

Lasby, Mary

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Pat Albers - Northeast Swale and Small Swale Boundary Endorsement - CK 4205-40
Attachments: Letter to City Council, February 6, 2023.docx

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 4:55 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Communication - Pat Albers - Northeast Swale and Small Swale Boundary Endorsement - CK 4205-40

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Monday, February 6, 2023 - 16:54

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

Date: Monday, February 06, 2023

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name: Pat

Last Name: Albers

Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name: Al-burrs

Phone Number : [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED] Pobran Crescent

City: Saskatoon

Province: Saskatchewan

Postal Code: s7s [REDACTED]

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: 7.2.3

Comments:

Please find my letter attached.

Attachments:

- [Letter to City Council, February 6, 2023.docx](#) 15.62 KB

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No

Although I am a member of many local, provincial and national nature and environmental groups, I am writing today as an individual citizen of the Silverspring neighbourhood. Walking through the natural and semi-natural areas near my home is an important part of my life. The swales, the river, and the Saskatoon Natural Grasslands are the reasons I moved to this area 17 years ago. These natural spaces and their subtle beauty were the motivation behind my joining so many local environmental groups. The native landscape, and its flora and fauna, are a vital part of my spiritual, mental and physical well-being. I am writing you in one final attempt to ask you to preserve the Northeast and Small Swales by adopting the boundary recommendations put forth by the Swalewatchers.

I am writing this with great concern and some despair. More than 60 years ago, in 1960, acclaimed writer and Pulitzer Prize winner, Wallace Stegner, wrote his famous Wilderness letter on the vital importance of protecting wild places. His deep reverence for nature came from his boyhood spent in Saskatchewan and other then-wild places. Since his famous wilderness letter, many more nature enthusiasts have followed his lead in speaking up for nature, albeit with limited success. I am one of those people.

It has been 10+ years since the Swalewatchers and other environmentally minded groups began their efforts to protect the swales. Ten years since Swalewatchers began, and over 60 since Stegner's letter, and still no one seems to be listening. The province isn't listening. If it were, it wouldn't be pushing a highway through the swale. Nor is the City listening; if it were, they would endorse, as I strongly do, the Swale boundary recommendations put forth by the Swalewatchers. Their very sensible recommendations are generally being overlooked. Hence, my despair.

Not only does the City's option 2 totally ignore the Swalewatchers' recommendations, but it is as though they have plugged their ears and minds. Not even space for the lekking grounds? What is the point of having a provincial bird at all if we aren't protecting its breeding grounds? Perhaps we should change our provincial bird from the sharp-tailed grouse to the common grackle, the European starling or the common sparrow as they better represent the kind of invasive and evasive opportunism displayed by our elected officials.

Not only has the City developed a reputation for not seriously conserving the natural areas we do have, but this is another example of abuse piled on top of neglect. The underfunding of Meewasin is just one example of how our existing areas are not being properly managed or conserved. Invasive species have been allowed to take over once-pristine areas. And now, there is the final coup de grace: a slap in the face to all the environmental groups and citizens who have tirelessly supported the protection of the swales, the ecosystems they support, and the carbon capture they provide. As I already said, no one is listening. Wallace Stegner and W.O Mitchell must be turning in their graves.

In conclusion, please reconsider the boundaries put forth by the Swalewatchers and protect what is a quickly vanishing resource, that is, the once great plains of North America. We know

much about the grasslands' many practical uses, but we must also consider nature for her own sake.

What Stegner wrote so long ago is still relevant today: "Being an intangible and spiritual resource, it (wilderness) will seem mystical to the practical minded--but then anything that cannot be moved by a bulldozer is likely to seem mystical to them... That is the reason we need to put into effect, for its preservation, some other principle than the principles of exploitation or "usefulness" or even recreation. We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope".

With hope,

Patricia Albers

█ Pobran Crescent,

Saskatoon, SK S7S █