



South Saskatchewan River Watershed AEGP

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We can direct you to technical support and help with applications for the **Farm Stewardship Program**, the **Farm & Ranch Water Infrastructure Program**, and the **Invasive Plant Control Program**.

CONTACT US TODAY!

Finding the Best Route – Excess Water Issues

By Jeremy Brown, PAg, Water Security Agency

Some portions of Saskatchewan will experience high water levels again in 2014. An abundance of rain the last few years coupled with a late spring melt has left some people concerned about high water levels which may affect their operations.

The implications of high water levels are real and significant, including roads washed out, yards flooded, or acres of land remaining under standing water. Landowners have to assess their personal situation and determine, “How can we manage around these fluctuations?”

For the most part, the water levels we are experiencing are not unprecedented; but it has been at least a couple of decades since we’ve seen this amount of precipitation, and our expectations and management practices have adjusted accordingly.

Not surprisingly, this situation has brought to the forefront the topic of altering drainage of water from the landscape. Rather than coin drainage as “good” or “bad”, it is important to consider the cost-benefit of such projects as well as the interests and authorities of all stakeholders. After all, we are all upstream of someone.

Here are a few points to consider:

If you do wish to alter the natural flow of water, you should first seek appropriate approvals from the Water Security Agency. Any drainage ditch, berm, or pump that causes water to flow off of your property requires approval. This process is intended to ensure that the project is properly constructed and that other landowners are not negatively affected.

Increased drainage may contribute to flooding problems downstream. Functioning wetlands store and slowly release water to creeks. The slow release of water helps trap sediments and pollutants and reduces erosion. In addition, natural flow rates are more likely to remain in the stream channel, reducing flood intensity downstream.

Landowners dealing with flooded land should consider land-use options and compensation programs available when making management decisions. Some conservation groups have incentive programs for landowners who maintain or restore wetlands, which can compensate for possible loss of production or increased complexity of management. Some areas too wet for annual cropping can be used for haying or grazing in late summer.

In summary, dealing with unwanted moisture can be a challenging issue. In order to make the best possible decisions, seek out as much information as possible and pencil out the short and long term implications. Check with your neighbors and local watershed groups to find out what information and funding are available in your area. Contact the Water Security Agency to discuss the proper process before altering the natural flow of water.

Our challenging climate will reward those who plan for “normal” fluctuations. All the best!

The **South Saskatchewan River Agri-Environmental Group Plan** is a producer based group dedicated to raising watershed awareness among local area farmers and ranchers. Producers within the boundaries of the South Sask River Watershed are able to access the **Canada-Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Program**. The CSFSP provides **cost-shared funding** to encourage the implementation of **Beneficial Management Practices**. The BMPs help address issues of water quality, nutrient management and soil erosion within the watershed.



Beneficial Management Practices

- Irrigation Management Planning
- Irrigation Equipment Modification
- Variable Rate Irrigation Technology
- Natural Waterway Erosion Control
- Creek and Stream Crossings
- Protect High Risk Erodible & Saline Soils
- Native Plant Establishment
- Shelterbelt Establishment
- Used Oil, Filter and Fluid Storage
- Relocation of Livestock Confinement Facilities
- Fencing to Protect Surface Water
- Farmyard Runoff Control
- Riparian Area Grazing Management, Fencing
- Manure Application Equipment & Technologies
- Manure Storage Enhancements
- Integrated Pest Management
- Variable Rate Fertilizer Equipment
- Variable Rate Mapping

Natural Waterway Erosion Control

Natural Waterway Erosion Control is used to assist producers protecting riparian ecosystems by reducing soil erosion and improving water quality. Producers impacted by erosion on natural waterways can mitigate the impact through re-vegetation or man-made erosion control structures to reduce the erosion potential. Potential projects include: gully stabilization, bank stabilization, erosion control matting, in-channel control, retention ponds and erosion control dams.



Eroded Water-run



Contoured Water-run



Re-vegetated Water-run

Pictures courtesy AAFC

Farmyard Runoff Control

Farmyard run-off control provides producers with assistance in addressing uncontrolled run-off passing through farmyards and livestock facilities. Run-off control measures divert clean run-off away from farmyards and/or retain run-off on-site to protect surface and ground water quality and reduce erosion.

Protecting High Risk Erodible and Saline Soils

Protecting high risk erodible and saline soils assists producers in implementing practices that minimize erosion and soil salinity on agricultural land by converting highly erodible and saline land from annual grain production to permanent cover including riparian buffer strips around water bodies.

Creek and Stream Crossings

Assistance for creek and stream crossings is available to producers with existing crossings (constructed or random) which pose a risk to water quality, fish habitat or riparian area health.

Please refer to <http://www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/GF2-FarmStewardship> for up to date information.

The Ministry of Agriculture has been holding a series of Invasive Weed Webinars.

These webinars can be accessed on the Ministry of Agriculture website and viewed at any time.

To find these and other Ministry of Agriculture webinars go to:
www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/webinars

