

A message from the  
Premier and Minister:

**A STRATEGY  
FOR MANITOBA'S  
WATER FUTURE**

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November 2022

“...a comprehensive provincial water management strategy to conserve wetlands, enhance resiliency, improve surface water quality, manage nutrients, protect biodiversity and sustain economic development.”

- Ministerial mandate for the provincial water management strategy,  
March 2020



Honourable Heather Stefanson  
Premier of Manitoba



Honourable Jeff Wharton  
Minister of Environment,  
Climate and Parks

## Water for Today, Water for Tomorrow

We are at a critical time for the management of water, both in Manitoba and around the world.

Our water needs are increasing – to support growing communities across our province, to enable a transforming and globally-connected economy, to protect and conserve our environment, to support food production and security, and to sustain our ways of life and the traditions we cherish.

At the same time, our water supply, and the economic, social, and environmental values that depend on it, is becoming less predictable. Our climate is changing, and the waters we depend on are changing with it. Our hopes for the future – especially the hope that our children will enjoy a prosperous, sustainable economy, with healthy waters and a clean environment – will depend, increasingly, on how we manage this precious resource in a time of growing water uncertainty.

It is our responsibility – as a province, as citizens of our communities, and as individuals – to make water decisions with wisdom, foresight, and with our responsibilities to future generations fully in mind.

Water cannot be managed separately from the landscapes and environment of our province. Our economy and our communities are inseparably embedded in the natural world.



To successfully address the water challenges and opportunities that we face, Manitoba needs a new, coordinated, and comprehensive provincial water management strategy, and we are excited to launch this new direction for Manitoba's water future.

Manitoba's needs are clear. We must invest in and advance priority water infrastructure to meet economic and community needs. We must prepare for droughts, floods, and the growing variability of our water resources. We must conserve our water resources and use them more efficiently. And we must strengthen and expand our data, knowledge, and understanding of Manitoba's water resources, how we use them, how we affect them, and how we can sustain them.

Innovative solutions, collaboration, and long-lasting partnerships between governments, business, and water stakeholders will be required to meet these challenges. Seizing opportunities for partnership and advancing new approaches and technologies will be essential to sustain economic and community growth for Manitobans now and into the future.

This strategy charts a course for water that balances our economic, environmental, and social needs, a course that focusses our efforts and energies on addressing these challenges and making the most of the remarkable water resources that define Manitoba. It is a statement of the principles we hold, the values we espouse, and the priorities we pursue.

## Strong Foundations in Water Management

### *Climate and Green Plan*

- Releasing the Climate and Green Plan in 2017 with its water pillar and a vision to make Manitoba Canada's cleanest, greenest, and most climate resilient province. This includes introduction of *The Climate and Green Plan Implementation Act* (2018), a \$40 million Climate and Green Fund for projects to help reduce emissions and adapt to climate change (2018), and formation of the Expert Advisory Council (2019).
- Investing \$204 million to enhance ecological goods and services on working landscapes, through establishment of the Conservation Trust (\$102-million investment, 2018), the GROW (Growing Outcomes in Watersheds) Trust (\$52-million investment, 2019), and the Wetlands GROW Trust (\$50-million investment, 2020).

### *Water and Resource Management*

- Implementing *The Sustainable Watersheds Act* (2018), to:
  - o better enable watershed-based management;
  - o modernize the Watershed Districts Program, building on decades of successful provincial-municipal partnership through Conservation Districts (now Watershed Districts);
  - o establish nutrient targets for Lake Winnipeg and its main tributaries;

- o enshrine a no-net loss of wetland benefits within Manitoba's process for licensing of drainage and control works; and
- o streamline Manitoba's drainage approval process and eliminate the drainage licensing backlog.
- Expanding Manitoba's Watershed District Program to 109 municipalities, and investing an additional \$1.13 million in annual funding for the program, since 2019.
- Investing \$1 million in a Water Strategy Fund, administered by the Enterprise Machine Intelligence and Learning Initiative, to support engagement on the water strategy and to complete three projects to inform strategy development and implementation (Predictive Water Supply/Demand Tool; Return on Investment in Irrigation Expansion; Improving Water Conservation and Efficiency).
- Renewing Manitoba's partnership with Saskatchewan to improve water management across our shared watersheds (2021), and establishing a new memorandum of understanding with Canada on Lake Winnipeg and its basin (2021).
- Investing \$14.0 million since 2019 to establish and implement programs that support the sustainability and certification of Manitoba's fisheries.
- Implementing the Recreational Angling Strategy (2021), including proposed angling regulation changes to increase angling opportunities and enhance Manitoba's valuable fish populations.

