

MEDIA ADVISORY

EMERGING ISSUES FACING THE SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER WATERSHED

SASKATOON, SK MARCH 31, 2015. The South Saskatchewan River is a 716 km ribbon of blue that flows through Saskatchewan from the Alberta border, near Leader, through Lake Diefenbaker and the City of Saskatoon, to where it meets the North Saskatchewan River just east of Prince Albert. The South Saskatchewan River watershed covers approximately 35,000 km² and is home to nearly one-third of Saskatchewan's population.

The South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards (SSRWSI) is hosting its annual general meeting and open house on March 31st, 2015 in Outlook. The open house is designed to engage the local communities and municipalities on emerging and pressing issues facing the watershed and is targeted to urban and rural municipal leaders, stakeholders and the general public across the watershed.

The SSRWSI open house will have presentations from the Water Security Agency and the Ministry of Environment discussing various issues facing the South Saskatchewan River Watershed. Presentations include the status of the reservoir management plan for Lake Diefenbaker, an update on the M1 Canal redevelopment for irrigation and rural water users southeast of Saskatoon, the issues facing ground water contamination, efforts to protect the endangered Piping Plover along the shores of Lake Diefenbaker and the threat aquatic invasive species (Zebra and Quagga mussels) pose to the watershed.

“The SSRWSI receives numerous inquiries regarding how Lake Diefenbaker is managed”, says Renny Grilz, Acting Watershed Coordinator with the South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards. The Water Security Agency will provide an update as to where the planning efforts are for Lake Diefenbaker and how the lake is managed, not just for agricultural, hydro-electric power, and recreational users, but for also species at risk such as Piping Plover. “The Ministry of Environment has identified Lake Diefenbaker as high risk to invasion by Zebra and Quagga Mussels” says Grilz. The impacts to the watershed and Lake Diefenbaker will be tremendous and will affect the tax payers of Saskatchewan, including impacts to irrigation, hydro-electric power, tourism and recreation, and municipal water systems. The Ministry has developed awareness and monitoring programs for these aquatic invasives and have asked the South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards to help deliver these programs within the watershed.

In 2007, the Government of Saskatchewan released the Source Water Protection Plan for the South Saskatchewan River. As a result of this plan, the South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards was formed to implement this plan and address emerging issues within the South Saskatchewan River watershed. The membership of the South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards includes cities, towns, villages, rural municipalities, First Nations and special interest groups that are located across the entire watershed.

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AGM and Open House Poster:

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