



the watershed observer

Wavey Creek; Photo: Jesse Vanderhart



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Your support makes a healthy Lake Winnipeg possible

message from our chair

It is time to get serious about evidence-based decision-making. In order to achieve LWF's vision, strategic action throughout the watershed is required to reduce phosphorus loading to Lake Winnipeg. To achieve the greatest phosphorus reductions, efforts should be focused in phosphorus hotspots. Fortunately, LWF's community-based monitoring (CBM) program is generating high-quality phosphorus hotspot maps. Now, let's put them to work!

One way of putting CBM evidence to work is for LWF to play a more direct role in shaping policy decisions. This means building relationships with governments. And relationships are easy, right? How, though, does LWF work constructively with governments while still holding the same governments to account?

Successful ENGO-government relationships in Canada have happened before. The federal government worked collaboratively with ENGOs to make decisions on marine conservation, using ENGO-generated evidence and making joint decisions to meet the 10 per cent by 2020 marine-protected-areas goal. With new federal funding for a Freshwater Action Plan announced this spring as part of Budget 2023, we have the opportunity to build similar successes. Partnering with the government of Canada to apply CBM findings will make targeted programs for phosphorus management happen sooner and be more effective.

This work also requires that Indigenous allies – rights-holding Indigenous allies – have a seat at the table. A healthy Lake Winnipeg is crucial to their ability to practice their rights. Indigenous peoples have a tremendous amount of experience and knowledge to apply to the problems facing Lake Winnipeg: evidence which must also be incorporated into government decision-making. The Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective is excellently positioned to lead aspects of this work.

While constructive relationships with governments are essential, an arms-length approach remains vital. LWF's advocacy efforts include encouraging transparency in government decision-making – and holding governments accountable. Clear, loud voices and ongoing oversight will ensure phosphorus reduction remains a priority as the new round of freshwater action rolls out alongside the development of the new Canada Water Agency – to be housed in Winnipeg in case that news slipped by your radar.

Actualizing our new strategic plan and its focus on evidence-based advocacy will require us to continue generating high-quality CBM data, supporting Indigenous peoples and then championing the use of this evidence in the creation of good governance. This will deliver measurable results – and protect Lake Winnipeg.

– Bruce Maclean, Chair, LWF Board of Directors

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news

■ We're proud to launch our new five-year strategic plan

This year marks an exciting new beginning for LWF, as we launch our 2023-2027 strategic plan.

This plan, which has been in development since 2021, is the result of a lot of hard work by our board and staff. Building on our strengths, the new strategic plan connects our evidence-based focus on phosphorus with the powerful advocacy of our dedicated members.

The plan also recognizes important opportunities for growth within LWF. We commit to continuous learning as we engage with new communities and new forms of knowledge to support solutions for Lake Winnipeg. We look forward to building a diverse, passionate, informed and empowered community working together to protect Lake Winnipeg.

Read the full plan at lakewinnipegfoundation.org.

■ LWF is getting a makeover

You may have noticed this newsletter has a new look. We're excited to put a fresh face forward with our new strategic plan.

In the coming months, we'll be making more changes to how we engage with our members. Watch for our updated website later this year, with improved accessibility, a new online donation portal, and easy-to-use digital advocacy tools.

Next year, our annual report will also be redesigned, with a focus on measuring and evaluating progress towards our four strategic goals: membership, advocacy, evidence and resilience.

■ Join us in advocating for phosphorus compliance at Winnipeg's north end sewage treatment plant

The collective call for phosphorus compliance at Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC) is growing louder – and decision-makers are taking notice. Now, we need your help to keep the pressure on and get results.

Tell your city councillor to approve funding in the 2024-2027 city budget for increased biosolids capacity at NEWPCC. City council must ensure that the new biosolids facilities are designed to maintain phosphorus compliance over the long term.

Tell your MLA to amend NEWPCC's operating licence to require phosphorus compliance as part of the Biosolids Facilities Project, and to remove the unnecessary and costly requirements for total nitrogen reduction and biological nutrient removal.

We are closely monitoring ongoing developments, and will continue to share updates and advocacy tools online at lakewinnipegfoundation.org.

charities + advocacy

Advocacy to improve policy for the public good is a central component of the role of Canadian charities.

