

# Lower Souris Watershed Committee Inc.

An Update from your Watershed Committee

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***“Promoting economic, environmental and social balance to sustain and improve the watershed for future generations”***

Lower Souris Watershed Committee Inc.

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## Christmas Greetings from the Lower Souris Watershed Committee

2016 seems to have been a whirlwind – 12 months have passed too fast! We are in the middle of a deep freeze and already have 2-3 feet of snow on the ground in December. Fingers crossed for a gentle snowmelt next spring and minimum flooded areas.

In January we welcomed Tyler Fewings as our new Manager/Watershed Co-ordinator. Tyler's feet haven't touched the ground since. Thank you, Tyler, for your enthusiasm and commitment.

Lower Souris' landmarks in 2016 include several workshops covering water management, soil health, invasive species, well decommissioning and a host of others. We are one out of 4 watersheds across Saskatchewan that are considered "drainage hotspots". For that reason we are participating in a water management plan covering over 240 quarters, many agricultural producers and downstream landowners in Manitoba. Thank you to all of our members for attending these workshops and to Karmen Kyle for her skills in organizing them.

Our summer student, Morgan Fisk, was a delight to work with and we hope to welcome her back in summer of 2017.

Elaine Morgan has been with us since the start and has decided to enjoy her retirement in 2017. I will miss Elaine's quick thinking and professionalism. We wish Elaine all the best for her well earned retirement.

On behalf of the Board and staff of the Lower Souris Watershed Committee Inc. I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all Good Wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

*Teresa Walker, Chairman*



L:R – Louis Hebert, Karmen Kyle, George MacDonald, Joe Widdup, Teresa Walker, Elaine Morgan, Martin Hjertaas, Darlene Fisk, Don North, Tyler Fewings

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- ~ Update from the Provincial Drainage- Water Management Conference
- ~ Have a Merry "Green" Christmas





## Seeding Forages? - Plan Ahead

Selecting appropriate plant species is important in successful forage production. Whether you are seeding forages to accommodate an expanding livestock herd, to sell hay, or to better manage marginal land, effort should be put into deciding what works best for your operation.

There are two main questions to ask yourself when selecting your forage variety. What is the end use and what are the limitations? Some things to consider when answering these questions may include:

- 1) End use – Will it be used for pasture, hayland, silage, or stockpile grazing? Will it be rotationally grazed or continuously grazed if used as pasture? Regrowth rates, bloat risk, livestock type, and yield potential need to be considered.
- 2) How long do you intend to keep the forage stand in production? – Forage species differ in their longevity. Forage stands that are to be integrated into an annual crop rotation will contain different species than a long term stand.
- 3) Soil type and condition – Are you seeding into sandy, loamy or clay soils? Are there salinity issues? Does it drain well? Are there any limiting nutrients? Soil testing is recommended to determine any limiting nutrients. Keep in mind that if any one nutrient is lacking, production will be affected and the plant's response to the application of other nutrients may be reduced.
- 4) Are there weed problems in the area to be seeded? – Perennial weeds are very competitive with forages during the establishment period and can significantly reduce future forage yields. It is difficult to control perennial weeds in established forage stands so it is best to control them before seeding. Also, keep in mind that certain chemicals used for weed control can have long-term effects for re-cropping.

Some common species used are:


Species	Best Use	Timing	Salinity Tolerance	Flooding Tolerance
Alfalfa (early/medium maturity)*	Both	Spring-Fall	Low-moderate	Low
Creeping Rooted Alfalfa*	Hay	Spring-Fall	Low – moderate	Moderate
Cicer Milkvetch	Grazing	Late spring-fall	Low – moderate	Low
Meadow Brome	Hay	Early spring-late summer	Low – moderate	Low
Hybrid Brome	Both	Spring-late summer	Low – moderate	Moderate
Tall Fescue	Hay	Spring – Fall	Moderate – High	Moderate – High
Creeping Red Fescue	Grazing	Spring – Fall	Low – Moderate	Moderate
Pubescent Wheatgrass	Both	Spring – Fall	Low – Moderate	Low

\* There is a possibility of pasture bloat with alfalfa varieties when grazing livestock

\*\* Table courtesy of Bonnie Mandziak

Although it is more costly, it is a good idea to use certified seed whenever possible to benefit from fewer weed seeds and known purity and varietal traits. Also, care should be taken when seeding forages such as Smooth Brome or Crested Wheat that spread easily and can choke out native species. It would be a good idea to check out other options when seeding these species near native prairie, creeks or other water ways.

For more information on forage selection and forage seeding programs, contact Karmen Kyle, Lower Souris Watershed, at 306.452.7953, your Regional Forage Specialist or and Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1.866.457.2377.



