

Ministry of Environment

Annual Report for 2019-20

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Letters of Transmittal



The Honourable
Dustin Duncan
Minister of
Environment

Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan:

I respectfully submit the Annual Report for the Ministry of Environment for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dustin Duncan'.

Dustin Duncan
Minister of Environment



Sarah Harrison
Deputy Minister of
Environment

The Honourable Dustin Duncan
Minister of Environment

Dear Minister:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of the Ministry of Environment for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Harrison'.

Sarah Harrison
Deputy Minister of Environment

Ministry Overview

The purpose of the ministry is established in *The Ministry of Environment Regulations, 2007*.

Vision	Mission	Mandate
A healthy, resilient environment.	We manage and protect Saskatchewan's environment for the well-being of the province and its people.	The Ministry of Environment's role is to manage the health of Saskatchewan's environment in a respectful, responsible and enforceable manner that balances growth with sustainable development through objective, transparent and informed decision-making and stewardship.

The Ministry of Environment's mandate in 2019-20 was supported by three core lines of business:

1. Environmental protection, which includes mining and industry regulation, the handling of hazardous materials, responding to spills, air quality monitoring, environmental assessment and waste management.
2. Resource management and compliance, which manages the province's fish, wildlife, lands, forests, and compliance enforcement.
3. Climate change and adaptation, which includes greenhouse gas emissions regulation and cumulative effects modelling and analysis.

These key lines of business support Government of Saskatchewan goals by ensuring the responsible management of our natural resources and protection of the province's people. They also contribute individually and collectively to the province's 10-year Growth Plan by providing goals and guidance for responsible and sustainable development.

The ministry derives its mandate, responsibilities and authority from a number of Acts and regulations. Acts currently assigned to the Minister of Environment, either solely or jointly, are:

<i>The Conservation Easements Act</i>	<i>The Ecological Reserves Act</i>
<i>The Environmental Assessment Act</i>	<i>The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010</i>
<i>The Fisheries Act (Saskatchewan), 1994</i>	<i>The Forestry Professions Act</i>
<i>The Forest Resources Management Act</i>	<i>The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act</i>
<i>The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act</i>	<i>The Natural Resources Act</i>
<i>The Protection of the Wild Ponies of the Bronson Forest Act</i>	<i>The Provincial Lands Act, 2016</i>
<i>The Sale or Lease of Certain Lands Act</i>	<i>The Water Appeal Board Act¹</i>
<i>The Wildfire Act</i>	<i>The Wildlife Act, 1998</i>
<i>The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act</i>	

¹ The *Water Appeal Board Act* was repealed in March 2020.

The Annual Report for 2019-20 reports on progress made towards objectives outlined in the 2019-20 Operational Plan, which can be found at saskatchewan.ca/environment.

Progress in 2019-20

Government Goals

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people

Meeting the challenges of growth

Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people

Delivering responsive and responsible government

Ministry Goal

Safe communities and a healthy environment protected from adverse environmental impacts

Strategy

Ensure all communities have solid waste management solutions in place

Key Actions

- Implement a solid waste management strategy.
 - The provincial Solid Waste Management Strategy was released on January 23, 2020. The strategy provides direction for the province to achieve practical and sustainable solid waste management goals over the next 20 years.
- Implement a new fee structure for the Multi-Material Recycling Program (MMRP).
 - Audits and cost studies to develop a new payment model were conducted throughout 2019-20. Resulting recommendations for a new payment model are currently being reviewed by the MMRP advisory committee.
- Develop and implement a household hazardous waste program.
 - The *Household Hazardous Waste Products and Stewardship Regulations* were approved in June 2019. First sellers were required to submit their product stewardship program for approval by December 2019. The implementation of plans is ongoing.

Strategy

Identify, prevent and mitigate risks to human health and safety

Key Actions

- Transition wildfire management responsibilities to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, after the 2019 wildfire season.
 - Responsibilities for wildfire management were transitioned to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency in November 2019.
- Build community resilience to wildfires by undertaking mitigation projects for at-risk communities.
 - Management of the project to deliver 141 mitigation projects to 85 northern communities over the next nine years has been transferred to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency.
- Work with the ministries of Agriculture and Health to identify and respond to risks to human

health as a result of diseases from insects and wildlife.

