

# THE WATERSHED OBSERVER

Birds Hill Provincial Park; Photo: Paul Mutch

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## MESSAGE FROM LWF'S CHAIR

In Manitoba, the change of season brings many things: forest leaves painted with new colours, the bounty of harvest – and at LWF, the unfurling of a new strategic plan!

While planning exercises may make some burst out in hives, they are critical opportunities for organizations to envision the future they want and build the structure required to get there. LWF staff and board are therefore pleased to be launching a new five-year strategic plan in 2023.

We have set four main goals designed to expand our already growing community and build on our greatest strengths. Put simply, we will demonstrate leadership in growing a diverse, empowered and evidence-based community, advocating for the lake that we all love.

More specifically, we will focus on addressing the eutrophication of Lake Winnipeg. We will advocate for evidence-based solutions to address the largest sources of phosphorus – work that includes holding governments to account on issues like Winnipeg's north end sewage treatment plant (and engaging with the city's new mayor!). We will apply our community-based knowledge to triage phosphorus hotspots. And we will demonstrate continued excellence in non-profit governance and practices. You can read more on page 5 of this newsletter.

As we put the new plan into practice, we will also clarify LWF's evolving relationship with the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective (find more about this on page 8), broadening and deepening LWF's understanding of treaty rights and responsibilities, anti-racism, environmental justice and the impacts of colonialism.



Watching the natural world shift from summer to fall on its annual march toward winter, I am reminded that change is circular – and important. Striving to identify what LWF does best, letting go of what is not serving us and challenging ourselves to continually raise the bar will ensure a clean, healthy Lake Winnipeg, now and for future generations.

– Bruce Maclean, Chair, LWF Board of Directors

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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.



Collecting water samples at Shannon Creek; Photo: Meghan Mills

### SCALING UP LWF'S PHOSPHORUS MONITORING EFFORTS

Reducing algal blooms in Lake Winnipeg requires targeted phosphorus reduction in phosphorus hotspots. Coordinated by LWF, the Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network (LWCBMN) leverages the power of citizen science to identify these hotspots and generate the water-quality data needed to inform policy, direct research and focus action where it will have the greatest impact.

Since 2016, LWCBMN data has been providing important water-stewardship answers – and raising new questions. As our seventh field season wraps up this fall, LWCBMN is growing in exciting ways.

We've established a new partnership with Dr. Nora Casson at the University of Winnipeg to enable laboratory analysis of a growing annual number of water samples.

We've also hired a full-time Field and Data Technician. Joining the LWF team in November 2022, this new position will support field activities, hydrological data collection and LWCBMN phosphorus-loading data analysis.

Finally, we've acquired a laser flow meter for deployment in the 2023 field season; this highly specialized piece of equipment will enable us to measure water flow at more sites within phosphorus hotspots, to better understand phosphorus sources.

We look forward to scaling up the capacity of this vital long-term phosphorus monitoring program – and sharing what we learn.

### THERE'S STILL TIME TO SPEAK UP FOR FEDERAL FRESHWATER FUNDING

Since last April, when Budget 2022 fell far short of previous promises for Canada's freshwater lakes and rivers, we have been advocating for renewed federal funding for Lake Winnipeg as part of Budget 2023.

We expect Canada's government to follow through on its pledge to invest in a 10-year, \$1 billion Freshwater Action Plan that includes dedicated funding for the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program. For years, this program has supported regional phosphorus-reduction projects and created opportunities for the meaningful inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in water governance.

If you haven't already, we encourage you to join us in this important advocacy. The more citizens who speak up, the greater impact we can have on Budget 2023 – and the health of Lake Winnipeg.

Learn more online at [lakewinnipegfoundation.org](https://lakewinnipegfoundation.org).

### 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](mailto:info@lakewinnipegfoundation.org).

# SEWAGE UPDATE

## A CRITICAL DECISION FOR WINNIPEG'S NEW CITY COUNCIL

After years of advocacy from LWF members, phosphorus compliance is now within reach at Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC).

