

February 25, 2025

Chapter 26 Water Security Agency-Regulating Water Use 2023 Report-Volume 1 Provincial

Recommendation and Status at Time of Audit (Indicate whether new or outstanding)	Page	Current Status (implemented, partially implemented, not implemented)	Actions Taken to Implement Since PA Report	Planned Actions for Implementation	Timeline for Implementation
<p>3.1 We recommend the Water Security Agency update completion date targets for relevant key actions originally set in its 25 Year Saskatchewan Water Security Plan pertaining to regulating water use to ensure water sustainability.</p>	-	<p>Implemented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSA replaced its 25 Year Saskatchewan Water Security Plan with a four-year strategic plan in 2022. • WSA set out its key actions relating to regulating water use in its Strategic Plan for 2022–2026. WSA uses its four-year strategic plan, as well as its annual business plan to outline its key actions and completion date targets. • WSA’s Business Plan 2022–23 includes key actions like completion date targets. 	<p>Continue with four-year Strategic Plans and annual Business Plans, including completion targets and progress updates.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>3.2 We recommend the Water Security Agency develop written procedures for processing and approving applications for water use.</p>	233	<p>Partially implemented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSA has developed flowcharts for the process and continues to develop written procedures. • WSA has developed an overarching Sustainable Water Allocation Framework, including a Final draft of the Water Policy Current State to support the development of policies and 	<p>Written procedures will be used as developed and staff will be trained on the framework and policy, and processes and updates will be made as needed.</p>	<p>Temp Industrial Water Rights procedures implemented Feb 2024.</p> <p>Administrative Review of Surface Water and Groundwater Applications in draft, anticipated to be</p>

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			procedures, including approaches to water allocation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSA has developed a procedure for the issuance of Temporary Industrial Water Rights Licences. • WSA is working on draft written procedures for the administration and technical review of water use applications. 		complete Q1 2025-26. Technical Review of Surface Water and Groundwater Applications in draft, anticipated to be Q2 2025-26.

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3.3 We recommend the Water Security Agency clearly document its consideration of key components used to predict water availability of a proposed water source before related surface water-use licenses are approved	-	Implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSA clearly documented key components considered when predicting water availability of a proposed surface water source. • WSA created a response template for staff when creating water availability studies for surface water. This template includes the minimum content requirements needed as key components considered in the studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to document key components and judgments essential in assessing water availability of a proposed water source before approving the related surface water-use licence. 	Implemented
3.4 We recommend the Water Security Agency implement written procedures about estimating and recording licensed water use	235	Implemented	Written procedures for the collection, processing and estimation of water usage have been developed and updated to include how water estimations are undertaken.	Staff will follow the procedure guide and document when how estimations were made if not in accordance with the procedures.	Implemented
3.5 We recommended the Water Security Agency actively monitor whether water-use licensees comply with key water-use license conditions.	236	Partially implemented	The WSA has hired two term employees until March 31, 2026, to develop the Outcome- Based Compliance Framework.	The framework will be drafted to provide guidance on compliance planning for various WSA programs, including water allocations. The framework will include annual compliance planning that will include monitoring and verification programming to be delivered.	The Outcome-Based Compliance Framework is anticipated to be complete Mar 31, 2025. Outcome -based Compliance process anticipated to be

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				Priority of compliance efforts will be based on risk to desired outcomes. WSA will draft specific steps within a program guide to include verification and monitoring of key water-use license conditions.	implemented Q4 2025-26
3.6 We recommended the Water Security Agency develop written enforcement procedures for staff to follow when the Agency identifies licensed water users not complying with water-use licenses.	236	Partially implemented	The WSA has hired two term employees until March 31, 2026, to develop the Outcome- Based Compliance Framework.	WSA will draft specific steps within a program guide to include compliance action and enforcement escalation in the case that non-compliances are verified.	The Outcome-Based Compliance Framework is anticipated to be complete Mar 31, 2025. Outcome -based Compliance process anticipated to be implemented Q4 2025-26
3.7 We recommended the Water Security Agency periodically give senior management written reports on non-compliance with key water-use license conditions and related enforcement strategies and actions.	237	Partially implemented	The WSA has hired two term employees until March 31, 2026, to develop the Outcome- Based Compliance Framework.	The Outcome-Based Compliance Framework includes steps to review compliance trends and data to adjust compliance programing. When preparing the annual compliance plan, risks to desired outcomes will be evaluated. An annual report on compliance trends can be provided to Senior Management.	The Outcome-Based Compliance Framework is anticipated to be complete Mar 31, 2025. Outcome -based Compliance process anticipated to be implemented Q4 2025-26

