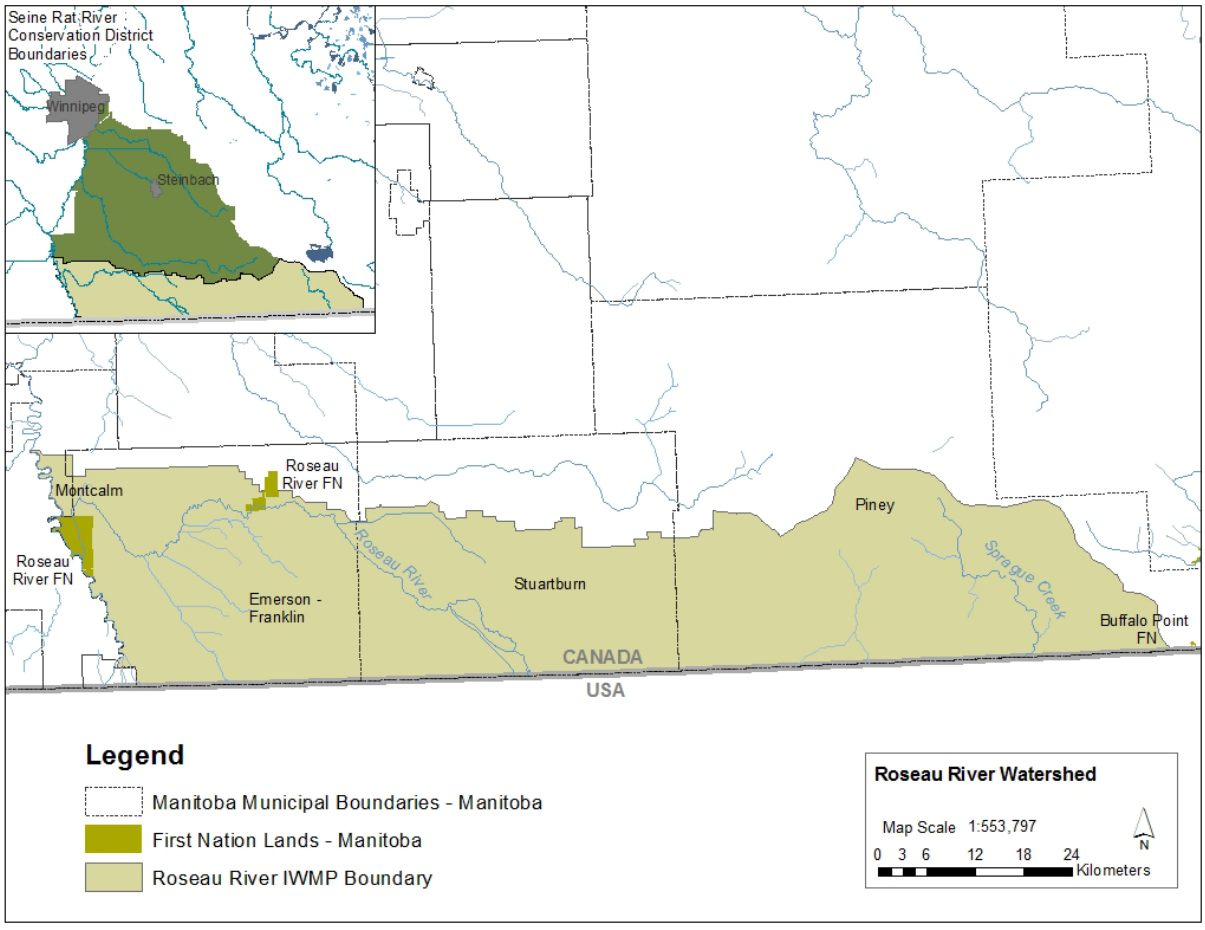
What We Heard:
Public Engagement Meetings for the Roseau River Integrated Watershed Management Plan

INTRODUCTION

In September 2014, the Province of Manitoba designated the Seine Rat River Conservation District (SRRCD) as the Watershed Planning Authority for the Roseau River Watershed. This designation granted the SRRCD with the authority and responsibility to create an integrated watershed management plan (IWMP) for the Roseau River Watershed (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Roseau River Watershed



PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Early in the planning process, the SRRCD formed a Project Management Team (PMT) to guide development of the Roseau River IWMP.