In June, the city's water and waste department presented an updated design for the NEWPCC Phase 2 Biosolids Facilities Project. The new design increases biosolids digester capacity to enable compliance with the provincial phosphorus limit upon completion of the new biosolids facilities. Working in concert with the interim phosphorus-reduction solution (projected to be up and running by August 2023), increased digester capacity will effectively treat sludge produced when phosphorus is removed from the plant's liquid waste stream by a chemical called ferric chloride.

The NEWPCC biosolids facility is the city's **No. 1 infrastructure priority** and, in August, three levels of government announced funding for this project. However, approved funding was based on cost estimates from 2019, and did not include the cost to increase biosolids digester capacity – currently estimated at \$130 million. This funding remains unconfirmed.

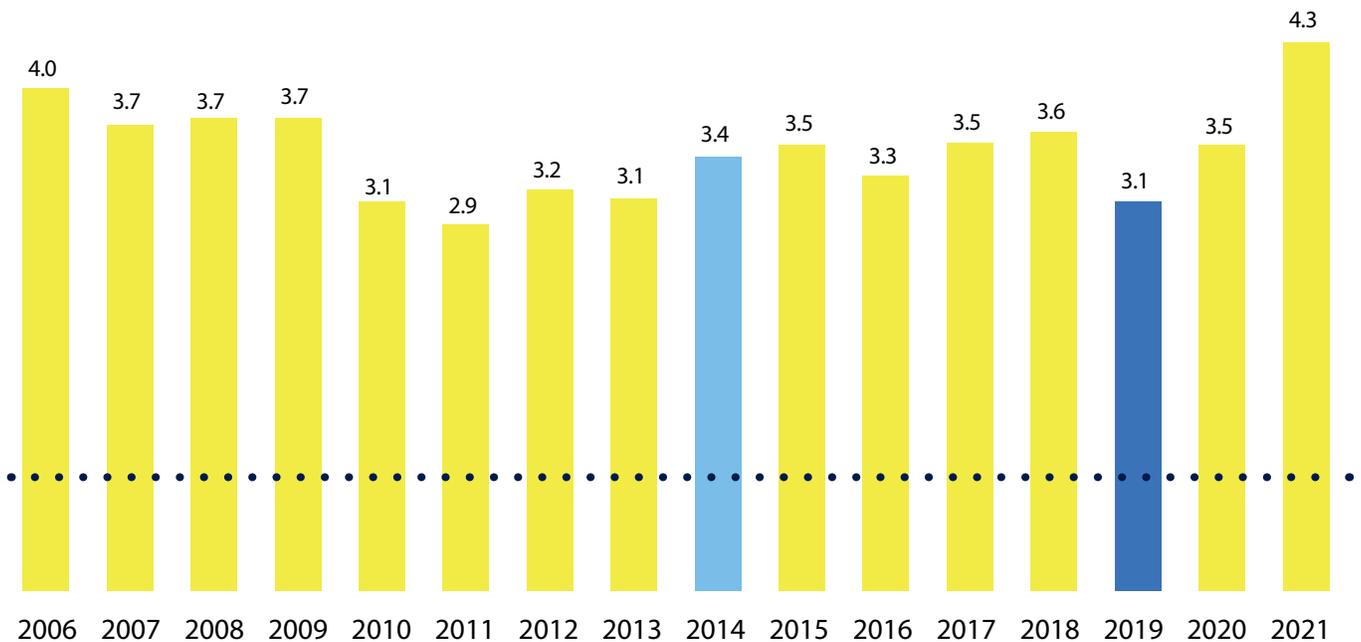
Winnipeg's previous city council referred the revised cost estimate for the biosolids project to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget process. This means Mayor Scott Gillingham and the rest of Winnipeg's newly elected council will soon be making a critical decision about environmental protection for Lake Winnipeg.

When we met with Mayor Gillingham in advance of the Oct. 26 election, he agreed that phosphorus compliance at the north end plant is a priority for the city of Winnipeg. We are committed to working with him to make it a reality.

Find our phosphorus compliance report online at [lakewinnipegfoundation.org](http://lakewinnipegfoundation.org).

## ANNUAL AVERAGE PHOSPHORUS CONCENTRATION IN NEWPCC EFFLUENT

NEWPCC phosphorus concentrations (mg/L) have consistently exceeded the provincial licence limit since public reporting began.



