

Integrated Watershed Management Planning

What you should know before starting

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is a topographically defined area of land where the water within flows to a common point. Within a watershed, surface and groundwater are generally connected as water flows across the landscape through waterways or vertically through the various layers of soil and substrate. This movement of water across and through the landscape connects an area hydrologically.

Any activity that affects water quality, quantity, or flow rate in one part of the watershed may affect locations downstream. Understanding this connectivity within a watershed is helpful when planning or managing activities for the future. For this reason, to protect our water it makes sense to protect our watersheds.



There are many vital resources and complex interactions that occur in a watershed:

- wetlands store and purify water
- water, soils and vegetation provide habitat for all life
- natural stream meanders and floodplains dissipate energy, and decrease water velocity and soil erosion

Why use watershed boundaries?

A watershed-based approach to land and water management provides benefits that include: understanding how activities on the landscape influence water quality and quantity, fostering a connection to the landscape we live in, and ensuring activities upstream are respectful of downstream residents.

The Manitoba government has adopted this watershed-

based planning philosophy and is working with water planning authorities, such as Conservation Districts, to lead planning efforts.

Effective integrated watershed management planning is important in managing water and land development and maintaining a healthy and sustainable watershed community.

The Importance of Planning

Watershed groups have found a long list of economic, administrative, and ecological benefits to planning, including:

- helping local boards prioritize limited resources
- giving community members an active voice in protecting and restoring watershed resources that are important to them
- providing greater access to a number of resources for project implementation
- targeting activities and programs to areas that need greater protection, or to areas where limited resources will be most effective
- setting a baseline for measuring the success of management efforts
- reducing costs of remedial actions by preventing future problems

What is an Integrated Watershed Management Plan?

An integrated watershed management plan (IWMP) is a document developed cooperatively by government and stakeholders (watershed residents, interest groups). It states shared goals and outlines actions to manage land, water and related resources on a watershed basis.



Water residents discuss land and water issues during public consultations.

What Makes a Plan Integrated?

Watershed management plans are considered integrated because:

- the planning process is inclusive and broad, and combines the needs of diverse watershed stakeholders
- there is a recognition of the balance between ecosystem, community and economic health
- the process respects the integration of activities on the land and their impact on water

The Water Protection Act (2006) is enabling legislation that guides watershed planning and provides the basis for launching and financing an IWMP. The Act also includes provisions intended to ensure plans are linked to local development plans, further integrating water and land planning activities.

The Purpose of IWMP

The purpose of an IWMP is to identify priority land and water-related issues in the watershed, determine projects or policies targeted to address the issues, and identify how land and water management programming will be cooperatively carried out throughout the watershed.

<u>Actions</u>	<u>Organization</u>
* Install fencing along Big River in target areas	Conservation District
* Consider upstream area of Big River a sensitive area and include protections in development plan	Planning District
* teach grade 5 students about watershed health	Conservation District
* Better enforce illegal drainage activities	Province

An example of how plan actions work towards a broader goal for the watershed.

What is the Planning Process?

There are several key groups that are critical to developing a successful plan:

Water Planning Authority (WPA): The group that takes on the responsibility to develop an IWMP. The WPA must complete an IWMP in accordance with The Water Protection Act.

Project Management Team (PMT): This PMT is a small group of key decision makers appointed by the WPA to represent the interests of all watershed stakeholders. People on this team should include a representative from the WPA, those who have a special interest in the development of this plan, and a watershed planner. The PMT typically meets monthly during the development of a plan. Once a plan is implemented, the PMT is responsible for ensuring the plan is monitored and evaluated, and reporting that progress back to the Watershed Team.

Watershed Team: This group can be large (30 to 50 people) and is selected by the PMT. This team should include a diverse and committed group of people who represent stakeholder groups, or people who can contribute technical information about the watershed. The Watershed Team meets three to four times throughout a plan's development.

The adjoining table outlines the steps involved in each of the three main phases of the IWMP process (pre-planning, planning and implementation). The IWMP process takes one to two years, and is thoroughly revised every eight to 10 years.



Manitoba Conservation Districts are some of the many organizations that turn plans into action on the ground.

