



# WHEN WETLANDS ARE DESTROYED, WE ALL LOSE.

*Wetlands strengthen Saskatchewan's sustainability. **Protect them!***

Land development, and other human activities that require draining, filling and construction in wetlands can result in negative impacts to downstream land-owners, infrastructure, water quality and the environment. Despite this, we continue to lose an average of 28 acres of wetlands a day (over 10,000 acres a year) in Saskatchewan.

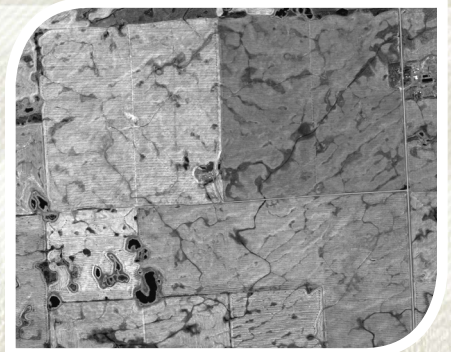
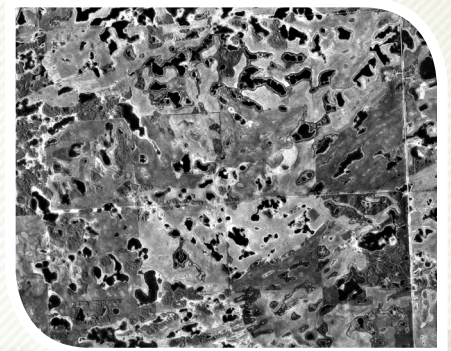
Avoiding, minimizing or compensating for negative impacts or loss is known as mitigation. Mitigation is important to sustainable growth as it maintains the benefits of wetlands while still allowing development.

Saskatchewan needs a well-defined mitigation process to enable producers, municipalities and industry to keep pace with growth, while ensuring Saskatchewan's environment remains healthy. The mitigation process must clearly define the required environmental outcomes and empower operators and organizations to determine how those results will be achieved.

***Wetland protection is one of the best investments in the environment that our government can make.***

Mitigating for any wetland loss is achieved through application of a proper mitigation sequence including:

- 1 **avoidance** of the impact
- 2 **minimization** of unavoidable impacts
- 3 **compensation** for impacts that cannot be minimized



*Aerial photos of the Smith Creek watershed in east-central Saskatchewan, in 1950 (top) with abundant wetlands, and 2005 (above) with most wetlands drained.*



Ducks Unlimited Canada

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**Avoidance is the most important step in a sustainable mitigation sequence.** In instances where avoidance is not possible, minimization of impact should be assessed on a case by case basis. Compensation should be the last resort. No amount of monetary compensation will ever fully account for what we lose when wetlands are removed from the landscape. **Permanent loss requires permanent mitigation.**

### Sustainable Development

Wetland restoration is the best option to compensate for wetland loss, but no amount of restoration can fully compensate for damage caused by wetland drainage. A far more economical, efficient and ecologically responsible course of action is to avoid and minimize wetland degradation in the first place.

**Wetlands are critical for Saskatchewan's future and must be protected** because they reduce flood risk and are critical to other aspects of our economic well-being. Wetlands store carbon and filter water by removing excess nutrients and contaminants. This protects our pristine lakes and rivers and ensures our tourism, recreation and economy remain strong and Saskatchewan remains "the place to be."

Wetlands provide a first and last line of defense against unintended runoff of agricultural inputs and are a sink for greenhouse gases. Maintaining wetlands on the agricultural landscape is a natural way farmers mitigate the impacts of agricultural inputs on the environment. In many cases, wetlands are able to reduce the impact of agricultural inputs by preventing movement or leakage into larger bodies of water.



*Protecting Saskatchewan wetlands protect our water resources, promotes economical water use, maintains water quality, helps control flooding and provides wildlife habitat in our province.*

*"The purpose of growth is to build a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan residents."*

*— Premier Brad Wall, opening message of "Saskatchewan Plan for Growth. Vision 2020 and Beyond"*



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