Learn more about this important work in LWF's new strategic plan at lakewinnipegfoundation.org.

contact us

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supporter spotlight



Jennifer Engbrecht; Photo: supplied

Channelling lake love into advocacy

Jennifer Engbrecht's love of the outdoors started early, developed through family camping trips (her dad was a boy scout leader) and visits to her nana and poppa's Victoria Beach cottage. That cottage stayed in the family and VB became an increasingly larger part of Jennifer's life as the years went on. She and her husband were married in the lakeside community and, in 2005, they purchased the cottage next door.

Appreciation for the natural world is something Jennifer has worked to instill in her own children, now 20 and 16, and in the kids she interacts with as an elementary school music teacher and the leader of her school's environment club.

Two years ago, she began teaching classes outside, inspired in part by American environmental educator David Sobel and his philosophy of place-based education. "He talks about having a moment of awe," she says, "where you're realizing that you *are* nature; there's no separation.

"When you're at the lake, you have those moments," she continues. "It's just such an incredible feeling to see this giant body of water. It's so amazing and powerful – I'm certain I have a gazillion moments of awe around the lake."

Jennifer has channelled her love for Lake Winnipeg into decades of advocacy: efforts that include sharing information on social media, and writing letters to elected officials on matters concerning freshwater health using the templates provided on LWF's website.

In 2019, the photos of an algae-covered Connaught Beach she posted to Instagram captured the attention of media and helped to build a groundswell of support for the need to upgrade Winnipeg's north end sewage treatment plant. Posting online is helpful, Jennifer says, and she also encourages lake-lovers to write letters to government officials – the people who can make policy change.

"Contact places like the foundation. Take the tools given to you for advocacy," she says. "Take your own personal experience and how it affects you, and mix that with the resources that [LWF] so freely shares."

Finally, she recommends using your influence within your personal networks – something she does by sharing the letters she's written to politicians with her friends and family.

"If I send it off to 10 people and they send it off to 10 people, that's already a lot of people," she says. "It doesn't take very long before it could become hundreds of messages."

advocacy success

Federal funding for Lake Winnipeg renewed in Budget 2023

Thank you to LWF members who raised their voices to call for renewed federal funding for Lake Winnipeg. Our collective efforts had an important impact!

The 2023 federal budget, released on March 28, included a commitment of \$650 million over 10 years for the national Freshwater Action Plan. Touted as the largest-ever federal investment in fresh water, this funding commitment is a result of powerful public advocacy throughout 2022 by LWF members and others across the country. It shows the incredible impact we have when we work together for policy change.

Of the \$650 million allocated to the Freshwater Action Plan, \$420 million is committed to the Great Lakes. The remaining \$230 million will be distributed among seven other lakes and rivers, including Lake Winnipeg. The total amount for Lake Winnipeg is not yet known.

In the coming weeks and months, LWF and our partners at the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective will be meeting with officials from Environment and Climate Change Canada to learn more and help shape the development of the renewed Lake Winnipeg Basin Program.

Since 2020, we've been calling for the federal government to fulfill **critically important responsibilities for Lake Winnipeg**, including:

- Using the best-available evidence to guarantee impact from every federal dollar spent to reduce phosphorus loading to Lake Winnipeg; and
- Supporting Indigenous peoples in reclaiming and restoring their relationship with water.

use your voice

Fill out and send a postcard – no postage required – to Minister Steven Guilbeault, thanking him for renewing federal funding for Lake Winnipeg, and reminding him of the importance of evidence-based decision-making.

The best-available evidence

The Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network (LWCBMN) is nationally recognized as a cost-effective, scientifically robust means to identify phosphorus hotspots. With data shared openly through **Lake Winnipeg DataStream**, LWCBMN provides the evidence necessary to ensure federally funded projects are targeted to hotspots where they will generate results, making effective use of public resources. The renewed Lake Winnipeg Basin Program will be strengthened by integrating LWCBMN data to achieve measurable phosphorus reduction and support program evaluation.

Indigenous peoples' relationship with water

Indigenous peoples have lived on the shores of Lake Winnipeg since its formation; generations of peoples survived by observing and listening to the land. Those observations developed into unique and complex systems of Indigenous knowledge, rooted in reciprocity, and evident in the resilience of the Anishinaabe, Dakota and Ininiwak peoples. To fulfill its treaty responsibilities and meaningfully implement the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, the federal government must recognize Indigenous jurisdiction and make space for Indigenous knowledge to guide public policy for water protection.

dollars + sense

This funding announcement is incredibly significant – but we know it's just the beginning of a 10-year effort to protect Lake Winnipeg. Equally as important as the total dollar amount is how this funding gets used. Evidence-based investment, clear goals and strong accountability measures are necessary to guarantee impact.

meet our team



LWF and LWIC staff (L-R): Daniel Gladu Kanu, Michelle Jordan, Anna Netsvetayeva, Chelsea Lobson, Marlo Campbell, Karl Friesen-Hughes, Claire Harvey, Kianna Durston, Alexis Kanu. Photo: Paul Mutch

The engine that drives LWF forward is the incredible power of people coming together to take action for Lake Winnipeg. This includes our dedicated staff.

