

**MANITOBA CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS PROGRAM**
2018-19 ANNUAL REPORT



**MINISTER
OF AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA
R3C 0V8

Her Honour the Honourable Janice C. Filmon, C.M., O.M.
Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba
Room 235
Legislative Building
Winnipeg MB R3C 0V8

Your Honour:

As Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development, I have the privilege of presenting the Annual Report of the Conservation Districts of Manitoba for the year ending March 31, 2019, including audited financial statements for the same period.

One of the most successful land and water programs in Canada, Manitoba's Conservation Districts Program reinforces government priorities by targeting investment in projects that improve water quality, enhance surface water management, safeguard drinking water sources and protect sensitive wildlife and aquatic habitat. Evolving to the Watershed Districts Program through The Sustainable Watersheds Act, districts will continue to improve watershed health and resilience with demonstrated value for investment. Watershed districts will also play a key partnership role in delivering Growing Outcomes in Watersheds (GROW), designed to secure ecological goods and services for the benefit of all Manitobans.

I am pleased to share the accomplishments of the districts in this annual report and I look forward to an exciting year ahead for the program.

Respectfully submitted,

original signed by

Blaine Pedersen



THE MANITOBA CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PROGRAM

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS IN MANITOBA

Manitoba's Conservation Districts Program creates healthy and sustainable watersheds through land and water stewardship programs and partnerships. With funding from the Manitoba government and municipalities, locally-appointed conservation district boards make planning and management decisions to improve watershed health across most of municipal Manitoba.

VISION

The Conservation Districts Program will strive to create healthy watersheds to support watershed residents, the environment, and the economy for the present and the future.

MANDATE

Conservation districts lead integrated watershed management planning and play a key role in plan implementation. Through a shared governance model and citizen engagement, conservation districts deliver local solutions to complex issues – contributing to healthier, more resilient watersheds.

PRINCIPLES

The Conservation Districts Program:

- functions as a partnership between levels of government while engaging local citizens
- is cost-shared by provincial and municipal government partners
- is incentive-based and not regulatory
- relies on local decision-making through conservation district boards and subdistricts with support from technical experts to solve local issues
- uses watershed management planning to guide decision-making and programming

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS IN MANITOBA

CONTACT INFORMATION

Alonsa	204-767-2101
Assiniboine Hills	204-535-2139
Cooks Creek	204-777-2223
East Interlake	204-642-7578
Intermountain	204-742-3764
Kelsey	204-623-3353
Lake of the Prairies	204-564-2388
La Salle Redboine	204-526-2578
Little Saskatchewan River	204-566-2270
Pembina Valley	204-242-3267
Seine-Rat River	204-326-1030
Swan Lake Watershed	204-734-9550
Turtle Mountain	204-747-2530
Turtle River Watershed	204-447-2139
Upper Assiniboine River	204-567-3554
West Interlake Watershed	204-762-5850
West Souris River	204-877-3020
Whitemud Watershed	204-476-5019

PROVINCIAL GRANTS

\$293,000
\$316,000
\$310,000
\$300,000
\$268,000
\$155,000
\$200,000
\$200,000
\$200,000
\$359,500
\$378,000
\$225,000
\$303,000
\$431,000
\$270,000
\$200,000
\$203,500
\$700,000
\$5,312,000

PROVINCIAL WATERSHED SUPPORT

The Watershed Planning and Programs Section of Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development administers and manages The Conservation Districts Program under the authority of The Conservation Districts Act. The Section also coordinates and supports watershed management planning as outlined in The Water Protection Act. For more information, please visit manitobawatersheds.ca.

PROGRAM FUNDING

Provincial Grant:

\$5,312,000

The Manitoba government provides an annual grant to each conservation district to implement integrated watershed management plans in their local watersheds.

Municipal Levies:

\$1,770,667

Participating municipalities match provincial grant contributions at a 3 to 1 ratio, meaning municipalities provide \$1 for every \$3 the province contributes. Municipalities appoint members to conservation district boards to implement programming and projects relevant to their local watersheds.

Other Funding:

\$3,322,114

Federal \$1,412,341
Additional municipal \$478,980
Additional provincial \$242,009
Non-governmental \$1,188,784
Additional funding is obtained from a variety of sources, including environmental organizations, industry, and government programs.