..... Phosphorus limit of 1.0 mg/L specified in NEWPCC provincial operating licence

■ First missed NEWPCC compliance deadline: Dec. 31, 2014

■ Second missed NEWPCC compliance deadline: Dec. 31, 2019

# LWF'S 2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

## CHARTING A PATH FORWARD FOR EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY

Over the past year, LWF's board and staff have worked together to develop a new strategic plan to guide our work from 2023 to 2027. Through the ongoing upheavals of COVID-19, we explored important questions about LWF's past and future, and examined the challenges and opportunities ahead of us.

The process we undertook has been the most in-depth and engaging strategic planning I have ever taken part in. It leveraged the incredible breadth of expertise – and undaunted commitment – of our volunteer board of directors, as well as the working knowledge of our professional staff team. Our discussions were both optimistically inspiring and reflectively honest – a combination which sets us on solid footing as we launch our new plan early next year.

Our new strategic goals reaffirm LWF's strength as an evidence-based advocate for Lake Winnipeg. We recognize that our advocacy is successful because of our membership community, and we value that LWF members are willing and eager to join in as we learn and grow. We also acknowledge that there are many opportunities to increase diversity, equity and inclusion throughout LWF's work. Our collective capacity to adapt and respond to ongoing challenges will be strengthened by engaging with, supporting and listening to the perspectives and knowledge of other communities.

Our new plan also builds on past successes. For the last five years, LWF's community-based monitoring program has consistently identified phosphorus hotspots in southeastern Manitoba's Seine River watershed. Just as we ask other decision-makers to use our monitoring data to target action for Lake Winnipeg, we need to model this evidence-based approach ourselves. Going forward, we'll be using our own data to direct our work, sharpening our focus in these persistent hotspots to better understand phosphorus sources and effective solutions.

We will also continue to hold municipal, provincial and federal governments accountable for their responsibilities to Lake Winnipeg, advocating for evidence-based policies and investments that actually and meaningfully reduce phosphorus loading to Lake Winnipeg.

Looking back over the past year's hard work, I am incredibly proud of this strategic plan and the people behind it. Looking ahead to our ambitious path forward, I am as confident as I have ever been in the unique and important role that LWF plays in making change in the world. Thank you for making change along with me.

By: Alexis Kanu, LWF Executive Director

## LWF'S STRATEGIC GOALS

- 1 MEMBERSHIP**  
 Build a diverse, passionate, informed and empowered community working together to address the eutrophication of Lake Winnipeg.
- 2 ADVOCACY**  
 Advocate proactively for evidence-based solutions to address the largest sources of phosphorus to Lake Winnipeg.
- 3 EVIDENCE**  
 Understand phosphorus sources within persistent phosphorus hotspots identified by the Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network.
- 4 GOVERNANCE**  
 Demonstrate excellence in non-profit governance and practice.

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

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, 2021 and Sept. 30, 2022.

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## Independent event organizers

Amelia & Maude | Bernie Wolfe Community School | Dianne Cameron (North 59 Art Show) | Chickadee Lane Photography | École Neil Campbell School | Gimli Yacht Club & the Kiwanis Club of Gimli & District | Robin Jewers | Manitoba Youth for a Healthy Earth (École Secondaire Kelvin High School) | River Heights School, Grade 8 | Morwenna Trevenen | Victoria Beach Tiber River Party | Andrea Wiebe

## In-kind support

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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



# LWF AND THE LAKE WINNIPEG INDIGENOUS COLLECTIVE

Poplar River, Photo: Daniel Gladu Kanu



## CELEBRATING OUR RELATIONSHIP

We are together on Indigenous land.

Indigenous rights and jurisdiction are recognized and affirmed by both the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** and the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**. Indigenous peoples hold responsibilities to water which were never ceded.

Since its formation in 2005, the Lake Winnipeg Foundation (LWF) has enjoyed access to – and influence on – the decision-making processes of colonial crown governments. In that time, we have noted the absence of Indigenous peoples around decision-making tables for Lake Winnipeg. We recognize that the ongoing exclusion of Indigenous peoples jeopardizes LWF's vision of a clean and healthy Lake Winnipeg. Indigenous knowledge is essential to a well-rounded understanding of the lake and watershed, and must be part of evidence-based solutions.