- The ministries of Environment and Agriculture are developing a chronic wasting disease (CWD) strategy to help limit disease transmission and reduce the risk of CWD spreading to new species and locations. In 2019-20, the heads of 3,300 potentially impacted animals were tested as part of a voluntary and targeted CWD surveillance program.
- Ensure contaminated sites are safely managed and remediated.
 - The ministry manages and maintains a contaminated sites inventory based on the National Classification System for Contaminated Sites (NCSCS) score. There are currently six class 1 (high priority) sites, although no new class 1 sites have been added to the inventory since 2018-19.

Strategy

Co-ordinate the development and implementation of provincial policy to enhance the resilience of Saskatchewan to the cumulative effects of climate change

Key Actions

- Continue to co-ordinate the government-wide implementation of *Prairie Resilience: A Made-in-Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy*.
 - The ministry continues to work with its Government of Saskatchewan partners to make progress on the goals identified in *Prairie Resilience*. The ministry leads the work on 14 commitments in the strategy, and chairs several cross-government working groups.
- Analyze and report results stemming from implementation of the *Saskatchewan Climate Resilience Measurement Framework*.
 - The second *Climate Resilience Report* was released June 19, 2020, after the 2019-20 reporting period, providing an update from the first *Climate Resilience Report* released in April 2019. Annual reporting helps identify areas that may require policy and program adjustments.
- Design well-informed policies and programs that better prepare the province for climate change.
 - Throughout 2019-20, the ministry engaged in a number of activities to better prepare the province for climate change. These included:
 - Implementing and delivering provincial output-based performance standards;
 - Evaluating existing programs for continuous improvement;
 - Providing climate change analysis and expertise across government to support programs that contribute to climate resilience; and
 - Administering the rebates portion of the provincial Net Metering Program.
- Develop compliance mechanisms to administer the output-based performance standards.
 - The ministry is developing the Saskatchewan Technology Fund, a provincial performance credit framework and offset credit framework, to help administer compliance under the output-based performance standards. The ministry engaged with stakeholders in 2019-20 for feedback on the design of compliance mechanisms, and developed options for the Saskatchewan Technology Fund. Additional engagement on the offset credit framework is anticipated.

Performance Measure Results

Number of communities participating in the Multi-Material Recycling Program

There are 501 municipalities, regional waste authorities and First Nations communities currently participating in the Multi-Material Recycling Program.

Number of community wildfire mitigation projects initiated

To be measured by the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency.

Percentage of legacy contaminated sites reviewed and rated using the National Classification System for Contaminated Sites

As of March 31, 2020, 8,818 historic sites have been reviewed and evaluated using the National Classification System for Contaminated Sites, which is 100 per cent completion.

25 indicators in the *Saskatchewan Climate Resilience Measurement Framework*, to measure progress in the face of changing global climate

The ministry assembles data from across the provincial government to report on 25 measures. The *2019 Climate Resilience Report* presents 15 measures that are classified as good and are demonstrating anticipated trends. Seven measures in the report are classified as fair, providing opportunities to reinforce the province's resilience to climate change.

Government Goals

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and opportunities for
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Ministry Goal

Productive, resilient and biologically diverse landscapes

Strategy

Conduct and use cumulative effects analysis to inform decision-making

Key Actions

- Develop and implement an invasive species and insect and disease management framework.
 - A draft invasive species, insect and disease management framework has been developed and is being reviewed by the ministry. The provincial Aquatic Invasive Species Strategy, one of the strategies included within this framework, was released in February 2020. This strategy is designed to help the province prevent, address and manage threats from aquatic invasive species.
- Begin work on a habitat management plan to guide habitat conservation while supporting responsible development.
 - Progress was made in 2019-20 to identify priority habitats using biodiversity modelling, establish habitat objectives, and develop mitigation principles to manage development impacts. A habitat advisory committee was established to advise on matters relating to the strategic use and conservation of the province's habitat.
- Implement recommendations from the land use planning review.
 - Land use plan summary reports were completed and shared with the public advisory committee in September 2019. The ministry continues to advance cumulative effects analysis to replace the land use planning process, which will strengthen the province's approach to land and resource management.