Status Update Template

February 25, 2025

Chapter 24, Water Security Agency – Regulating Drainage, 2024 Report – Volume 1

Recommendation and Status at Time of Audit (Indicate whether new or outstanding)	Page	Current Status (implemented, partially implemented, not implemented)	Actions Taken to Implement Since PA Report	Planned Actions for Implementation	Timeline for Implementation
<p>Outstanding: We recommend that the Water Security Agency approve finalized policies related to its regulation of drainage of water on agricultural lands. (2018 Report – Volume 1, p. 186, Recommendation 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2019)</p> <p>Status – Implemented</p>	<p>239</p>	<p>Implemented</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Outstanding: We recommend that the Water Security Agency develop policies on water quality and wetland requirements to use when assessing risks of drainage works. (2018 Report – Volume 1, p. 190, Recommendation 4; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2019)</p> <p>Status – Partially implemented</p>	<p>239</p>	<p>Implemented</p>	<p>The Agricultural Water Stewardship Policy was implemented in January 2025.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>NA</p>

<p>Outstanding: We recommend that Water Security Agency staff consistently follow established processes to document risk assessments when reviewing applications for drainage works. (2018 Report – Volume 1, p. 192, Recommendation 6; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2019)</p> <p>Status – Partially implemented</p>	239	Implemented	The Agricultural Water Stewardship Policy was implemented in January 2025. It includes processes to document water quality risks and wetland retention requirements. Staff have been provided with training.	NA	NA
<p>Outstanding: We recommend that the Water Security Agency require documentation of all aspects of watershed risk before approving applications for drainage works. (2018 Report – Volume 1, p. 189, Recommendation 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2019)</p> <p>Status – Partially implemented</p>	240	Implemented	The Agricultural Water Stewardship Policy was implemented in January 2025. It considers the large-scale impact of proposed drainage projects.	NA	NA
<p>Outstanding: We recommend that the Water Security Agency publish expected timeframes to resolve requests for assistance on unapproved drainage works. (2018 Report – Volume 1, p. 191, Recommendation 5; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2019)</p> <p>Status – Implemented</p>	241	Implemented	NA	NA	NA

<p>Outstanding: We recommend that Water Security Agency staff follow established processes to escalate identified actions on unapproved drainage works within a reasonable timeframe. (2018 Report – Volume 1, p. 194, Recommendation 8; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2019)</p> <p>Status – Implemented</p>	241	Implemented	NA	NA	NA
<p>Outstanding: We recommend that the Water Security Agency develop a prioritization plan to identify and bring unapproved high-risk drainage works into compliance. (2018 Report – Volume 1, p. 195, Recommendation 9; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2019)</p> <p>Status – Partially implemented</p>	242	Partially Implemented	<p>A prioritization matrix has been developed to ensure resources are allocated to the highest risk projects.</p> <p>The project dashboard is now tracking file priority.</p> <p>A new audit procedure to spot non-compliance has been developed.</p> <p>An extension unit and strategy has been created to engage landowners in high-risk areas about drainage approvals and best practices.</p> <p>Funding has been allocated through the Agriculture Water Management Fund for complex issues, allocated using a risk scoring matrix.</p>	<p>Current initiatives focus on prioritization, education, and awareness.</p> <p>As capacity allows, WSA will develop work plans for proactive compliance.</p> <p>Advancing a pilot project in the Waldsea Dead Moose Houghton closed basin to address high-risk basins.</p>	<p>Ongoing – The Auditor expressed that to fully address their recommendation WSA should be actively monitoring agricultural land with tools such as drones and immediately bring works into compliance. Given the magnitude of drainage works across the province and WSA’s focus on staff safety, this approach will not be practical or appropriate in the near future. WSA will continue to take a risk-based approach.</p>

			<p>New partnerships with third-party professionals to increase capacity and advance compliance.</p> <p>Dedicated resources to address non-compliance in a high vulnerability region.</p>		
<p>Outstanding: We recommend that the Water Security Agency periodically report to senior management on actions taken to address non-compliance on unapproved drainage works. (2018 Report – Volume 1, p. 196, Recommendation 11; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2019)</p> <p>Status – Implemented</p>	243	Implemented	NA	NA	NA
<p>Outstanding: We recommend that the Water Security Agency report to the public on its regulation of drainage of water on agricultural lands. (2018 Report – Volume 1, p. 195, Recommendation 10; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2019)</p> <p>Status – Partially implemented</p>	243	Implemented	<p>WSA has released an Indicator Framework as part of the Agricultural Water Stewardship Policy. The Framework includes 10 indicators that will be publicly reported on – SK will be the first jurisdiction in Canada to do this. The baseline measures are being developed/collected through 2025, with the first public reporting of indicator outcomes to take place in 2026.</p>	NA	NA

