



Earth Day is April 22, a time to demonstrate support for environmental protection.

While we celebrate Earth Day, the Water Security Agency has been holding meetings with select stakeholders to gather feedback regarding the development of a new Agricultural Water Stewardship (aka Drainage) Policy for Saskatchewan. While there has been no media releases about this Policy, WSA has a webpage dedicated to providing updates. <https://www.wsask.ca/7147-2/>

Why is this new policy important and why should you care? This policy will determine how farmland will be developed for economic growth by draining wetlands. For decades, wetlands have been drained for agricultural rewards and for urban development and this new policy will maintain current drainage as well as allow for more. However, this drainage has not considered the impacts or recognized the long list of benefits that wetlands provide.

Wetlands are a natural part of our ecosystem and have existed on the prairies for thousands of years. They store excess water and protect against flooding during wet years, filter out nutrients that would normally flow into our lakes and rivers thus preventing algae blooms, recharge ground water sources that support household water wells mostly in rural areas, and they recharge ground water supplies. They provide habitat for aquatic plants, fish, amphibians and wildlife. As wetlands disappear, so will nesting areas for ducks and other water birds. Larger wildlife like deer are losing their shelters and foraging areas.

News media report a global water shortage. There is a water crisis in Colorado, so serious that water is being rationed in southeastern states. Further cuts are being considered and will affect 40 million people. California has experienced severe flooding followed by severe drought. Food crops are being threatened. The message is conserve, conserve, conserve!

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2023/02/05/colorado-river-drought-explained/>

Farmers also don't need to drain wetlands in order to be productive. New sustainable farming practices like Regenerative Agriculture address how farming practises can improve soil composition and production while also increasing the soils ability to absorb and store water. Soil doesn't hold water by itself but needs plant roots and roughage to maintain water in soil

subsurface. Keeping the ground covered is one of the basic principles of Regenerative Ag. This can be done by planting a “cover crop” or “multi-cropping”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3j5MRJeCoYs>

Our Saskatchewan government must heed these warnings and help producers adopt sustainable farming practices rather than promoting old agricultural practices like wetland drainage which are not sustainable and impact our lakes and rivers. We must join other provinces and countries in conserving our water resources before we experience problems. This year for Earth Day we are asking for your help to protect our lakes and streams in Saskatchewan.

Call to action:

Please email your MLA (or if your MLA is NDP please email the Minister of WSA Honourable Jeremy Cockrill at hi.minister@gov.sk.ca and cc WSA Critic Erica Ritchie at eritchie@ndpcaucus.sk.ca)

Express your concerns in an email about the importance of protecting and conserving wetlands to the Water Security Agency: agwatermanagement@wsask.ca

The question to ask is this: How will this Policy ensure our water quality is improved in our lakes and streams?

For more information follow us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/QuappelleValleySK>

<https://files.constantcontact.com/9668bc5f701/e6023782-4b53-4723-bb1c-a83fd0964b87.pdf>

If you would like to join CLEM or LMLSG please call 306 539 6903



CLEM is working with the Last Mountain Lake Stewardship Group to ensure the health of our lakes in southern Saskatchewan.

For more information, visit www.lmlsg.ca/SAWS or our Facebook page Calling for a Sustainable Quill Lake Solution or Calling Lakes Ecomuseum

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