

THE WATERSHED OBSERVER

Winnipeg, Photo: Paul Mutch

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“Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem; it is a Canadian one.”

– Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; 2015

MESSAGE FROM LWF’S CHAIR

As we settle into the fall/winter season here at LWF, we are picking up an activity we started before COVID hit: a review of our current strategic plan and the creation of a new one.

Developing a strategic plan is exciting. It’s an opportunity to bring board and staff together to collaboratively generate the high-level organizational objectives which will guide LWF’s day-to-day operational work over the next five years. The process involves discussing shared values and how we can put those values into practice. It involves reflecting on past achievements and considering emerging challenges which remain unmet. It’s about building on success, leveraging our strengths, and identifying how LWF fits into today’s freshwater environment – a dynamic context that includes new systems, new threats and new partners.

The foundation’s existing strategic plan has been in place since 2017, and many internal and external changes have happened since then. Over the next few months, we will be working virtually to develop a new plan which fits our organization’s current size and capacity, and which also looks to the future: affirming our responsibility to Lake Winnipeg, and addressing the priorities we believe to be important and achievable over the next five years.

Our goal is to share the new strategic plan with LWF members in 2022. I look forward to the important work ahead.

– Selena Randall, Chair, LWF Board of Directors



Selena Randall at the start of a very long, muddy portage in Ontario's Quetico Provincial Park. Photo: Chris Randall

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Become an LWF member

With an annual donation of \$50 or more, you’ll become an LWF member, adding your voice to the call for a healthy Lake Winnipeg, now and for future generations. LWF members receive our newsletter twice a year and have the right to vote at our annual general meetings.

LWF and COVID-19

LWF continues to adapt our operations to keep our community safe. We continue to work remotely and in-office interactions are limited to people who are fully vaccinated. Thank you for your understanding.

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A BUSINESS CASE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING

Increasingly, community-based monitoring (CBM) programs are being recognized for their ability to engage citizens, fill data gaps and improve our understanding of regional environmental challenges. A new report has now quantified the economic benefit of these programs.

Prepared by Geoffrey Gunn, Policy Advisor at the International Institute for Sustainable Development, *A Business Case for Investment in Canadian Community-Based Water Monitoring* features the Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network (LWCBMN) as one of three case studies across the country.

Gunn compared costs related to LWCBMN activities from 2016 to 2019 with those of a sampling program run by a centralized government agency. The analysis found LWCBMN was able to generate data at a fraction of the price; \$329,000 as opposed to \$1,118,732.

The effectiveness of LWCBMN's data collection methods was also highlighted. Network volunteers live, work or commute near their sampling sites, which means they can sample frequently in response to the spring melt and summer storms – generating data which can be used to accurately quantify phosphorus loading.

CBM is a cost-effective, scientifically rigorous method to collect long-term water-quality data. Sustained government investment in such programs will ensure they are able to continue providing the evidence needed to make targeted, results-focused freshwater management decisions.

Find the full report online at iisd.org.

ELECTION 2021 AND LAKE WINNIPEG

September's federal election was an opportunity to remind candidates about the need for immediate action to improve Lake Winnipeg's health.

In the leadup to the vote, LWF and the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective championed our joint plan, *Five Things the Federal Government Must Do for Lake Winnipeg*, which identifies concrete, evidence-based actions that are achievable in less than five years and fulfill long-standing government commitments.

We remain committed to advocating for strategic federal investment that will achieve real impact. In the coming months, we will be reaching out to federal MPs, and watching for new mandate letters which will outline the objectives and expectations of each cabinet minister. We expect to see Lake Winnipeg treated as a national priority, and will continue to push Canada's government to follow through on its commitments, use evidence to guide decision-making and invest in measurable results.

JOIN LWF'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LWF's Board of Directors is seeking new members!

As a board member, you'll be part of a strong team working collaboratively to advance our shared mission: to advocate for change and coordinate action to improve the health of Lake Winnipeg. The board is responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the foundation, and oversees its financial affairs.

This volunteer opportunity is open to all current LWF members. For more information on directors' responsibilities, time commitment, desired skills and the application process, please contact us at info@lakewinnipegfoundation.org.

LAKE WINNIPEG HEALTH PLAN UPDATE

SEWAGE SUCCESS!

Three years ago, interim phosphorus removal at Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC) wasn't on the agenda of our civic or provincial governments – until LWF members put it there.

