Summer 2016

Lower Souris Watershed Committee Inc.

An Update from your Watershed Committee *(306) 452-3292*

"balancing the economic, environmental, and social values to sustain and improve the watershed for future generations"

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The Lower Souris Watershed Welcomes a New Summer Student

Hi! My name is Morgan Fisk, and I am the new summer student for the Lower Souris Watershed. I am from Moosomin, SK and graduated in the year of 2013. I am currently taking my Environmental Sciences at Lakeland College in Vermilion, with a major in Conservation and Reclamation.

In my spare time I enjoy horseback riding, hanging out with my cattle, friends and family and going to conferences and workshops where I can further my knowledge on pasture management and soil conservation!

This summer I will be working on getting the new website up and running, as well as organizing a video project which will be used to portray different aspects of the watershed.

I am very excited for what this job and my summer holds, and look forward to meeting some of you along the way!

INSIDE:

Fencing for Healthy Pastures and Water

Grazing season is here. Are your pastures ready? Healthy pastures and riparian areas not only provide forage for your livestock but also increase water infiltration into the soil, reduce sedimentation, and filter and slow runoff which helps to protect our creeks, wetlands and other water sources. Proper pasture management leads to productive pastures, clean water and healthy animals.

What does good pasture management involve? Following the 4 principles of grazing management:

Stocking Intensity

Use appropriate stocking rates for your pastures based on the type of vegetation (native prairie, tame grass, bush, riparian areas), the age of the stand, soil type and health of the pasture.

Timing and Duration

Try not to graze the same pasture at the same time each year. Keep animals out of wet areas during sensitive periods (eg. Prevent livestock access to creek areas in early spring). Rotational grazing (instead of season-long grazing) pays off with healthy animals, thriving pastures, fewer weeds, less bare soil and reduced runoff.

Distribution

Strategic use of fencing, herding and locations of water, salt and mineral can better distribute the livestock throughout the pasture.

Rest

Ensure that your pasture has enough rest DURING the growing season to allow the plants to recover.

Cost-share funding may be available to producers through Growing Forward 2's Farm Stewardship Program for fencing beneficial management practices (BMPs) including:

1) **Riparian Area Grazing Management and Fencing BMP** – to create riparian paddocks and a grazing management plan to better manage the timing, intensity, and duration of grazing in these sensitive areas. Riparian areas are the lush green areas adjacent to streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands where the vegetation is influenced by the water-rich soils.
2) **Native Rangeland Grazing Management BMP**– the intent of this BMP is to develop and implement a grazing plan to improve the health and productivity of our remaining native rangelands. These pastures are important sources of forage, however livestock can have negative impacts on native pasture if not managed properly. Proper native rangeland management reduces erosion, improves forage productivity and minimizes invasive plant establishment and spread.
3) **Fencing to Protect Surface Water BMP** – this BMP is designed to protect water quality and riparian areas by excluding livestock from a natural water body such as a lake, creek or stream.

We look forward to working with producers in the Lower Souris Watershed to develop and implement custom grazing management plans to improve your pasture and riparian area health, and protect your water sources. For more information on developing a grazing management plan or about funding opportunities available for fencing, water source development and more, contact Karmen Kyle at 306.452.7953 or karmen@lowersourisriverwatershed.com.

The Dangers of Zebra Mussels

Aquatic invasive species are a non-native aquatic organism that are considered a threat due to the significant risk they pose to the economy, environment and/or human health. These species are spread by human activity; mainly the transportation of watercraft. Although there are many types of aquatic invasive species, focus is being directed at invasive mussels; specifically, Zebra Mussels.

Zebra mussels where introduced in the Great Lakes in 1986 by Cargo Ships coming from the Black and Baltic Seas. So far they have NOT been detected in SK, AB, NWT or BC water bodies, but in 2013 were discovered in Lake Winnipeg. Aquatic species have been entering Canadian waters for centuries, but as frequency and ease of transportation increases so does this introduction and spread of the species.

