

**SASKATCHEWAN'S PROTECTED AREAS UPDATE REPORT**  
**CCEA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**OCTOBER 2008**

**Annual Update**

- A number of land use planning exercises that have been ongoing for a number of years have made progress and are nearing a foreseeable conclusion. All of these land use plans have incorporated proposals for protected areas.
- The Nisbet Forest located near the City of Prince Albert has gone through a number of different proposals for protected areas in its land use planning process. Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment staff reached an internal consensus on the identification of three separate areas that total 9,211 hectares. These lands will add to the representation of the Boreal Transition Ecoregion. Conflicting interests in the Nisbet Forest are part of a history of multi-resource use. Close proximity to the Cities of Prince Albert and Saskatoon contribute to a relatively high demand for outdoor recreation adding to management complexities.
- The North Central Land Use Plan takes in a large area situated north of Lac la Ronge. This plan contains three separate areas that are to be protected in some form. Two areas that total in excess of 400,000 hectares are proposed to become representative area ecological reserves and one area of approximately 27,000 hectares is proposed as an expansion to an existing recreation site.
- The Great Sand Hills Regional Environmental Study was completed and released in a final report in the spring of 2007. A number of the recommendations made in the study were directed at the need to protect additional areas in the fragile grassland ecosystem of the Great Sand Hills. Based on the outcome of the environmental assessment, which is presently in the midst of a 60-day public review, the ministry will determine what the next steps will be to proceed on protecting additional areas.
- In northern Saskatchewan additional processes are underway as the ministry continues to move forward to identify candidate protected areas. One of those being a proposed site in excess of 160,000 hectares near Cree Lake. Pressure to develop recreational cottage areas throughout the north and fringe regions of the province continues to be felt as the ministry field's inquiries and proposals for development. The interest in cottage property has resulted in a considerable spike in real estate values around popular lakes.
- Saskatchewan added approximately 4,200 hectares of conservation easements giving the province a total of approximately 61,000 hectares of land held under conservation easements.
- In the southern agriculture regions of the province slow gains can be reported to the Representative Areas Network by the addition of private conservation lands and wildlife lands. Much work needs to be done in the Moist Mixed Grassland

and Aspen Parkland Ecoregions to reach the goal of protecting 12 percent of the landscape.

- Saskatchewan is a resource rich province and with soaring prices for uranium, potash and petroleum, the province is of great interest to respective industries to explore and develop those resources. This demand is being felt on the environmental side as well as the province looks to balance rich resources and protection of the landscape.

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