

**Question 1: What commitments will you and your government make to respect and protect water quality in our lakes by ensuring that our wetlands are restored and protected including through strong regulation and enforcement?**

Background for Question 1:

Wetlands play a vital role in protecting the water quality in our lakes – Wascana, Last Mountain Lake, Pasqua, Echo, Mission, Katepwa, Round and Crooked. Wetlands filter out phosphorus, nitrogen and other contaminants from water that flows into lakes, streams, rivers and groundwater. Wetlands help control floods by storing large amounts of water; they recharge groundwater by seeping into aquifers; have the potential to remove and store greenhouse gases and provide habitat for wildlife. Despite these benefits, wetlands continue to be lost to urban expansion, infrastructure, agriculture, and industrial development. We have lost 70% of our wetlands and the loss continues. When wetlands are lost the benefits they provide us are also lost.

Other provinces understand the benefits of wetlands. Their policies identify the importance of wetlands, are accountable and transparent, have legislation that is enforceable and consistently applied, and they avoid, minimize, and compensate for wetland impacts when they occur. They also educate people, including landowners, land managers, stakeholders, and other government departments about the benefits of wetlands and their wetland protection policy.

- <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-wetland-policy.aspx>
- [https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/waterstewardship/licensing/mb\\_water\\_policies.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/waterstewardship/licensing/mb_water_policies.pdf)
- <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/water-planning-strategies/wetlands-in-bc>
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/wetland-conservation>
- [https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei\\_wetland\\_policy\\_2007\\_0.pdf](https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei_wetland_policy_2007_0.pdf)
- <http://www.environnement.gouv.qc.ca/eau/politique/index-en.htm>

For example, Prince Edward Island has an impressive policy, insuring that their farmers continue to be successful and improving their water quality at the same time. This is what we want for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan does not have a Wetland Policy. In 2018, the Provincial Auditor criticized the Water Security Agency for not having one while continuing to license wetland drainage projects.

Wetland protection benefits all stakeholders including cottage country, our cities, our agriculture industries, and First Nations.

**Question 2: What commitment will you and your government make to improve and protect water quality while supporting sustainability and prosperity for local**

## **businesses, farmers, property owners and First Nations within the Qu'Appelle Valley Watershed?**

### Background for Question 2:

We need to recognize that economic wellbeing and environmental health are dependent on each other.

First Nations and Metis depend on the Qu'Appelle River System for clean drinking water, sustainable livelihoods and viable subsistence fisheries. Water and the environment also affect the success of local businesses, and poor water quality profoundly affects tourism.

Rural communities and lake dwellers rely on aquifers and wells for their needs. As well, some residents draw water from their lakes for drinking and household use. Recreational lakes contribute largely to tourism, which in turn supports and sustains local businesses.

95% of Saskatchewan's tourism sector is comprised of small or medium-sized businesses, and many are independently owned or operated. Inaction to protect the water quality on the Qu'Appelle River System puts our small and medium size businesses at risk. Well planned, and properly developed and managed tourism and economic activity can help to justify and pay for the protection and preservation of the natural environment.

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2019/may/27/tourism-week>

Safe, clean water and a healthy environment are in everyone's interest. Sustainability is widely defined as being able to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. It is estimated that over 90% of the phosphorus going into the Qu'Appelle River is from agricultural runoff.

<https://www.lqws.ca/quappelle-river-basin-research-and-monitoring-committee>

### **Question 3: What commitments will you and your government make to provide public reporting on water quality that is easily accessible and frequently updated?**

#### Background for Question 3:

The Saskatchewan Water Security Agency is responsible for managing the provinces water supplies, protecting water quality, ensuring safe drinking water and treatment of wastewater, reducing flood and drought damage, protecting aquatic habitat, and representing Saskatchewan on trans-boundary water issues. Our water must be protected. We all have a right to clean, safe water.

Currently, our local governments and citizens do not have access to real-time information about the health of our waters in the Qu'Appelle River system. In BC, their Lake Monitoring Program aims to better understand and report on their lakes. Monitoring the water quality of lakes is essential to understanding current conditions, as well as the influences of human activities over time. The need for lake monitoring and watershed planning is increasing due to potential impacts from multiple stressors, including population growth, land development, recreation, and climate change.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/research-monitoring-reporting/monitoring/lake-monitoring>

In Saskatchewan, we have 11 Watershed Stewardship Associations with the mandate to protect our source water. We have Government agencies in place sampling and conducting studies that aren't being made public for us. The last report on the State of our Watersheds was back in 2010.

<https://www.wsask.ca/About-WSA/Publications/State-of-the-Watershed-Report---2010/>

Making the information public can inform citizens and be used by local governments to assess how their own policies are working. We need this knowledge to determine the ecological health of our lakes and to lead to the development of sound, science-based plans and tools for watershed management. We need to know if our water quality is getting better or worse.

[www.lmlsg.ca/saws/](http://www.lmlsg.ca/saws/)