



To Sustain And Enhance Our Lake For Future Generations

Honourable Dustin Duncan
Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency
Room 340, Legislative Building
2405 Legislative Drive
Regina SK S4S 0B3

September 15, 2017

Dear Minister:

Re: Quill Lake Diversion Plan

I am writing to express our concerns regarding the proposed plan to divert water from the Quill Lakes area downstream to Last Mountain Lake (LML).

The plan to remove water from the Quills is to construct a diversion channel in the Kutawagan Complex from Pell Lake south towards Peter Lake and Last Mountain Lake. Several creeks that naturally flow into the Quill Lakes would be redirected into the channel.

This plan is being presented by QLWA as a “fresh water” diversion. The Last Mountain Lake Stewardship Group (LMLSG) does not agree. As reported, “Ironspring and Romance creek systems, Jansen Lake and the runoff in general from our area was mostly between 600 and 900 TDS, far lower than Last Mountain Lake”. (Total Dissolved Solids [TDS]). Fresh water is defined as having from 0-500 mg/l TDS. So before this water even leaves the creeks, it is considered subsaline water, not fresh water. Once the water runs its course through the Kutawagan Basin, Saline Creek and Peter Lake, and through heavily fertilized farmland where additional pollutants would be picked up and absorbed along the way, TDS concentration would be much higher than indicated above.

LML has a reputation for being one of the most popular recreational lakes in southern Saskatchewan. The introduction of this highly polluted water into LML would cause irrevocable damage to the quality of our lake water. Fish and aquatic life would be at risk. The highly polluted water entering the north end of Last Mountain Lake would be disastrous to the Wild Bird Sanctuary. We would see an increase of algae blooms in our lake due to added TDS and agricultural runoff (nitrates and phosphates).

The KGS Consulting Group was retained to complete a study on flood mitigation options that would address the rise of water levels in the Quill Lakes. The report provides six mitigation strategies with two or more options in each. The QLWA has chosen to focus on only one – Removal of Water from Quill Lakes.

The LMLSG has recommended the following options:

1. **Drainage Enforcement:** Close all agricultural drains on the land around the Quill Lakes immediately, and prohibit any new drainage operations. Over the years, this practice has changed the overall natural water flow in the area.

2. **Upland Storage Options:** Twelve potential upland storage areas, identified in the KGS Report, would maximize surface area upstream of the Quill Lakes to increase evaporation, thereby reducing inflows to the lakes.
3. **Withdraw Water for Potash Mines:** Develop a long term solution by creating a partnership- with the BHP Jansen Lake Mine or the Karnalyte Potash Mine.

Illegal drainage must stop. Agricultural drainage accounts for 38% of high water levels at the Quills. Lakes would not be flooded and infrastructure would not be destroyed or need to be raised, and this environmental disaster would not be happening at the lakes. Effective October 1, 2016 WSA was given authority to close all unapproved drainage works, or impose penalties on landowners who did not comply. Landowners continue to drain into the Quill Lakes. To date WSA has not issued a single fine for illegal drainage.



Wetlands are an important part of our ecosystem that support aquatic plants, fish and wildlife. Wetlands serve as natural storage areas for excess water. This storage area is essential for the Quill Lake area. According to the KGS report the estimated volume of drained wetlands in the Quill Lakes Watershed is 143,576 cu dams. Landowners continue to drain wetlands. Why are we destroying the very solution needed to solve the flooding problem at Quill Lakes?

During a recent meeting with QLWA, it was suggested that a commission be set up and a delegation of experts review all flood mitigation options. We strongly urge you to consider this proposal so that a responsible decision can be reached, one that does not have a negative impact on our lakes and rivers. Diverting polluted water from the Quill Lakes area to Last Mountain Lake is not solving the problem, simply spreading it around.

This diversion project affects not only the landowners at Quill Lake, but also residents of Last Mountain Lake and residents downstream throughout the Qu'Appelle chain of lakes. The plan to divert water that is loaded with TDS into Last Mountain Lake is just one more step in causing long term damage to a healthy natural resource.

We look forward to your reply.

Submitted by: Sherry Forsyth
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