The Project Management Team includes:

Jim Swidersky (PMT Chair)	Rural Municipality of Stuartburn (Reeve)
Cornie Goertzen	Seine Rat River Conservation District (Chair)
Greg Janzen	Municipality of Emerson-Franklin (Reeve)
Harold Janzen	Rural Municipality of Montcalm (Councilor)
Ken Prociw	Rural Municipality of Piney (Councilor)
Ed Penner	Rural Municipality of Stuartburn (Councilor)
Jodi Goerzen	Seine Rat River Conservation District (Manager)
Dorthea Gregoire	Seine Rat River Conservation District (Technician)
Dale Timmerman	Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND ON-LINE SURVEY

One of the first steps in the development of the plan was to hold public meetings to discuss what residents of the watershed value within the planning area. Three public meetings were held in January and February 2016: Vassar (January 28), Dominion City (February 10), and Vita (February 11). A total of one hundred and eleven watershed residents participated.

Location	**Number of Participants**
Vassar	35
Dominion City	36
Vita	40
TOTAL	**111**

In addition to the public meetings, a survey was mailed to each household in the watershed and posted on the SRRCD's website allowing watershed residents the opportunity to provide input into the Roseau River IWMP process through a means other than attending one of the three public meetings. Seven surveys were completed and submitted for input.

The discussions and feedback from the public meetings and surveys are reported in this document and will provide direction to the PMT on the scope and priorities of the integrated watershed management plan. Participants were asked to indicate what they considered to be the most important issues in the Roseau River Watershed, to identify what they value, and to provide potential solutions related to these issues. Participants were also asked to provide specific information on drought vulnerability and preparedness, as well as, to identify opportunities for permanent or temporary water storage.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Surface Water Management emerged as the most important issue to people in the watershed at all three public meetings. Key surface water management issues included peak flows on the Roseau River, water flow restrictions or lack of, flooding and inundation, land drainage, water retention and jurisdictional water management issues between Canada and the United States of America.

Water Quality, including both Groundwater and Surface water, were the second and third most important issues for residents of the watershed. Key water quality issues included clean and abundant ground and surface water for domestic use, clean and abundant ground and surface water to support wildlife, aquatic life and recreation, and clean water through functioning and healthy riparian areas.

Ecosystem Health and Natural Areas emerged as the fourth most important issue. Key ecosystem health and natural areas issues included functioning and healthy riparian areas and buffer zones for additional water quality benefits beyond just for domestic use, preserving plant and animal biodiversity in the watershed, and many elements of recreation such as development, access, use and enjoyment as it relates to the Roseau River.

Table 1 outlines the watershed priorities, as well as, the assets and issues that were identified by watershed residents at the public meetings and from the online surveys (priorities are in order of importance, assets and threats are not).

Table 1: Roseau River Watershed Priorities, Assets and Issues (Vassar, Dominion City, and Vita Community Meetings and On-line Survey)

