

SWA Report on Livestock Watering and Grazing on Turtle Lake Shore land

- At the April 29, 2006 TLWI Board meeting, Jeremy Brown, range agronomist for the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority was requested to investigate five locations around the shoreline of Turtle Lake where livestock has been seen. (see April 29, 2006 Board minutes for specific land descriptions)
- The following report was compiled in regards to that request for information regarding the potential impacts of livestock to Turtle Lake.
- Four of the five areas were assessed, one land owner did not co-operate
- Five areas were identified as having cattle along the lake at some time during the year. These areas represent approximately 15% of the total shoreline. The land managers of each area were contacted to collect information on management strategies and riparian area health.
- Management information collected included: number of cattle, season of use, presence of alternative water sources, and grazing management techniques.
- In each case, cattle are only present during the growing season. Season of use varied from 20 – 150 days. In each case grazing in the riparian areas is deferred to at least early summer to allow for vegetative growth.
- Two of the pastures had other water sources available to the cattle at all times. (E.g. dugouts) Currently none of the managers pump water into off-site troughs. This practice was recommended in three cases and is being considered by the managers.
- Managers tend to practice techniques to minimize the time that cattle spend in the riparian areas, such as rotational grazing and placement of attractants (salt blocks) away from the riparian area.
- Riparian health assessments were performed on four to the pastures. The average score was 75% in a range from 54% to 95%. This indicates that the riparian area is generally able to perform its expected functions, but may have some disturbance impacts. In these places, the main change was an alteration in vegetation.
- One pasture is on public land, where impacts from livestock and recreational use (ATV's) are cumulative.
- This information is provided for general discussion only with the co-operation of the land managers/owners.
- Available opportunities to further improve the management of these areas have been discussed with the land owners.
- In summary, cattle that have access to Turtle Lake are generally being managed in a responsible manner. The result of responsible grazing management will be healthy functioning riparian areas and a low risk of impact on the lake itself.