Recognizing this absence of Indigenous voices, LWF supported Indigenous leaders and knowledge carriers in forming the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective (LWIC). The collective envisions that Lake Winnipeg's sacred waters are healthy, traditional livelihoods are restored and Indigenous perspectives are influential in leading the protection and sustainability of Lake Winnipeg as a source of life for all future generations.

Together, LWIC and LWF share a common goal of restoring the health of Lake Winnipeg. Our relationship is a reciprocal partnership. LWIC and LWF provide each other with mutual support across key operations and programs, including partnership development, policy expertise, learning opportunities and logistical support. This mutual support strengthens each organization.

The ongoing partnership between LWF and LWIC is unique and evolving over time. Currently, LWIC is not independently incorporated. LWF continues to support LWIC in accessing funding and donations – as such, the LWF board of directors retains oversight of LWIC's operations until such oversight can be transferred to an Indigenous governance body. Ultimately, both LWF and LWIC are committed to ensuring the collective is independently incorporated to represent water rights-holders in a strengthened Lake Winnipeg governance system.

– October, 2022

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECONCILIATION

In January 2021, LWF and the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective (LWIC) collaboratively created a reconciliation reading club. Our goal is to equip LWF and LWIC staff with knowledge, terminology and perspectives that will help us integrate actions of reconciliation and anti-racism within our professional work and in our personal lives. To us, this work must include amplifying Indigenous voices, respecting Indigenous knowledge and affirming Indigenous rights.

Staff reflections on other books can be found online at [lakewinnipegfoundation.org](http://lakewinnipegfoundation.org).

### FIVE LITTLE INDIANS BY MICHELLE GOOD

This is the first book I had read since becoming a mother, and since the 2021 discovery of the 215 children found buried on the grounds of a residential school in Kamloops. That number is rapidly increasing as more residential school grounds are being surveyed. To date, only 15 schools out of 139 have been surveyed, and **over 1,800 graves have been found**. We need to remember that these numbers are children who were loved. They were children who could have been grandmothers and grandfathers, who became ancestors too soon.

This is a hard truth. I grew up hearing stories about these unmarked graves. I grew up with these stories that traumatized and strained family, stories that have been ignored and denied by mainstream Canadian society. Although I am happy our truth can no longer be denied, the grief and the mourning weighs heavy. With each announcement of more children, I hold my baby tight at night, where no one can take her. No church, no RCMP and where she is safe from Canada.

*Five Little Indians* by Michelle Good tells the story of a group of friends and the different ways each of them deals with the trauma they endured at a church-run residential school. It was one of five books featured in **Canada Reads 2022**, an annual 'battle of the books' whose theme this year was "One book to connect us."

I challenge this idea. Despite it being a good book which sheds light on common experiences of survivors, I think the way it is perceived by individuals reading it will be different based on identity. As a young Indigenous woman whose grandparents

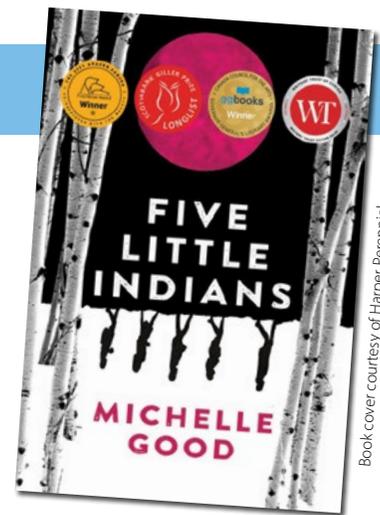
attended residential schools, whose mother attended day school and who is myself a product of the child welfare system, I wasn't shocked by the contents of the book.

Something often expressed during reading club discussions was that this book "humanized" its characters. However, as an Indigenous person, alongside a lot of my peers, we saw our relatives in each character. We saw our grandparents, our aunts and our uncles. We saw our parents and we saw ourselves. We didn't need our relatives to be "humanized" because for us, they have always been that: human.

