

## **Media Backgrounder**

### **Saskatchewan Watershed Authority**

**To better co-ordinate efforts to protect source water across Saskatchewan, the watershed management responsibilities of Sask Water, Saskatchewan Environment and Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation (SWCC) are being combined to form a new crown corporation, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority.**

The Watershed Authority will consolidate expertise from all three organizations into a single focus on watershed management which will eliminate conflicting priorities among the organizations, and reduce duplication and inefficiencies.

The new Watershed Authority will report to the Minister of Saskatchewan Environment. Existing budgets for the watershed management program within Sask Water, SWCC and Environment will be redirected to fund the new organization. There will be no overall increase in costs.

The new Crown corporation's mandate will include:

- Watershed planning
- minimizing contamination of surface water bodies
- protecting aquifers from depletion and contamination
- enhancing public awareness of water management planning
- maintaining, restoring and protecting the health of aquatic and riparian ecosystems and drinking water sources
- encouraging conservation of wetlands
- developing, operating, maintaining and upgrading provincial water management infrastructure
- planning water-based developments considering the potential effects of flood, drought and climate change
- promoting sustainable economic diversification through wise use of water and related land resources
- monitoring and researching water resources
- help resolve disputes over the use and diversion of water

The new organization includes all Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation staff, Environment staff working on watershed management and about two thirds of Sask Water employees. In total, the new Saskatchewan Watershed Authority has approximately 180 employees. It will be headquartered in Moose Jaw.