

# Moose Jaw River Watershed **Newsletter**

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Welcome to the first edition of the Moose Jaw River Watershed newsletter!



Because the proactive role taken on by the Moose Jaw Creek Watershed Association is a relatively new endeavour, an explanation of the Association and its purpose is likely a good place to start...

Although legally formed in 1964, the Moose Jaw Creek Watershed Association #2 didn't assume a proactive role in watershed stewardship until 2001, with motivation from Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. In April of 2005, with assistance from the Canada-Saskatchewan Greencover Technical Assistance Component, the group was able to hire a technical coordinator to assist in meeting the following goals:

- ✓ Publicly convey the importance of environmental stewardship
- ✓ Encourage and assist with stewardship initiatives on private lands
- ✓ Improve the ecological health of the Moose Jaw River Watershed
- ✓ Carry out restoration work that will improve water quality of local creeks and streams.

Over the past few months, I have met with landowners, such as the MacLachlans, already making strides towards environmentally sustainable practices, and worked with landowners such as the Hickeys and Mike Howe to obtain funding to help make such changes. I have worked with 250 curious students to convey the importance of watershed stewardship. And in October, we will be visiting two sites in the watershed to witness the proper sealing of two abandoned wells. All of this, of course, would not be possible without support from organizations such as Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, Agriculture Canada, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans, local Rural Municipalities, and SaskWater – just to name a few!

I hope you enjoy our first newsletter – if you have any comments or suggestions, please be sure to contact me.

## **Twyla Jesse**

Technical Coordinator  
Moose Jaw Creek Watershed Association #2

# BMPs in the Moose Jaw River Watershed

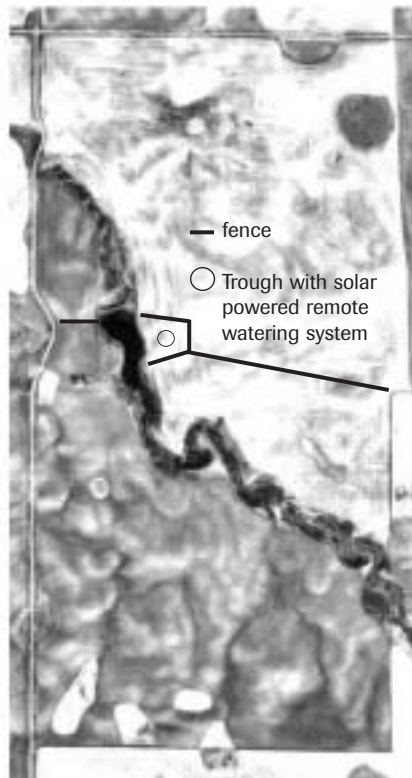
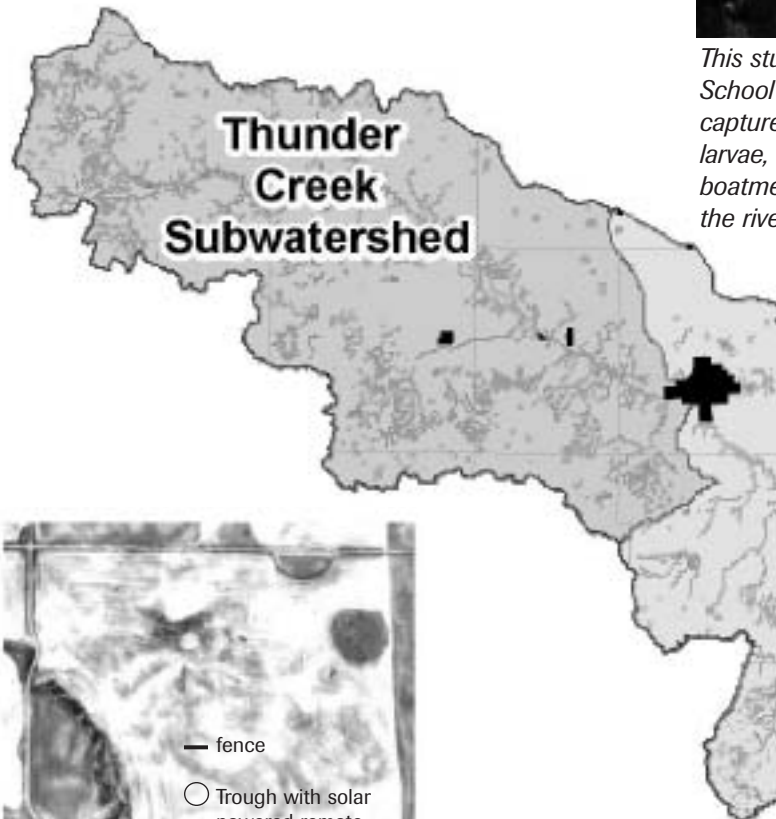
***Beneficial Management Practices, commonly referred to as BMPs, are practical practices that either minimize or mitigate possible environmental risks from agricultural and urban actions.***