Survivors and their descendants don't owe anyone anything. For non-Indigenous folks and settlers, I think it's crucial to unpack your own biases. This book addressed uncomfortable topics such as substance use, sex work, young motherhood and involvement in the justice system. Although it's true that not all Indigenous people partake in these things, it's also true that a lot do, and they are no less than the 'palatable' natives. John Trudell, an author and an activist with the American Indian Movement, talked about how "**the drunken Indian saved us**," the idea that under colonization, we couldn't be who we are, and we refused to conform to what colonizers wanted us to become, so instead we became something else. In this way, the stereotype represents rebellion: a refusal to submit.

Indigenous people aren't stagnant in the past, and neither is our oppression or genocide. I think the ideas explored in this book still ring true for a lot of Indigenous youth in present-day so-called Canada. Currently, there are more Indigenous children in care than there were at the peak of residential schools. In Manitoba, Indigenous children account for about **90 per cent of the approximately 10,000 children in care**. The intention of stealing Indigenous children from their families has always been there, only the tactics and language has changed.

By: Kakeka ThunderSky, Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective Communications and Engagement Coordinator



Book cover courtesy of Harper Perennial

## SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

### SILVER HARBOUR PROPERTY OWNERS JOIN IN SOLUTIONS

Silver Harbour is a small lakeside community on the western shore of Lake Winnipeg, about 25 km north of Gimli. A mix of permanent residents and cottagers, its population can swell to over 400 in the summer months from about 135 during the off-season.

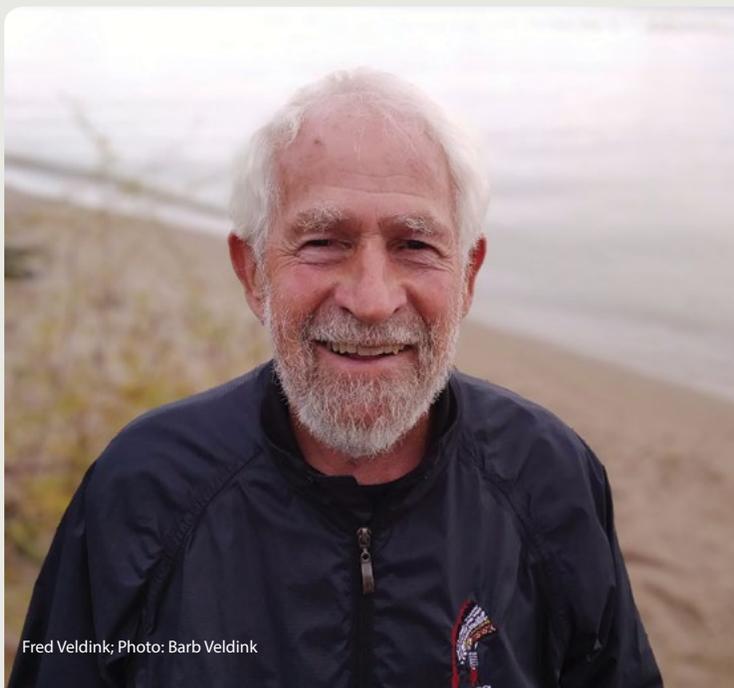
Fred Veldink and his wife, Barb, built their lakefront Silver Harbour home in 1992 with an eye to retirement, and have been full-time residents since 2006, save for their annual winter 'snowbird' trips.

"It never, ever, ever gets boring," Fred says of Lake Winnipeg, whose ever-changing moods he enjoys watching from his front window. "It's always different. It's always fascinating."

An avid sailor who also loves cross-country skiing – when he's around for snow, that is – Fred is the president of the Silver Harbour Property Owners' Association (SHPOA) and chair of the association's environment committee. With a membership of about 100 households, SHPOA exists to serve the needs of the community, a role that involves liaising with government about local concerns, organizing social events and sharing information on relevant issues, including environmental ones.

The need for relevant, up-to-date information about Lake Winnipeg's health led SHPOA to join the Lake Winnipeg Foundation in 2019 as an organizational member.

SHPOA members consider LWF as a trusted expert, and the association makes good use of available resources: sharing LWF newsletters and reports at its AGMs, and encouraging its members to get involved in current advocacy



Fred Veldink; Photo: Barb Veldink

campaigns. This summer, for example, SHPOA distributed LWF's federal budget postcards throughout the community and surrounding area so that residents could join in the collective call for renewed federal funding for Lake Winnipeg.