Zebra mussels can grow to be about two inches long, and have a characteristically striped shell. Their life span is from four to five years. Zebra mussels have sticky byssal threads on the base of their bodies, which they use to attach tightly to any hard surfaces. They are capable of reproducing by the end of their first year, and then continue to do so from spring until winter when water reaches a temperature of 68°F.

Mussels can alter habitats and make them inhabitable for native species, therefore reducing natural biodiversity. They can also cause damage in commercial and recreational equipment and infrastructure, and dramatically increase the operating costs of water treatment plants, water purification plants, power plants and dams. Zebra mussels filter water in order to eat plankton, competing with fish for food. As well, water clarity is increased which allows sunlight to penetrate deeper and enable growth of plants called macrophytes (an aquatic plant that grows in or near water and is either emergent, submerging or floating). When these plants die and decay they wash up onto the shore lines, fouling beaches and cause water quality problems.

Invasive mussels will attach to boats, trailers, docks and other recreational equipment, moving from location to location unless properly disposed of.

Before returning home from other provinces, visiting or moving between waters within Saskatchewan, remember to

CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY

★ **CLEAN and inspect the watercraft, trailer, equipment and all gear that made contact with the water.**

- **Remove** visible plants, animals and mud. Scrub/scrape grainy surfaces (sandpaper textured). These may be young mussels too small to see then using high pressure, **Wash, scrub or rinse** with hot tap water (50°C) away from storm drains, ditches and waterways.

★ **DRAIN all water on-board from the motor, livewell, bilge, and ballast tanks.** Flush with hot tap water and leave plugs out during transport and storage.

★ **DRY your watercraft, equipment and all gear completely,** for at least five days and leave compartments open to dry.

SPONSORS

Village of Fairlight
Village of Fleming
Village of Gainsborough
Village of Manor
Village of Maryfield
Village of Storthoaks
RM of Argyle # 1
RM of Mount Pleasant # 2
RM of Storthoaks # 31
RM of Reciprocity # 32
RM of Moose Creek # 33
RM of Antler # 61
RM of Maryfield # 91
RM of Walpole # 92
RM of Wawken #93
RM of Moosomin # 121
RM of Martin #122
RM of Silverwood # 123
RM of Kingsley #124
RM of Chester #125
RM of Willowdale #153
Town of Redvers
Town of Moosomin
Town of Wapella

COMING EVENTS

Lower Souris Watershed Well Decommissioning Field Days
details coming soon
lowersourisriverwatershed.com

International Rangeland Congress
July 16-22, 2016
Saskatoon, SK
2016canada.rangelandcongress.org

Saskatchewan Pasture Tour
Aug 4, 2016
Harris, SK
www.saskforage.ca

Remote Livestock Watering Systems

Livestock producers want a safe and reliable source of good quality water for their livestock. They want to do their part to protect natural and constructed water sources from environmental damage.

Allowing livestock direct access to water bodies can result in damage to wetlands and the stream and dugout banks, loss of riparian vegetation and habitat, nutrient buildup, deterioration of water quality, weed and algae growth, not to mention effects on the livestock such as increased incidence in foot rot, leg injuries, potential death from drowning, and exposure to blue-green algae toxins.

A remote pasture watering system can provide many benefits:

Water Source and Riparian Area Protection

Improved Herd Health

Improved Pasture Utilization

Many options are available for pasture watering systems including pipelines, solar watering systems, wind powered, fuel/electricity powered, and gravity fed.

There are many things to consider when choosing the remote watering system that will work best for you:

1) How many animals will be drinking from it?
2) Is it in intensive or extensive grazing system?
3) What type of water source are you using (dugout, well, creek) and where are they?
4) What power sources do you have available – electricity, solar, wind?
5) Do you need a portable system?
6) How reliable is the system and how much maintenance is needed?
7) Do you plan to use it for summer or winter watering or both?
8) Shop around – talk to other producers using these systems and to the dealers to learn what system will work best for you

Contact Karmen Kyle at 452-7953 for more information on remote watering systems and cost-share funding opportunities available through the Farm & Ranch Water Infrastructure Program to develop pasture watering plans on your farm to benefit your livestock and the environment.

Growing Forward 2
A federal-provincial-territorial initiative
Government of Saskatchewan
Canada