### ***Infrastructure and Resilience***

- Investing \$48.1 million in Manitoba's disaster fighting infrastructure, including:
  - o Delivering \$32.1 million in funding under the Disaster Prevention and Climate Resiliency program for 18 projects that enhance municipal climate resilience
  - o Investing \$16 million in Provincial Road 246 to create an alternate route to Provincial Trunk Highway 75 during flood events.
- Implementing the innovative Mitigation and Preparedness Program (MPP) that allows municipalities to reinvest their municipal Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) deductible to build local resiliency against natural disasters, extreme weather events, and the impacts of climate change. Over \$717,000 in municipal DFA deductibles for the 2020 MPP and up to a maximum of \$2.6 million in municipal DFA deductibles for the 2022 program will be invested in 89 local projects.
- Investing in water and wastewater infrastructure worth approximately \$1.6 billion in Total Project Costs through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP), including:
  - o City of Brandon Water Treatment Facility Upgrade and Expansion
  - o Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC) Headworks and Biosolids Facilities Upgrades
  - o Red-Seine-Rat (RSR) Wastewater Treatment Facility & Conveyance System
- Investing \$540 million cost-shared between Manitoba and Ottawa to build new flood management infrastructure for the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin outlet channels (2018), including establishment of an Environmental Advisory Committee and a \$15 million dollar fund to support Indigenous economic development opportunities (2022).

## *Agriculture*

- Enhancing the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program for producers through the development of a new online platform that streamlines content and delivery. The governments of Manitoba and Canada invested \$990,000 through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP).
- Investing over \$14 million since 2018 through the Watershed Ecological Goods and Services, Environment Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) and Agricultural Crown Land Forage Productivity activities under CAP to support the on-farm adoption of water-related initiatives and climate-resilient practices.
- Investing more than \$85 million from the provincial and federal governments under AgriRecovery into three new programs to assist livestock producers respond to the 2021 drought:
  - Livestock Feed and Transportation Drought Assistance
  - Livestock Transportation Drought Assistance
  - Herd Management Drought Assistance
- Enhancing Manitoba's Ag Weather Service to Manitobans by investing \$1.4 million of Provincial and Federal funding through CAP. The Ag Weather network has 120 weather stations across agri-Manitoba with equipment that provides real time monitoring of soil moisture.
- Signing a fourth memorandum of understanding between Manitoba, Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) and Fertilizer Canada to reaffirm the ongoing commitment to 4R Nutrient Stewardship (Right Source of Nutrient @ the Right Rate, Right Time and Right Place), a science-based framework that promotes the sustainable use of nutrients in crop production.
- Supporting the co-ordination of Living Labs - Eastern Prairies by the Manitoba Association of Watersheds.

## A Commitment to Partnership

We are building on a strong foundation of water management. Our province has made significant strides towards more effective and coordinated water management in recent years through key investments, legislation, and programming.

This is only a beginning and there is more to be done. We will make changes in how we manage water as we contend with the water challenges of our times. The provincial government is committed to providing the resources required to implement this strategy. We cannot stay this course alone. With the launch of the water management strategy, we are asking Manitobans for their help.

This **water management strategy** provides high-level direction and establishes strategic objectives that will guide Manitoba's water management for many years to come. The strategy will be supported by a **water action plan**, planned for release in spring 2023, which will include a focused, near-term program of actions, partnerships, and investments to achieve the objectives of the strategy.

Throughout development of the water strategy, hundreds of Manitobans were engaged including other governments, communities, organizations, agencies and businesses so that we could understand their water priorities and how a water strategy can help address them.

These voices and perspectives have shaped the water strategy, and this conversation will continue. As we work to transform the vision and objectives of the water strategy into actions, we will continue engage Manitobans in the development of a water action plan, for release in spring 2023.

We recognize that Indigenous Peoples have a unique and immensely important relationship with water. Opportunities for Indigenous inclusion in water management are expanding, and Manitoba is committed to collaborating on shared water priorities. A dedicated engagement with Indigenous communities and peoples is an important step on this road.

It is also crucial that Manitoba continues to balance its on-going industry expansion and attraction efforts with the need to maintain a sustainable water supply for future generations. That is why, as we continue to grow the economy, we will look to industry to support the development and implementation of innovative solutions and new technologies to help address our shared water needs.

Together, we can grow Manitoba's economy sustainably, build our communities resiliently, and preserve and protect our vibrant natural environment.



## To Learn More

Please visit <https://engagemb.ca/water-strategy> to learn more about the strategy and the latest engagement opportunities.