The past year has seen the addition of several new team members who bring the expertise needed to achieve the goals set out in LWF's 2023-2027 strategic plan.

The Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network (LWCBMN) is a flagship program for LWF and guides our efforts to understand and address the sources of phosphorus within persistent hotspots.

Program Coordinator Claire Harvey (she/her) is responsible for coordinating LWCBMN data collection, which includes recruiting and training new volunteers, preparing and distributing sampling kits, collecting water samples, and engaging with network partners. Field and Data Technician Karl Friesen-Hughes (he/him) is responsible for ongoing LWCBMN data analysis. Starting this summer, Karl will also lead hydrological data collection, using LWF's cutting-edge laser flow meter to measure water flow at new monitoring sites established within recurring phosphorus hotspots in the Seine River watershed.

Our members are LWF's greatest strength and we have set ourselves an ambitious goal to retain and recruit 10,000 members in five years. We are also committed to building financial resilience through diversification: aiming to solicit 50 per cent of our annual income from unrestricted, private donations, and increase the amount of recurring, smaller gifts from individual supporters.

Accomplishing these goals requires internal processes that are efficient and scalable for growth. Donor & IT Administrator Anna Netsvetayeva (she/her) is responsible for managing and developing LWF's donor database, and ensuring that our technology systems run smoothly.

As part of our ongoing reciprocal partnership, LWF provides administrative and financial resources to support the organizational capacity of the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective (LWIC). LWIC Project Coordinator Kianna Durston (she/her) organizes a variety of LWIC initiatives and activities, and is currently developing an environmental monitoring network in partnership with communities around the lake.

Have a question about our work? Reach us at info@lakewinnipegfoundation.org or at ask@lwic.org.

summer events

Saturday, June 24 | Nature's Calling

10:30 a.m. @ Charlie Wall Park, Hillside Beach
 Meet up with fellow lake-lovers to learn more about advocacy opportunities for Lake Winnipeg and how you can get involved.

Thursday, July 27 | Advocacy and Action for Lake Winnipeg

7:00 p.m. @ East Beaches Social Scene, Victoria Beach
 Join us to learn how the Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network is pointing the way to solutions for Lake Winnipeg.

Saturday, July 29 | Advocacy and Action for Lake Winnipeg

10:00 a.m. @ Ponemah Beach Central Art Centre, Dunnottar
 Join us to learn about collective advocacy campaigns to protect Lake Winnipeg, focused on evidence-based phosphorus reduction.

Friday, August 11 | Bike to the Beach

11:00 a.m. @ Village Green, Victoria Beach
 Cheer on the intrepid cyclists as they arrive in Victoria Beach! Donate online at lakewinnipegfoundation.org/biketotheseach2023.

Sunday, August 13 | Walk for Water

9:45 a.m. @ Village Green, Victoria Beach
 Our signature family-friendly event! Get your pledge form online at lakewinnipegfoundation.org/walkforwater2023.

cut mail-in form here



your gift makes a healthy lake winnipeg possible



Donate online at:
lakewinnipegfoundation.org/donate

OR



Mail your cheque and this form to:
 Lake Winnipeg Foundation
 107-62 Hargrave St, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 1N1

Please find a cheque attached for:

*All donations of \$50 or more will include a one-year membership.

- \$1,000 \$500 \$200
- \$100 \$50* \$ _____ (specify amount)

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____ Lake Community: _____

This donation is in honour of: **OR** in memory of: _____

Please send recognition on my behalf to:

Name: _____ Address: _____

Too much paper? I would prefer to receive this newsletter via email

Want more info? Please send me monthly e-updates No, thank you



Bruce Creek; Photo: Paul Mutch

“At LWF, I work at the confluence of science and policy every day, ensuring decision-makers have the data they need to make evidence-based decisions to protect Lake Winnipeg.”

– Chelsea Lobson, LWF PROGRAMS DIRECTOR



Lake Winnipeg Foundation
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A clean, healthy Lake Winnipeg and watershed, now and for future generations.
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