Scott and Tara MacLachlan, along with their family, farm south of Eyebrow. Depending on the year, Thunder Creek, which flows through various grazing paddocks owned by the MacLachlans, may be a source of drinking water for the cattle. More often than not, however, this section of the creek dries up before the end of June. With funding from SaskPower, Scott and Tara have set up a more reliable system, with a dugout adjacent to the river supplying a solar-powered remote watering system. This system, which can be accessed from three different grazing paddocks, is now the preferred source of water for the cattle. Consistent with other producer's experiences, this remote watering system provides a cleaner water source, supports greater weight gain, and decreases the incidence of foot rot.



*T Jesse 2005*

*Here, Scott shows his son, Patrick, how the float can signal the water to flow into the trough.*



*This aerial photo shows the location of the remote watering system, and the cross-fencing of the half-section to develop two grazing paddocks.*



*T Jesse 2005*

This old pump is the remnant of an abandoned well south of Boharm. This 60 meter deep bored well will be a site for a well decommissioning workshop hosted by the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. Because old wells like this one provide a channel for contaminants to reach the ground water, and

may also be a liability for landowners, it is important to properly decommission these wells by plugging them with bentonite clay, for example. This workshop will take place on **October 25th of 2005**, and will focus on proper well decommissioning techniques. **Please contact Twyla with the Moose Jaw Creek Watershed Association to register.**

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On June 6, 2005, the Moose Jaw Creek Watershed Association partnered with SaskWater and Prince Arthur Community School to host *Water's Critters on the Creek*. The 250 children that attended this event identified critters from the Moose Jaw River, learned how



A student from Prince Arthur Community School is enthralled by the large snails that he collected from the Moose Jaw River. Caddisfly, whirligig beetles, water striders, water penny, and mayfly larvae were also found in the river that day.

contaminants can enter the river and affect the food chain, and visited with Wakamow Valley Authority and Moose Jaw Asphalt Inc. representatives to learn about what they are doing to protect the river. Later in the afternoon, older students painted fish symbols on storm sewer outlets throughout the City of Moose Jaw to identify one of the routes for contaminants to enter the river system.



resena Hicke plan to take advantage of a Saskatchewan program to expand their grazing system and add a remote watering system. By converting a section of hay into two grazing paddocks, the farmer can defer grazing on valuable native rangeland until later in the season, which will maintain the forage value of native prairie. A solar-powered watering system will provide a water source away from the dammed river, accessible from each of the two paddocks. Similar to many other projects, the farmer will not be fencing off the coulee as cattle tend to prefer the water provided by the remote watering system.

