



Calling Lakes Planning Commission
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March 2, 2023

Honorable Don McMorris, MLA
Minister of Government Relations
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Regina, SK S4S 0B3
Mcmorris.mla@sasktel.net

Mr. Travis Keisig, MLA
Box 928 Balcarres, SK S0G 0C0
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Dear Sirs:

Re: Agricultural Water Management Policy Fall 2023

I am writing to you on behalf of the Calling Lakes District Planning Commission (CLDPC) which is a district planning group represented by the following rural Municipalities and urban municipalities:

1. RM of North Qu'Appelle No. 187
2. Resort Village of Fort San
3. Resort Village of B-Say-Tah
4. Village of Lebret
5. Resort Village of District of Katepwa
6. Town of Fort Qu'Appelle

Dr Peter Leavitt, a University of Regina biologist and expert on the Lower Qu'Appelle Watershed presented to the CLDPC in November of 2022. Dr Leavitt has studied the Qu'Appelle River system for over 27 years and was part of the team that studied the purple ice on Pasqua Lake in spring of 2021.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10402381.2021.1992544?scroll=top&needAccess=true&role=tab>

This article notes 'Interactions between unprecedented rates of atmospheric warming and excessive nutrient influx have created conditions in which surface waters may experience novel conditions that cannot be anticipated from extrapolation of antecedent environments, a phenomenon known as "ecological surprises" (Christensen et al. [2006](#), Filbee-Dexter et al. [2017](#)).

During the November meeting Dr Leavitt noted that there are two main contributors to nutrient influx – these being urban development and agriculture.

It has come to our attention that the Water Security Agency (WSA) is working on an Agricultural Water Management Policy that according to their website will become policy in the Fall of 2023.

February 2, 2023 is World Wetlands Day - A day to celebrate all the many things that wetlands do and provide for us.

Wetlands are found all over the world and are one of our most natural productive ecosystems. They are also one of our most threatened ecosystems. In Saskatchewan, wetlands come in all shapes and sizes, and include marshes, lakes and rivers, floodplains, swamps, sloughs, potholes, and peat lands.

Examples of the beneficial effects of Wetlands include:

- Filter contaminants from our water
- Fight climate change by storing carbon
- Provide habitat for wildlife
- Lessen the effects of floods and drought
- Recharge aquifer groundwater sources

Wetlands are critical to our way of life, yet they continue to be removed in Saskatchewan to suit agricultural and urban development. When this happens, we lose all the benefits they provide, and it takes hundreds of years to bring them back.

The loss of wetlands negatively impacts biodiversity by destroying critical habitat, increasing the amount of nutrients going into our lakes and rivers causing toxic algae blooms, releasing more carbon into the atmosphere thereby accelerating climate change and increasing drought and floods resulting in the destruction of our critical infrastructure including highways and properties.

Will the Agricultural Water Management Policy ensure that water quality is improved for everyone in Saskatchewan?

Is the Agricultural Water Management Policy an agricultural drainage policy or a wetland protection policy?

Will the CLDPC, and other interest groups, be consulted and be given an opportunity for input into the formation of the policy?

Will the policy contain specific measurable objectives and related timelines for identifying and preserving wetlands, both on private and Crown lands?

Will the policy contain clear rules, including enforcement measures, and mitigation required where a landowner has offended the policy?

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest opportunity, with regards to the questions the Commission has asked.

Sincerely,
On Behalf of the Calling Lakes District Planning Commission,



Murdoch MacPherson
Chair, Calling Lakes District Planning Commission

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