Fast-forward to 2021 and citizen advocacy efforts continue to yield tangible results. In February, Winnipeg's city council approved \$10.5 million in capital funding for interim phosphorus removal at NEWPCC. Subsequently, in May, Manitoba Conservation and Climate provided regulatory approval for the project.

Based in large part on a design proposed by LWF and partners in 2019, the interim phosphorus removal project will adjust the dosage of the chemical ferric chloride in order to reduce the amount of phosphorus the north end plant releases into the Red River and downstream Lake Winnipeg. Winnipeg's city council has also directed its public service to continue working with stakeholders like LWF to optimize interim phosphorus removal.

Our successes to date are hard-won and well-deserved – but, if we've learned anything over the past three years of sewage advocacy, it's that we can't let up now. Continuous public pressure is necessary to remind decision-makers that their jobs are not done until phosphorus compliance is actually demonstrated at the north end plant.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The approved interim solution is projected to be operational in late 2023. Even then, however, the north end plant will still be out of compliance with provincial phosphorus limits. Citing limits to biosolids treatment capacity, the City anticipates the interim solution will only reduce phosphorus concentration in NEWPCC effluent to 2.5 mg/L. Further reduction is needed to meet the provincial limit of 1 mg/L.

Though increased biosolids capacity is the city's No. 1 infrastructure priority, neither the provincial nor civic government has made a firm commitment to ensure the 1 mg/L phosphorus limit will be met once new biosolids treatment facilities are operational. To LWF and our partners, integration of the interim solution with the design of brand-new biosolids facilities is a no-brainer – a cost-effective, proactive opportunity to ensure phosphorus compliance is achieved at the earliest possible opportunity.

Sewage treatment is not rocket science. Proven technologies exist and have been used across the continent for decades to protect lakes and rivers. Lake Winnipeg deserves no less.

Continued foot-dragging on critical environmental protections is unacceptable – and so, this fall, we're calling on Manitoba Conservation and Climate to provide the City of Winnipeg with clear direction to achieve phosphorus compliance through the design and construction of new biosolids upgrades.

Once again, we encourage you to get involved and join us in this advocacy. There is no greater power in politics than the power of public opinion. Help us remind our political leaders of their responsibility to Lake Winnipeg.



Action 3: Setting the Standard for Wastewater Treatment

The water we use to flush our toilets ends up in Lake Winnipeg. It's our collective responsibility to ensure it's clean when it gets there.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECONCILIATION

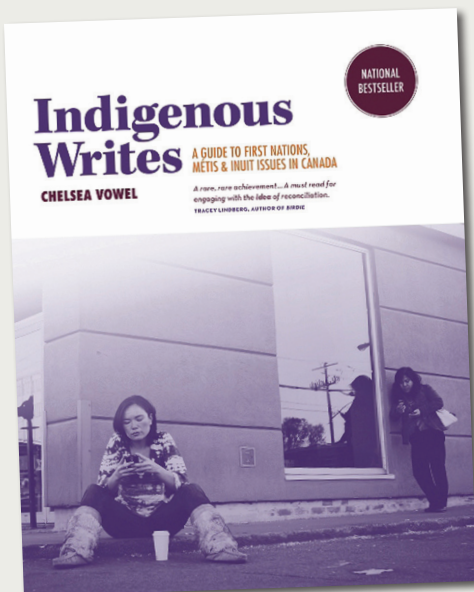
As an environmental organization working in Indigenous territories, and as treaty people, the Lake Winnipeg Foundation recognizes our obligation to actively practise reconciliation. To us, this work must include amplifying Indigenous voices, respecting Indigenous knowledge, and affirming Indigenous rights, which are recognized in both Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms and in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

A READING CLUB DEDICATED TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Discussions about Canada's dark colonial history can no longer be ignored. The truth must be acknowledged.

Education is the first step towards reconciliation. The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, says that "education is what got us into this mess and education is key to getting us out of it."

In January, LWF and the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective collaboratively envisioned and created a "reconciliation reading club." Our goal is to equip LWF staff with knowledge, terminology and perspectives that will help us integrate actions of reconciliation within our work and in our personal lives. The reading club is a safe space where Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff can share thoughts, explore emotions, and engage in open and honest discussions.



Book cover courtesy of HighWater Press.

