

Ten Directives Proposed by SAWS

December 10, 2019

1. **That** WSA take up our recommendation to provide informational pamphlets that describe landowner's responsibilities and requirements when draining water off agricultural land. These handouts would be made available to crown corporations, (Sask Power, Sask Energy and Sask Tel), both on-line and hard copy, so that service technicians can hand out this information at the time line locates are requested.
2. **That** WSA's policy should apply to all wetlands. No wetlands should be excluded from requiring mitigation, regardless of size.
3. **That** WSA Mitigation Policy should not allow for the use of uplands as a way to mitigate for wetland loss. By including land that is in grass or trees distorts the end result. Uplands do not mitigate for nutrients and flooding; they provide different habitat.
4. **That** agriculture be held to the same standards as other industries, (e.g. water treatments, potash mines etc.) when adding to lakes and rivers. The % of wetlands to be retained should be the amount required to adequately mitigate for water quality, flooding and habitat.

What % is required to ensure nutrients are not sent downstream?

5. **That** WSA include climate change/carbon sequestration in their Mitigation Policy. We now know that wetlands are tremendous carbon sinks storing tonnes of carbon, but become tremendous carbon sources when they are drained and cultivated. Draining just a few acres of wetlands releases as much carbon as what is stored in thousands of acres of zero till, canceling out any climate change gains this positive farming practice achieves. Restoring wetlands can also sequester significant amounts of carbon from the atmosphere. Wetlands, in addition to reducing GHG emissions, also have a cooling/humidifying effect on local climate and need to be part of the agricultural landscape.
6. **That** WSA adopt Canada's signed commitment under the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to wetlands, Goal 6.6, by 2020, "to protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes"; and other environmental goals, #6 "Clean Water and Sanitation", #13 "Climate Action", #14 "Life Below Water", #15 "Life on Land".

What incentives do agricultural producers have to adopt new sustainable practice where laws regarding wetlands are inadequate and/or not enforced, along with perverse incentives to adopt unsustainable practices and technologies in such circumstances, (e.g. tile drainage technologies with little legislative oversight, regulation and monitoring)?

7. **That** WSA begin the process of moving from conflict to collaboration by ensuring any risk to water quality from a drainage approval will be assessed and measured.
8. **That** water quality testing will be done by a third party and paid for by the developer. The data will be stored in a public bank ensuring transparency, accessibility and trust for Saskatchewan citizens.

9. **That** WSA ensure:
 - a. Elected board members of watershed associations declare conflicts of interests in matters where they personally financially benefit in making specific decisions or by not enforcing conservation measures;
 - b. WSA's impartial enforcement of licencing requirements as a regulator is not influenced by other economic or political objectives of the WSA or the province;
 - c. The economic or other objectives of the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure (in which the WSA is now located) do not impede WSA's duties as a regulator.

10. **That** WSA suspend all drainage approvals until the Mitigation Policy is finalized, or the proponent commits to undertaking a complete Environmental Assessment as part of their approval process.