explosion of new green growth of a variety of native grasses, including fescue, and several species of wildflowers. Crocuses in particular prefer areas of natural prairie which have been moderately disturbed, such as the disturbance Meewasin is intentionally introducing.

For more information about the Meewasin Prescribed Burn Program feel free to contact Brenda Wallace, the Manager of Resource and Planning, or Luc Delanoy, the Resource Management Officer at 665-6887.

Continued - Meewasin Five Year Strategic Plan 2009-2013

Conservation

- To update Conservation Zone planning and monitoring of Conservation Areas, Nature Experience Areas, Riverbank Parks, and Nature Preserves along the riverbank for the purpose of protecting habitat including our source of drinking water;
- To support research and protection of heritage assets focusing on Factoria, Rocky Island, lime kilns, and the Moose Woods Trail;
- To protect habitat from fragmentation, from invasive and noxious weeds, from ecological degradation, and by restoration;
- To facilitate edible landscapes, orchards and urban agriculture;
- To act as a central clearing house on environmental issues;
- To secure long-term stewardship of lands currently outside of public protection.

Development

- To develop a new Meewasin Valley Centre;
- To refresh Beaver Creek Conservation Area;
- To expand opportunities for winter appreciation of the valley with a new outdoor skating facility and ski-trails;
- To take the lead in sustainability by establishing a corporate stance on environmental performance;
- To expand recreation opportunities within the valley.
- To expand the Meewasin Trail as a multi-purpose trail with specific goals in each section of the city;
- To expand connections to a city-wide alternative transportation network;
- To create specialized trails such as exercise loops and interpretive hikes;
- To enhance trails with trail branding, distance markers and trail etiquette programs.



Education

- To continue to support existing audiences including grade 3 and grade 5 school programs, other school programs, and the general public;
- To develop new initiatives expanding the Meewasin cultural story including recognition of diversity, and the Meewasin natural story with the impacts of climate change and water issues.

Fund Development

Of the \$90 million that Meewasin has spent in the valley in park, interpretive centre and Meewasin Trail development in the past 30 years, \$35 million (39%) has been raised from outside sources through a number of fund development programs.

In the next five years Meewasin will:

- Deepen relationships between Meewasin and contributors;
- Continue to seek project oriented grants;
- Secure ecological gifts
- Continue to engage donors through legacy donations and sponsorships (trees, bricks, benches, seating nodes, larger amenities);
- Improve the sophistication of fund raising;
- Renew statutory funding.

Eavesdropping Nuthatches Appear To Understand Chickadees In Distress

Studies have found the first example of an animal making sophisticated decisions about the danger posed by a predator from the information contained in the alarm calls of another species.



It is reported that Red-breasted Nuthatches (*Sitta Canadensis*) eavesdrop on the alarm calls of the Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*) to glean information about predators in their environment. It has been shown that the chickadee's familiar "chick-a-dee-dee-dee" alarm calls contain a surprising amount of information. Now, it turns out, the nuthatches can understand the warnings given by the chickadee.

There are a fair number of animals that respond to other animal's alarm calls. But this is the first example of subtle information from a call being interpreted by another species. Nuthatches can tell if a raptor poses a high or low danger from the chickadee's alarm call. For more information, check out the following study: University of Washington (2007, March 20). "Eavesdropping Nuthatches Appear To Understand Chickadees In Distress". Science Daily. <http://www.sciencedaily.com>