Strategy

Work with our partners to develop and implement programs and policies to protect the province's biodiversity


Key Actions

- Ensure natural and commercially forested lands are managed in a manner that enhances the removal and storage of carbon from the atmosphere while allowing for sustainable harvesting, respecting normal forest cycles and fire preparedness.
 - The ministry approved two 20-year Forest Management Plans in 2019-20 (Mistik and Northwest). These plans help manage the provincial forest, while maximizing a sustainable harvest and addressing climate change challenges.
- Develop and implement landscape-based plans for maintaining and recovering species at risk.
 - The ministry worked with the Ministry of Agriculture to manage critical habitat in the South of Divide on Crown land. The SK2 Central Range Plan for Caribou recovery was approved, and the SK2 West Range Plan is currently under review.

Performance Measure Results

Road/trail kilometres approved with reforestation requirements.

As a condition of their operating plans, forest licensees are required to reclaim forestry road access associated with forest harvest activities by returning road surfaces to their original or near-original state. The kilometres of forestry road access (class 1, 2 and 3 roads) constructed and reclaimed annually is used as base information for future road construction and reclamation activity reporting.

Forest resource roads constructed or reclaimed up to March 31, 2017, in the commercial forest		
	Road Class	Length (km)
	Class 1: forest resource road	872
	Class 2: improved bush road	3,496
	Class 3 bush road	23,890

Note: the most current data available for this measure is as of March 31, 2017

Government Goals

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Ministry Goal

Knowledgeable, compliant and engaged regulated communities

Strategy

Collaboratively design and implement regulatory tools and processes to enhance environmental outcomes

Key Actions

- Implement new Environmental Code chapters.
 - Two new Code chapters were developed (Forest Inventory and Wildland Urban Interface) and one chapter was amended (Hydrostatic Testing). The Forest Inventory Chapter and Hydrostatic Testing Chapter amendments are anticipated to be implemented in 2020. The Wildland Urban Interface Chapter is on hold with the move of the wildfire program to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency. A new *Fisheries Act* was introduced to enable the development of code chapters related to fishery habitat and resources. The new Act will come into force in 2020-21.
- Review and co-ordinate environmental assessment requirements with the federal environmental assessment framework to ensure Saskatchewan's interests are considered.
 - The ministry reviewed and provided advice on documents and publications released by the federal government throughout 2019-20. The ministry prepared an analysis of Canada's proposed projects list, and remains engaged in discussions with the federal government to identify areas of potential cooperation and coordination across provincial environmental assessment and federal impact assessment processes.
- Implement and co-ordinate a regulatory framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
 - The ministry expanded coverage for participants in the output-based performance standards. A new standard for the aggregation of upstream oil and gas facilities was developed and came into effect on September 1, 2019. The ministry continues to review the regulations, while developing a compliance plan to ensure regulatory requirements are being met.
- Refresh the ministry compliance framework.
 - The ministry continues to review compliance activities across branches to ensure a consistent approach to compliance throughout the ministry.

Performance Measure Results

Number of new or revised results-based regulations, code chapters, standards and policies.

Work progressed on three new Code chapters (Forest Inventory, Wildland Urban Interface and Hydrostatic Testing).

Changes in intensity in provincial greenhouse gas emissions.

From 2007 to 2018, greenhouse gas emissions intensity in Saskatchewan dropped by 11 per cent. More information can be found in the 2020 Climate Resilience Report available at saskatchewan.ca/climate-change.