Total Program Funding: \$10,404,781

PROGRAM SPENDING BY ACTIVITY

Conservation district programming reflects provincial and local priorities. Conservation districts design programming to meet goals, objectives and actions identified in their integrated watershed management plans. Although programming and project types vary between individual conservation districts, programming generally falls within five main categories:

Surface Water Management

59%

Includes water retention, erosion control, grassed waterways, wetland restoration and drain maintenance

Nutrient Reduction and Water Quality

20%

Includes exclusion fencing, alternative watering systems and riparian buffer strips

Habitat Conservation and Enhancement

10%

Includes conservation agreements, habitat leases, tree planting and aquatic restoration

Watershed Awareness and Education

7%

Includes research partnerships, water festivals, producer workshops, tours and presentations

Drinking Water Protection

4%

Includes abandoned well sealing and wellhead remediation

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

HEALTHIER,
MORE RESILIENT
WATERSHEDS

STRONG RURAL
COMMUNITIES

SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTION

ENHANCED WATERSHED PLANNING



- Develops a shared vision and coordinated action for watersheds
- Provides funding for targeted, on-the-ground action to address local and provincial priorities
- Builds local capacity for cooperation, improved communication and local knowledge sharing
- Builds and strengthens local, provincial and federal partnerships

REDUCED IMPACTS OF FLOODING



- Builds watershed resiliency to adapt to a changing climate
- Targets and prioritizes water retention and peak flow reduction projects
- Identifies and co-ordinates surface water projects on a watershed basis
- Prevents and mitigates flood and drought events
- Builds soil health and water retention capacity of soils

IMPROVED LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



- Conserves and restores aquatic, riparian and prairie habitat
- Protects and enhances ecological goods and services
- Fosters linkages between land development planning and watershed planning
- Conserves important habitat
- Promotes sustainable land management

IMPROVED WATER QUALITY



- Increases local capacity to monitor and understand trends in water quality
- Implements projects to improve water quality and reduce nutrient loading
- Improves soil health and reduces the need for over-application of nutrients on agricultural lands
- Fosters collaboration between technical professionals and local land managers to improve water quality

PROTECTION OF DRINKING WATER



- Conducts source water protection planning for public drinking water systems
- Provides recommendations and implements actions to improve local drinking water quality
- Implements projects to assess and protect drinking water quality
- Fosters collaboration between technical professionals and local people to monitor groundwater quality, assess groundwater issues and implement projects aimed at protecting local groundwater sources

PROSPEROUS RURAL DEVELOPMENT



- Provides direct injection of government funding into rural communities, increasing local ability to leverage additional sources of external funding
- Supports rural employment and local businesses
- Educates youth and local land managers
- Manages waterway infrastructure to support a productive agricultural landscape and rural development



- 23 watershed management plans being implemented
- One new watershed plan completed
- Three watershed plans in development
- One watershed plan in renewal



- 40 water storage projects with 1,957 decametres (1,586 acre-feet) of storage created
- 221 km of drains maintained or reconstructed
- 192 crossings replaced or repaired



- 115 hectares (284 acres) of land protected through conservation agreements
- Seven hectares of aquatic habitat rehabilitated
- 92,634 trees planted
- 1,194 kilometres of shelterbelts established



- 54 erosion control structures established
- 27 grassed waterways created
- 11 gully stabilization and 13 streambank stabilization projects completed



- 136 surface water quality sites tested
- 738 private wells tested
- 180 abandoned wells sealed



