**Decision Support Tool – Screening Criteria**

All criteria in Tables 1 and 2 of the Decision Support Tool are intended to help practitioners determine whether an area meets the Pan-Canadian standards and is therefore eligible to be reported as a Protected Area or an “Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure" (OECM) under the pan-Canadian standards. Criteria in Table 1 apply similarly to both Protected Areas and OECMs. Criteria in Table 2 help to both define and distinguish between Protected Areas and OECMs. All criteria in Table 2 must be met at the PA level for an area to be reported as protected, or at the OECM level or combination of OECM and PA levels for an area to be reported as an OECM. **This template is intended to be used in conjunction with the decision support tool and detailed interpretation guide.**

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| **BASIC INFORMATION** | |
| **Name of Site** | **Meewasin Valley Authority Fee Simple Ownership**  **1. Beaver Creek Conservation Area (BCCA) – north parcel**  **2. Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (SNG)** |
| **Designation** | N/A |
| **Province/Territory** | Saskatchewan |
| **Year of Establishment / Securement** | 1. 1979 2. 1993 |
| **Area (ha)** | 1. 52.6ha 2. 13.89 ha |
| **Management Authority** | Meewasin Valley Authority |
| **Explanation of Management Authority** *(optional)* | The Meewasin Valley Authority (Meewasin) is a non-profit organisation created in 1979 under the *Meewasin Valley Authority Act*, SS 1979, c M-11.1. The Meewasin board is appointed by the Government of Saskatchewan, the City of Saskatoon, and the University of Saskatchewan. It was created to manage the cultural and natural resources of the South Saskatchewan River Valley. Meewasin’s purpose, as described on their website, is “to ensure a healthy and vibrant river valley with a balance between human use and conservation, for the benefit of present and future generations.” To achieve this goal, Meewasin can acquire, hold, occupy, administer, and dispose of property as well as “co-ordinate or control the use, development, conservation, maintenance and improvement of public land in accordance with the development plan,” as per section 10 of the *Meewasin Valley Authority Act.* They may also create bylaws affecting the Meewasin Valley as specified in the terms of section 12. |
| **Governance Type *(CPCAD type*)** | Private |
| **Legal Basis / mechanism(s)** | Fee simple ownership by the Meewasin Valley Authority  *Meewasin Valley Authority Act (MVAA)*  MVA Bylaw 1 (Sites 1, 2, 4, 5), MVA Bylaw 2 (Site 1), and MVA Bylaw 4 (Site 1)  Other general guiding mechanisms:   * The Meewasin Valley Project 100 Year Conceptual Master Plan * The Strategic Plan (A World-Class Corridor, Naturally Beautiful, Uniquely Ours. A vision for the Meewasin Valley 2014-2024) * The Meewasin Northeast Swale Master Plan * Meewasin Valley-wide Resource Management Plan |
| **Explanation of legal basis / mechanism(s)** *(optional)* |  |
| **Summary of Essential / Relevant natural, social and cultural values** | Meewasin is the Cree word for beautiful. The Meewasin lands house over 200 plant species, and 100 fauna species including birds, amphibians, reptiles, and other animals. The lands are located in the Native grasslands ecosystem, one of the most at-risk ecosystems in the world. Both BCCA and SNG have public access.   1. Beaver Creek, which was established as a nature park in 1913, contains short grass prairie and remnant Sandhill prairie complexes that provide rare habitat for grassland birds, wildflowers and species at risk including the sand-dune reliant Smooth Goosefoot, and the ground nesting Common Nighthawk. The site contains four trails and an interpretive center. The site also has archaeological value. 2. Saskatoon Natural Grasslands - this native fescue grassland is a unique urban park which lies within a developing residential neighbourhood. 117 species have been observed here including more than 25 kinds of butterflies. |