"Everybody realizes that the reason that we're all here is the lake," Fred says. "People really feel it's important to fight for a healthy lake and do whatever we can to keep it healthy."

Associations like SHPOA have a responsibility to provide leadership to their membership, he continues. In practical terms, this includes not only facilitating ongoing education about lake-friendly practices for individual property owners, it also includes actively supporting broader freshwater stewardship efforts – and organizations like LWF – in recognition that many other communities depend on Lake Winnipeg, too.

"Having a healthy lake is in everybody's interest," he says.

### IS YOUR PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION INTERESTED IN FRESHWATER SOLUTIONS?

Consider joining LWF as an organizational member! With an annual donation of \$50 or more, your group will receive our newsletter twice a year and have the right to vote at our annual general meetings. Plus, you'll be joining the collective call for a healthy Lake Winnipeg.

Contact us at [info@lakewinnipegfoundation.org](mailto:info@lakewinnipegfoundation.org) for more information or to book a presentation.

# THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SUMMER

## LWF EVENTS SUPPORT YEAR-ROUND ADVOCACY

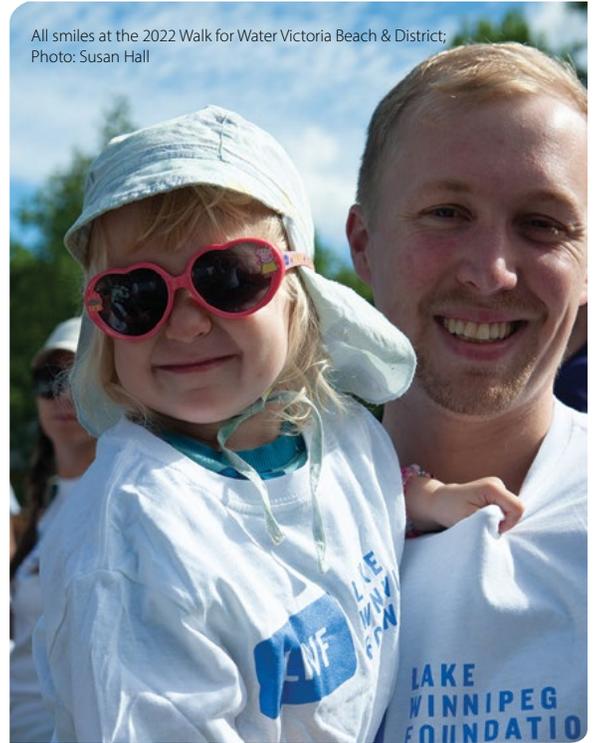
LWF's summer event season is an annual opportunity to connect with fellow lake-lovers and take action in support of a healthy Lake Winnipeg. Summer events also play an important role in advancing our mission and increasing our impact.

Operating grants that we receive from governments and other funding agencies often come with spending restrictions which exclude advocacy efforts.

Yet persistent, evidence-based advocacy is crucial to advancing freshwater solutions; it is how we create policy change and hold governments accountable.

That's why we use the funds raised through Walk for Water, Bike to the Beach and other community fundraisers to support our ongoing public-policy advocacy to reduce phosphorus loading to Lake Winnipeg.

Thank you to the volunteers, participants, donors and sponsors for making the 2022 summer season yet another success. Your contributions enable us to continue speaking up for change.



*cut mail-in form here*

## YOUR GIFT MAKES A HEALTHY LAKE WINNIPEG POSSIBLE



Donate online at:  
[lakewinnipegfoundation.org/donate](https://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

Never doubt that *a small group of thoughtful,  
committed citizens* can change the world.

Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

– MARGARET MEAD, AMERICAN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGIST



Oak Hammock Marsh; Photo: Jesse Vanderhart



Lake Winnipeg Foundation  
107-62 Hargrave St  
Winnipeg, MB, R3C 1N1

A clean, healthy Lake Winnipeg and watershed, now and for future generations.  
The Watershed Observer | Fall & Winter 2022 | [lakewinnipegfoundation.org](http://lakewinnipegfoundation.org)