

Coalition to Save Lake Winnipeg



Keeping watch on Lake Winnipeg Rod Berscheid



cslakewinnipeg@gmail.com

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.

cslakewinnipeg@gmail.com

Please share this newsletter

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

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Volume 6 Issue 1

The Coalition to Save Lake Winnipeg volunteer Steering Committee encourages our concerned citizens to share this newsletter with communities to continue advocacy for the health of Lake Winnipeg. The CSLW encourages concerned citizens to contact elected officials by telephone, email or letter writing.

CSLW Letter to Premier Kinew and Honorable Minister Schmidt

In early January the CSLW sent a letter to the Honorable Wab Kinew, Premier of Manitoba and Honorable Tracy Schmidt, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, regarding development of lagoons in the intermittent wetlands in the RM of Armstrong and RM of Gimli.

To Premier Kinew: Please reference [Responses to CSLW Questions 09 2023](#)

A recent proposal highlighted the issue facing Lake Winnipeg and its future viability. In the RM of Gimli and the RM of Armstrong, a community, The Crystal Springs Colony, intends to develop an agricultural area to house 250 people and an abattoir in addition to livestock, presumably heading in that direction. The dual lagoon system proposed will be situated in an intermittent wetland. Aside from building a development on a wetland, potentially causing seepage or premature embankment failure of the lagoons, the high nutrient run-off will flow down Willow creek, a known fish habitat, containing numerous public drinking water systems, and a large number of private wells, all of which draw their water from a groundwater source. Currently the Provincial Department of Environment and Climate Change is considering the application and design.

In a response three months ago you as the leader of the NDP was stated in writing:

We will properly resource the Manitoba Water Services Board and provide stable and predictable funding to municipalities to build and modernize waste-water treatment plants and improve surface-water protections.

We will work with agricultural producers to help mitigate phosphorous runoff from farmlands.

The challenge to begin defending the freshwater resources that this province holds so dear is upon us. Manitoba must make decisions about all development that are in Lake Winnipeg's immediate watershed that will pose no risk to the health of the water.

When economic decisions are made that put the environment at risk, the future is foreboding. If economic decisions are a priority without regard to the environment, they are not sustainable. When we take care of the environment first, we create ways to move towards balance. Protecting our water is protecting Manitobans.

Can we now count on you and your government to honor your word, and protect the freshwater resource flowing through our province?

To Honorable Tracy Schmidt, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Premier Kinew's mandate letter to you on [October 19, 2023](#) included Lake Winnipeg as a priority for protection and consideration:

"Work with experts and scientists to protect Lake Winnipeg and safeguard the health of all our waterways."

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Manitoba must make decisions about all developments that are in Lake Winnipeg's immediate watershed that pose no risk to the health of the water. Resolution of current challenges that impact Lake Winnipeg's health must be identified, regulated and resolved before any additional developments occur.

Can we now count on you to protect the freshwater resource flowing through our province?

Response from Honorable Tracy Schmidt, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

JAN 29 2024

Dear Coalition to Save Lake Winnipeg:

Thank you **for** your recent letters **to** The Honourable Wab Kinew, Premier of Manitoba, and to me regarding the health of Lake Winnipeg. As the Minister **of** Environment and Climate Change, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Premier.

I appreciate the Coalition to Save Lake Winnipeg's **efforts** and interest in the health of Lake Winnipeg. We recognize the importance of Lake Winnipeg to all Manitobans, and its critical role in tourism, recreation, commercial and sport fisheries, hydroelectric generation, and as a drinking water source for many.

The Manitoba government **is** taking strong action **across** the Lake Winnipeg basin to reduce nutrient loading and improve water quality. Manitoba uses a science-based approach to identify appropriate measures for nutrient reduction. While a licensing decision for the proposed housing development and abattoir by the Crystal Springs Colony has not been made, I assure you that environmental health and well-being are key considerations in the environmental assessments of all licensing applications.

Manitoba's Environment Act outlines the environmental assessment and licensing process for a variety of developments in Manitoba that may significantly impact the environment, including Lake Winnipeg. **This process** ensures environmental protection, **encourages early** consultation, allows **for** full public **participation**, and ensures **that** economic development occurs in an environmentally responsible manner. For more information on the environmental assessment and licensing process, visit https://www.manitoba.ca/sd/permits/licenses_approvals/eal/index.html.

We share **your** concerns about the health of Lake Winnipeg, and it is a key mandate priority for my department. We **will** continue to work **with** stakeholders to encourage collaboration, facilitate educational opportunities, and advance our knowledge and understanding of the Lake Winnipeg ecosystem

Thank you for sharing your concerns.

Sincerely, Honorable Tracy Schmidt Minister cc. The Honorable
Wab Kinew

Information References for Concerned Citizens regarding the Lagoon Development

- Manitoba Government, Environment and Climate Change, Permits, Licences and Approvals [Public Registry 6193](#)
- Express News Weekly [Nov 16 2023 Express Weekly](#)
- [CTV News Report](#)

Provincial Mandate Letters

Following the election of the New Democrat Government October 4, 2023, Premier Kinew provided each Minister with a mandate letter. These publicly available documents provide a framework of expectations for elected officials who receive a Ministerial appointment. Please visit [October 19 2023 Ministers Mandate](#) for more information.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Thank you to Candace Parks, AIS Specialist, Province of Manitoba, for sharing updated information.

When it comes to aquatic invasive species...

*“Why clean, drain and dry any way? - Why can't I just do a decontamination?”
Here is why.*

The Clean, Drain, Dry, and Decontaminate actions are sequential steps that each add layers of protection against the human spread of AIS.

