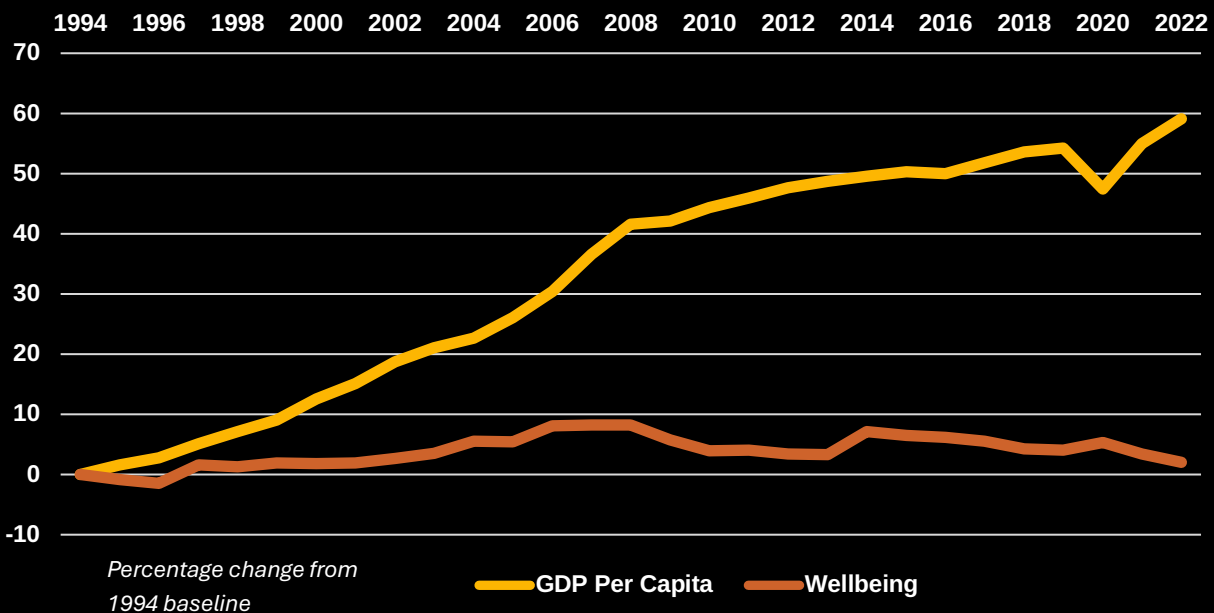


ENVIRONMENT INTEGRAL TO WELLBEING

While GDP rises, does wellbeing rise alongside it? The answer surprises many. While GDP in many parts of Canada has increased, wellbeing has not followed suit. Between 1994 to 2022, GDP in Saskatchewan increased by nearly 60%; during the same period, wellbeing metrics rose by just over 2%. Thus, the story becomes clear: **GDP alone fails to measure how well our population is faring.**

