

December 2022

Developing Agricultural Water Management Policy



Agenda for the Day



Background

- Why we need an Agricultural Water Management Policy
- What will be included in the policy
- Engagement Process and Timelines

What We Heard from July 2022 Engagement

- Summary of feedback
- How WSA addressed the feedback
- Feedback on Policy Name

Networking

Group Discussions on Desired Policy Outcomes

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Why we need an Ag Water Management Policy

- This policy is needed to manage flooding, drought, water quality, wildlife habitat, and soil health.
- WSA has tools to help manage drainage impacts. However, these are not sufficient to address the impacts without some amount of wetland retention.
- This policy will protect ag producers from the federal government imposing regulations (e.g., federal environmental assessment), and further demonstrates sustainable agricultural practices in Saskatchewan.



What will be included in the Policy?

Desired policy outcomes



Mitigation approaches/tools

A wetland component (describes the amount of wetlands needed to manage for water quantity, water quality, and habitat)



Target for a final policy: fall 2023

The policy will apply to agricultural drainage in Saskatchewan.

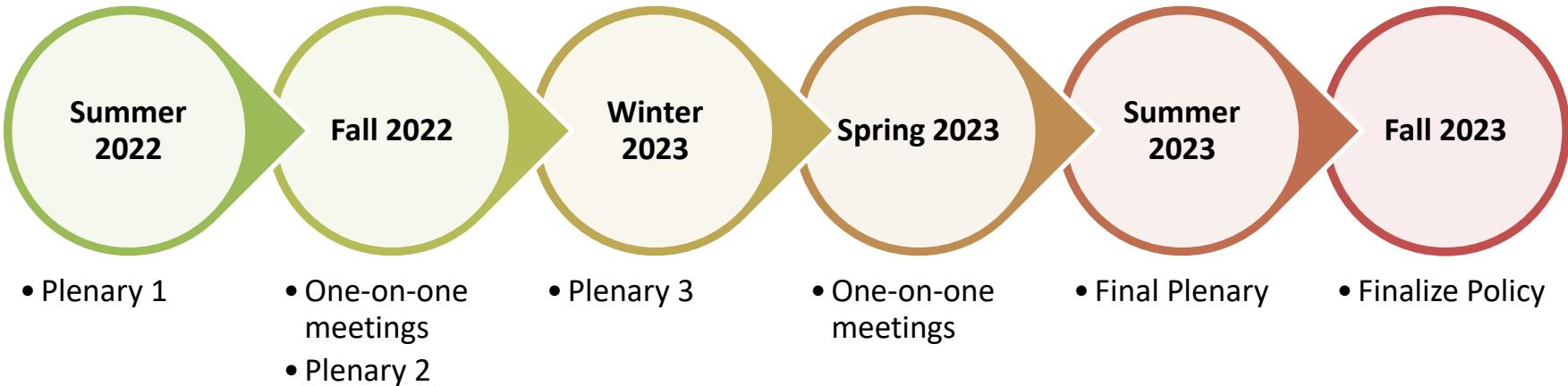
Which groups are being engaged?

Agriculture producer groups, municipalities, Indigenous communities, environmental groups, and research partners will inform the policy.



- 32** agricultural producer groups
- 8** environmental groups
- 5** research groups
- 4** municipal/community organizations
- 21** Indigenous communities/organizations

The engagement process



Jul 2022

Policy Framework
provides structure
for a comprehensive
policy.

Guiding Principles
will help ensure that
the policy reflects
collective values
and needs of
Saskatchewan
residents.

Oct 2022-Apr 2023

Desired Policy Outcomes

will serve as goals for the policy.

Mitigation Approaches

will capture a comprehensive set
of policy tools to address the
impacts of drainage.

Apr 2023-Jul 2023

**Policy Package including
Implementation Plan**

will include clear
information about the
desired policy outcomes
and how WSA, producers
and partners will work
together to achieve them.