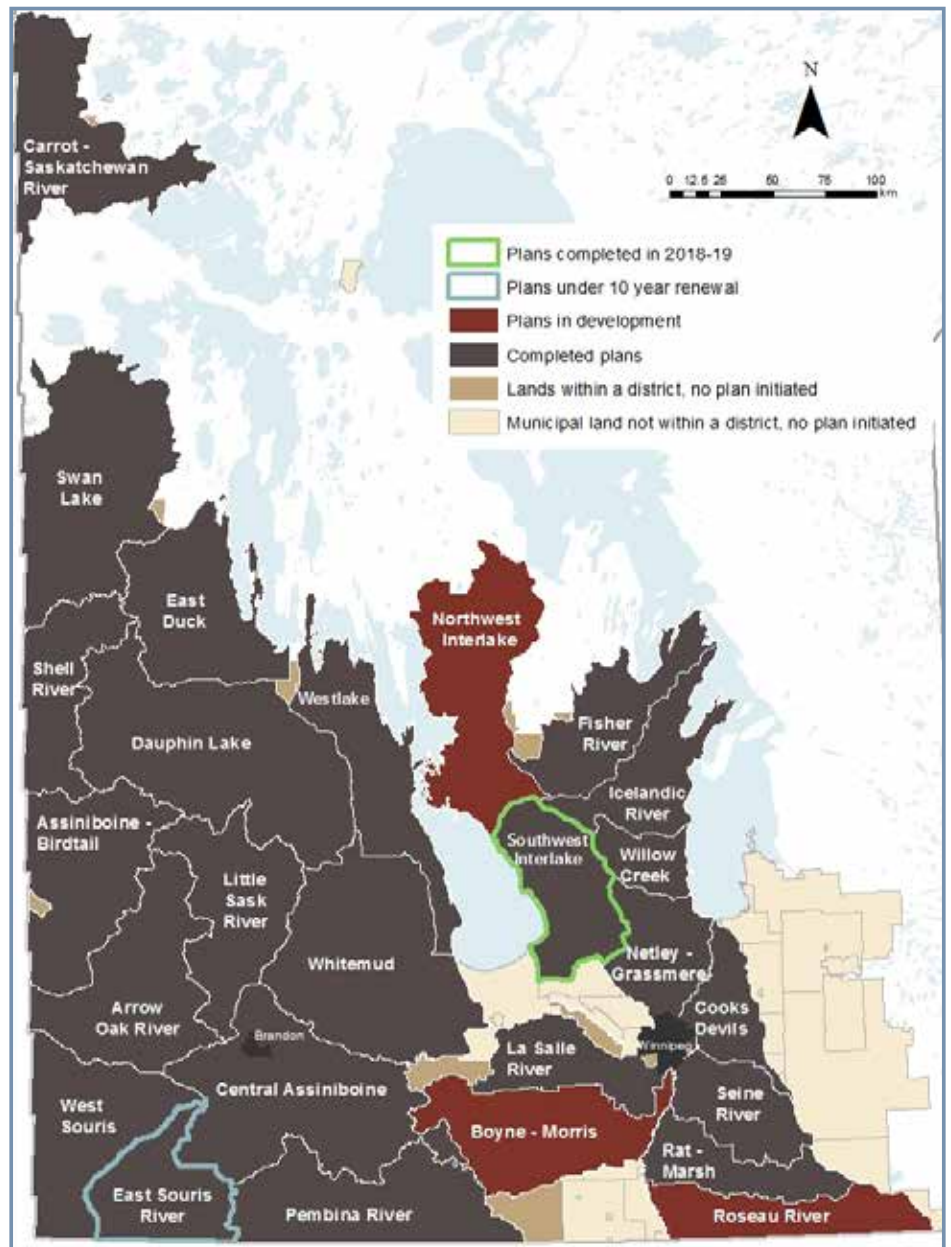
- 3,826 students attended water festivals
- 102 tours and demonstrations with 1,556 attendees
- 46 full-time and 40 part-time and seasonal staff employed

2018-19 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Watershed management plans provide a decision-making framework for the protection, restoration and management of water, aquatic ecosystems, and drinking water sources. The planning process engages watershed residents, stakeholders and government to identify and prioritize watershed issues, gather and analyze local, technical, and traditional knowledge, and develop recommendations to address priority issues in targeted areas. Plan implementation is shared by conservation districts, all levels of government, stakeholder organizations and watershed residents.

Conservation districts have initiated 27 integrated watershed management plans as of 2018-19, of which 23 plans are complete, three plans are at various stages of development, and one plan has begun its 10 year renewal process.



ENHANCING WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The first integrated watershed management plan developed under Manitoba's Water Protection Act, the East Souris River watershed plan, was completed in 2006. Since that time, 22 additional plans have been completed, evolving over time as experience, collaboration and technical capacity have grown. In particular, technical support for watershed planning has become more focused over time as numerous government departments provide background data relevant to the watershed (i.e., water quality, groundwater, and hydrology data; public drinking water source data; land cover and agricultural trends; development plan goals; infrastructure inventories; and others). Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development technical staff have been invaluable in the development of Distributed Water Retention Studies and Drought Mitigation Plans, stand-alone technical documents that support newer watershed plans. For additional information on integrated watershed management plans, please visit manitobawatersheds.ca.

CUMULATIVE PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Conservation districts have built 183 water retention projects since 2014 with 7,374 decameters (5,978 acre-feet) of water storage capacity. This is equivalent to more than three times the water storage capacity of Lake Minnedosa.



