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Volume 13- Issue 1	Know Your Watershed	February 2019
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**Swift Current Creek Watershed Stewards
Annual Meeting
March 7, 2019
1:00 PM
LB Thomson Room
Swift Current Research and Development
Centre**

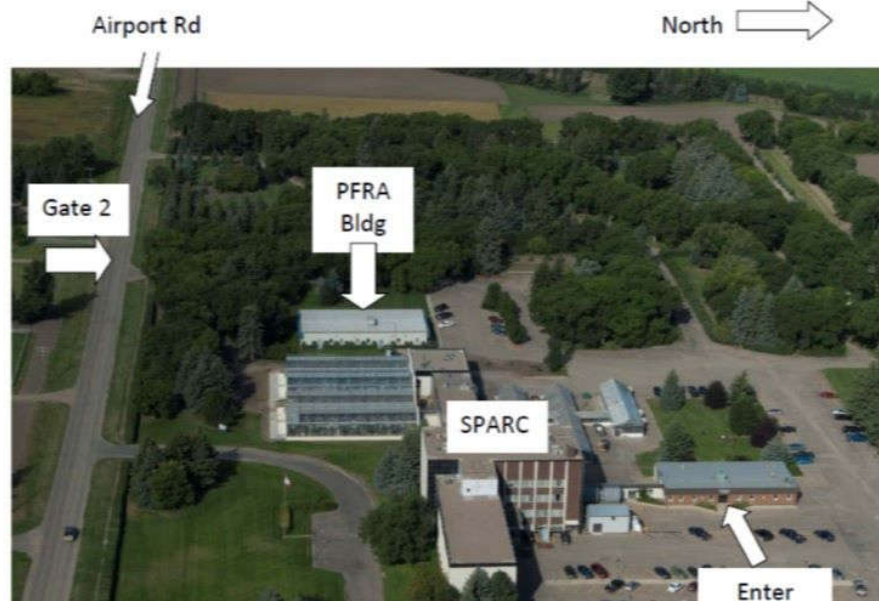
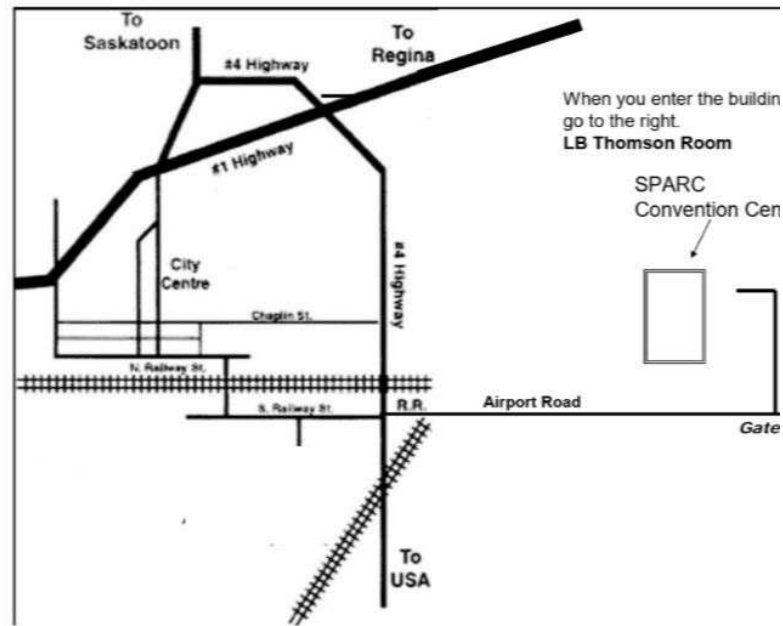
Topics to be discussed include :

- Final Observations from 2017 Swift Current Water Monitoring Project
- Results of 2018 Water Quality Monitoring Project
- Updates on SCCWS Projects and Programs
- Release of SCCWS Strategic Plan

All stakeholders in water quality and watershed health of the Swift Current Creek and Rush Lake Creek Basins are invited to attend

For For more information contact Kevin Steinley at 306-770-4607 or stewards@sccws.com or visit our web-site sccws.com

Map to LB Thomson Room Swift Current Research Station



Be careful when using ice melter products on your property

One of the findings of the 2017 Swift Current Creek Water Monitoring Project was increased levels of chloride in the water downstream of Swift Current compared to sites upstream of the city and chloride levels at these sites were higher in 2017 than what was observed in 2007. One possible explanation for these results was that run-

off from the city was contributing to the increased chloride levels. Research suggests that higher chloride levels can be one indicator of increased urbanization in a watershed. The City of Swift Current has seen a significant amount of roads, driveways and parking lots built since 2007 which increases the use of road salts and ice melter products which in turn contributes more chloride to run-off that enters the creek.

To combat ice on its streets the City of Swift Current uses a mixture of road salt and sand to reduce the amount of salt that may end up in the creek through the storm drain system. However many property owners are using commercial ice melter products to clear their sidewalks, driveways and entrances of ice and snow. While it is very important to keep sidewalks and other areas safe to walk on; there could be unintended consequences of overusing these products. Most commercial ice melters contain a large amount of different type of salts. All salts contain chloride which increases salinity, conductivity, Total Dissolved Solids and pH of water degrading its quality.

Property owners can reduce their use of ice melter by clearing snow from sidewalks and other areas before it gets compacted or melts and refreezes. Mixing the ice melter with sand or kitty litter will provide some traction on icy spots and reduce the amount of salt used lowering the chloride that ends up in creek. Make sure that the kitty litter and sand are swept up in the spring to limit sedimentation that may get washed into the creek in the storm drain.

Diligence to keep sidewalks, driveways, steps and entrances clear of snow is the best way to reduce the use of ice melter. However, it may not always be possible to keep these areas clean and the use of these products may become necessary. Some ice melter products when used properly will reduce damage to property and lower the amount of chloride and other contaminants from entering the creek. The best is to look for products that are labelled as Pet Friendly as they will not burn the pads of the pets paws and will not damage carpets or other flooring when tracked into a house. These products contain less sodium chloride or table salt so pets and wildlife are not tempted to lick or eat the salt that has been spread. These products have less chloride which make them less harmful to plants and reduces the amount of chloride in run-off into the creek. These products usually replace chloride compounds with sulfate compounds so care must still be taken when used and is recommended to be used in a mixture with sand or kitty litter.

There are also products that have larger, jagged crystals that act as traction aids and breakup ice rather than melt it. These products have less sodium chloride and other

chloride compounds than regular ice melter products reducing the amount of chloride that will eventually end up in the creek. Again please be respectful of pets, wildlife and how much product used when applying these products.

Some other considerations for the winter include putting your snow from sidewalks and driveways onto your yard and not on the street. Swift Current has a by-law against shovelling your snow onto the street as it makes the street rougher and more rutted than it normally is during the winter.

Winter brings many challenges to living in our watershed. When looking to make choices to help cope with winter remember to think about the consequences of your choices. Making the right choice will help to improve water quality and watershed health within the city and downstream ensuring a safe and sustainable supply of water for all users of the Swift Current Creek.

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