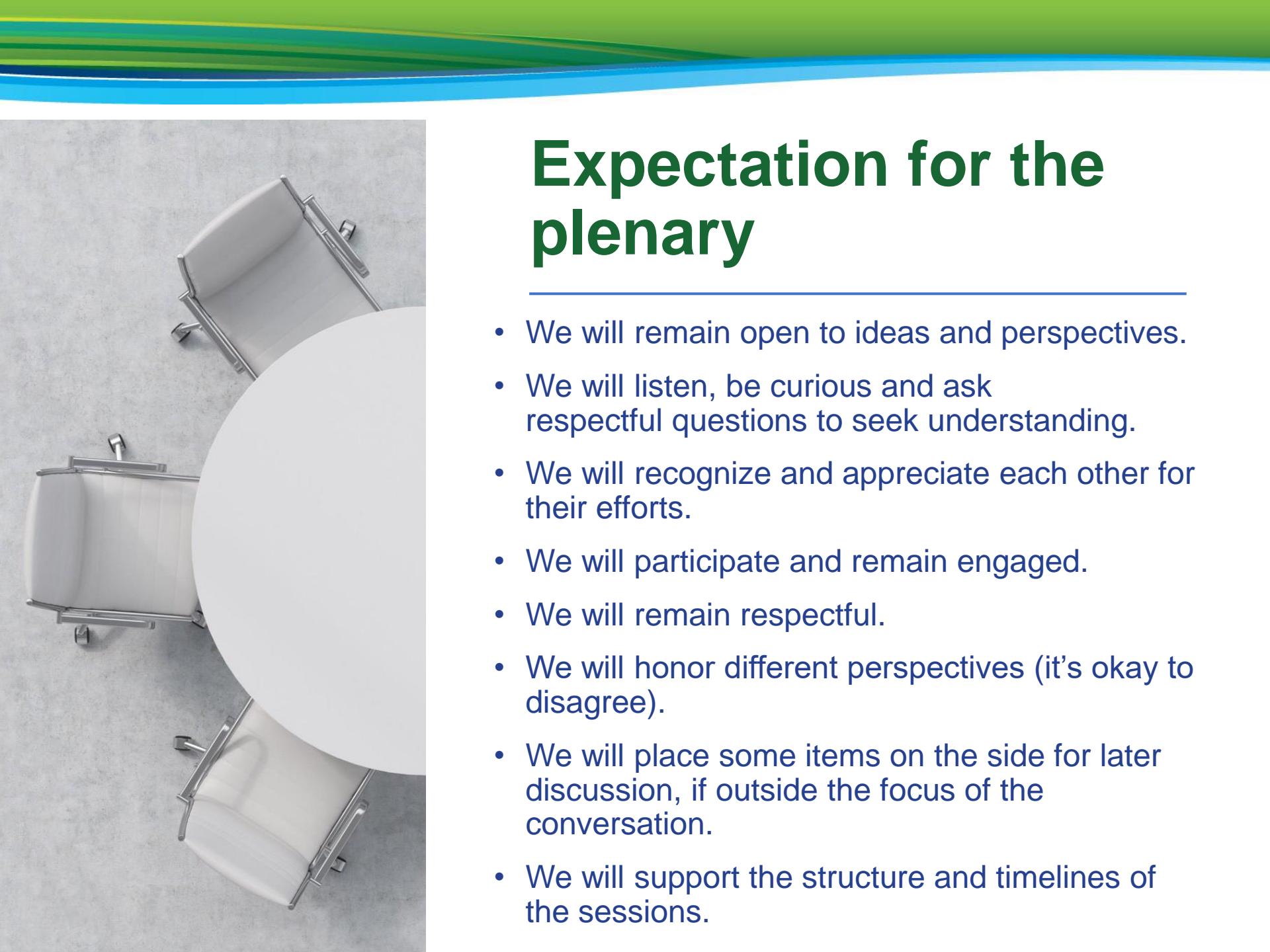
Share learnings from Demo and Research Projects (on-going)

Objectives for this plenary



Participants have an understanding of how we've addressed feedback from July 2022 engagement

Participants have the opportunity to collectively discuss desired policy outcomes



Expectation for the plenary

- We will remain open to ideas and perspectives.
- We will listen, be curious and ask respectful questions to seek understanding.
- We will recognize and appreciate each other for their efforts.
- We will participate and remain engaged.
- We will remain respectful.
- We will honor different perspectives (it's okay to disagree).
- We will place some items on the side for later discussion, if outside the focus of the conversation.
- We will support the structure and timelines of the sessions.