Watershed Priorities	Watershed Assets	Watershed Issues
Surface Water Management -water retention -drainage management -flood mitigation	• Agricultural crops • Agricultural property • Residential property • Wells & groundwater quality • Municipal roads • Fisheries • Wildlife habitat • Peat moss	• Drainage infrastructure & maintenance • Flooding & peak flows • Land drainage • Loss of wetlands • Jurisdictional water management (Canada/USA) • Jurisdictional water management (province, RM's, private lands) • Beaver management • In-channel blockages • Regulation • Water allocation (erratic

		flows) • Ice jams
Ground Water Quality	• Clean drinking water • Domestic wells • Clean rivers and creeks	• Flooding • Abandoned wells • Septic systems • Agricultural management practices • Nutrient loss • Source water protection • Well rehabilitation
Surface Water Quality	• Healthy & functioning riparian areas for surface water • Stream banks & riparian corridors • Wildlife habitat • Recreation • Fisheries	• Agricultural runoff • Agriculture management practices • Poor buffer zones • Wetland loss • Drainage • Erosion & sedimentation
Ecosystem Health & Natural Areas -Riparian Systems -Plant communities & bio-diversity -Fish & Wildlife -Recreation	• Residential property • Domestic water supply • Water quality • Fisheries & wildlife • Recreation such as canoeing, paddling, inner-tubing, river access, fishing, swimming, tourism, scenic views, boating, hiking • Riparian vegetation • River corridors • Navigable waters • Hunting • Scenic value & views • Access to river	• Development • Flooding & runoff peaks • Drainage • Stream bank erosion • Erosion • Drought • Waste disposal & treatment • Riparian condition

DROUGHT

A discussion on drought vulnerability and preparedness was undertaken at the public meetings. Participants were asked to provide input into the impacts of drought, vulnerability to it, their ability to respond to the impacts of drought and identify actions to reduce the severity or impacts of drought. Table 2 provides a brief summary of the results of this questionnaire.

Table 2: Drought impact assessment for the Roseau River Watershed

Drought Impact	Duration of Impact	Watershed or Personal Vulnerability	Drought Mitigation Strategy
In-stream flows	On-going during summer months	• Health of natural resources, plants, & wildlife. • Well water levels. • Reduced recreation	• Reduce household domestic use of water • Recycle and use grey water • Water retention
Fire	Short term	• Increased fire hazard. • Loss of personal property and assets	
Crop failure	Short to long-term	• Reduced personal income and spending in the community	
Recreational opportunities	Short term	• Less water for recreation	
Feed & water shortages for livestock	Short to long-term	• Reduced personal income and spending in the community	• Reduce livestock numbers • Water retention
Erosion	Short term	• Reduced soil quality • Water quality impacts	
Water Quality	Short term	• Reduced water quality and filtering in streams	
Domestic water supplies	Short to long-term	• Lower well water availability	• Reduce household domestic use of water.

WATER STORAGE OPPORTUNITIES

Water retention is viewed as a potential water resource management tool in the Roseau River watershed. Workshop participants were asked to identify possible water retention and storage opportunities based on their local knowledge of the watershed, the landscape, and drainage or runoff patterns. Results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Water Retention opportunities for the Roseau River Watershed

Project Name	Retention Purpose	Description
South Caliento Swamp	• Flood control • Water supply • Wildlife	• Existing control structures, ditches should be removed and center point used as retention area
Sundown Lake (N & S side of 201)	• Flood control • Water supply • Wildlife	• Dredge out and install better flow control • Maintain groundwater levels • Water for wildlife and hunting
Open Old Roseau River Channel	• Flood control • Water supply • Wildlife • Recreation	• Allow limited flow through Arbakka dam • Refill old river bed
Horseshoe Lake	• Flood control • Water supply • Wildlife • Recreation	• Horseshoe Lake flows into Sundown bog flows into Caliento bog. Use for retention and flow control
Small water retention projects	• Flood control • Wildlife	• Small dam, backflows for flow control on targeted landowner sites
Kirkpatrick Swamp	• Flood control • Water supply • Wildlife	• Use for temporary holdback of water and water retention
Kittsen County, USA	• Flood control • Water Supply • Wildlife	• International cooperation to help manage retention and flow.
Soil Health	• Flood control	• Increase organic matter levels to absorb water ex. leaving straw on land
Crown Land	• Flood control	• Retention projects on crown land where feasible
Sprague River	• Flood Control	• Hold water in river bed