Our first assigned reading was *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Issues in Canada* by Chelsea Vowel. Although forceful and sarcastic in her writing, I thought Vowel provided a good historical overview of the concepts, policies and legislation that continue to have lasting impacts on the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada today: from The Indian Act and the concept of *terra nullius*, to residential schools and the Sixties Scoop, to pervasive myths about Indigenous peoples.

After reading this book, it is evident that as a whole, our education systems have failed to properly educate Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike about Canada's colonial past. As Vowel puts it: "This country is woefully ignorant on a grand scale, and we will never succeed in building relationships until we address that ignorance. I can't stress this enough: without education, there can be no justice, and until there is justice, there will be no peace."

For me, *Indigenous Writes* reinforces the importance of education, critical thinking and reflection. We cannot begin to see the world differently without being exposed to different perspectives, nor without challenging our own personal beliefs, prejudices and past education.

Our reading club is meant to be the beginning of a journey rather than a destination. Reconciliation requires internal work, continuous learning, dedication, meaningful dialogue and, most importantly, active participation. Reconciliation requires concrete action towards societal change.

As we continue to read new books, we will be sharing our reflections on our website, through e-updates and in future issues of this newsletter. It's my hope that each of us will feel a sense of responsibility to actively engage in reconciliation, both within our work at LWF and in our personal lives.

I encourage you to join us on this journey.

By: Émilie Ferguson, LWF Program Coordinator, Education

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The Lake Winnipeg Foundation is proud to be part of a passionate community of lake-lovers. Thank you to the following donors who gave generously between Oct. 1, 2020 & Sept. 30, 2021.

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BUILDING A LAKE LEGACY: LWF'S ENDOWMENT FUND DONORS

Managed by The Winnipeg Foundation, LWF's agency endowment fund was established in 2019. To date, it has been supported by the generosity of the following donors: Deborah M. Lyon | Ord Mackintosh | Donna Plant | Robin Wiens & Émilie Lagacé | and other anonymous donors

Sustaining contributors



THE CLIMATE CONNECTION

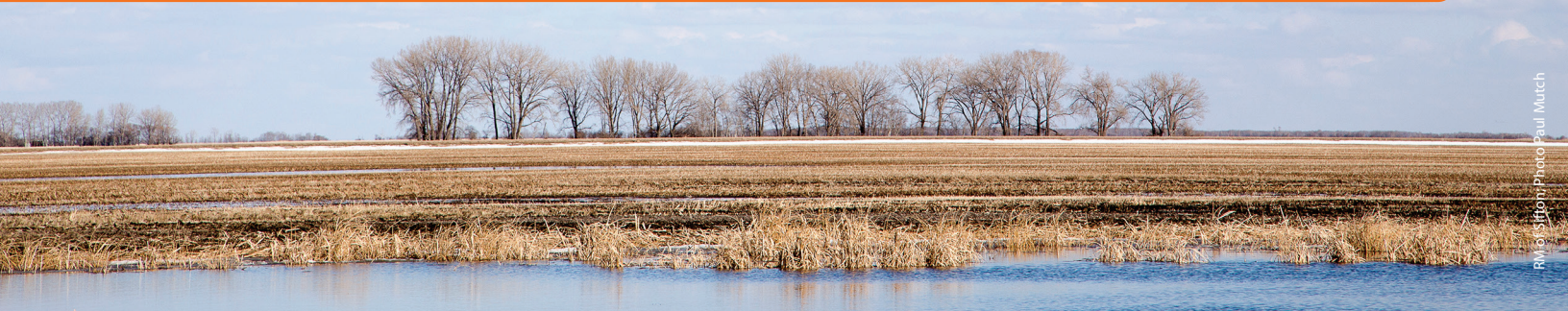


Photo: Paul Mutch

HOW WARMING TEMPERATURES AFFECT PRAIRIE LAKES

This year's drought conditions and extreme fires have fueled ongoing conversations about climate change and its amplification of existing environmental concerns – among them, the eutrophication of freshwater lakes.

Changes in long-term patterns of temperature, precipitation and wind are caused by the alteration of global atmospheric composition. Carbon dioxide emission levels have been increasing alarmingly since the 1950s. While natural fluctuations in emissions can and do occur, the unprecedented scale at which carbon dioxide levels have been rising is due to “anthropogenic,” or human-caused activities – in particular, the burning of fossil fuels.

