

Calling Lakes District Planning Commission Meeting
Fort Qu'Appelle, SK
Tuesday, July 11, 2017

This meeting was organized by the Calling Lakes District Planning Commissions.

The Calling Lakes Planning Commission is a regional planning group and includes members from towns and villages in the Fort Qu'Appelle area.

We heard a presentation by Kerry Holderness of the Quill Lakes Watershed Association #14. This watershed was formed about a year ago to brainstorm a solution to the flooding of the Quill Lakes.

The presentation was made up largely of the history of rainfall and flood peaks in the Quill Lake area. The presenter provided a description of the current situation, farm properties currently under water and the danger of the lakes spilling over their banks and travelling downstream to Last Mountain Lake, flooding additional farmland on the way.

The presentation included a plan to divert water from several creeks that naturally spill into the Quills, sending the water through Kutuwagan Creek and Saline Creek, downstream to Last Mountain Lake and through the Qu'Appelle chain. Although the presenter continually referred to this water as "fresh", the diverted water would contain Total Dissolved Solids, mainly saline. Their position was, because these creeks contained a high volume of water, the TDS and saline would be diluted and therefore not have a serious impact on water entering Last Mountain Lake. During the presentation, it was stressed several times that a plan must be put in place quickly to avoid further flooding.

Objections to the presentation were as follows:

- Not enough factual information was available in the presentation.
- An example used in the presentation was the success of the Devils Lake, (N.D.) diversion plan into the Red River in Manitoba. However, that example was disputed since the water diverted to Red River was actually highly polluted with TDS.
- A commission must be set up where experts can review options and come up with a solution beneficial to all.
- Governments must become more involved and provide substantial financial support and expertise, rather than rely on stakeholders to come up with a solution.
- The question was asked as to whether or not agricultural drainage is being terminated. The answer was "no". Although the presenter insisted that agricultural drainage had no effect on the lake levels, most in attendance did not agree.
- A quick solution is most often a wrong solution.
- It was recommended that a long term solution could be determined by setting up a commission that would be capable of providing much needed research and solutions.

Submitted by Sherry Lou Forsyth
Last Mountain Lake Stewardship Group