

West Interlake Watershed Conservation District 2013-2014 Annual General Meeting – January 17th, 2014

Manager's Report

TO: All members of the West Interlake Watershed Conservation District

The WIWCD mandate/mission is: *"to assess the health of the watershed and address regional land and water issues in a cooperative, long-term planned approach in a sustainable manner."*

The 2013-2014 year was a success. We delivered many successful projects as outlined below, and we furthered the process to welcome the RM of Grahamdale into our CD. We have also formed a project management team to begin our integrated watershed management plan.

Riparian and Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation

- The WIWCD applied and was awarded an external grant of \$25,000.00 from Manitoba Water Stewardship's Fisheries Enhancement Fund to conduct an *Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Assessment* of the Swan Creek watershed in 2009/10.
- The WIWCD applied and was awarded an external grant of \$25,000.00 from Manitoba Water Stewardship's Fisheries Enhancement Fund to conduct an *Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Assessment* of the Lake Francis watershed in 2010/11.
- The WIWCD applied and was awarded an external grant of \$25,000 from Manitoba Water Stewardship's Fisheries Enhancement Fund to conduct an *Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Assessment* of the Dog Lake watershed in 2011/12. The WIWCD has also applied for external funding for riparian fencing, off site watering systems and spawning shoals on the Chippewa Drain for 2013-2014 season.
- The WIWCD applied for another \$25,000 grant from Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship's Fisheries Enhancement Fund for the Shoal Lakes watershed in 2012/13. The WIWCD didn't receive the external funding. The WIWCD reapplied to the Fisheries Enhancement Fund and Lake Winnipeg Basin Stewardship Fund for the Shoal Lake study. WIWCD has been approved for \$ 12,245.00 from the Fisheries Enhancement Fund. The WIWCD hired AAE Tech Services (Mark Lowdon) to conduct an Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Assessment of Shoal Lakes; the assessment should be completed March 31, 2014.
- From these studies many projects were completed over the years, such as riparian fencing and off site watering projects as follows:
 - 12 projects have been approved in the Swan Creek Sub District, of which eleven of these projects have been completed for a total of 17.8 km of exclusion fencing, two Off Site Watering Systems and three alternate waterers.
 - Two Projects completed in the Lake Francis Sub District for a total of 3.8 km of exclusion fencing, and one alternate waterer.
 - Two projects completed in the Dog Lake Sub District for a total of 5.6 km of exclusion fencing, and one Off site waterer.
 - One project completed in the Shoal Lake Sub District for a total of 1.2km of exclusion fencing and two alternate waterers.

A total of 28.4 km of exclusion fencing has been installed and 9 summer off site waterers completed since the CD programs began.

- The WIWCD has also completed three spawning shoals on Burnt Lake Drain and three on Sherringham Drain and currently WIWCD has identified three locations for spawning shoals in the Shoal Lake area. WIWCD has applied for funding to construct a fish ladder on the Burnt Lake Drain and is looking into funding for the Lake Francis Outlet.
- The WIWCD offered a winter off-site watering program in 2012. This program received a lot of interest. Fifteen projects were approved, of which:
 - five have been completed and one initiated in the Swan Creek watershed
 - four were completed in the Shoal Lake watershed;
 - four were completed in the Dog Lake watershed; and
 - one was initiated in the Lake Francis watershed.

Groundwater Protection

- The Well Water Protection Program, which includes sealing abandoned and flowing wells and well head protection projects, has had enormous interest. Eight wells were sealed in the 2008/09 season, thirty wells were sealed in 2009/10, fifteen wells were sealed in 2010/11, five wells were sealed in 2011/12, four wells in 2012/13 and eleven wells sealed and two well extensions in 2013-2014 for a total of 68 wells sealed and two well extensions since the district's opened its doors in October of 2008.
- The WIWCD initiated a well inventory program to assess groundwater quality in the district. Two summer students were hired to go door-to-door throughout the district and talk to landowners about their wells, test well water quality and promote district programs like well sealing and wellhead protection. Water samples were analyzed for total coliform, *E.coli* and nitrates at no cost to the landowner.
 - Approximately 500 homes were visited with 260 samples collected and analyzed in 2009.
 - A total of 328 homes were visited and 149 samples were taken in 2010.
 - A total of 141 samples were taken in 2011.
 - A total of 178 homes were visited with 140 samples taken in 2012.
 - Because the province's contract was up for renewal with the lab for the 2013-2014 year the well inventory program was put on hold until the middle of August 2013. A total of 14 homes were visited with 14 samples taken in 2013.
- The district also transported 382 samples in 2011/2012, 184 samples in 2012/13 which the CD paid to have analyzed with the province subsidizing 2/3 of the cost. In the 2013-2014 year the residents had to pay the full cost for the water sample to be analyzed so only 20 samples were transported to the laboratory in Winnipeg.