| **TABLE 1: STANDARDS COMMON TO PROTECTED AREAS AND OECMS** | | | | |
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| **CRITERIA:** | **INTENDED EFFECT OF THE CRITERION** | **SCREENING CHOICE** | **EVIDENCE-BASED RATIONALE  Rationale/evaluation of how area meets or does not meet the intended effect of the criterion** | **MEETS INTENDED EFFECT?** |
| **GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE** | Demarcates the area to facilitate the in-situ conservation of biodiversity. | A. The geographical space has clearly defined and agreed-upon borders. | Boundaries for all sites are clearly demarcated on maps.  All sites are clearly marked in the Meewasin Trail Guide. BCCA has signage onsite. | Yes |
| **EFFECTIVE MEANS – 1** | Activities incompatible with the in-situ conservation of biodiversity do not occur and compatible activities are effectively managed. | A. The mechanism(s) provide(s) the ability to prevent incompatible activities and manage all other activities within the area, such that the in-situ conservation of biodiversity can be achieved. | **Fee Simple Ownership**  Meewasin owns and manages the sites.  Private landowners in Saskatchewan have the right to refuse entry to their land according to *The Trespass to Property Act.*  <https://www.canlii.org/en/sk/laws/stat/ss-2009-c-t-20.2/latest/ss-2009-c-t-20.2.html#document>  However, landowners may not deny “reasonable access” to mineral rights holders.  **Subsurface rights in Saskatchewan**  Saskatchewan is the sole mineral rights holder on both sites.  The province has demonstrated a commitment to conservation of these lands by creating the MVA and granting of subsurface development rights is unlikely.  Meewasin controls access and activities through bylaws that are specific to individual areas:   1. Bylaws 1 (The Public Parks Bylaw), 2 (The Use if Vehicles Bylaw), 4 (the Dog Bylaw) 2. Bylaw 1 (The Public Parks Bylaw)   Where…  The purpose of Bylaw 1 is: “To conserve and protect the flora, fauna and natural habitat of public parks for educational and recreational purposes.” It achieves this purpose by prohibiting activities that may harm wildlife and wildlife habitat where the bylaw applies. Section 10 restricts vehicle presence in the parks.  Bylaw 2: With the exception of certain authorized vehicles and snowmobiles, no person shall drive, operate, park, or move any motorized vehicle (including boats) within the area of application of this bylaw.  Bylaw 4: Dogs are not allowed at Beaver Creek. | Yes |
| **EFFECTIVE MEANS – 2** | A. The mechanism(s) compel(s) the authority(ies) to prohibit activities that are incompatible with the in-situ conservation of biodiversity. | Bylaw 1 obliges the landholder to restrict activities that do not conform to the conservation objectives of the MVAA.  Bylaw 1 applies to both sites and is sufficient to compel conservation on BCCA and SNG. | Yes |
| **LONG TERM** | The area is permanently protected or conserved and not easily reversed. | A. The mechanism(s) is/are intended to be in effect for the long term and not easily reversed. | **Fee Simple Ownership**  Meewasin ownership is intended to be a permanent conservation mechanism. Moreover, even if these sites were to be sold, Meewasin bylaws would continue to apply to them.  **Meewasin Bylaws**  Changing a bylaw would require the majority of the Meewasin board members to vote for the change. It is unlikely that all three parties would want to reduce the protections on the sites covered by the bylaws because they have all demonstrated a commitment to conservation through Meewasin documents including the Meewasin Valley Project 100 Year Conceptual Master Plan and the Meewasin Valley-wide Resource Management Plan (<https://meewasin.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/mva-strat-plan-web-53ab28ca3b4a3.pdf>.)  **The Meewasin Valley Project 100 Year Conceptual Master Plan**  This plan was published in 1979 and expresses an intent to manage all sites under Meewasin Valley authority for the long term. It specifically mentions Beaver Creek. SNG was not established at the time of its publication.  **Meewasin Valley-wide Resource Management Plan (RMP)**  The RMP was published in 2017 and presents conservation goals for the Meewasin Valley Conservation Zone and Meewasin managed properties that are to be accomplished by 2027. Once this progress is made the intention is to maintain conservation in the long term.  Both sites meet screening choice A | Yes |
| **TIMING** | Biodiversity is protected or conserved year-round. | A. The mechanism(s) is/are in effect year-round. | All mechanisms (fee simple ownership, the *MVAA*, bylaws, and management/planning documents) are in effect all year. | Yes |