To improve water flow and reduce flooding, four conservation districts with a waterway infrastructure management mandate have maintained 8,000 km of drains since 2014.

Since 2014, conservation districts have installed over 185 km of riparian fencing and 186 off-site watering systems to exclude 53,912 cattle from riparian areas, improving water quality and riparian habitat.



Over the last 10 years, conservation districts have planted over half a million trees. It is estimated that these trees sequester over 3,000 tonnes of carbon per year. This is the equivalent of taking 750 cars off of Manitoba's roads every year.

Over the last five years, conservation districts have sealed 1,123 abandoned wells and conducted 4,752 drinking water tests to safeguard private drinking water sources.



In the past five years, conservation districts have held 125 producer workshops and 272 project tours, educating 6,472 participants on healthy soil and water management practices.

2018-19 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Activity	Projects	Sites	Storage (dam ³)	Km	Hectare	Head of Cattle	Trees	Attendees
Surface Water Management								
Aerial surveys	18			51				
Beaver bounty incentives	668							
Beaver dam removal		192						
Beaver management		8						
Drainage licences reviewed	155							
Drop inlet	1		3					
Erosion control structures	27	54						
Gated culverts	1		4					
Grassed waterway	27				104			
Gully stabilization	11				31			
Hydraulic assessments	58	56						
Infrastructure brushing/mowing	245			1,650				
Infrastructure crossing maintenance	180							
Infrastructure crossing replacements and major repairs	12							
Infrastructure drain maintenance	90			192				
Infrastructure drain reconstruction	12			29				
Infrastructure inventory	11	864						
Streambank stabilization	13				14			
Surface water flow and retention assessment	130							
Urban rain gardens		5						
Water retention (<50 dam ³)	38		1,822					
Water retention (>50 dam ³)	2		135					
Water retention project maintenance	41							
Weirs	1							
Nutrient Reduction and Water Quality								
Forage buffer strips	6				238			
Groundwater testing		43						
Livestock – alternative watering systems	64					12,265		
Livestock confinement relocation	1					150		
Livestock crossings	8					1,000		
Livestock exclusion fencing	41			73		9,100		
Livestock pasture pipeline	11			18		2,150		
Livestock rotational grazing	2				130	50		
Soil health – forage seed	61				1,296			
Soil health – polycrop trials		7			64			
Soil health – salinity seed	17				63			
Soil health – soil testing		23						
Surface water testing		110						
Surface water testing – ARD partnership		26						

Activity	Projects	Sites	Storage (dam ³)	Km	Hectare	Head of Cattle	Trees	Attendees
Drinking Water Protection								
Abandoned well sealing	180							
Drinking water testing		738						
Well establishment	11							
Well head remediation		7						
Well inventory		413						
Well shock chlorination		42						
Habitat Conservation and Enhancement								
Aquatic habitat creation	12				7			
Conservation agreements	4				126			
Conservation corridors	451				2,165			
Fish – lake aeration		2						
Fish – rearing ponds	1							
Fish – stocking	2							
Habitat lease	22	281			820			
Land acquisition		2			128			
Nature trails	27			73				
Property maintenance	19							
Riparian and aquatic assessments	2	25		36				
Trees – community tree nursery	1						1,400	
Trees – field and property shelterbelts				1,194			27,549	
Trees – tree planting	33						3,899	
Trees – seedlings provided	1,086						59,786	
Watershed Awareness and Education								
Banquets and watershed functions	13							950
Beneficial management practices research	4	54						
Brochures	413	18,613						
Demonstration and tours	43							1,164
Eco-tourism	2							
Geographic information system and aerial photos	354							
Project or interpretive signs	66							
Project tours	59							392
Rain barrels	89							
Strategic planning	13							
Video and documentary	1							
Water festivals	15							3,826
Water use conservation planning	1							
Website and social media	38							
Youth education	123							6,843

MUNICIPAL PARTNERS

104 MUNICIPALITIES ARE PARTNERS IN THE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PROGRAM

VILLAGES

Dunnottar
St. Pierre – Jolys

TOWNS

Carberry
Carman
Minnedosa
Neepawa
Niverville
Ste. Anne
Stonewall
Swan River
Teulon
Virden
Winnipeg Beach