Depending on how our societies respond to climate change, global temperatures could warm significantly by 2100; modelling from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggests an increase ranging between 1.7°C and 4.8°C. This will impact physical and biological processes within both Lake Winnipeg and its watershed.

Within the watershed, warmer air temperatures will alter the frequency and intensity of precipitation. While it's projected Manitoba will see slightly more precipitation overall, when precipitation does occur, it's expected to be more intense. It's anticipated that we will experience drier conditions in the summer, and wetter conditions in the spring and fall.

The amount of phosphorus exported from our landscapes into Lake Winnipeg is affected by water flow. In drought years, low water levels mean less phosphorus loading – which in turn, may result in fewer and shorter-lived algal blooms. (Data generated by the Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network in 2018, a very dry year, support this connection.) In flood years, however, significant amounts of phosphorus may be flushed into the local waterways that eventually flow into the lake; the same high phosphorus export can also be expected as a result of extreme precipitation events.

Within Lake Winnipeg itself, climate change is likely to exacerbate the formation of algal blooms. Warmer air temperatures create warmer waters, altering aquatic nutrient cycling and food webs. For example, the process by which phosphorus from decomposing algae moves from the lake bottom back into the water column is accelerated with warmer water. As a result, greater amounts of phosphorus will be available to support blue-green algae growth. Warmer waters also give blue-green algae a competitive advantage over other algal species, as blue-greens have higher optimum growth temperatures.

Across Canada and beyond, researchers are actively studying the connection between our climate and our waters. What we learn will help us adapt and develop new tools to protect our lake – but research is only one part of the solution.

Too often, the very communities and regions most vulnerable to the effects of climate change are left out of the conversations. Northern Indigenous communities, for example, are likely to experience greater warming, yet their valuable knowledge – developed by observing changes to land and waters over generations – is often absent from decision-making.

A collaborative approach which considers existing systemic inequities and includes Indigenous knowledge alongside scientific perspectives is needed in order to address the threats of climate change in a way that protects everyone.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

GIMLI ROOTS INSPIRE A LEGACY GIFT TO LAKE WINNIPEG

Ord Mackintosh says he's at the stage of life where it's time to give back. And, when it came to doing so, the 87-year-old's lifelong connection to Gimli was the primary motivation behind his decision to support LWF's agency endowment fund at The Winnipeg Foundation.

Mackintosh's family has been cottaging on the west side of Lake Winnipeg since the mid-1930s. His father, a railway worker who had immigrated to Canada from Scotland a decade prior, fell in love with the natural beauty of the area and purchased a cottage. Ord, his parents and two siblings would take the train down on July 1 using the family's CPR pass and stay out until Labour Day.

There was no electricity or refrigeration in those days. "We were all sitting around with oil lamps," he recalls. "A guy used to come around with the ice truck once a day; you had a fridge box or something, and you got a big chunk of ice and that kept things cool." His chore was to fetch water from the nearby artesian well, which people from the campground across the street would use as cold storage for bottles of milk and jars of food. Fresh vegetables and berries were purchased from a woman from a nearby farm who would bring her horse and carriage into the community.

Childhood summers were spent exploring the area with the local kids: swimming at the harbour, watching fishing boats come and go. As an adult, Mackintosh took up sailing and joined the Gimli Yacht Club. Today, he owns a cottage north of Gimli on a lakeside lot his father bought in 1957 after selling the first cottage (Ord helped clear the land); his brother and sister own properties nearby.

Having spent his career as a successful chartered accountant, never married and with no children to support, it was important to Mackintosh to share his good fortune as part of setting his affairs in order. LWF's endowment fund is managed by The Winnipeg Foundation ("It's a marvelous institution," he says) and was the perfect fit: in addition to the tax benefits,



Ord Mackintosh shows a photo of himself as a young boy, standing in front of the hand-built log fence surrounding his family's Gimli cottage. Photo: Mario Campbell

Ord liked the idea of his donation being bigger than a one-time gift; a donation that would provide perpetual support for a cause about which he cares deeply.

"Lake Winnipeg is such a big part of my life and also such a big concern in the province of Manitoba," he says. "Being down there for so long, I can see all the benefits that it's had for families over the years."

Ord's gift honours both his past and present personal connection to Lake Winnipeg. It's also an investment in a hopeful future. His generosity will sustain freshwater stewardship efforts for generations to come – his contribution, part of a collective legacy that makes a healthy lake possible.

Interested in planned giving?

