

Coalition to Save Lake Winnipeg



Photo Courtesy of Rod Berscheid



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VISION

A HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE LAKE WINNIPEG THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF ALL.

TO ACT AS AN ADVOCATE INFORMING STAKEHOLDERS AND COORDINATING EFFORTS TO SAVE, PROTECT AND MAINTAIN POSITIVE, SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES FOR LAKE WINNIPEG.

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Links available at
[Manitoba Cottage Owners Association](#)

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Steering Committee **Coalition to Save Lake Winnipeg (CSLW)**

The CSLW Steering Committee continues their commitment advocating for the improved health and sustainable practices for Lake Winnipeg through information sharing with all stakeholders. The CSLW was established in the fall of 2019 following public information sessions on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg sponsored by Hillside Beach and Lester Beach Community Associations. Volunteers from communities on the West and East Side of Lake Winnipeg collaborated in September 2019 to create the foundation for the CSLW and 10 of the original participants continue on the Steering Committee. Volunteers from Gimli, Silver Harbor, Victoria Beach, Albert Beach, Hillside Beach, Lester Beach and Manitoba Association of Cottage Owners are represented on the committee at this time. Since the November, 2019 public information session, communication and advocacy has shifted to electronic emails and information sharing through newsletters.

The CSLW shares research information from organizations committed to the health and sustainability of Lake Winnipeg, responses and decisions made by elected officials that impact the health of Lake Winnipeg and existing Government regulations that influence and support Lake Winnipeg. Raising awareness by information sharing and contacting elected officials supports the vision and goals of the CSLW. As a grassroots volunteer group the Coalition to Save Lake Winnipeg thanks the Manitoba Association of Cottage Owners (MACO) for sharing all publications on their website [MACO](#), Rural Municipalities for sharing a link to CSLW information in their minutes and all the Community Associations who share with their membership. Please feel free to share CSLW publications or links with other concerned stakeholders and stakeholder groups.

Manitoba's Netley- Libau Marsh

Coordinated effort from the Red River Basin Commission, University of Manitoba, Southern Chiefs Organization, Peguis First Nation, International Institute for Sustainable Development, South Basin Mayors and Reeves, Lake Winnipeg Foundation and Manitoba Hydro has supported positive results for wetland restoration in the Netley-Libau Marsh. This marsh is the largest non-coastal wetland in North America and its' restoration has the potential to "hold" 6% of the nutrient load that negatively impacts the Lake Winnipeg ecosystem. The impact of this restoration shows considerable promise as an agricultural discharge buffer zone.

Learn more about the important change happening that impacts Lake Winnipeg by viewing [Video Dr. Gordon Goldsborough](#) and visiting the following links:

[Restoration Pilot Project Information](#)
[Save the Netley Marsh](#)
[Red River Basin Commission](#)
[Winnipeg Free Press Article Oct 22 2021](#)

Manitoba's Water Treatment Plants

State of the Art City of Selkirk Water Treatment Plant

"The almost \$40 million state of the art water treatment plant is the city's largest capital investment ever – and treats effluent to a higher standard than provincial regulations. It can handle Selkirk's present-day population and up to 11,000 more, with the capacity to cost-effectively and easily expand in the future.

The city's old plant was built in 1976 and no longer met current provincial regulations that require treated wastewater, or effluent, to contain no more than 1mg/L of phosphorus and 15 mg/L of nitrogen. The new plant's phosphorus levels after treatment are 0.3mg/L and nitrogen is 3mg/L.

Our new plant's Membrane-Bioreactor Treatment process provides the best environmental protection for the Red River and Lake Winnipeg, and is producing an exceptionally high quality of effluent, so if regulations change in years to come, the city will still likely meet the standards without costly retrofits or new construction." [City of Selkirk Website Link](#)

Congratulations and thank you City of Selkirk. You can virtually visit this state-of-the-art water treatment plan here [Selkirk State of the Art Water Treatment Plant Video](#).

North End Water Pollution Control Center (NEWPCC)

On November 24th, 2021 the Provincial Government and the City of Winnipeg announced that they would advance an application for funding of phase two of the upgrades to the North End Water Pollution Control Center to the Government of Canada Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The timeline for completion for all upgrades at the NEWPCC continues to be by the second quarter of 2032. [Nov 24 2021 Province of Manitoba News Release](#)
[NEWPCC Upgrade Report](#)

The Lake Winnipeg Foundation continues the hope of phosphorus compliance from the NEWPCC during the Phase 2 upgrades. Please see the Lake Winnipeg Foundations updated information. [Lake Winnipeg Foundation Nov 2021](#)

Combined Sewer Overflows

"The Preliminary 2022 Balanced Budget Update provides a significant acceleration of funding investments into Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO), adding \$60 million to the six-year capital investment plan for a total investment of \$240 million.