CITIES

Brandon
Dauphin
Morden
Selkirk
Steinbach

MUNICIPALITIES

Alonsa
Arborg
Argyle
Armstrong
Bifrost – Riverton
Boissevain – Morton
Brenda – Waskada
Brokenhead
Cartier
Cartwright – Roblin
Clanwilliam – Erickson
Coldwell
Cornwallis
Dauphin
Deloraine – Winchester
De Salaberry
Dufferin
Ellice – Archie
Elton
Emerson – Franklin
Ethelbert
Fisher
Gilbert Plains
Gimli
Glenboro – South Cypress
Glenella – Lansdowne
Grahamdale
Grandview

Grassland
Grey
Hamiota
Hanover
Harrison – Park
Kelsey
Killarney – Turtle Mountain
La Broquerie
Lakeshore
Lorne
Louise
McCreary
Minitonas – Bowsman
Minto – Odanah
Montcalm
Mossey River
Mountain
Norfolk – Treherne
North Cypress – Langford
North Norfolk
Oakland – Wawanesa
Oakview
Pembina
Piney
Pipestone
Portage la Prairie
Prairie Lakes
Prairie View
Reynolds

Riding Mountain West
Ritchot
Riverdale
Roblin
Rockwood
Rosedale
Rossburn
Rosser
Russell – Binscarth
Sifton
Souris – Glenwood
Springfield
St. Andrews
St. Laurent
Stanley
Ste. Anne
Ste. Rose
Stuartburn
Swan Valley West
Taché
Thompson
Two Borders
Victoria
Wallace – Woodworth
West Interlake
West St. Paul
Westlake – Gladstone
Woodlands
Yellowhead

2018-19 PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Canada Summer Jobs
Canadian Agricultural Partnership – Ag Action Manitoba
Environment and Climate Change Canada
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND CROWN CORPORATIONS

Manitoba Agriculture
Manitoba Emergency Measures
Manitoba Fisheries and Wildlife Enhancement Fund
Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation
Manitoba Hometown Greenteam
Manitoba Hydro
Manitoba Sustainable Development

NON – GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

ALUS Canada
Brandon University
Deerwood Soil and Water Management Association
Ducks Unlimited Canada
ECO Canada
Enbridge
Lake Winnipeg Foundation
North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action
Nature Conservancy of Canada
Royal Bank of Canada
Sunrise Credit Union
Tundra Oil & Gas
Watershed Residents and many local community groups
and foundations

NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

In December 2018, the Manitoba government created the Conservation Trust, a \$102 million endowment managed by The Winnipeg Foundation and administered by the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation that supports projects aimed at preserving nature and addressing climate change. The fund is expected to generate several million dollars per year for projects that will be undertaken by Manitoba conservation-based not-for-profit groups in five categories: Watersheds, Habitat and Wildlife, Connecting People to Nature, Innovation and Conservation Planning, and Enhancing Soil Health. Manitoba's conservation districts are expected to be well positioned to secure funding in all categories.