The Lake Winnipeg Foundation endowment fund is managed by our partners at The Winnipeg Foundation. To learn more about making a legacy gift for Lake Winnipeg, contact The Winnipeg Foundation's donor engagement team:

Phone: 204-944-9474

Email: donorengagement@wpgfdn.org

Online: wpgfdn.org/giving/legacy-gifts

LT.-GOV. JANICE FILMON ON LAKE WINNIPEG, GRATITUDE AND THE POWER OF SAYING YES

Read any profile of the Honourable Janice Filmon, Manitoba's 25th Lieutenant Governor, and you'll likely encounter phrases like "community builder," "widely respected fundraiser" and "tireless volunteer." It's a reputation she's built over a lifetime – a former social worker turned champion of the not-for-profit sector, Filmon is passionate about giving back.

The wife of former Premier Gary Filmon, she has served as Chair of the Board of Directors of CancerCare Manitoba Foundation, is the Founding Chair of the Nellie McClung Foundation, and remains active in youth leadership initiatives. ("I love the passion of youth and the fact that they believe they can do anything," she says.) Prior to being installed as the Queen's representative in 2015 – only the second woman to hold the position in our province's history – she was awarded both the Order of Manitoba and the Order of Canada in recognition of her significant contributions to community service.

Speaking with LWF over the phone, Filmon is effortlessly warm and open; the kind of person who instantly puts you at ease. She says her role as Lieutenant Governor is to connect and celebrate Manitobans: who we are and what we have. That includes Lake Winnipeg – a place where she has been cottaging for her entire life, be it in Sandy Hook, Gimli or Loni Beach. Longtime LWF members, the Filmons today maintain an all-season, lakeside cottage; three of their four children have properties nearby.



Her Honour, the Honourable Janice Filmon, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba; Supplied photo

"The lake has been a constant in terms of my summers," she says. Filmon recalls being a young girl, playing in white, powdery sand with her sister, the two of them wearing matching bathing suits. She shares a memory of the time she joined hundreds of other people on the beach as part of the Gimli Film Festival: the big screen anchored offshore, the water lapping on the sand, aurora borealis dancing in the sky overhead.

Many of the experiences Lake Winnipeg offers are unlike any in the world, Filmon says, and the decisions made today are important because they will impact the lake we pass on to future generations.

Gratitude is a big part of Filmon's worldview, perhaps because cancer has touched her life repeatedly; she has survived two bouts of the disease that took the lives of her mother at age 54 and her daughter at age 49.

"When you're grateful, you're not frustrated, you're not angry, you're not disappointed," she says. "As you develop the discipline of a grateful heart, you see what's in front of you."

"The fact is, with any disease – in a person or in the lake, if we look at it in that way – hope is the only weapon we have," she adds. "When you start concentrating on what is good and what you do have and what you can do, the energies go in a totally different way."

Each of us has the power to make a difference when it comes to the causes we care about, Filmon says. "Say yes and get involved. I mean, 'yes' is the mother of all possibility, right?"

Her advice to those for whom Lake Winnipeg is their chosen cause?

"Stay healthy. Work to keep your lake healthy. Be aware of all the parts, the interconnectedness of people to nature. As we start getting back to some of that connectedness, I think we'll all do better."

PEOPLE-POWERED SOLUTIONS

THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER AMAZING SUMMER!

Change happens because of people. People who care enough to pay attention. People who stand up and speak out for what they believe in. People who channel their values into action.

Each year, we are grateful to the many people who choose to support our summer events – and we are especially grateful to those who stuck with us this season, as we adapted, and then re-adapted, in response to an ever-changing public health situation.

Bike to the Beach returned for its second year, surpassing all expectations to raise more than \$118,000 for a healthy lake – truly, an astounding success story for the 53 riders who took part. Walk for Water also returned for 2021, with 130 people joining together in Victoria Beach for an inspiring show of community support for freshwater solutions. And our online art auction was a fun opportunity to showcase the considerable talents of lake-loving artists and makers.

Thank you to everyone who participated and to everyone who volunteered to ensure these events were such a huge success. It is because of you that the future of our great lake is a hopeful one.

See you next year!

Bike to the Beach riders en route to Lake Winnipeg;
Photo: South Basin Photoworks



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:

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

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

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

CHANGE HAPPENS *because of you*

Thank you for supporting a healthy lake – this year and always.



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