

Summary of 2011 Flood Events for Lake Manitoba and Twin Lakes Beach

By Rilla Britton, Twin Lakes Beach

Monday, May 9

Provincial Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) met with Rural Municipalities around the lake and to receive information on flood lake levels. No offer of help was indicated. Maps of expected flooding were provided.

Tuesday, May 10

Twin Lakes Beach Association sent first notice to members advising that sandbagging will commence on Thursday, May 12. The RM of St. Laurent was fortunate to find a sandbag machine being returned to Winnipeg from Dauphin. The Army was made available to assist with sandbagging for 4 or 5 days ending on Victoria Day, May 23rd.

Saturday, May 28

Twin Lakes Beach Assoc. Executive met.

Tuesday, May 31

Storm with over 90 km/hr. winds hit the St. Laurent area; St. Laurent declares a State of Local Emergency and mandatory evacuations were ordered for all the beaches. This included residents on the south Twin Beach Road who reside in the RM of Woodlands. Woodlands and St. Laurent advised they are working in cooperation.

Saturday, June 11

Only parts of Twin Lakes Beach were allowed back and access is only from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm. Property owners must check in at security checkpoints. Residents south of lot number 165 were denied access due to the extremely unsafe and impassable road conditions.

Sunday, June 12

Twin Lakes Beach held an Emergency Members Meeting and over 350 people and media attend, along with RM Council, EMO Assistant, and Mr. Don Norquay from Water Stewardship, and 5 MLA's.

Monday, June 13

The Manitoba Association of Cottage Owners (MACO) was contacted and requested to meet with Minister Struthers at 4:00pm. Present is Vice President, Rilla Britton, Directors Gus Wruck, Jim Neufeld,

Mo Tipples and area representative Lorne Britton. Joining Minister Struthers was Ministers Ashton and Melnyk as well as Deputy Minister Barry Todd and numerous staff. Outcomes were as follows: A list of engineers was to be made available; Province was looking at improvements to Twin Lakes Beach Road as it is nearly impassable; there was to be a review of the compensation package. MACO went on record as supporting the need for equitable compensation for all effected property owners.

Tuesday, June 14

MACO held a Lake Manitoba Flood Rally and over 250 people attended. Speakers included: Stan Struthers, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Steve Ashton, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, Minister responsible for Emergency Measures, and Minister charged with the administration of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act, Ralph Eichler, M.L.A. Lakeside, Hugh McFayden, Leader of the Opposition, John Gerard, Leader of the Liberal Party, Tom Teichob, Rancher, Barry Swan, Lake Manitoba First Nation, Fred Piscelvich, Twin Lakes Beach, Garnett Lobb, Shoal Lake, Jay Fox, Manitoba Beef Producers, and Larry Baker, Manitoba Association of Cottage Owners.

Larry Baker had numerous media interviews prior to the Rally (CBC Radio), and Pat Dunlop was interviewed on CBC Radio following the Rally.

MACO was asked to meet with the Premier at 2:45pm, along with members of the RM of Woodlands and the RM of St. Laurent. MACO representatives present were Rilla Britton, Gus Wruck, Pat Dunlop and Larry Baker. Gus spoke to the need to expand the outlet on Lake Manitoba in the short term and to redefine flood protection in the longer term; Larry spoke to the Shellmouth Dam and need for more water retention areas. Larry also brought up the issue of phosphorus and pollutants that are being brought into the Lake by the Portage Diversion. On the topic of buy-outs the Premier is prepared to explore options, however, he says he cannot go as far as to agree to everyone having this option. A buy-outs option needs to make sense. The Premier responded to Deputy Reeve Mona Sedleski's desire to get relocated back in the area from her current location in Winnipeg. She also added that many residents evacuated to Winnipeg need to get back closer to their homes.

The potential for a trailer park developed in the RM of St. Laurent is briefly discussed.

The question of education and property taxes came up as well as property values; Government will give consideration to reassessment for homes. The Premier reminded us that a Commissioner of Appeals, Mr. Ron Bell, the former President of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, has been announced.

The RM's wanted the government to identify what lake level is safe, so that property owners will not continue to blame the government for not allowing access. Currently it is unsafe to allow overnight access. The Premier agreed to announce that current levels are not safe for permanent habitation. Woodlands was very concerned about the lack of access to owners beyond lot number 165 on South Twin Beach Road who have yet to see their property. RM had no way to get people in and out and asked the Premier for assistance. The Premier agreed to get the Fire Commissioners office involved via their urban search and rescue team.

The deadline date of September for compensation application was flagged as an unrealistic date given the reality of the situation, especially the length of time the waters are going to remain at this high level. It was later noted that this would be the initial application but it could be amended later as required.

The RM's said that they are not getting proper and timely communication from the Province. Some relocation of Provincial staff at the RM was discussed as a valuable asset.

The question of who deems what is acceptable flood mitigation was discussed.

The Premier reminded the RMs of the green teams that are available to them. Woodlands replied that the situation on South Twin Lakes beach was still too dangerous for youth to be used.

The RM of Woodlands raised the issue of the Shoal Lakes and the compensation package at the producer level. It was indicated that this package was not beneficial to farmers with lower volumes of income. The Premier advises that the province was looking at the Grassmere Drain option for the Lakes.

Saturday, June 18

Under the initiative of the Twin Lakes Beach Association, a meeting was held in Winnipeg of various stakeholders around Lake Manitoba. Over 14 groups/organizations attend. They developed a new organization called the Association of Lake Manitoba Stakeholders (ALMS) whose purpose was to present a unified voice for all property owners affected by the man-made flooding of Lake Manitoba. It was determined that the first priority of this association would be to send a message to government that lake levels on Lake Manitoba must come down now, on an emergency basis. Their letter is attached. Larry Baker, MACO rep and Sugar Point cottager, reports that he will be a link to the Lake Manitoba Rehabilitation Group, who are represented by 11 Municipalities, cottagers, farmers and ranchers in the Interlake area who were also affected by flooding. Their meeting were scheduled for June 23 at 7pm at the Narrows Lodge.

ALMS has now developed a web site and the URL is:

[Http://lakemanitobaassociation.wordpress.com](http://lakemanitobaassociation.wordpress.com)

ALMS was to meet again on Monday, June 27 at 7:30pm at the Winnipeg Stadium, Blue and Gold Room. The co-chairs are Lawrence Heise, from Twin Lakes Beach Association and Cheryl Smith from the Sandpiper Association.

Conclusions and Actions for MACO consideration and approved:

- MACO supported the development of the new Lake Manitoba Stakeholders will put a link on our web site to theirs
- MACO endorsed the following persons to represent MACO and participate in the ALMS association: Larry Baker, Rilla Britton, and Lorne Britton.