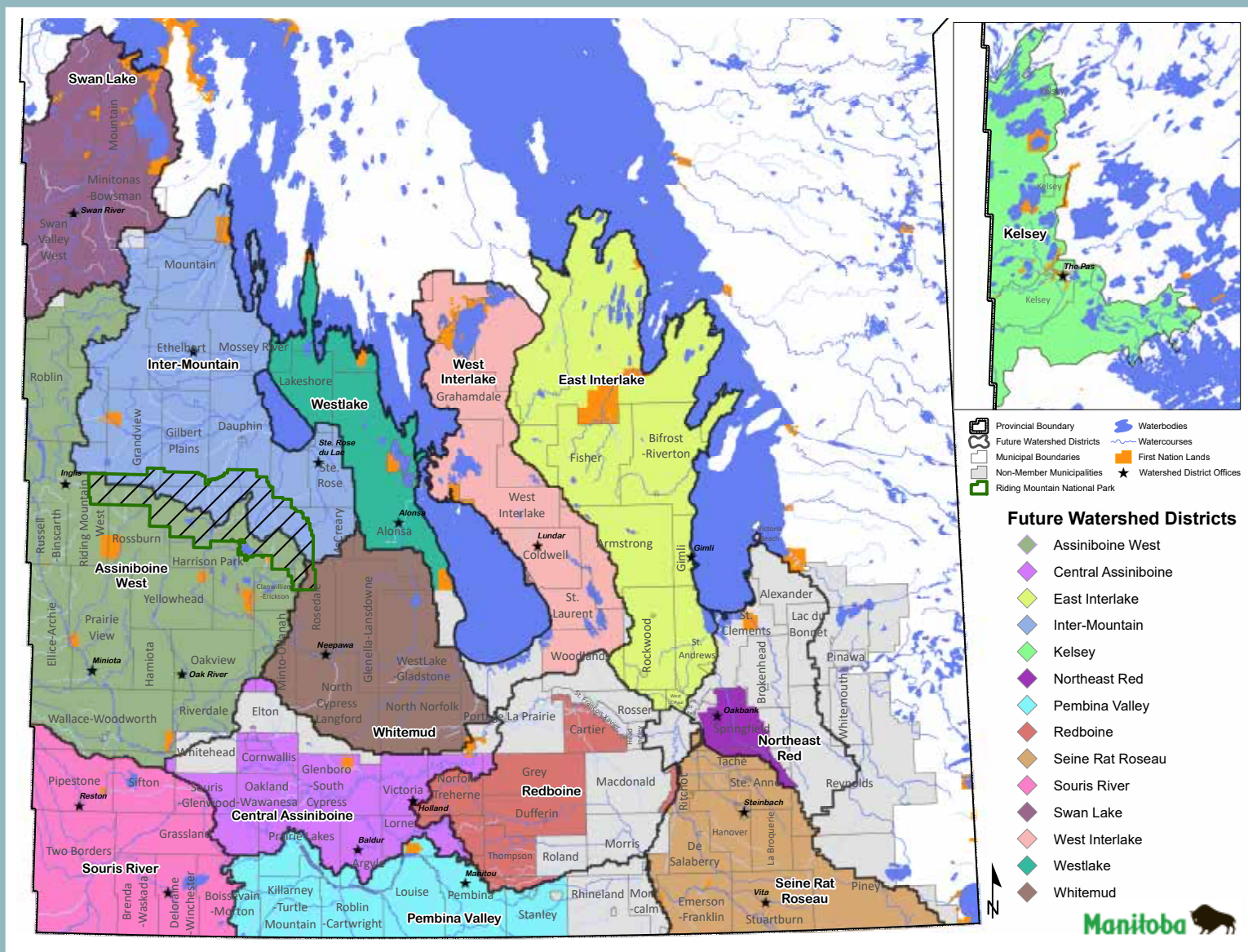


In addition to these partnerships, many municipalities contribute more than their required matching funds each year in support of the high quality programs and projects completed by districts.

TRANSITIONING TO WATERSHED DISTRICTS

UPDATE ON MODERNIZING MANITOBA'S CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PROGRAM

In 2018-19, the Manitoba government took additional steps to modernize Manitoba's Conservation Districts Program. As water does not follow administrative or political boundaries, watersheds are considered the most appropriate unit to plan and manage water and activities on the land that impact water. Reorganizing districts to watershed-based boundaries will be an important step in moving toward a true watershed-based approach to managing water in Manitoba.





In June 2018, the Manitoba government passed The Sustainable Watersheds Act, which amended four pieces of legislation, including The Conservation Districts Act. When proclaimed, The Conservation Districts Act will become The Watershed Districts Act. Amendments to the Act support a truly holistic and watershed-based approach to water management in Manitoba by:

1. Realigning the boundaries of conservation districts to reflect watershed boundaries. This includes a name change from conservation districts to watershed districts.
2. Enabling watershed districts to enter into agreements with non-municipal entities, including Indigenous communities, communities under the authority of Indigenous and Northern Relations, and industry. This supports a holistic and watershed-based approach to managing water and implementing watershed management plans.
3. Adding flexibility for watershed district boards to appoint up to two non-municipal members-at-large to their boards, if the board wishes to do so.
4. Providing watershed districts with options for using apportionment or total portioned land assessment to calculate levy contributions from member municipalities.
5. Strengthening connections between watershed districts established under The Watershed Districts Act and watershed management plans developed under The Water Protection Act.
6. Streamlining program administration to reduce red tape.

In 2018-19, the Manitoba government worked with districts and their member municipalities to delineate the future boundaries of watershed districts and to develop establishment proposals for each new proposed district.

Conservation district staff and boards have been instrumental in guiding their partner municipalities through the transition, in many cases strengthening already-existing partnerships, and forging new ones. Working toward the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, conservation districts and Indigenous communities have also initiated relationship-building in anticipation of working together under new legislative provisions in The Watershed Districts Act.

For more information on the transition to watershed districts, integrated watershed management planning, and The Watershed Districts Act, please visit manitobawatersheds.ca.



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