GDP v. Wellbeing in Saskatchewanⁱ



Environment & Wellbeing

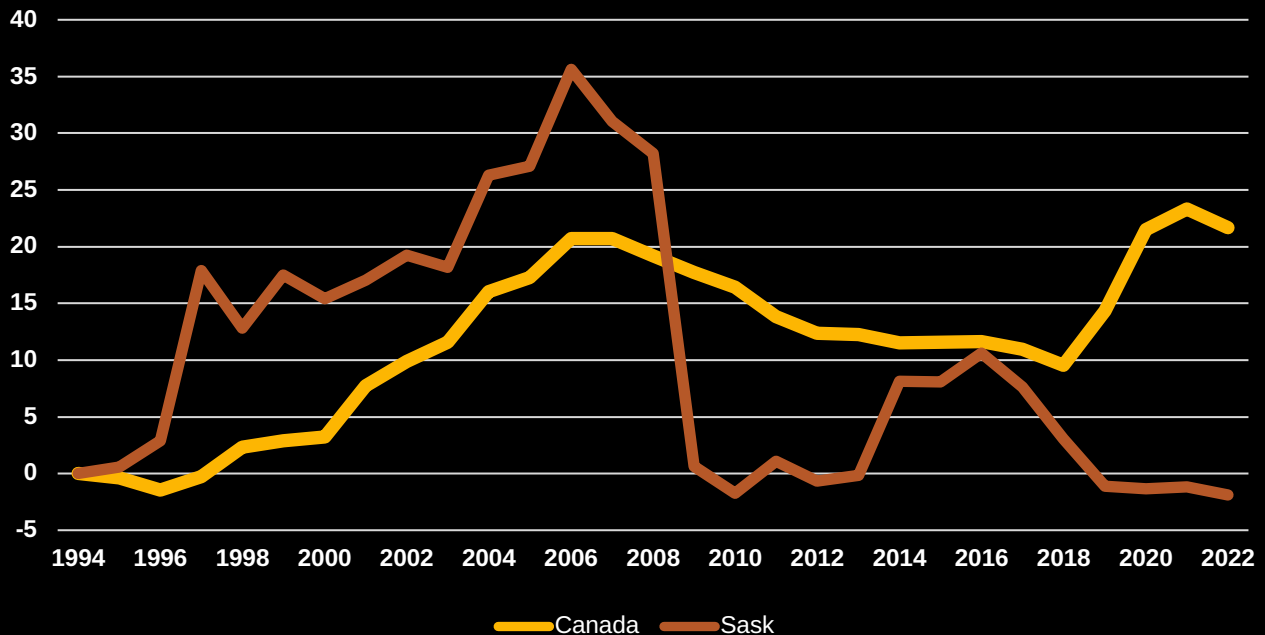
What trends do we see in the environment from 1994 onwards?

How have outcomes in Saskatchewan's environmental state evolved since 1994, and how do these outcomes compare to national metrics? Below we examine the statistical trends of environment quality and the story this tells. In the Saskatchewan Index of Wellbeing, environmental wellbeing is analysed through eight metrics. These metrics have been compiled into a single numerical value with 1994 as the baseline.ⁱⁱ

How do we describe the concept of environment in this analysis?

The environment is the foundation upon which human societies are built and the source of our sustained wellbeing. On a broader level, environmental protection involves the prevention of waste and damage while revitalizing our ecosystems and working towards the sustainability of all our resources.ⁱⁱⁱ

Environmental Trends from 1994-2022^{iv}



Saskatchewan and Canada have experienced variable results across environmental metrics since analysis began in 1994. Although some metrics have improved, the overall trend signals a number of areas of concern. Please note there are some mixed results in the metrics between Saskatchewan and Canada. For the sake of this analysis, whether a metric is considered an area of success or concern is based on how Saskatchewan has fared.

Metrics of Success^v

Air pollution in fine particulate matter emissions (megatonnes): 27.9% decrease in Saskatchewan; 13.7% decrease in Canada

Total farmland (000,000s of hectares): 9% increase in Saskatchewan; 8.5% decrease in Canada

Residential energy use (terajoules per 1,000 dwellings): 5.9% decrease in Saskatchewan; 17.4% decrease in Canada

Metrics of Concern^{vi}

Absolute greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) (megatonnes of CO₂ per year): 12.1% increase in Saskatchewan; 8.3% increase in Canada

Drinking water from water plants per capita served (cubic metres): 21.7% decrease in Saskatchewan; 30.55% decrease in Canada

Forest regeneration: Area planted (000s of hectares): 4.52% decrease in Saskatchewan; 6.6% decrease in Canada

Primary energy production (000s of terajoules): 9.0% increase in Saskatchewan; 56.1% increase in Canada

Percentage of people who volunteered in conservation or protection of environment or wildlife activities: 10.5% decrease in Saskatchewan; 140.0% increase in Canada

How Do We Build a Stronger Environment for the Future?

