

Water Allocation

Withdrawals of more than 5500 imperial gallons/day (25 000 Litres/day) require a water rights license from the Water Use Licensing Section of Water Stewardship. In addition, withdrawals in excess of 162 acre-feet per year (200 cubic decametres/year) trigger a requirement for an Environment Act Licence issued by the Environmental Approvals Branch of Manitoba Conservation. Water used for domestic purposes, such as a private well, does not require licensing. The intent of water rights licensing is to protect the interests of licensees, domestic users, the general public and the environment with respect to the use or diversion of water or the construction and operation of water control works under licence.

When licensing specific projects there are a number of factors considered in the assessment including: analysis of stream flow data, riparian needs, the water use requirements of senior water users, domestic needs, and instream flow requirements. For groundwater projects, this determination is based on an assessment of hydrogeological information including; geological information on aquifers, aquifer sustainable yield estimates and water allocation budgets, where available, as well the water use requirements of senior users and domestic needs.

An important water supply in the watershed is the Little Saskatchewan River. Aquifer or stream water budgets have not been established for the Little Saskatchewan River watershed as a whole. Therefore, the percentage of water available for allocation in the watershed has not been determined. However, based on an average annual stream flow of 3.63 m³/sec (measured at Minnedosa) there is sufficient water available to allocate for these projects. The three instream reservoirs also greatly enhance the availability of water on the system. Tables 3 and 5 give a breakdown by source and use of licenses and applications on file. Amounts allocated by licensed projects are reported in Table 4. The municipal distribution system for the Town of Rivers is allocated 485 ac-ft per year.

Licenses

Table 3

Purpose	Licences		Total Licences
	Groundwater	Surface Water	
Agricultural	9	0	9
Industrial	0	0	0
Irrigation	1	7	8
Municipal	2	1	3
Other	0	0	0
Total	12	8	20

Allocations

Table 4

Purpose	Allocated under License (ac-ft)		Total Allocation (ac-ft)
	Groundwater	Surface Water	

Agricultural	64.0	0.0	64.0
Industrial	0.0	0.0	0.0
Irrigation	39.7	411.0	499.4
Municipal	42.0	485.0	527.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	145.8	944.6	1090.4

Applications

Table 5

Purpose	Applications		Total Applications
	Groundwater	Surface Water	
Agricultural	1	1	2
Industrial	1	0	1
Irrigation	0	4	4
Municipal	2	2	4
Other	1	1	2
Total	5	8	13

Management Concerns

Water Allocation

The Little Saskatchewan River is the only watershed in the region that has a firm flow component capable of meeting the demands of a municipal water supply system. Prior to issuing any of the surface water licenses on this watershed a site specific analysis was conducted for each project. Technical and scientific evidence indicates that under current conditions there is enough water to meet all of the current demands. A detailed in-stream flow needs assessment study is currently underway on the Little Saskatchewan River which will establish the minimum flow need to maintain ecosystem health. The results of this study will be incorporated into future water rights licensing decisions.

Recommended Actions (Little Saskatchewan River)

- That the instream flow needs assessment currently underway on the Little Saskatchewan be completed.

All Other watersheds:

- That instream flow needs assessment be conducted on the other major water courses in the study area.