This fall, Mike Howe is taking advantage of a partnership initiative to reseed a quarter section of cropland to native grass. Through Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Funding administered through the Canadian Cattleman's Association, Mike will use burn-off chemical and a seed mixture consisting of green needle grass, western wheatgrass, northern wheatgrass, little bluestem, and a small amount of alfalfa. Mike will incorporate this paddock into his grazing system to provide valuable rest for other paddocks and provide quality forage for his livestock. This demonstration project will serve several purposes for all the partners. Providing livestock with high quality forages throughout the grazing season will reduce potential methane emissions from grazing livestock. Increased perennial cover will enhance wildlife habitat potential. Establishing native forages will also provide valuable field scale testing of the AAFC forage trials. Partners on this demo site are CCA (GHG Mitigation Fund), SWA, DUC, SAF, AAFC (Dr. Iwassa), MJCWA and Mike Howe.



### Seeding native forages for grazing

By Trevor Lennox, Forage Development Specialist, SAF

Producers wanting to grow forages for grazing have been limited in terms of the number of tame species that are adapted to the dry, southern prairies. This is where native species come in. They offer a broader range of forage options. Native species are well-adapted to the harsh prairie environment, as they have evolved for centuries under these conditions. Another benefit of native species is their ability to cure well on the stem, allowing late-season grazing.

When seeding native forages, it is important to choose at least three different species, but some producers may seed 15 or more species. An Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada study at Swift Current reported excellent establishment of native forages seeded in the spring of 2001, one of the driest years on record. The average forage yield reported at the start of grazing (June/July) for the first two production years (2002-2003) was 1700 lb./ac. for a simple mixture consisting of seven species.

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Program Going Strong

The Canada-Saskatchewan EFP program, an important part of environmental programming under the Agricultural Policy Framework, has been well-received across the province. The program is being delivered by the Provincial Council of Agriculture Development and Diversification Boards of Saskatchewan, Inc. (PCAB), which has deployed trained facilitators to deliver a series of two workshops to program participants.

“So far, the EFP program in Saskatchewan has yielded tremendous success in terms of number of participants and the overall general perception of the program,” said PCAB EFP Program Co-ordinator Shelanne Wiles-Longley. “The majority of producers who have participated realize the importance of an EFP and how it will benefit them.”

#### A workshop approach

At the workshops, PCAB facilitators assist and instruct producers on how to complete an environmental risk

*EFPs provide an excellent tool for producers who are interested in assessing their operations from an environmental perspective*

assessment of their operation, and subsequently to develop a plan to address any identified risks. With assistance from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food and

other agency partners, PCAB facilitators provide producers with the technical support they need to prepare their EFP.

#### Moving forward

Once producers have completed their EFPs and have had them endorsed by PCAB, they are eligible to apply for financial assistance to help with the implementation of specific beneficial management practices (BMPs) on their farms. In Saskatchewan, producers can choose from a list of 30 categories of BMPs designed to reduce environmental risks. The program will pay from 30 to 50 per cent of the eligible costs of implementation, depending on the BMP. A producer can receive a maximum of \$30,000 from the program, which ends on March 31, 2008.

For more information on the EFP program, contact **Saskatchewan Agriculture and Agri-Food – Agriculture Knowledge Center**

**1-866-457-2377**

For more information on program delivery and EFP workshops, contact

**Provincial Council of Agriculture and Development and Diversification Boards (PCAB)**

**1-306-955-5477**



Agriculture and  
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et  
Agroalimentaire Canada

The Moose Jaw Creek Watershed Association #2 takes pride in working with local communities, landowners and partner agencies to improve water quality and quantity within the watershed. With funding available, we can assist with projects that demonstrate beneficial management practices in the Moose Jaw River watershed. If you would like to know more about how to be involved in our programs, please contact our technical coordinator at:

#### Moose Jaw Creek Watershed Association #2

P.O. Box 1902  
Moose Jaw SK S6H 7N6  
(306) 691-3396 office  
(306) 630-6534 cell  
(306) 693-2166 fax  
[twylajesse@sasktel.net](mailto:twylajesse@sasktel.net)

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