| **TABLE 2: STANDARDS THAT FURTHER DEFINE AND DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PROTECTED AREAS AND OECMS** | | | | |
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| **CRITERIA:** | **INTENDED EFFECT OF THE CRITERION** | **SCREENING CHOICE** | **EVIDENCE-BASED RATIONALE:**  **Rationale/evaluation of how area meets or does not meet the intended effect of the criterion** | **OUTCOME** |
| **SCOPE OF OBJECTIVES** | Objectives have sufficient scope to result in the in-situ conservation of biodiversity. | A. The objectives are for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity as a whole, or for indigenous values accomplished through the in-situ conservation of biodiversity. | Meewasin’s overall objectives are guided by:  - Raymond Moriyama’s Meewasin Valley Project 100 Year Conceptual Master Plan. The Meewasin Valley plan will: a) increase education and research opportunities; b) advance cultural arts; c) conserve nature; d) improve recreational opportunities and e) further the rural-urban relationship.  - The 2014-2024 Strategic Plan provides key directions that include: making the Valley’s resources accessible to everyone, conserving natural and heritage resources, balancing recreation and development with conservation, developing activities adapted to demography and involving the public in decision making.  Both sites have different goals:   1. Beaver Creek Conservation Area was created to preserve a creek, the river valley, and prairie habitat. A resource management plan and master plan for the site is currently under development. 2. Saskatoon Natural Grasslands is a natural preserve used for hiking and wildlife viewing, and can be considered to be a natural urban park. SNG has a resource management plan, which is not publicly available. | Yes - PA |
| **PRIMACY OF OBJECTIVES** | Objectives are such that they result in the in-situ conservation of biodiversity. | A. Conservation objectives are stated as primary and overriding of other objectives. | Meewasin’s objective is to ensure a healthy and vibrant South Saskatchewan River Valley, with a balance between human use and conservation, for the benefit of present and future generations.  Uses for both sites are discussed below:   1. For Beaver Creek Conservation Area, conservation overrides the site’s other two objectives: education programming and public hiking. 2. In 1993, ownership of SNG was transferred to the Meewasin to “conserve the Natural Grasslands Area in a natural state and use the Natural Grasslands Area for the purposes of the general public.” | Yes - PA |
| **GOVERNING AUTHORITIES** | The in-situ conservation of biodiversity is not jeopardized by relevant governing authorities. | A. All relevant governing authorities acknowledge and abide by the conservation objectives of the area. | The Meewasin Valley Authority (site owner and manager) and the government of Saskatchewan (mineral rights holder) are governing authorities. The province of Saskatchewan has demonstrated a commitment to conservation. | Yes - PA |
| **BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION OUTCOMES** | Biodiversity is conserved in-situ. | A. The area is achieving the conservation objectives. | 1. Beaver Creek Conservation area provides high quality habitat for grassland birds, wildflowers and a home for numerous species at risk including the sand-dune reliant Smooth Goosefoot, and the ground nesting Common Nighthawk. Monitoring includes breeding bird surveys, wildlife camera monitoring and rare plant species surveys. 2. The 2005 educational guide to the Saskatoon Natural Grasslands refers to the rich and diverse native ecosystem of the grassland with dispersed patches of trees. Counts and surveys show up to 200 species of plants (though 18% of these are non-native) and a variety of native birds and animals. It also hosts more than 25 kinds of butterflies (Meewasin web site). Monitoring is driven by incidental observation and wildlife cameras. | Yes - PA |

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| **SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT** | |
| **OUTCOME / EVALUATION** | **Screening Outcome:** Protected Area (meets all criteria)  Is this an Interim Target 1 area: No  Is this a candidate Target 1 area: Yes  **Currently reported to CPCAD/CARTS?** No  **Total Area (ha) to be reported to CPCAD/CARTS:** 66.49ha (52.6ha+13.89ha) |
| Identify deficiencies that could be overcome in order to report as PA or OECM | *What, if any, actions could be undertaken to meet the Pan-Canadian criteria and standards for reporting?* |
| Lead evaluator / assessor | *Names and organizations of lead evaluator and contributors, date of contribution, relationship to site*  Elena Sanchez McAuley, ECCC-CWS-PAD; Edith Leclerc, ECCC-CWS-PAD; Katya Suvorov, ECCC-CWS-PAD |
| Communications / Engagement | *Names of governing authorities and others consulted, including names and positions of contact people and dates*  Mike Velonas, MVA; Renny Grilz, MVA; Courteney Davenport, Government of Saskatchewan; Giselle Hooey, MVA |
| Approvals | *Names of governing authorities (including landowners, right holders and the responsible jurisdiction) that have approved the content and results of this screening as being accurate and complete to the best of their knowledge and agree to reporting of data.*  Mike Velonas, MVA and Courteney Davenport, Government of Saskatchewan |