Government Goals

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Ministry Goal

A high-performing organization committed to excellence

Strategy

Proactively build strong, collaborative relationships with First Nations and Métis communities and organizations

Key Actions

- Customize an Indigenous engagement framework.
 - The ministry has developed an Indigenous Engagement workshop for internal staff.
- Ensure relevant ongoing learning for staff.
 - The ministry created several opportunities for building awareness and encouraging dialogue through presentations and discussions with Indigenous leaders and elders, communications from the Deputy Minister to staff, and support for all staff to attend in-person Aboriginal Awareness sessions.

Strategy

Increase client satisfaction through improved service

Key Actions

- Develop and use strategic, collaborative and co-ordinated approaches to better ensure success for external ministry engagement initiatives.
 - The ministry engaged with the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous nations (FSIN) Lands and Resources Commission and First Nations Outfitting Association on an engagement process to address commercial outfitting on First Nation lands. As this work progressed, the focus evolved to include collaboratively developing a set of shared wildlife management values.
- Enhance government and public use of geomatics data for decisions related to land use.
 - The ministry works collaboratively with the Provincial Office of Geomatics Co-ordination and government-wide working groups to advance priority projects and initiatives through the enterprise Geographic Information System (eGIS) platform. The December 2019 release of GeoHub, a self-service initiative for published spatial data, has allowed the ministry to develop a page on this site, and increase its public datasets from one to 22 as of March 31, 2020.
- Examine opportunities to improve online business services.
 - Work continues on implementation of the enterprise Crown Land Management System (eCLMS) for the ministries of Environment, Agriculture and Parks, Culture and Sport. eCLMS is an accessible government service for Crown land information and decision-making, with a public-facing portal for clients to submit data, obtain approvals and pay invoices.
 - Launch of the internal business application across the three ministries is expected in April 2020.
- Publish the *State of the Environment 2019: A Focus on Forests* online.
 - The *State of the Environment 2019: A Focus on Forests* was released in April 2019. This

was the second comprehensive assessment of Saskatchewan's provincial forests. The report assesses 24 diverse indicators of forest health, captured under four broad headings: productivity and resilience; economic and social benefits; conserving biological diversity; and sustainable forest management.

- For the first time, the indicators were presented in an online format on saskatchewan.ca, which allows for greater public transparency and ongoing updates to the information.

Strategy

Foster a positive culture that reflects the Saskatchewan Public Service core values

Key Actions

- Ensure internal committees have work plans that champion accountability, innovation and safety.
 - The ministry has four internal committees – Innovation and Culture; Planning and Accountability; Workplace Health and Safety; and Union Management – which developed and executed work plans that champion accountability, innovation and safety throughout the ministry.
- Maintain corporate knowledge and address changing workforce needs through professional development, mentoring, succession planning and hiring practices.
 - The ministry launched an internal communications strategy in October 2019 for all staff and managers. The ministry has also developed a number of toolkits to support staff learning and development. Maintaining corporate knowledge has been supported through specific recruitments for identified positions, lateral movement and term opportunities to cross-train staff.
- Identify and implement actions to promote the objectives of a Mission Zero workplace.
 - The ministry transitioned its safety program to a strategic health and safety management system that prioritizes strategic results. The safety program prioritizes incident investigations by focusing on cause analyses and endorsing sustainable corrective actions.
- Maintain mental health and well-being plans that address the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) response.
 - The ministry adopted the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace through its transition to a strategic health and safety management system. The ministry participated in the 2019 University of Regina Safety Climate Survey and participated on the Corporate Healthy Workplaces Steering Committee. Training was also offered to staff on a number of topics, including: Workload Management and Balance; Psychological Support and Psychological Protection; and Clear Leadership and Expectations.

Performance Measure Results

Number of publicly accessible online map services published by Environment.

There are currently 109 public map services published by the ministry. These map services are used in various combinations to create interactive web maps such as Sask Interactive, HABISask and Bathymetry.

Number of publicly downloadable spatial datasets published by Environment.

There are currently 22 publicly downloadable spatial datasets published by the ministry.