Surface Water Quality

- In 2011/12, the district began to sample surface water quality in the Swan Creek on a quarterly basis in partnership with Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship. This site was added to the Province's long-term water quality monitoring program. Results from this program will be shared with residents once sufficient data has been collected and analyzed.

Soil and Water Conservation

- The WIWCD began a forage seed program in 2011/12 with 29 applications approved, however due to weather conditions, only ten producers were able to seed. The remaining applications were carried over to the 2012-13 season. In 2012/13 season, 33 applications were approved, however with poor weather conditions, only 20 producers were able to seed. The remaining 13 applications are eligible to reapply for the 2013/14 season. In 2013/14 10 applications were approved and 10 were completed.
- The WIWCD began a sod seeding program in 2012/13 with 9 applications approved, however due to poor weather conditions, only five producers were able to complete the sod seeding. The remaining four applications were carried over to the 2013/14 season and completed.
- The WIWCD purchased 450 composters, of which 419 have been sold at a subsidized cost to landowners or donated to community events. Residents and cottage owners find these units to be very beneficial in their yards.
- The WIWCD purchased 298 rain barrels, of which 190 have been sold at a subsidized cost to landowners or donated to community events.
- The WIWCD offered a low flow toilet rebate program for the first time in 2011/12. The program offered residents a \$50.00 rebate for the purchase of a low flow toilet bought locally. To date, 22 applications have been approved and paid out.
- In 2012-2013 the WIWCD ordered 50,000 trees from PFRA and 50,000 trees from Trees for Tomorrow.
In 2013-2014 the WIWCD received 2100 trees from PFRA (mixed tree willows, villosa lilacs and Manitoba maples) as there wasn't enough trees to distribute to all the residents, it was decided at the All Member Meeting held May 1, 2013 that all the RM's names would be placed in a hat and the RM that was drawn would deliver the trees to their residents. The RM of Coldwell was the lucky winner.
The WIWCD received 5700 white spruce and 600 black spruce from Trees for Tomorrow which the WIWCD distributed to residents.
- In 2013-2014 the WIWCD initiated a Community Tree Nursery Program to date 2,983 Tree Seedlings have been ordered.
- The WIWCD organized a shoreline clean up for September 2013, but due to weather conditions it had to be cancelled.

Public Education

- The WIWCD hosted a manure composter demonstration day on September 18, 2010. The tour generated great interest with approximately 30 people in attendance. On July 27th, 2012 the WIWCD hosted a portable summer off site waterer demonstration with Carl Driedger of Sun Dog Solar explaining how the system worked and answering any questions producers had, followed by a barbecue sponsored by WIWCD and then producers went to inspect fields that were sod seeded. Three different fields were selected to sod seed three different ways to see which field produced the best results.
- Four "Trapper Days" events have been sponsored by the WIWCD - October 2008, February 2009, October 2009 and May 2011. All four events had excellent turnouts, with many

youth and adults learning the benefits of trapping, proper trapping and preparation techniques from some of our own members, including Kris Fjeldsted and Neil Brandstrom. Manitoba Trappers Association held their 2010 Convention & Annual General Meeting in February 26 & 27, 2010 and the WIWCD set up a booth and handed out WIWCD information and promotional products to watershed residents.

- The WIWCD also attended many local events in communities with the district to promote out programming and hand out application forms.
- The WIWCD has partnered with Oak Hammock Marsh to host school visits in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. Oak Hammock Marsh organized activities for Grade 1 – 8 students in schools located in Lundar, Eriksdale, Inwood, Woodlands and two schools in St Laurent, Ashern and adding Moosehorn and Gypsumville in 2012/13. The WIWCD partnered with EICD to host a water festival day, 150 students attended from two schools and WIWCD received very positive feedback.
- The WIWCD sponsored a Workshop on Shoreline Protection. The workshop covered basic planting principles, to protect heavily impacted areas and offered residents a low cost alternative to more traditional engineering. Guest speakers were Chris Randall –Uof M graduate student and ecologist and Alan Sabados – Greenhouse owner.

Watershed Planning

- The WIWCD signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship and received a \$25,000 grant to initiate an Integrated Watershed Management Plan in 2011. In 2012, the WIWCD sent letters to all the RMs involved requesting the council to appoint a representative to participate on the planning team. The planning team has had one organizational meeting and another meeting was scheduled for January 16th but was cancelled due to weather. The planning process will take approximately two years to complete.

Summary

Even with the wet conditions in 2009, 2010, 2011 and dry conditions in 2012, the WIWCD has successfully started and completed a number of on-the-ground projects and will continue to support programming to residents in the coming year. The WIWCD is ready to take on another year of operation in 2014 - 2015.

If any municipal and sub-district members have ideas for programs or projects, please contact the WIWCD office.

We thank you for your on-going input and support to our district.

Sincerely,

Linda Miller
Administrator/Manager
(204) 762-5850