Clean: means the physical removal of visible AIS, debris, animals, mud, and plants including algae. **This step removes AIS itself or substances where AIS can hide.**

Drain: means to get rid of standing water. This is where the hard-to-see and microscopic AIS can live and would not be otherwise removed by cleaning.

Dry: means eliminating any residual wetness or dampness missed in the cleaning and draining steps. For example, the action of wiping down surfaces can help crush any AIS and remove trace habitats, further decreasing the chance of their survival.

Decontamination is a disinfection procedure that aims to kill any overlooked AIS. Decontamination is an additional step following Clean Drain, Dry and only applies when items have been removed from an area known to have AIS. The risk of humans spreading AIS to other areas is much greater after being in an AIS invaded area. Thus, a greater risk of spreading AIS is met with a corresponding level of AIS protection.

Together, **Clean, Drain, Dry, and Decontaminate are additive steps to become free of AIS.** They target various stages and types of AIS to offset the level of risk our behaviours pose for spreading AIS to new areas.

For more information on Aquatic Invasive Species Detection please visit [AIS Detection](#)

If you are interested in more information regarding AIS and/or interested in a demonstration/training to detect AIS on watercraft and water related items please contact:

Candace Parks, AIS Specialist, Province of Manitoba
Cell: 204-232-8683 Toll Free: 1-877-867-2470 Email: AIS@gov.mb.ca

Winnipeg North End Water Pollution Control Centre: 2023 Progress and Challenges

The Winnipeg North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC) has largely been absent from the news cycle in 2023. It appears there has been both progress and accompanying challenges with the planned upgrades to this facility. Billed as one of the largest wastewater infrastructure projects in North America, the planned upgrades include improved treatment plant technology to protect our waterways by reducing the amount of nutrients we release into our rivers and lakes, including Lake Winnipeg.

The necessary upgrades are planned in three phases:

1. **NEWPCC Upgrade: Power Supply and Headworks Facilities**

A new power substation is required at NEWPCC to meet the additional power demand. Upgrades to the Headworks Facilities will provide new wastewater pumps and improved screening and grit removal. This project has been approved and funded.

Status - Project Ongoing. Not on time or budget. Estimated completion date Q2-Q3 2025 (subject to change; see challenges).

2. **NEWPCC Upgrade: Biosolids Facilities**

A new facility to turn wastewater sludge into biosolids and treat biosolids will be constructed. This project has been approved and funding from three levels of government was announced in 2022 (\$552 million, based on 2018 estimates).

Status – Currently in pre-construction phase. Estimated completion date Q4 2032. See Challenges.

3. **NEWPCC Upgrade: Nutrient Removal Facilities**

A new facility to remove nitrogen and phosphorus from our wastewater will be constructed. This project has not yet been approved or funded.

Interim Phosphorous Reduction - A plan to add an interim phosphorous reduction strategy to the NEWPCC upgrades was put forward and approved in 2020 to address the significant delays in upgrades to the nutrient removal facilities. The interim phosphorous reduction plan creates additional sludge, so expanding the Biosolids Facilities at the same time is critical for successful long-term implementation. Revised project timelines put forward in the February 2022 NEWPCC Upgrade Plan shows the target for “Total Performance” for Q3 2023. As of this writing, we can find no confirmation that the project was completed and brought fully online in 2023.

Phase 1 Challenges:

- Delays in obtaining permits for crucial construction phases, resulting in changes to timelines.
- Lagging design deliverables for Headworks project.
- Materially different site ground conditions on Headworks project were encountered, necessitating changes to design and build requirements.
- Northwest Interceptor failure (June 2023) due to an unknown preexisting crack in the concrete pipe combined with a significant rainfall event causing two excavated shafts to flood with sewage. This event had a significant impact on Phase 1 construction.

- **Implications:** Due to the materially different ground conditions and the NWI failure, a schedule extension will be required which will revise the substantial completion date of Q2-Q3 2025

Phase 2 Challenges:

- The newly approved 2023 budget for this project is \$1.035 billion. The current tri-level government funding agreement is based on the 2018 budget of \$552 million.
- Requests for additional funding have been sent to the province and federal government.
- **Implications:** Should additional funding not be secured, the City of Winnipeg will foot the bill for 64% of the total cost of Phase 2. This will have a substantial impact on rate payers with the estimated average household water and sewer bill (family of 4) rising by approximately 7% per year starting in 2029.

Information Session on the West Side of Lake Winnipeg

On September 23, 2023, the Silver Harbour Environment Committee organized a Public Forum on the Health of Lake Winnipeg at the Gimli Rec Centre.

Speakers included:

- The Lake Winnipeg Foundation
- The Manitoba Eco Network
- Canada Water Agency
- Eastern Interlake Water District
- Selkirk Waste Water Department
- Dr Eva Pip
- Robert Kristjanson
-

The presentations were well received but unfortunately provincial and local politicians were not present despite repeated invitations.

The NDP candidate Sarah Pinsent and MP James Bezan did attend as well as former Governor General Ed Schreyer.

Blue Green algae blooms were very prominent this year and lasted well into October. Frequent east winds pushed the algae into harbours and creeks. Fishers experienced the problems first hand. Lower catches and fouled nets were common through September and October. Considering that phosphorus is a main factor in the growth of Blue Green Algae Blooms, it is more important than ever that phosphorus discharges into ditches, rivers and lakes be drastically curtailed.

- **Would your community be interested in hosting an information session for residents? Contact the CSLW at cslakewinnipeg@gmail.com to connect.**