Most metrics demonstrate a decline in Saskatchewan's environmental outcomes, revealing the need for significant intervention. **Reversing these trends will require coordinated action from governments, nonprofits, and individual citizens, with emphasis on civic participation and large-scale action to support a healthy environment for the wellbeing of all Saskatchewanians.**

Possible Policy Solutions

Expanding tree planting and forest regeneration: The federal government's 2 Billion Trees Program provides funding to organizations to plant trees across Canada, supporting forest regeneration and providing greater climate resilience for communities.^{vii}

Turning paved spaces into green spaces: Montréal's *Bye Bye Béton! (Bye Bye Concrete!)* program supports residents and community groups in removing asphalt and concrete and replacing them with vegetation, enabling citizens to create greener, more beautiful neighbourhoods with greater biodiversity, stormwater management, and fewer urban heat islands.^{viii}

Reinvesting environmental penalties in communities: Ontario's Community Environment Fund invests money collected through environmental penalties toward community-based projects such as habitat restoration, shoreline cleanups, and invasive-species management, allowing environmental harms to generate funding for vital local efforts.^{ix}

Supporting community environmental stewardship: Saskatoon's Environmental Grant provides matching funding of up to \$10,000 to nonprofit organizations for local projects such as waste reduction, water conservation, and natural-area protection, better protecting the local environment.^x

Improving household energy efficiency: The Canada Greener Homes Affordability Program provides no-cost energy-efficiency retrofits to working and middle-class households, reducing energy consumption and increasing efficiency.^{xi}

What's Next?

Environmental health and quality fundamentally affect overall wellbeing. Examining existing successful programs for comparison and policy inspiration can help guide efforts to ensure a better environment for all. Further, thoughtful consideration and investment to protect and conserve the environment can impact and uplift other domains. **No domain exists in a vacuum, with Environment influencing metrics in domains such as Living Standards and Healthy Populations.**

Who Are We?

What is Saskatchewan's definition of wellbeing?

"Wellbeing is achieved when people are physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy; economically secure; have a strong sense of identity, belonging and place; and have the confidence and capacity to engage as citizens." ^{xii}

Who is SaskWellbeing?

SaskWellbeing is a Saskatchewan-based initiative that works to support collaboration across sectors to improve quality of life and inform decision-making for healthier, more resilient communities. Further information can be found at: saskwellbeing.ca

What is the Canadian Index of Wellbeing?

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) is a framework that measures the quality of life for Canadians across eight interconnected domains. Further information can be found at: uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/about-canadian-index-wellbeing

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| <p>I. Smale, Bryan. (2025). <i>Data and Trends in Wellbeing in Saskatchewan and Canada from 1994 to 2022: A Technical Report</i>. Canadian Index of Wellbeing, University of Waterloo. Prepared for Heritage Saskatchewan and Community Initiatives Fund.</p> | <p>VIII. Ville de Montréal. (2026, May 25). <i>Participez à Bye Bye Béton! Le programme de déminéralisation et de verdissement de VSP</i>.</p> |
| <p>II. Smale, Bryan (2025).</p> | <p>IX. Government of Ontario. (2025). <i>Ontario Community Environment Fund</i>.</p> |
| <p>III. Smale, Bryan (2025).</p> | <p>X. City of Saskatoon. (2026). <i>Environmental grant</i>.</p> |
| <p>IV. Smale, Bryan (2025).</p> | <p>XI. Natural Resources Canada. (2024). <i>Canada Greener Homes Affordability Program</i>.</p> |
| <p>V. Smale, Bryan (2025).</p> | <p>XII. SaskWellbeing. (2025). <i>Definition of Wellbeing</i>.</p> |
| <p>VI. Smale, Bryan (2025).</p> | |
| <p>VII. Natural Resources Canada. (2026, March 16). <i>2 Billion Trees Program</i>. Government of Canada.</p> | |