## 2016 Provincial Drainage- Water Management Conference Update

The Lower Souris Watershed Committee and Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds hosted the Provincial Drainage & Water Management Conference in Moosomin on Thursday December 1. Approximately 100 people attended to learn more about the changes in the provincial water management strategy, the effects of drainage on our landscape, local efforts putting this plan into action and more.



### Some key points from the day:

- Water management is a priority and the goal isn't to shut down drainage but to ensure effective management. *(Stephen Bonk, MLA for Moosomin)*
- 6 watershed groups (including the Lower Souris Watershed for the 600 Creek project) are assisting as Qualified Persons in priority basins to help landowners work through the drainage application process *(Doug Johnson, WSA)*
- There is a push for more science to be done regarding drainage *(Doug Johnson, WSA)*
- The role of the Qualified Persons (QPs) will be to concentrate on the complexities of the drainage application process, co-ordinate between land owners, help with paperwork, and apply standard design to allow for a more efficient approval process *(Etienne Soulodre, WSA)*
- UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) or drones can help in the drainage application process through watershed simulations, developing flow maps and identifying natural waterways to simplify the permitting process *(Warren Genik, Green Aero Technology)*
- With drainage, there is an increased flow and increased concentration of nutrients coming off the land that affects water quality. Therefore to reduce impacts on water quality, there needs to be a reduction in the volume of water going downstream. *(Etienne Soulodre, WSA)*
- Multi-purpose water retention (small dams) projects are designed to slow the water flow across the landscape. They have the potential to reduce damage to land and infrastructure, improve water quality, address flooding concerns, give ranchers opportunity to build water sources and increase biological diversity. *(Ryan Canart, Upper Assiniboine Conservation District)*
- Drainage is done to gain farmable acres, minimize maneuvering of large equipment and provide economic gain, however it can have negative impacts on water quality, quantity and habitat. Steps need to be taken to be responsible and to reduce downstream impacts. *(Aron Herschmiller, WSA)*
- The 4C's to finding a way forward on drainage *(Bryan O'borne, WSA)*
  - \* Communication – understanding the impacts
  - \* Commitment to finish – continued support
  - \* Technical Co-ordination
  - \* Compliance planning
- The 600 Creek project in the Lower Souris Watershed was chosen because of interested producers and complaints made in the area. There are 240 quarters involved in this project. This is a more complicated project because the drainage applicants are in Saskatchewan, however the adequate outlet is in Manitoba. Work is being done on the application, site visits have been made, and communication is flowing between RMs, WSA, Manitoba government, and landowners. *(Tyler Fewings, Lower Souris Watershed Committee)*

Thank you to the partners for this event; the Lower Souris Watershed Committee, Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds, Water Security Agency and SARM. Also, thank you to the interested producers, and municipality and industry representatives for joining us to learn more about how we can take more responsibility managing our valuable water resources.

## SPONSORS

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RM of Argyle # 1  
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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

## Have a Merry “Green” Christmas

With the hustle and bustle of the Christmas, let’s remember to care for the environment while we’re celebrating the season! Here are some ideas to reduce our environmental impact during the holidays.

- 1) Check out local artisans for unique locally made gifts
- 2) Buy less – give services instead of goods, give a loved one an experience to remember, give a homemade treat, or give a charitable donation in honor of someone else
- 3) Lower the impact of holiday lighting by using LED lights and/or reduce the size of your outdoor displays
- 4) Choose a live tree over an artificial one - they not only smell like Christmas, they are often locally grown and sold, improve air quality while they’re growing, and most of them are recycled into mulch
- 5) Give homemade Christmas cards – recycling old calendars and cards to make a new card or use children’s artwork to make unique cards for family and friends
- 6) Use alternatives to wrapping paper – try environmentally friendly gift wrap, reusable gift bags, use less tape, and reuse wrapping paper where possible
- 7) Spend some time in nature on Christmas day. Go for a family nature hike, go sledding or find a pond and go skating, or decorate a tree for the birds with suet, seed bells and seed trays.
- 8) Use a timer for your Christmas lights
- 9) Skip disposable plates and cutlery
- 10) Decorate your home with natural materials - use evergreen boughs, branches, pine cones, holly, homemade ornaments and more to make beautiful centrepieces, potted arrangements and more.



## COMING EVENTS

### Saskatchewan Beef Industry Conference

January 24-26, 2017  
Regina, SK  
[www.saskbeefconference.com](http://www.saskbeefconference.com)

### Managing Saline Soils Workshop

Monday, February 6, 2017  
Arcola, SK  
Contact 452-7953 for more information & to register

### Native Prairie Restoration & Reclamation Workshop

February 8-9, 2017  
Regina, SK  
<http://www.pcap-sk.org/upcoming-events-workshops/2017-nprw>



The Lower Souris Watershed Committee has a **Grain Bag Roller** for watershed residents to use on their farms free of charge!

**Recycling bags** for twine and net wrap collection are also available.

Contact Tyler Fewings at 306.452.3292 for more details.