Financial Summary

The ministry's approved appropriation for 2019-20 was \$350.5 million, which includes supplementary estimates of \$174.5 million. On November 10, 2019, the ministry's wildfire management program transferred to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA). \$170 million in supplementary estimates was required for a non-cash accounting adjustment to transfer the book value of wildfire management assets to the SPSA and \$4.5 million for higher-than-budgeted rebates for the Net Metering Program. Total 2019-20 expenditures were \$339.1 million, a variance of \$11.3 from the ministry's approved estimate. The under-expenditure was primarily due to capital grants less than anticipated, project delays and vacancy savings.

The ministry's budgeted revenue was \$83.6 million for 2019-20. Actual revenue recorded by the ministry in 2019-20 was \$80.1 million. The variance of \$3.5 was primarily due to federal agreement revenue transferring to the SPSA.

The Ministry of Environment is responsible for the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund and the Impacted Sites Fund. Explanations and financial statements for these funds are found on pages 16 and 17, respectively.

In 2019-20, the ministry's full-time equivalent (FTE) utilization was 771.6, which is a decrease of 82.4 FTEs from 2018-19 due primarily to the transfer of wildfire management to the SPSA.

Additional financial information can be found in the Government of Saskatchewan Public Accounts located at <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/categories/893>

Allocation of the ministry's actual and budgeted expenditures by subvote and subprogram

	2018-19 actual expenditures	2019-20 original estimates	2019-20 revised estimates	2019-20 actual expenditures	2019-20 variance
Subvote					
Central Management and Services (EN01)					
Minister's Salary	52	50	50	54	4
Executive Management	1,775	1,980	1,980	1,933	-47
Central Services	10,274	10,318	10,318	10,913	595
Accommodation Services	4,980	5,889	5,889	5,824	-65
Subvote Total	17,081	18,237	18,237	18,724	487 ¹
Climate Change and Adaptation (EN06)					
Climate Change	1,610	4,066	8,566	9,053	487
Cumulative Impacts and Science	1,162	1,247	1,247	1,205	-42
Subvote Total	2,772	5,313	9,813	10,258	445 ²
Fish, Wildlife and Lands (EN07)					
Fish, Wildlife and Lands Program	8,826	9,380	9,380	9,514	134

Fish and Wildlife Development Fund	4,971	4,953	4,953	4,932	-21
Subvote Total	13,797	14,333	14,333	14,446	113 ³
Compliance and Field Services (EN08)	20,528	19,823	19,823	19,938	115 ⁴
Environmental Protection (EN11)					
Environmental Protection Program	5,367	5,514	5,514	5,372	-142
Environmental Assessment and Stewardship	4,570	1,496	1,496	1,378	-118
Beverage Container Collection and Recycling System	24,766	27,013	27,013	27,013	0
Remediation of Contaminated Sites	36	-	-	328	328
Business Support Services	4,732	4,576	4,576	3,817	-759
Subvote Total	39,471	38,599	38,599	37,908	-691 ⁵
Forest Service (EN09)					
Forest Programs	6,075	6,823	6,823	5,530	-1293
Insect and Disease Control	1,713	1,246	1,246	1,238	-8
Subvote Total	7,788	8,069	8,069	6,768	-1,301 ⁶
Wildfire Management (EN10)					
Forest Fire Operations	67,736	53,671	223,671	212,713	-10,958
Recoverable Fire Suppression Operations	4,946	1,700	1,700	3,051	1,351
Forest Fire Capital Projects	7,414	16,153	16,153	15,264	-889
Remediation of Contaminated Sites	-	100	100	39	-61
Subvote Total	80,096	71,624	241,624	231,067	-10,557 ⁷
Total Appropriation	181,533	175,998	350,498	339,109	-11,389
Capital Assets Acquisitions	-9,656	-17,333	-17,333	-14,393	2,940
Capital Assets Amortization	11,260	12,212	12,212	5,472	-6,740
Non-spending Control Items	1,277	-100	-100	-5,069	-4,969
Total Expense	184,414	170,777	345,277	325,119	-20,158

Explanation of major variances:

1. Pressures associated with IT hardware and software expenses
2. Net metering rebates higher than anticipated
3. Project expenses offset by new federal funding
4. Salary pressure
5. Project delays
6. Vacancy savings
7. Capital grants less than anticipated

Third Party Funding

In 2019-20, the ministry provided \$215.4 million in funding to third parties.

