

## Does the proposed trespass response miss the crime mark?

Have the people of Saskatchewan fully considered what the Trespass Act proposals the Provincial



Government intends to enact in the spring of 2019 really mean? We fear that the full implications are not well recognized. Once we do understand it may be too late. The freedoms we currently enjoy in this beautiful prairie Province will be needlessly curtailed. Many of us who never break a law will be subject to restrictions we never thought possible in our free and just society. We may be put on the wrong side of the law unintentionally.

If the proposals pass into law, those of us who travel in rural areas enjoying the scenery and the outdoors will be bound by provincial law to stay on the roads and road allowances. It means that unless we are travelling through a provincial forest, vacant crown land or a provincial park we will not be able to stop to pick a pussy willow, exercise a dog, stretch our legs or otherwise wander off the road allowance even just to sniff the fragrance of a wild flower without permission. It means that those of us who voluntarily monitor, band, observe and report birds and other wildlife will only be able to do so from the highway, road or road allowance unless we have been lucky enough to find and contact the landowner or lessee. This means that if we are travelling in southern or central Saskatchewan virtually all lands we see will be land we cannot enter without permission. We can only look at our Province as we pass through it, and rarely touch it.

This legislation is not necessary nor will it reduce rural crime. It will not deter those people who are willing to threaten others, willing to break into and steal items from rural or urban premises. Those bad apples are already intent on committing criminal offences and any threat of a trespassing violation will be of no consequence to them. They don't think they'll be caught. If this legislation passes it will place a huge new workload on law enforcement and police personnel who are already over-burdened and understaffed. In this context, we are particularly perplexed that 19 Ministry of Environment front counter service staff have recently been eliminated. There are already provincial laws which regulate littering, all terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, hunting, trapping and fishing on private land. Some of these activities are already very heavily regulated. Landowners already have viable options to restrict activities on their land. However, the proposed Trespass Act and associated amendments go too far and

will make violators out of those people who are now legally on the land and who report suspicious activities to land-owners or authorities. Under the guise of rural-crime prevention the Government is severely impacting the ninety-nine percent of us who treat all lands with respect, whether it is private or public. Those of us who operate small rural businesses which depend upon non-resident hunting will also be impacted as Saskatchewan no longer continues as a welcoming, world class place to hunt the vast flocks of waterfowl as well as the big game and other game birds we are known for.



Is this really what we want in a proudly rural Province? We strongly suggest the Provincial Government re-think what they are considering, before it is too late. It could do away with that which makes us all deservedly proud to be part of this treasured Province.

-Saskatchewan Outdoor Enthusiasts Alliance