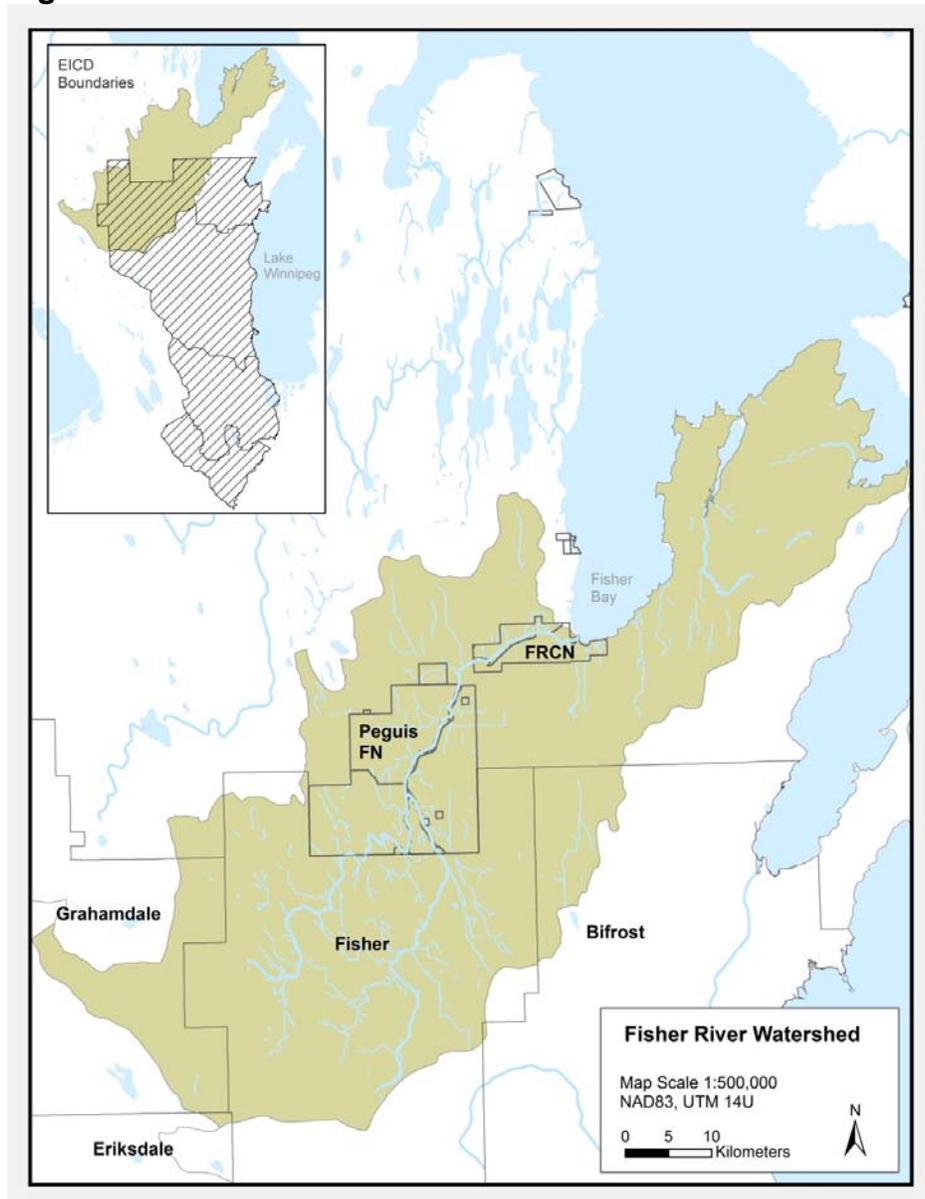


What We Heard: Public Engagement Meetings for the Fisher River Integrated Watershed Management Plan

INTRODUCTION

In March 2009, the Province of Manitoba designated the East Interlake Conservation District (EICD) as the Watershed Planning Authority for the Fisher River Watershed. This designation granted the EICD the authority to create an integrated watershed management plan (IWMP) for the Fisher River Watershed (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Fisher River Watershed



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

Project Management Team:

- Dion McKay (Chair) – Councillor, Fisher River Cree Nation
- Boyd Abas (Vice Chair) – Councillor, RM of Fisher
- Mike Sutherland – Councillor, Peguis First Nation
- Barbra Marcynuik – Mayor, Dallas Red Rose
- Robert Green – Board member, EICD
- Armand Belanger – Manager, EICD
- Robin Beukens – Watershed Planner, Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship

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.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Five public meetings were held in August 2012: Fisher Branch (August 20), Peguis First Nation (August 21), Fisher River Cree Nation (August 21), Dallas Red Rose (August 23) and Matheson Island (August 23). A total of 67 watershed residents participated.

Location	Number of Participants
Fisher Branch	4
Peguis First Nation	23
Fisher River Cree Nation	12
Dallas-Red Rose	7
Matheson Island	21

In addition to these meetings, 28 people from the RM of Fisher completed individual forms at open houses indicating their issues, assets, and threats concerning the Fisher River watershed

The results of all the public input is summarized 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 assets in the Fisher River watershed and to identify threats to these assets.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Natural areas emerged as the most important asset to people in the watershed. This includes wetlands, forests, wildlife, aquatic ecosystems, fish, medicines, traditional territories, and much more. Surface water quality was the second most important asset; watershed residents valued clean water in their lakes, rivers, and streams and noted changes that have occurred over time. Agriculture was the third most important asset, particularly in the southern portion of the watershed. Groundwater quality was the fourth

asset, as most residents of the watershed are dependent on groundwater as their source of drinking water.

Table 1 outlines the priority assets as well as the threats to these assets that were identified by watershed residents (Assets are in priority order, threats are not).

Table 1: Fisher River Watershed Priority Assets and Threats

Priority Assets	Threats to Assets
Natural Areas including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish • Wildlife • Wetlands • Forests • Medicines • Traditional Territories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peat Mining • Development • Pollution • Drainage and Land Clearing • Invasive Species • Overhunting • Poor Water Quality • Erosion • Manitoba Hydro Lake Winnipeg Lake Level
Ground Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abandoned Wells • Septic Systems • Agricultural Runoff • Arsenic
Surface Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding • Drainage • Siltation • Agricultural Runoff • Lagoons and Septic Systems • Loss/Degradation of Riparian Zones • Loss of Wetlands • Landfills and Illegal Dumping
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding • Improper or Inadequate Drainage • Loss of Top Soil • Pollution