

# Saskatchewan Irrigation Projects Association Inc.



## A Review of SIPA's 2021 Activities

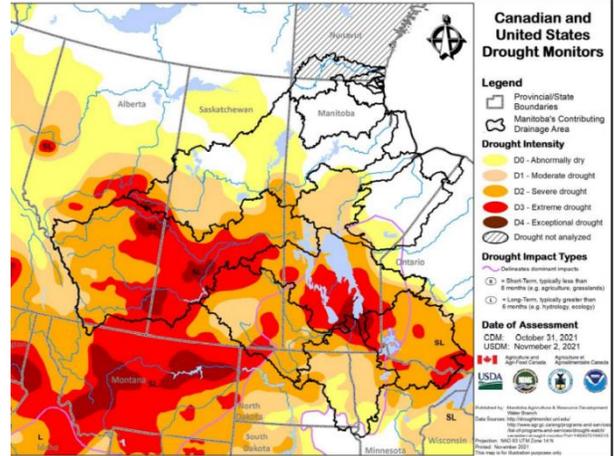
**SIPA was established in 1996 with four goals/objectives:**

- I. Promote the benefits of Irrigation
- II. Assist in the expansion of irrigable acres.
- III. Provide direct input to develop irrigation strategies in setting policies that impact Saskatchewan agriculture and economy
- IV. Advocate for irrigation concerns to governments

2021 has been a year of unprecedented drought conditions in Saskatchewan. In 10 - years we have gone from using Lake Diefenbaker as a reservoir to manage flooding to relying on water storage for a drought-stricken province. With the drought and programming available, we have seen new highs in the development of irrigated acres throughout the province.

SIPA continues to strive to carry out our mandate as directed by our membership over the last 26 years ago. We started the task of reviewing our mandate, goals and vision with a strategy of expanding our resources including defining the role of an Executive Director to be our voice for irrigation. We have completed step 1 of the task and will have an Executive Director on staff for 2022 with an office in Outlook.

SIPA also signed a 5-year agreement with Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Water Security Agency (WSA) to enable SIPA to expand our resources and engage with the stakeholders in irrigation expansion in Saskatchewan.



## 1.Promote the benefits of Irrigation

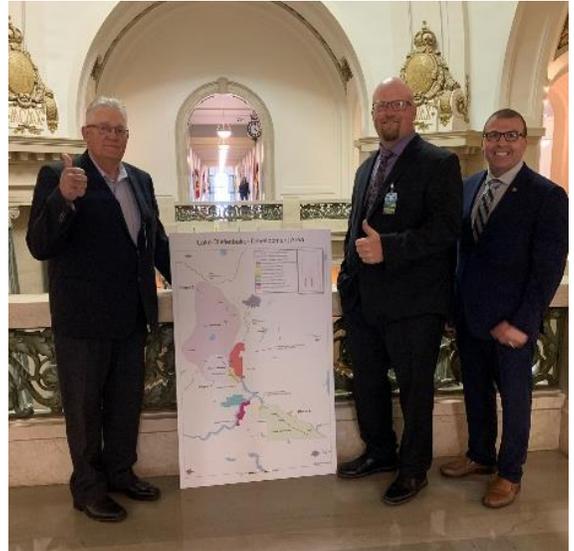


- Presentation to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.
- Numerous interviews with media and editorials on the benefits of irrigation expansion.
- Participated in the field day and display booth at Riverhurst bean festival in July.
- Updated materials on our website with the assistance of a summer student with funding assistance from the Canada Youth Program
- Participated in a webinar with Canadian Federation Independent Businesses and the Federal Minister of Economy regarding COVID Recovery and opportunities for infrastructure programs.
- Encouraged irrigators to drop straw to assist the cattle industry in this year of severe wide spread drought.



## 2. Assist in the expansion of irrigatable acres.

- Since the announcement in 2019 by the Hon. Greg Ottenbreit and Mr. Lyle Stewart with the commitment of \$4.0 B to fund the expansion of irrigation from Lake Diefenbaker, SIPA has continued to meet with the provincial TEAM members.
- SIPA participated in 2018 WD Water Summit, 2019 Water Workshop and SIPA continues to discuss irrigation expansion with Western Economic Diversification Canada, now Prairies Canada.
- SIPA participated with an information display at 3 Open Houses on the westside project.



