

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPONENT: Agassiz Resource Management
Limited

PROPOSAL NAME: Shannon Creek Irrigation Reservoir

CLASS OF DEVELOPMENT: Two

TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT: Water Development and Control

CLIENT FILE NO.: 4542.00

OVERVIEW:

The Proposal was received on July 31, 2000. It was dated July 31, 2000. The advertisement of the proposal was as follows:

“A Proposal has been filed by Agassiz Resource Management Ltd. (a holding company formed by the Agassiz Irrigation Association) to develop an irrigation reservoir adjacent to Shannon Creek in SW 11-4-5W in the Rural Municipality of Roland. The reservoir would be a replacement water source for the adjacent irrigation operation which has previously used the Winkler Aquifer as a water source. The capacity of the reservoir would be 160 acre-feet, and it would be filled from spring runoff in Shannon Creek. Construction is proposed for the fall of 2000.”

The Proposal was advertised in the Winkler Times on Monday, August 14, 2000. It was placed in the Main, Centennial, Eco-Network and South Central Regional Library (Morden) public registries. It was distributed to TAC members on August 4, 2000. The closing date for comments from members of the public and TAC members was August 28, 2000.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

No public comments were received.

COMMENTS FROM THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Manitoba Conservation - Water Quality Management Although the project description indicates that there will be a minimum 10 metre riparian zone setback from Shannon Creek to the toe of the reservoir, the Appendix includes an illustration of the reservoir location as being in the creek. Provided that the minimum 10 m setback from

the high water mark of Shannon Creek is adhered to, then the proposal appears to be a preferable alternative to using groundwater for irrigation purposes. Providing that the reservoir is filled during spring runoff as indicated in the proposal, then the water quality for irrigation purposes should be better than that of groundwater. However, it should be noted that evapotranspiration over the summer will increase the concentration of total dissolved solids and salts relative to concentrations noted for data collected in April.

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Disposition:

Discussions with the Proponent indicate that the reservoir would be an off-channel water storage facility. The approval of plans prior to construction can be required as a licence condition. The comment regarding summer water quality will be brought to the attention of the proponent for information and monitoring.

Manitoba Conservation - Terrestrial Quality Management Is this area going to be surveyed to see if there are any undisturbed areas and, if so, will these areas be assessed for rare and endangered floral and fauna species? As there are little riparian areas left and what is left is important, the construction work should attempt to keep the disturbance to a minimum. Finally, if possible, use native grass seed when seeding the flat slopes of the reservoir.

Disposition:

The project site was inspected on August 30, 2000. The area is a heavily grazed pasture with a willow grove on the eastern side. There is no undergrowth in the willow grove and only grass in the riparian zone of the stream, which is channelized and dry in this reach. Accordingly, no further assessment of flora and fauna is needed. The proposed setback of 10m will provide adequate protection to the creek to prevent sedimentation during construction. The comment about seeding with native grass seed can be addressed as a licence condition.

Manitoba Conservation – Policy Coordination This proposal does not cumulatively review the proposed water withdrawal in light of other licenced and pending allocations of water from Shannon Creek and the downstream minimum flow requirements for fisheries and other riparian needs. The proposal concludes that although there is good to excellent flows, the fish habitat is limited. This conclusion does not take into consideration the value of the habitat if fish were able to access the area. Input is needed from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans on the screening of the water intake.

Disposition:

The Water Resources Branch is in the process of completing a cumulative assessment of water withdrawals from Shannon Creek in connection with the project. It is anticipated that the assessment will be completed by mid-September, 2000, and that the requested allocation would be available. Instream flow requirements will be specified in a Water Rights Licence for the project. This matter can be addressed in an Environment Act Licence through a standard licence condition. With respect to fish habitat, a site visit indicates that the waterway is frequently dry, and the reach of interest is heavily pastured.

It is unlikely that access would be provided further downstream to allow fish movement into a low value reach of a highly intermittent stream. DFO comments on fish screening follow below.

Historic Resources Branch No concerns.

Mines Branch No concerns.

Highway Planning and Design No concerns.

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency An environmental assessment under The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act will be conducted by PFRA. Environment Canada, and Health Canada have offered to provide specialist advice in accordance with Section 12(3) of the Act. Fisheries and Oceans has requested more information prior to making their determination.

Fisheries and Oceans Additional information is required – there are possible intake screening needs, detailed construction drawings were not provided, instream works may or may not occur, clarification is required respecting the cumulative water allocation, instream flow needs have not been determined, erosion and sediment control planning is not complete, and possible flow regime changes have not been described.

Disposition:

Some of the requested information will be addressed in final construction drawings. The remainder can be addressed as licence conditions. With respect to intake screening, it is believed that the project location is well upstream of the fisheries area of interest. DFO has jurisdiction over intake screens, so will approve any necessary screen design directly.

PUBLIC HEARING:

As no public comments were received, a public hearing is not recommended.

RECOMMENDATION:

All comments received on the Proposal can be addressed as licence conditions. Therefore, it is recommended that the Development be licensed under The Environment Act subject to the limits, terms and conditions as described on the attached Draft Environment Act Licence. It is further recommended that enforcement of the Licence be assigned to the South-Central Region.

PREPARED BY:

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