"The City is taking a historic step on our CSO problem," said Brian Mayes, Chairperson of the Standing Policy Committee on Water and Waste, Riverbank Management and the Environment. "This is a billion-dollar challenge, and if the provincial or federal governments can match our \$15 million annual increase to the \$30 million base, we could be done this billion-dollar initiative in 20 years." [City of Winnipeg Media Release Dec 6 2021](#)

Environment and Climate Change Canada Symposium
Lake Winnipeg Basin Program

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) hosted a three-day virtual symposium highlighting activities and research undertaken through the Lake Winnipeg Basin Project. Day one of the symposium looked at scientific advancements related to nutrients and climate change. Day 2 focused on advancing knowledge of in-lake and watershed science and Day 3 on projects and actions that have been undertaken throughout the basin.

Some highlights from the Symposium shared by CSLW Steering Committee Member, Gordon Campbell.

The Lake Winnipeg Basin program monitors water quality along rivers and streams at both domestic and international boundaries. The Lake Winnipeg science plan tracks changes and monitors nutrients in the watershed and reports on progress with the goal of restoring a healthy lake. Climate variability is a key factor which makes predictions challenging, but close monitoring is showing several trends.

The State of the Lake Report (2016), showed the water quality to be in fair condition but it has declined with the proliferation of various species, particularly zebra mussels. The EOLakeWatch tracks algae blooms and zebra mussel distribution in Lake Erie, Lake of the Woods, and Lake Winnipeg. [EOLakeWatch](#)

There are over 200 wastewater lagoons in Manitoba. Due to climate change, emergency releases of effluent are more frequent and emergency releases are not required to meet nutrient limits. A continuous slow release of effluent is preferable to a pulse release which puts greater stress on the river system. Many communities are outgrowing their wastewater infrastructure and local industry can have a significant effect on the quality of water released into the lagoons and ultimately the watershed. [Environment Climate and Parks Municipal and Industrial Wastewater](#)

It is important that there is an interplay between management and landscape practices as well as hydrological activities. An economic analysis should be undertaken to determine if all reclaimed farmland is actually economically feasible. (Cost of input vs yield). Land and water policies need to be developed/designed considering climate change as well as each unique ecosystem. Blanket policies do not often result in effective water management strategies for specific locals.

Studies demonstrate the greatest nutrient loading in the watershed occurs in April with the snow melt. Research is studying the different aspects of nutrient loading, including fertilizer application, manure, wastewater treatment plants and atmospheric deposition. There is expected to be an increase of between 16-76% of nutrients by the end of the century. Science, Governments, First Nations, communities and agricultural producers must work together to determine what is actionable and economically feasible when developing policies and procedures with regards to water management. Continued trust needs to be built with the agriculture sector. Decisions need to be targeted taking into account specific hotspots for nutrient release recognizing that practices can differ depending on the landscape.

Addressing the health of the Lake Winnipeg benefits the whole watershed. Collaboration with the Canada Water Agency and the Journal of Great Lakes Research can link all agencies, stakeholders and rightsholders. To review the projects funded by the Canadian Government Lake Winnipeg Basic Program visit [Lake Winnipeg Basin Program Government of Canada](#). Approximately \$25.7 million has been allocated to the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program. In March 2022 the continued funding is essential for the important steps forward to continue.

The CSLW has written to request the continued funding for the critically important Lake Winnipeg Basin Program. Interested concerned citizens could contact:

Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Honourable Steven Guilbeault
Steven.Guilbeault@parl.gc

Minister of Natural Resources
Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
jonathan.wilkinson@parl.gc.ca

Zebra Mussels

Lake Winnipeg's infestation of zebra mussels continues to severely impact the ecosystem of the lake. The Province of Manitoba Ministry of Agriculture regulates the disposal and transport of zebra mussels. A permit is required to move zebra mussels from shorelines. [Province of Manitoba AIS Removal from Shoreline](#)

Municipalities and communities that have public beaches on the shores of Lake Winnipeg have been dependent on the availability of volunteers and limited or no financial support to address increasingly challenging zebra mussel litter. The hazard to human safety and the potential to reduce important tourism for communities and municipalities requires the direction and financial support of the regulating body, the Province of Manitoba. Collaboration of Municipal Governments, Communities and the Province of Manitoba is needed to address best practices for this growing challenge on Lake Winnipeg.