- Continue to support the work of the boards of the Qu'Appelle and the Macrorie Irrigation Districts.
- We continue to respond and direct inquiries on irrigation development from residents of Saskatchewan and from out of country and out of province.

- We participated in the Water Council for Saskatchewan meetings hosted by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. University of Regina updated the council on their project working on water conflicts with the Canadian component focusing on the Qu'Appelle.
- Invited SaskEnergy to a meeting to review the steps for timely installation of natural gas.
- Successful in having funding available to all producers in Districts and private irrigators with the maximum per farming unit increased to \$500,000.



### III. Provide direct input to develop irrigation strategies in setting policies that impact Saskatchewan agriculture and economy

- We continue to emphasize that an irrigation strategy should be based on the 5 principles of:

1. Universal - all programs available equally to all irrigators and potential irrigators across the province
2. Long term
3. Sustained program funding
4. Co-operation amongst Government Ministries, Agencies and Crowns.
5. One stop for programs and new development



- Invited private and district members to Open Mic meetings with the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and President of the WSA, then followed up with members concerned. MoA committed to having semi-annual Open Mic meetings.
- SIPA strongly recommended that the Ministry treat all Districts equal in asset transfer.



- SIPA reviewed the CAP program requirements with MoA encouraging the Ministry make changes to regulations for the CAP program to allow for fair and equitable treatment for the expansion of all acres including districts.

- SIPA participated in the National Fresh Water Forum leading to meetings on the Canada Water Agency.

- SIPA participated in meetings and workshops with the federal government and Water Council for Saskatchewan on development of the Canada Water Agency. We were invited to present at federal and regional virtual meetings. SIPA with many others supported the City of Regina's proposal to locate the head office in Regina.

- Throughout the year we have had numerous formal and informal meetings with staff of MoA & WSA.
- We continue to support the collaborative research that is carried out by ICDC and CSIDC stressing the importance of research even under COVID 19 conditions.
- We appointed board members to ICDC and to the Executive Management Committee at CSIDC.
- SIPA met the terms of an agreement partnering with WSA in 4 pilot drainage projects incorporating irrigation.



## IV. Advocate for irrigation concerns to governments



- CSIDC's Executive Management Partners organized a workshop to review their mandate and how they can accommodate irrigation expansion in SK. Board members and irrigators were invited to participate in the review.
- SIPA had numerous discussions on the payment of PST by Irrigation Districts while private producers are exempt.
- Our board participated in meetings with the Assistant Deputy Minister of Western Economic Diversification and staff.
- We had numerous meetings with Water Security Agency and Ministry of Agriculture to discuss the irrigation expansion announcement and SIPA's expanding role that led to the signing of a 5- year agreement.
- Continued to meet with Ministerial staff on a plan of action developed in 2020 on the control of algae in irrigation canals with planned implemented prior to the 2021 season.
- Our board accepted an invitation to participate in a briefing on the provincial budget announced in March.



- Facilitated meetings with the province, municipal and irrigation district on the benefits of effluent irrigation as opposed to releases into a water body.
- Board members met with the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, SK Build and WSA to discuss funding of the irrigation expansion strategy.
- Received numerous calls from Provincial Ministers.
- We have continued to encourage the Ministry to streamline the application process for the development of new acres of irrigation.

## V. Other Activities

- Organized joint meetings with ICDC, MoA and WSA to continue discussing the pros and cons of forming 1 entity. Applied for funding to engage an independent contractor to investigate what an organization could look like after a merger.
- Discussion with APAS on the costs of Carbon Tax to irrigators and the possibility of an inclusion for an amendment for an exemption for grain drying and irrigation.
- Participated with AAFC in a Living Lab workshop and opportunities for Saskatchewan
- We continue to organize the annual irrigation conference with ICDC.
- We supported the work of the Lake Diefenbaker Task Force on mussels.
- SIPA representatives participated in watershed stewardship committees
- Because of COVID, in the last year the board only had 2 in-person board meetings but continued with monthly conference calls, virtual meetings and numerous committee meetings.