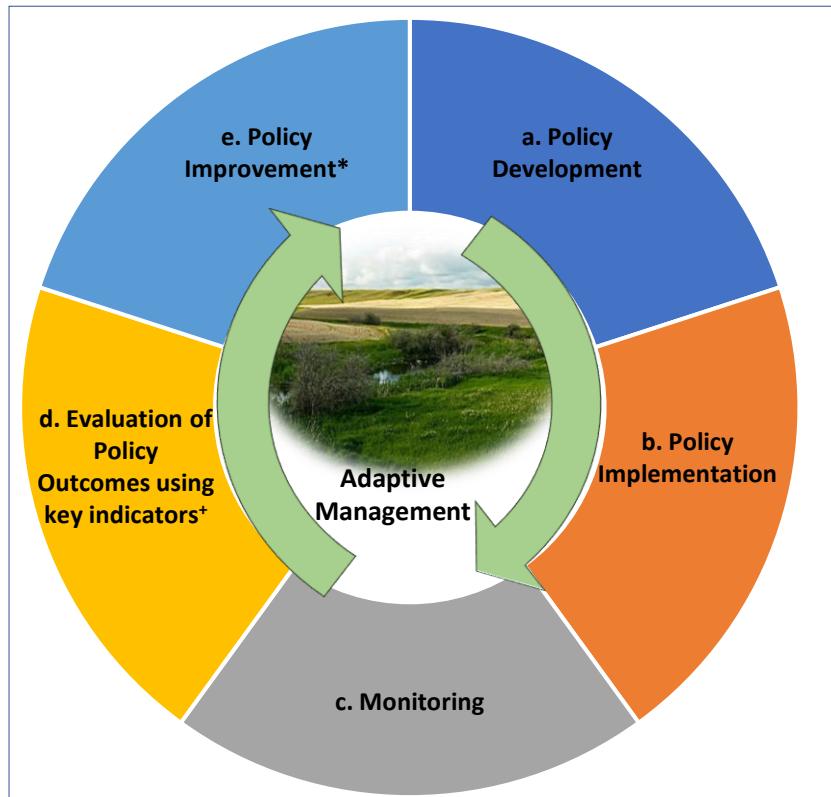
How has WSA addressed feedback from July 2022 engagement

What we've heard on the Policy Framework



- A framework is **necessary to guide the process.**
- The framework is **comprehensive and ambitious.**
- Key aspects needed for policy success include:
 - **Flexibility** to allow the framework to accommodate unforeseen circumstances and the wide diversity in the province
 - **Adaptability** for new information and facts
 - Consider **how components of the framework will be prioritized**
 - Ensure all relevant **stakeholders and Indigenous communities are engaged and reflected** within the policy
 - Acknowledge that **WSA works with other organizations** for mutual benefit
 - Inform stakeholders on the topic of ag water management
 - Inform the public on **benefits of the policy and projects**, not just metrics of work done.

Updated Policy Framework



WSA will apply **adaptive management** to support continuous improvement of the policy.

WSA will review the policy and its components on a regular basis.

Key indicators will be developed once the policy outcomes are defined. WSA will report on progress made using these indicators.

Updated Policy Framework

Collaboration and Partnerships

WSA will continue to support collaboration and partnerships with agricultural producers, agricultural industry, Indigenous communities, conservation groups, government partners, and the research community.