Recently the CSLW Steering Committee had the privilege of Dr. Eva Pip, PhD Biology, present a Power Point that provided detailed information regarding the aggressive and destructive nature of zebra mussels. Key points as recorded by Lynnette Froese CSLW Steering Committee:

- Dr. Pip alerted the Provincial Government in 2011 that zebra mussels had been found in the waters of Traverse Bay. Concern was not evident by the Government until 2013.
- Zebra Mussels have no natural predators in the Lake Winnipeg ecosystem.
- They rapidly reproduce (up to million/annually) and have the ability to survive and colonize for 3-9 years in cold water temperatures.
- Colonization of zebra mussels on the west side of Lake Winnipeg is more abundant due to the contribution of higher calcium levels in the water from the natural limestone in the area.
- Zebra Mussels filter up to 1 litre a day, removing nutrients from the ecosystem. This impacts food availability for fish, wildlife and natural aqua plant growth.
- The filtered water, with nutrients removed, creates clearer water and therefore allows more sunlight penetration supporting the increased growth of algae blooms.
- Zebra Mussels do not consume the toxic algae blooms (blue green algae) which increase in growth in nutrient deprived, phosphorus rich clear water.
- The colonizing of the zebra mussels on hard surfaces or each other, impacts the function of equipment and clogs water intake pipes. The razor-sharp zebra mussel shells pose a risk to humans and animals.
- Zebra Mussel shells have dangerous levels of toxins, PCB, PAH and heavy metals. This restricts the use of the shells that wash up on shores as they are not safe as fertilizer/feed.
- Handling the mussels for removal from an area is not a risk, however, regulations regarding removal exist.
- Quagga Mussels are the upcoming threat as they can live in colder water, with lower levels of oxygen and in deeper waters.
- Management through the introduction of chemicals to waters is contraindicating to ecosystems. New products on the market to keep zebra mussels from docks or boats must be viewed with concern regarding potential toxic components in their product.
- A product called "ANTIFOULING PAINT" used on watercraft to prevent AIS from attaching is highly toxic with Tributyltin. This use is restricted by the Government of Canada (2011).

Provincial Government Ministers

On January 19th, 2022 Premier Stefanson assigned new roles to elected officials as Ministers whose portfolio includes important responsibilities for the health of Lake Winnipeg. The CSLW has congratulated each new Minister and shared information about the CSLW and the community of concerned citizens that advocate for positive practices to restore and sustain a healthy Lake Winnipeg. For your information we are including the Ministers, contact information and the questions we put forward. We will share the responses in our next newsletter.

Minister Eileen Clarke- Municipal Relations

minmr@leg.gov.mb.ca

As the Minister responsible for Municipal Relations how will you ensure that municipalities are provided with the support to ensure compliance with the 1mg/l or less phosphorus emissions from the water treatment plants?

As the Minister responsible for Municipal Relations how will you support municipalities to fund for the collection and safe removal of zebra mussels from the beaches along the shores of Lake Winnipeg?

Minister Derek Johnson – Agriculture

minagr@leg.gov.mb.ca

As the Minister responsible for Municipal Relations how will you ensure that municipalities are provided with the support to ensure compliance with the 1mg/l or less phosphorus emissions from the water treatment plants?

As the Minister responsible for Municipal Relations how will you support municipalities to fund for the collection and safe removal of zebra mussels from the beaches along the shores of Lake Winnipeg?

Minister Jeff Wharton – Environment, Climate and Parks

minecp@leg.gov.mb.ca

As the Ministry responsible for Environment, Climate and Parks how will you monitor and enforce the current environmental goal of reducing and maintaining a 1mg/l or less of phosphorus emission from Municipalities, Agriculture to protect Lake Winnipeg?

As Minister of the Environment, Climate and Parks how will you ensure that developments proposed for processing plants and mining will not contribute to the contamination of the waterways that lead to Lake Winnipeg?

As Minister of the Environment, Climate and Parks how will you work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Climate Change Canada to tackle the challenges of the zebra mussel invasion in almost all of Manitoba's waterways?

Minister Doyle Pivniuk – Transportation and Infrastructure

minmti@leg.gov.mb.ca

As Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure can you provide information regarding the status of the application to ICIP?

As Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure how will you ensure that planned development from the Provincial Government supports the financial needs to expedite the upgrades for the NEWPCC or is limited to restrict the risks of a crisis of capacity?

Manitoba Municipal Elections in 2022

This year municipal elections will be held throughout the province. The Village of Dunnottar, Town of Winnipeg Beach and the Victoria Beach hold the election on Friday, July 22, 2022.

For all other municipalities including the City of Winnipeg election day is Wednesday, October 26, 2022 is election day.

Registered property owners who are "non-residents" are eligible to vote in municipal elections. [Manitoba Municipal Council and School Board Elections Act](#)