
[Update On Upper Qu'Appelle Water Supply Project \[1\]](#)

Since our stakeholder meetings in March, 2011, the South Central Enterprise Region (SCER) has initiated the studies that were talked about at the time by engaging consultants with the required expertise.

An environmental baseline study was completed by Golder Associates of Saskatoon on the corridor from Lake Diefenbaker to Buffalo Pound Lake. Golder investigated the presence of vegetation, wildlife, fisheries, and heritage resources. They encountered numerous species at risk and discovered numerous new heritage resource sites. The findings have been documented in their final report which was submitted to SCER in August. While they identified several potential concerns they indicated that with proper planning there is unlikely to be any environmental issues that would prevent project development. Due to some route adjustments at the pump station and balancing reservoir some additional work may be done in spring 2012.

Dr. Suren Kulshreshtha of the University of Saskatchewan's College of Agriculture and Bioresources has been conducting the water demand study to assist in projecting future water needs in the Qu'Appelle River Basin. During the course of his work he has been in touch with numerous government and non-government officials to obtain their input to his projections. He is also looking at the influence of climate change, water conservation and improved technology on future water use. Dr. Kulshreshtha's report to SCER has been submitted and is currently being reviewed by SCER and the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority (SWA). The report indicates the largest increases in water use are likely to be in the agricultural (irrigation) and industrial sectors of the economy.

As part of the SWA's contribution to the project they engaged Golder Associates to develop a computer model of the Qu'Appelle River system. The Authority is currently using the model to simulate operation of the river system during different types of years to predict the flows that will be required to meet the growing needs and to assess how delivery of the water through the system of lakes and the river would be accomplished.

Feasibility level design work is underway on the entire water supply project and is being conducted by AECOM Canada Limited and their sub-consultant Clifton Associates. They have completed their report for the Pump Station and it will be provided to SCER in January, 2012. Design of the spillway into Buffalo Pound Lake including investigation of the potential for a small hydroelectric station is currently underway and a draft design report on that component is anticipated to be received in late January. AECOM has finalized the proposed canal route, using the LiDAR survey, imagery and field investigations Clifton Associates has completed the field geotechnical investigation for the canal and the small balancing reservoir. The geotechnical information is important in assessing the ability of the canal and small reservoir to retain water without creating seepage issues. AECOM is currently preparing drawings for the canal which will show the route, hydraulic design elements, structures and other elements of the canal, such as the need for lining and armoring. It is expected that submission of the draft design report for the canal will be in May 2012 as there is much work yet to be completed on that component of the project.

As part of their work on the canal project, AECOM will also be putting together a comprehensive project report which will include all of the technical components of the project plus the results of the economic feasibility study.

In November, 2011, SCER staff met with the Qu'Appelle South Irrigation Project proponents to provide an update on the work underway and received assurance from the Ministry of Agriculture that there is at least 110,000 acres of potentially suitable irrigable lands in the vicinity of the canal. There may be substantially more irrigable acres in the general proximity of the canal. In December, 2011, SCER and AECOM combined to do a presentation about the water supply project at the Saskatchewan Irrigation Projects Association annual meeting in Moose Jaw.

In December, 2011, SCER invited proposals from several consulting firms to undertake a study of the economic feasibility and economic impacts of the project. Proposals will be received by January 31, 2012. This is considered a critical part of the work being undertaken as it will guide SCER in making recommendations for further studies and possible development of this project.

When the consultant's work is complete, SCER will be providing a final report and recommendations on the feasibility of this project to Enterprise Saskatchewan in September, 2012. Funding for these studies is being provided by Enterprise Saskatchewan under the Western Economic Partnership Agreement.

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