

November 2016



EAGLE CREEK  
WATERSHED GROUP

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**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**Information Session:**

**Details about grant money and more!**

**Nov 30th- Luseland @Legion Hall**

**Dec 1st- Perdue @Perdue Hall 1-4pm**

**No cost or pre-registration**

## EAGLE CREEK WATERSHED NEWS

***When is the last time you checked your water?***

**Step 1: Go to your nearest public health**

Hospitals can give you containers to put your water sample in. You simply choose your test, return your sample and they will send it to the lab for you. The lab will then bill you.

**Step 2: So many choices!**

I recommend the Regular and Nitrate Panel (\$26.25)\* and at least once in the lifespan of your well it would be good to do a General Chemical/Water Quality (\$94.50)\* and a Health and Toxicity (\$84.00)\* test. These let you know things like the alkalinity and hardness of your water as well as the levels of things such as iron, lead and arsenic

**Step 3: Get your results**

The lab will tell you if there are any problems with your water and give you more information. On our website we have a link where you can input your results and learn more about them!

**Step 4: Send them to us!**

Good or bad, it is useful for us to get an idea of water quality issues in our watershed.

Urban municipalities take great care to ensure water quality is held to high standards and test frequently and regularly. The information regarding quality of municipal water is readily available for the public. Many rural residents, on the other hand, rely on well water to supply their household and their livestock. Despite the importance of the water quality for both human and animal health, it seems many haven't conducted a water test recently. Many factors can change over the years; quality, possible contamination, deterioration of the well and so on. When it comes to livestock, water is important in ensuring productivity in areas such as weight gain, milk production and fertility. There are certain tests you can do for livestock specifically. Visit our website for more information. By looking at different results throughout the watershed we can get an idea of what trends there may be and what issues need to be addressed. We can also provide assistance in interpreting your results.



## **Eagle Creek Board of Directors**

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### **Introducing....**

My name is Kandra Forbes and I was hired by the Eagle Creek Watershed Group in July through the Green Internship program. I have been working on projects such as Invasive Weed and Water Quality Awareness. I am from Moose Jaw and recently graduated from the University of Regina with a Bachelor in Environmental Studies and Geography.



I have been working with weed inspectors in the watershed to help identify what their problem weeds are and helping them map the spots they spray. I am also working with weed inspectors and producers to help identify new weeds that they may not be familiar with.

#### **What is that weed?**

Every land owner has experienced that moment when a new weed pops up in the field or yard. What is it? Is it a problem?

You have two options:

1. If you are smart phone savvy you can send us a picture.

Tip: If you do this, pull the weed and put it on the hood of the truck. Taking a picture of it in the ground or out in the field can make it hard to distinguish.

2. Use one of our top four resources (links available on our website under Links and 2016-2107 Invasive Weed Awareness)

#### **Current Weed of Concern:**

**Leafy Spurge:** This is an incoming problem in our watershed. There are areas in the southern part of the province where it is reducing carrying capacity for pastures. It reproduces readily by seeds with a high germination rate and that may remain viable in the soil for *at least* seven years. The seed capsules open explosively, dispersing seed *up to 5 m* from the parent plant, and may be carried further by water and wildlife. Leafy Spurge also spreads from the root system, which is reported to reach *8 m into the ground and 5 m across*, and may have numerous buds.



### 3 Ways to Use Farm and Water Infrastructure Funding

#### 1. Well Decommissioning- 90% *COST COVERED (up to \$10,000)*

Why: Open, abandoned wells pose obvious threats to livestock, children, farm equipment, and serve as a pathway for contaminants to reach ground water.

How: Identify your well. Is it bored (large diameter) or drilled (small diameter)?

Drilled require a professional well driller to use specialized equipment to pump appropriate sealing material.

Bored wells may be decommissioned by a contractor or by the landowner.

Before starting your project contact us (306-831-6009) and we can help you with the application process as well as help locate information on your well.

#### 2. Improving Livestock Watering Systems (*50% up to a maximum rebate of \$60,000*)

Why: The most common approach is to restrict livestock access to creeks, rivers, dugouts, lakes and wetlands. This promotes sustainability by limiting contamination and encouraging vegetation growth (erosion reduction).

How: Identify what watering system best suits your needs. Some examples are:

- Wet wells and nose pumps as an alternative to direct watering.
- Developing a shallow or deep water pipeline to transport water to a more sustainable area or to an area with unreliable/no water.
- A new well or dugout with a sustainable livestock watering appliance.

#### 3. New Well (*50% up to a maximum rebate of \$60,000*)

Why: If you don't currently have a supply for your livestock or spraying there is funding for well exploration, well drilling and construction and in addition there is funding for screening and casing as well as pumps.

\*Issues with water quality are not valid enough reason to require drilling a new well\*

How: Make sure before you make any plans for new water infrastructure that you check that all projects must meet requirements for Saskatchewan Water Security Agency Groundwater and/or Surface Water Approvals.

If you have any questions, give us a call.

*You're at home here.*



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## It's Never Too Early To Plan

It's never too early to begin thinking about seeding next year's forage stand. Successful perennial forage establishment starts with good preparation plenty of time before seeding occurs. Taking time this fall and winter to plan your next forage stand will give you a leg up on successful establishment of your long term investment.

Site selection has likely already been mildly thought about if you are thinking about a forage stand in the near future, however there are many factors to consider that will influence your stand establishment. The crops grown previous to forage seeding will affect the weed species, weed density, herbicide residues, and fertility levels present. Consider which weeds were problematic this year and develop a weed management program that will allow for a weed free seedbed and establishment atmosphere. Take a good look at what herbicides were applied to the chosen site in the previous cropping years; some herbicides will leave residues that can persist for multiple years which will decrease germination and plant growth. Soils tests can be completed in the fall to determine fertility to save time in the spring. By completing soil sampling in the fall, any fertility issues can be identified with plenty of time to develop a fertilizer application plan or change management plans.

Species and seed selection can also take place once a site has been selected and the issues above have been considered. The intended use of the forage crop is an important question to address when choosing species, followed by the consideration of soil texture, soil pH, salinity, and moisture availability. Once species have been chosen, high quality seed can be found and the quality verified by viewing the seed analysis certificate. Spring seeding can then be planned even further by determining proper seeding rates, if any seed treatments are required, and which equipment will be used for seeding.

Do you have any saline or erodible soils in your annual crop fields that you are wondering how to improve? Your AEGP technicians can help you with the Protecting High Risk Erodible and Saline Soils BMP through the Farm Stewardship Program which allows producers to plant perennial forages to mitigate these soil issues. Speak to your AEGP technician this fall to plan for next year's projects to ensure you are prepared for the spring rush!

### The Environmental Farm Plan is now ONLINE!

Environmental Farm Plans (EFP) are assessments voluntarily prepared by producers to increase their environmental awareness in up to 25 different areas on their farm. Through the EFP process, farmers will highlight their farm's environmental strengths, identify areas of environmental concern, and set realistic action plans with time tables to improve environmental conditions.

To complete or update an EFP visit [efp.saskatchewan.ca](http://efp.saskatchewan.ca). This online, interactive, self-assessment tool will allow producers to work through their Environmental Farm Plans at their own pace to complete an individual action plan. For technical assistance or more information on the Environmental Farm Plan Program please contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377 or [aginfo@gov.sk.ca](mailto:aginfo@gov.sk.ca).

**Important Update - Producers with Environmental Farm Plans that are 10 years old are encouraged to update their plans but are still eligible for Farm Stewardship Program Funding. If you have an Environmental Farm Plan but would like help with your Farm Stewardship applications, please contact Glenn Barclay at 306-831-6009**

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