



SASKATCHEWAN RIVER BASIN

Wetlands and

WETLAND VALUES

...

w Wildlife Habitat

w Recreation

w Flood Reduction

w Water
Purification

w Ground Water

The word wetland conjures up images of towering cattails, lily pads and leaping frogs and a pair of ducks skimming the surface before landing with a splash. And that is an accurate description for certain kinds of wetlands.

Technically, there are five classes of wetlands: bogs, fens, salt and freshwater marshes, swamps and shallow water. Each class has its own set of unique characteristics but all are defined as lands saturated by water for periods long enough for vegetation to take root and peaty soils to form.

THE VALUE OF

WETLANDS

Historically, wetlands have had a reputation of being spaces with little value. However, a closer look reveals that wetlands have plenty to offer.

For the human population, wetlands help guard against floods, buffer shorelines against erosion and purify water by acting as filters. Wetlands across Canada also provide direct economic benefits through the harvest of marsh hay, wild rice, cranberries, peat moss and sphagnum moss. Income is also generated from recreational activities that abound at wetlands, such as bird watching, hunting and fishing. Wetlands are wonderful for demonstrating and observing ecological principles in a natural ecosystem. Canadians depend on wetlands and the educational opportunities they provide across the country.

Almost every part of a wetland, from the mucky bottom to the still surface, is important to wildlife. Wetlands provide cru-

WETLAND PRESERVATION

Wetlands are in trouble. Across the prairies, up to 70% of all wetlands have been drained or heavily impacted by human development. When wetlands are drained, not only does important waterfowl and other wildlife habitat disappear, a

critical link in the water cycle and the prairie ecosystem is lost. Wetlands store water, filter pollutants and recharge groundwater supplies. A network of wetlands throughout the prairies is important to maintain water quality and quantity, particularly during drought years. Through the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, government and private

For More Information

This fact sheet was published by Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin.

c/o Meewasin Valley Authority
(Managing Partner)

402 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7K 3G5

phone: (306) 665-6887
1-800-567-8007

fax: (306) 665-6117
email: partners@saskriver-basin.ca

web: <http://www.saskriver-basin.ca>

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can get involved in wetland preservation. Here are a few ideas to help you understand and save these important ecological spaces.

- w Start a school project that determines the variety of life that exists in a wetland ecosystem.
- w Take a hike to a wetland with your family and keep a list of the wildlife you see. Investigate the vegetation, insects and birds that are part of a wetland.
- w Be a friend to wildlife. Support your local wildlife and habitat groups such as the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited Canada and your local naturalist organizations.
- w Host a fundraising event to raise money to protect a hectare of wetland.
- w Learn about how water is being used in your community. Talk to the mayor or reeve about the extent of drainage that goes on in the

This fact sheet funded by:



Acknowledgements

The contribution of the following towards the production of this fact sheet is acknowledged:

Information:
Ducks Unlimited Canada

Editor:
Alison Elliott

Training Unlimited

Writer:

