

WE LOVE OUR LAKES.

Provincial Auditor says our Water Security Agency is not sufficiently regulating illegal drainage



On June 7th 2018, Provincial Auditor Judy Ferguson released her twelve-month assessment of the Saskatchewan Water Security Agency's processes. The audit's final recommendations were as follows:

1. The WSA must finalize, approve, and follow its policies for bringing unapproved drainage works into compliance.
2. Have robust policies for assessing water quality and wetland retention when assessing risks resulting from drainage works, and better document the results of its assessments.
3. Have a plan that sets by when high-risk existing unapproved drainage works will be in compliance or closed.
4. Report its progress in regulating drainage on agricultural lands to the public.

The Auditor's report also acknowledged a few key aspects of the WSA's responsibility in resolving the Quill Lakes crisis:

1. Leaving unapproved drainage works in high-risk areas (the WSA classifies the Quill Lakes as one of the highest risk areas in the Province) increases the risk of flooding of neighbouring farmland and the receiving water body, water quality issues in the receiving water body, and loss of wetlands.

2. It is now understood that flooding your neighbour is not the only drainage issue —drainage has a cumulative effect on flooding further downstream, water quality, wetland loss, and increased greenhouse gas emissions.
3. The Quill Lakes area has numerous networks of mostly unapproved drainage works. The Quill Lakes have been experiencing significant flooding in the last several years with a corresponding loss of agricultural land adjacent to the Lakes.

The Provincial Auditor is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan put in place to promote accountability and better management by providing legislators and the public with an independent assessment of the government's use of public resources.

Government agencies with more accountability to the people of the province they are serving is exactly what Saskatchewan needs right now. We are calling on the Government of Saskatchewan and the WSA to organize a roundtable on the illegal drainage and Quill Lakes issues where representatives from every concerned community can have their voices heard.

Here is a suggested email format to send a strong message to the right people and help Saskatchewan flourish:

Dear Honorable Dustin Duncan Minister of Environment and Sam Ferris Acting Vice President of WSA, what date in September have you selected to host the Roundtable Discussion to collaboratively solve the Quill Lakes Flooding issue. I would like to see the Department of Environment organize a Round Table discussion that brings together all aspects of the Saskatchewan community. Sincerely _____.

Samuel.Ferris@wsask.ca
minister.env@gov.sk.ca

Please “help us help you” by donating to “Save Last Mountain/Qu’Appelle Lakes” directly or by going to our GoFundMe page at: <https://www.gofundme.com/savelastmtn-qu-appelle>

Our website is: <http://www.lmlsg.ca/>

The Provincial Auditor's full report can be found at:
https://auditor.sk.ca/pub/publications/public_reports/2018/12_Water%20Security%20Agency%E2%80%94Regulating%20Drainage.pdf