This includes:

- **learning adaptive farming practices** from agricultural producers and Indigenous communities
- **partnering with agricultural industry and research community** to evaluate land and water management practices
- **supporting environmental organizations' stewardship and conservation efforts**



What we've heard on the Guiding Principles



- The guiding principles are comprehensive and well thought-out.
- Provide **additional context** on why these guiding principles are being used to help stakeholders and Indigenous communities understand the process.
- Provide **specificity** to accompany the guiding principles to ensure the desired intents are achieved.
- Consider **how the guiding principles will be prioritized** if conflicts arise (e.g., what is more important, the economy or the environment).
- Ensure principles are **not politicized** (e.g., “my benefit is more important than yours”)

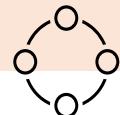
The Guiding Principles

WSA is providing details on how the principles can be applied. Please refer to the updated Framework for examples of each principle.

Principle 3. A proactive and systematic approach to decision-making is applied. WSA staff follows a systematic and consistent process when reviewing drainage applications. This includes identification and assessment of possible risks that may arise from a drainage project and identifying mitigation conditions that are placed as drainage approval conditions.

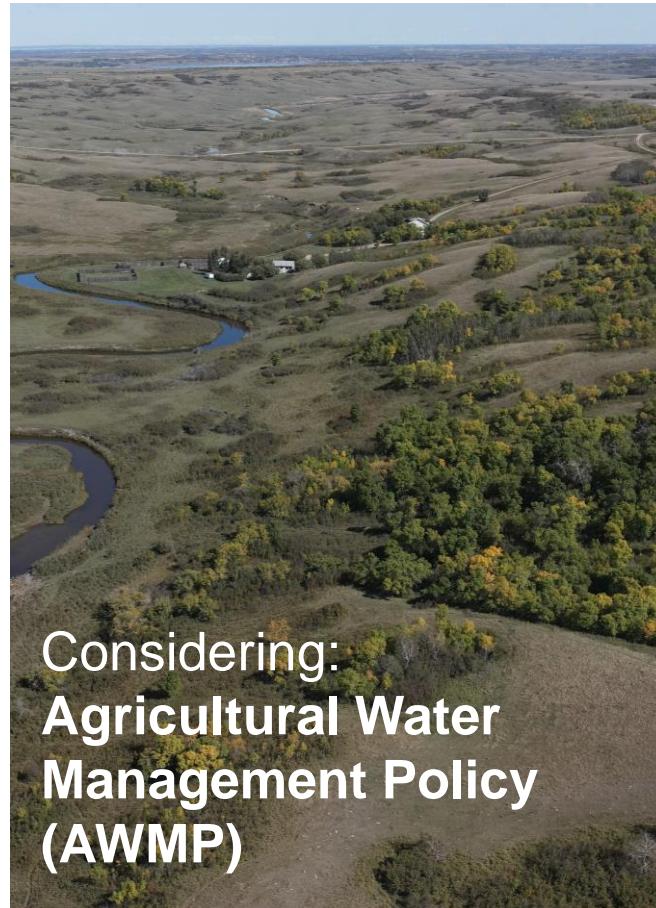


Principle 5. Flexibility and adaptability are applied appropriately. WSA implements a flexible approach, rather than a one-size-fits-all. Effectiveness of agricultural water management approaches depends on the local context; hence drainage project conditions are project-specific and consider regional and local conditions.



On the Policy Name

Then: **Agricultural Water Management Mitigation Policy**



Considering:
**Agricultural Water
Management Policy
(AWMP)**

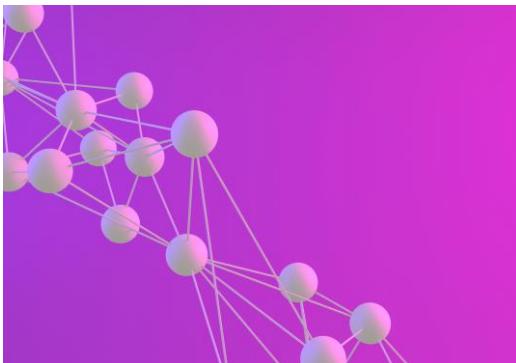


Networking (10:30 am - 11:00 am)

10:30 – 10:45: World Café Introductions

- Find a table to stand at (hosted by a moderator)
- Introduce yourselves:
 - ***Your name, role and organization***
 - ***What are you most looking forward to accomplishing today***
- After 5 minutes, everyone finds a different table for new introductions
- We will repeat 2-3 times.