Revenues

Most of the revenue collected by the Ministry of Environment relates to environmental handling charges, hunting and angling licence fees, forestry fees and dues, and receipts from other governments. These revenues are collected on behalf of the government and all revenue collected is deposited into the General Revenue Fund.

The ministry's budgeted revenue for 2019-20 was \$83.6 million; actual revenue recorded was \$80.1 million. This \$3.5 million variance was primarily due to federal agreement revenue transferring to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency.

Description of revenue	2019-20	2019-20	Variance
	Budget	Actual	
	(\$000s)	(\$000s)	(\$000s)
Own-source revenue			
Investment income	65	-773	-838 ¹
Other fees and charges	62,925	63,330	405 ²
Miscellaneous	12,317	13,071	754 ³
Transfers from the federal government	8,277	4,466	-3,811 ⁴
Total revenue items	83,584	80,094	-3,490

Explanation of variances:

1. Reversal of prior period interest
2. Increased Environmental Handling Charges offset by a decrease in forestry dues
3. Increased wildfire cost recovery for exports of aircraft, personnel and equipment offset by a decrease in bottle deposit revenue collected
4. Decrease due to revenue transferred to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

Other

Fish and Wildlife Development Fund

The Fish and Wildlife Development Fund (FWDF) is a special purpose fund established under *The Natural Resources Act*. The ministry uses the fund to support habitat protection and fish and wildlife management throughout the province. Revenues are transferred to the FWDF based on an amount equivalent to 30 per cent of habitat licence certificates and hunting, angling and trapping licence fees collected by the province, less \$180,000 which is allocated for other grants. The FWDF also receives seven per cent of Crown land sales. Expenditures relate to habitat protection through the purchase, management and enhancement of habitat.

The following table provides a summary of the budgeted and unaudited results of the FWDF for 2019-20.

Audited financial statements will be available at www.saskatchewan.ca under the Ministry of Finance public accounts section.

(Based on unaudited figures)	2019-20 budget	2019-20 actual	Variance	
	(\$000s)	(\$000s)	(\$000s)	
Revenue	5,556	5,828	272	¹
Expenses:				
Fish enhancement projects	2,080	1,994	-86	²
Wildlife habitat projects	2,625	2,381	-244	³
Grants in lieu of taxes	365	372	7	⁴
Total expenses	5,070	4,747	-323	
Excess of revenue over expenses	486	1,081	595	

Explanation of variances:

1. Increase in federal grant revenue and private donations
2. Decrease in expenses for Fish Enhancement agreement
3. Fewer land inspections and lower wildlife survey costs
4. Grants in lieu of taxes were higher than anticipated

Impacted Sites Fund

The Impacted Sites Fund was established on April 2, 2015 by the *Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010*. The fund receives all revenue from fines and administrative penalties imposed in accordance with the Act. Other revenues may include interest, gifts, donations, grants or moneys appropriated by the legislature. The Act permits expenditures from the fund to reclaim, restore and remedy orphaned environmentally impacted sites and to pay the expenses of administering the fund.

The following table provides a summary of the budgeted and unaudited results of the fund for 2019-20.

Audited financial statements will be available at www.saskatchewan.ca under the Ministry of Finance public accounts section.

(Based on unaudited figures)	2019-2020 budget (\$000s)	2019-2020 actual (\$000s)	Variance (\$000s)
Revenue	66	839	773 ¹
Expenses:			
Contracts	-	-	-
Grants	-	-	-
Total expenses	-	-	-
Excess of revenue over expenses	66	839	773

Explanation of variances:

1. In 2019-20, there was a large fine related to an oil spill from a prior year

For More Information

The Ministry of Environment welcomes your comments and questions.

centre.inquiry@gov.sk.ca

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This annual report is also available electronically at saskatchewan.ca/environment.