



## **Chair's Report**

### **2026 Annual General Meeting**

### **Waskesiu Community Council**

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## **I. Introduction & Overview**

Since the 2025 Annual General Meeting, the Waskesiu Community Council (“**Council**”) has been active on many fronts. A quick “snapshot” of just some of the issues we have dealt with during the last 12 months include the following:

- (1) obtaining a \$30,000 grant from Tourism Saskatchewan to help market Waskesiu to people living in southern Saskatchewan (south of Davidson) and in parts of Manitoba as they were planning their spring and summer vacations.
- (2) finalizing the new Cottage Development Guidelines for the Waskesiu townsite in conjunction with the Waskesiu Seasonal Residents Association and Parks Canada Agency (**PCA**).
- (3) actively participating in the development of “Phase 2” of the Aquatic Invasive Species (**AIS**) prevention plan for Prince Albert National Park.
- (4) providing financial support to the Waskesiu Foundation as part of its successful AIS Defence Fund initiative.
- (5) participating in discussions with PCA regarding the future of structural fire protection services in Waskesiu, including issues related to the near term (and longer term) future of the Waskesiu Volunteer Fire Department.
- (6) reviewing and recommending the 2026 water, sewer, and garbage fees to be charged to businesses and seasonal residents in Waskesiu.
- (7) working with PCA to ensure clear and consistent policies associated with tree removal in the Waskesiu townsite.
- (8) considering and discussing many other townsite issues including:
  - emergency preparedness (regarding the townsite)
  - drinking water quality and related reports
  - electrical upgrades for the Red Deer trailer park (and timing of the project)
  - improved waste management practices
  - the impact of Government of Canada funding cuts in the Waskesiu community.



## **II. 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Prince Albert National Park**

As reported last year at this time, the “*Waskesiu Community Action Plan*” includes planning by all of Waskesiu’s key stakeholders for the **100<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of the opening of Prince Albert National Park in 2028.

A meeting with representatives of key Waskesiu stakeholders was held on September 29, 2025, and another meeting (hosted by the Community Council) will be held this September. If you have any ideas about commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Waskesiu, please share them with Council (or your favourite community-based organization) at your earliest convenience. The clock is ticking!

## **III. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) – A Dangerous & Growing Threat**

AIS can include zebra mussels, quagga mussels, whirling disease, Eurasian water milfoil, some carp species, and other invasive species. Zebra and quagga mussels pose the most serious and imminent danger for the lakes in our Park because:

- They are prodigious filter feeders that strip nutrients from the water (leaving little or no food for native species).
- Their presence affects the entire food web, impacting plant and animal life in the region, and altering water chemistry and clarity.
- Infestations are irreversible.

Sadly, Zebra mussels were detected in Lake of the Prairies this spring - a shared lake straddling the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border. As a result, the Province of Saskatchewan activated its AIS response plan and issued containment orders for the Saskatchewan portion of the lake. Any watercraft or equipment used in that area must now be decontaminated before being used on another waterbody.

While Zebra mussels have not been detected in Prince Albert National Park waterbodies, this is the closest confirmed detection to us yet. Our common goal in this community must be to prevent the establishment of AIS in PANP.

If you love Waskesiu Lake, and the other lakes in Prince Albert National Park, please commit to being informed and part of the solution.



#### **IV. The Future of Structural Fire Protection in Waskesiu**

Another important topic relates to structural fire protection services for the Waskesiu townsite. We are in the early stages of our discussions, however what has become apparent is that meaningful changes will be needed in both the near and longer term. Potential solutions could involve the engagement of a third party provider or the creation of a Waskesiu-based entity (likely a non-profit corporation or a cooperative) to take on the task of operating our fire hall and providing structural fire protection services for the community of Waskesiu. Finding both a near and long term solution is critically important to everyone in our community – including all cabin and cottage leaseholders, the business community, and Parks Canada Agency.

#### **V. Funding Cuts Are Affecting PANP Services & Activities**

Over the last two fiscal years the Government of Canada has been requiring departments and agencies (including Parks Canada Agency) to find savings by cutting services, expenses, and/or staffing. Prince Albert National Park is not immune from the effects of those cost cutting measures. More information will be provided by PCA during the annual meeting.

One major concern is the decision by PCA to stop providing any financial support (starting in 2027) to the Waskesiu Lakeside Music Festival. That decision means a reduction in revenue exceeding 15% of the Lakeside Festival's total budget. It will take considerable effort on the part of our community to solve this funding gap, failing which the future of the Lakeside Festival may be in peril. If you believe that Parks Canada should reconsider its decision, please contact them and provide your thoughts. If you are willing to help keep the Lakeside Festival as an important part of summer in Waskesiu, please contact the Waskesiu Recreation Association (or make a donation online via the Waskesiu Foundation's website - [www.waskesiufoundation.ca](http://www.waskesiufoundation.ca)). Your help is greatly appreciated!

#### **VI. Some Good News Worth Celebrating**

On a happier note, let's take a moment to appreciate what we can accomplish by working together as a community.

Some great examples of success in this community include:



- The Recreation Area Renewal Project (Phase 3) was successfully completed this year, including new landscaping that helps to showcase the entire facility (especially the new recreation office building and our two new dedicated pickle ball courts). The Waskesiu recreation grounds were already very impressive – so the new landscaping is just “icing on the cake” for a wonderful community project completed by the Waskesiu Foundation and the Waskesiu Recreation Association successfully working together as partners.
- A sold-out “Bingo Bash” fundraising event hosted by the Waskesiu Foundation on July 11<sup>th</sup> at the Waskesiu Community Hall.
- The family-friendly, and free to attend, Waskesiu Lakeside Music Festival (“**Lakeside Festival**”) returns on August 28-30. Details are available at [lakesidefestival.ca](https://lakesidefestival.ca). The Lakeside Festival requires 1000s of volunteer hours to plan, fundraise for, and implement - and it has become the townsite’s biggest annual event. Please volunteer if you can - and please plan to attend with your family and friends. *(Remember, you can help support the Lakeside Festival by donating to the Waskesiu Foundation, buying festival branded merchandise, purchasing 50/50 tickets, and by attending the Original 16 beer gardens on Saturday).*

## **VII. Conclusion**

In conclusion, I want to sincerely thank my fellow Councillors for all their hard work during the past 12 months. They are an excellent team that care deeply about the future of Waskesiu.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Kerby, Chair  
Waskesiu Community Council  
July 29, 2026