

West Interlake Watershed Conservation District 2010 Annual General Meeting – November 18, 2010

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 2010 year has been both a challenge and a success. Our manager resigned in December 2009 to pursue other opportunities; I was hired as the new manager/financial administrator. We also hired a part-time assistant administrator. We have delivered many successful projects this past year as outlined below.

The WIWCD is constantly exploring new programming but we have been focusing on five main areas:

Watershed Planning	Water
Soils	Wildlife/Fisheries
Public Education	

Watershed Planning

- The WIWCD signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Manitoba Water Stewardship and received a \$25,000 grant to initiate an Integrated Watershed Management Plan in 2010. This planning process has been postponed until 2011. We will be looking for volunteers to participate on the planning team in the coming months.

Soils

- The WIWCD purchased 300 composters, of which 228 were sold in 2009/10 and 50 in 2010/11 at a subsidized cost to watershed residents. Our urban residents and cottage owners found these units to be very beneficial in their yards.
- The WIWCD also purchased 298 rain barrels in 2010, of which 50 have been sold at a subsidized rate.

Public Education

- Three "Trapper Days" events were sponsored by the WIWCD - October 2008, February 2009, October 2009. All three 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 our programming and hand out application forms.
- The WIWCD has partnered with Oak Hammock Marsh to host school visits starting in November 2010. Oak Hammock Marsh will be organizing activities for Grade 1 – 8 in schools located in Lundar, Eriksdale, Inwood, Woodlands and two schools in St Laurent.

Wildlife/Fisheries

- 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. This study identified 12 priority projects for the rehabilitation of riparian and fish habitat and the improvement of water quality, of which 5 of these projects have been initiated by the WIWCD and local residents. These projects include riparian fencing and off-site watering systems which will help decrease cattle access to the creeks within the Swan Creek watershed, and ultimately, improve water quality, riparian areas and fish habitat.
- 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 study will be finalized in December 2010 by Mark Lowden of AAE Tech Services. The WIWCD looks forward to implementing the priority projects identified in this study, which will restore degraded fish habitat, improve water quality and enhance riparian areas.
- The WIWCD is planning to apply for another \$25,000 grant from Manitoba Water Stewardship's Fisheries Enhancement Fund for the 2011/12 season to conduct an Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Assessment of the Dog Lake watershed.

Water

- The Well Water Protection Program, which includes sealing of abandoned and flowing wells and well head protection, has had enormous interest. Eight wells were sealed in the 2008-2009 season, while 22 wells were sealed in 2009-2010 and nine wells were sealed in 2010. Another 6 wells will be sealed in the coming months. By the end of 2010-2011, 45 wells will be sealed by the WIWCD since its inception in October 2008.
- Through the Riparian Management Program, we conducted our first demonstration day in Lundar on July 30, 2009. This demonstration day featured information on off stream watering systems and riparian management practices. It was extremely well attended. The morning ended with a barbeque lunch provided by the WIWCD.
- On September 18, 2010, the WIWCD hosted a manure composter demonstration day which also generated great interest. Approximately 30 people were in attendance.
- The district has funded many riparian improvement projects over the last two years. One off-stream watering system was installed in the Dog Lake Sub District in 2009/10 and five projects have been initiated in 2010-2011 as a result of the Swan Creek Study. Riparian fencing and offsite watering systems are paid for by the WIWCD and the landowner is responsible for constructing the fence to WIWCD specifications. The five projects will be completed in the Spring of 2011. The WIWCD has had several landowners fill out applications for projects in 2011-2012, but we are always looking for more residents who are interested in our programming. Another three projects are being reviewed or have just got underway, for eight riparian fencing and off-stream projects in the 2010-2011 season. These projects will eliminate cattle access to creeks which will improve water quality, restore fish habitat and enhance riparian areas.
- The WIWCD initiated a well inventory program in the spring of 2009 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. The well inventory program was offered again in 2010 with two summer students. In the second season, a total of 328 homes were visited and 149 samples were taken.

Summary

Even with the wet conditions in 2009 and 2010, the WIWCD has successfully started a number of projects and will continue to support the residents of the WIWCD in protecting ground and surface water quality. The WIWCD is ready to take on another year of operation in 2011 - 2012.

If any sub-district members have ideas for programs or projects, please talk to myself, Linda Miller.

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

Hope you enjoy the supper.

Sincerely,

Linda Miller
Administrator/Manager