Pre-Planning

Once your group has decided to take part in the planning process there are a few pre-planning steps to follow:

One Talk to your regional watershed planner about your intent and their availability

Two Write a letter to your regional watershed planner that includes a request to initiate an IWMP, including a resolution of support

Three Gain status as a WPA through signing a memorandum of understanding between your watershed group and the Minister of Water Stewardship

Four Form a balanced Project Management Team (PMT) to fairly represent your group

Five Set the terms of the plan. The terms should include the purpose of the plan, a schedule, an outline of the roles and responsibilities for team members, and a proposed budget

Planning

One Host public meetings at locations throughout the watershed to gain input on local issues

Two Host a Watershed Team Meeting to share and review the public input on issues

Three Compile watershed characterization and an outline of the action plan

Four PMT will prepare and compile a rough outline of watershed plan to present to the group

Five Host a second Watershed Team meeting to discuss stakeholder commitments

Six Write a draft plan

Seven Host a third Watershed Team meeting to review budgets, measures of success and a timeline

Eight Host a public presentation and review

Nine Finalize IWMP and submit to minister

Implementation

One Implement actions and policies from IWMP

Two Monitor and evaluate actions

Three Revise plan

What does it cost to develop a plan?

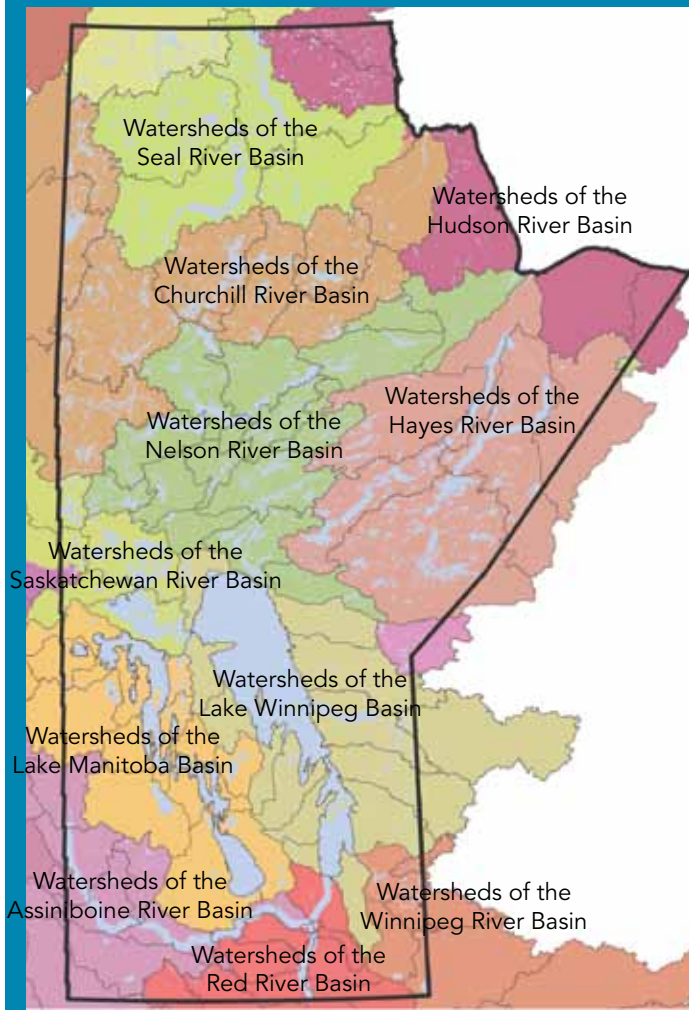
Each WPA is provided with a watershed planning grant of \$25,000 to offset expenses related to the development of the plan.

WPA expenses include printing costs, consultant fees, meeting fees (room bookings, refreshments, etc.).

In-kind support makes up the bulk of the costs when developing a plan. Each team member involved in the plan will dedicate valuable time, or in-kind support, to this effort. The value of this professional input can range from \$100,000 to \$200,000, provided at no cost to the WPA. Costs for developing an integrated watershed management plan are separate from the costs necessary to implement the plan.

Plan implementation is funded through many sources. Manitoba Water Stewardship supports plan implementation through the Conservation Districts Program. Other departments, organizations and individuals all contribute support as they begin initiating plan actions.

Watersheds of Manitoba



Contact Us

The Watershed Planning and Programs section of Manitoba Water Stewardship is available to assist groups to develop an integrated watershed management plan.

Your regional watershed planners can be reached at the following locations:

Brandon

Box 13 - 1129 Queens Avenue
Brandon, MB
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Ph: 204-726-6633

Dauphin

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