10:45 – 11:00: Coffee & Networking time



Break out session

Desired Policy Outcomes

Q1. What is our collective vision for Saskatchewan's water quantity?

Themes from one-on-one meetings*	Draft Policy Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resilience to drought and flooding• Optimum water resources and levels (Not too much, not too little)• Consider water quantity impacts downstream, e.g., to Assiniboine in Manitoba	<p>Ag water management supports a landscape that has capacity to be resilient against both flooding (outside of extreme events) and drought.</p> <p><i>This outcome also includes upholding inter-jurisdictional water quantity obligations, to the extent possible.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abundant and healthy groundwater – this is important for local water supply	<p>Ag water management retains availability of groundwater to support communities and industries.</p>

*More details from one-on-one meetings are provided in the handout.

Q2. What is our collective vision for Saskatchewan's water quality?

Themes from one-on-one meetings	Draft Policy Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Good water quality for drinking, agriculture and livestock production, wildlife, recreation, and general public.Consider water quality impacts downstream, e.g., to Lake WinnipegMeet commitments to downstream partners (e.g., Manitoba and US)	<p>Ag water management maintains water quality that supports human uses and maintains healthy aquatic populations and biodiversity.</p> <p><i>Human uses include drinking water, industry, agricultural uses, recreation.</i></p> <p><i>Healthy aquatic populations and biodiversity includes ecosystem structure and function.</i></p> <p><i>This outcome includes upholding inter-jurisdictional water quality obligations, to the extent possible.</i></p>

**More details from one-on-one meetings are provided in the handout.*

LUNCH BREAK (12:00 NOON TO 1:00 PM)

We'll resume the break-out session
at 1:00 PM.

Q3. What is our collective vision for Saskatchewan's wildlife resources?

Themes from one-on-one meetings	Draft Policy Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sustainable and viable population and diversity of species<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Protect wildlife, stop the decline of wildlife resources, guarantee no extinction, do not add species into the list of species that are in extinction.○ Reduce potential risks of invasive species○ Distribution and diversity of habitatEnsure economic and cultural value associated with wildlife retention are realized.Co-existence of wildlife habitat and ag industryRecognition of agricultural producers' contributions in providing habitats and wildlife sustainability.	<p>Ag water management maintains habitat quantity and quality that supports biologically diverse and resilient fish and wildlife populations (aquatic and terrestrial).</p> <p><i>This includes upholding Species-at-Risk obligations, migratory bird convention, and other national agreements.</i></p>

**More details from one-on-one meetings are provided in the handout.*

Q4. What is our collective vision for Saskatchewan's agricultural economy?

Themes from one-on-one meetings	Draft Policy Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong and stable agriculture economy• Sustainable agricultural sector growth and productivity through efficient land management• Sustainable agricultural growth that provides economic, environmental and social balance.	<p>Ag water management promotes productive and profitable farms to support a resilient, sustainable, and growing agricultural economy.</p> <p><i>This includes supporting growth in Saskatchewan's natural resource export.</i></p>

Q5. What is our collective vision for Saskatchewan's communities?

Themes from one-on-one meetings	Draft Policy Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy and thriving communities• Resilient communities prepared for climate change• Support a robust ag industry that will ensure investment in rural communities and reduce rural-urban migration<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Support a thriving community through an effective water resources management• Mitigate flooding of private properties and infrastructure• Increased tourism and access to ecological goods and services	Ag water management promotes a robust agriculture industry that will support healthy and thriving in rural communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fair conflict resolution• Resolving conflicts in a fair and swift way	Ag water management resolves and manages local conflict around drainage and build public trust in the agriculture sector.

Next Steps



- **Summarize What We Heard today**
- **Share Demonstration and Research Projects results** (Virtual events in February 2023)
- **Synthesis of desired policy outcomes and discussions on mitigation tools and approaches** (Plenary 3 around March 2023)

WSA has a webpage that is dedicated on providing updates on the development of the Ag Water Management Policy: [Engagement & Policy Development | Water Security Agency \(wsask.ca\)](https://wsask.ca/engagement-and-policy-development)