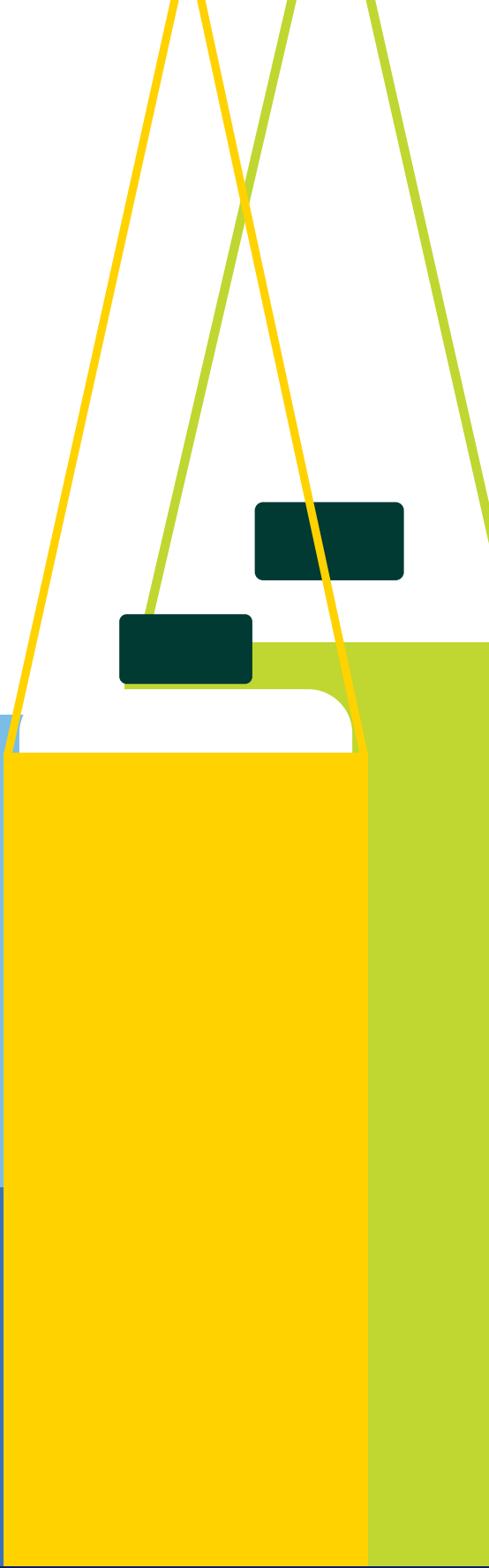




LAKE  
WINNIPEG  
FOUNDATION

# 2023-2027 **strategic plan**



## lake winnipeg foundation

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Founded in 2005 by concerned citizens, LWF is a membership-based environmental charity that is uniquely positioned to link science with action.

# vision

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

# mission

To advocate for change and  
coordinate action to improve  
the health of Lake Winnipeg



# values



Our values guide our decision-making and inform the plans we develop to achieve our goals.



# acknowledging the land

## We are together on Indigenous land

Lake Winnipeg, the lake we are working to protect, is part of the traditional territories of the Ininiwak (Cree), Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), Nakota and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. Indigenous peoples have cared for Lake Winnipeg since time immemorial.

Yet Indigenous peoples have been deliberately displaced from and dispossessed of their traditional lands. Many of these lands are now enjoyed as parks, camps and cottage communities that we lake-lovers benefit from. LWF's monitoring and research activities take place across the lake's watershed. Because we have access to and benefit from the water and land, our work intersects with failures to fulfill the treaties, and failures to recognize Indigenous rights and jurisdiction within colonial systems of water governance. The exclusion of Indigenous peoples from water governance jeopardizes the health of Lake Winnipeg. Indigenous knowledge is critical evidence developed over generations – evidence that is essential to a well-rounded understanding of Lake Winnipeg, and to our efforts to protect it.

In alignment with our organizational values of accountability, continuous learning and integrity, we are committed to challenging the colonial systems, institutions and cultures in which we live and work.

We recognize that racism and colonialism – past and present – are contributors to water-quality degradation and impede our collective efforts to protect Lake Winnipeg.


We acknowledge and thank the original caretakers of the lands and waters. It is because of their efforts that we can enjoy the many gifts given to us by Lake Winnipeg. We see the health of Lake Winnipeg as a point of connection and shared purpose in a difficult, ongoing conversation. We are committed to protecting and restoring the health of this special place – now and for future generations.

## LWF and the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective

Recognizing the ongoing exclusion of Indigenous peoples from government decision-making processes for Lake Winnipeg, 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, evolving over time. LWIC and LWF provide each other with mutual support across key operations and programs, including partnership development, policy expertise, learning opportunities and logistical support. Ultimately, both LWF and LWIC are committed to ensuring the collective is independently incorporated to represent water rightsholders in a strengthened Lake Winnipeg governance system.





*"Understanding our history is part of the healing journey. We must be curious about this shared history, despite it being a painful one. This is the first step towards moving out of a lingering colonial mindset."*

– **Bruce Maclean**

CHAIR, LWF BOARD OF DIRECTORS



# goal 1 membership

## **Build a diverse, passionate, informed and empowered community working together to address the eutrophication of Lake Winnipeg**

Over the next five years we will:

- 1.1 Recruit and retain 10,000 LWF members by providing accessible, evidence-based information and relevant opportunities for advocacy and action.
- 1.2 Build diversity, equity and inclusion in LWF's brand and communications.
- 1.3 Educate LWF staff, board, members and partners on treaty rights and responsibilities, anti-racism, environmental justice, and the impacts of colonialism.
- 1.4 Foster reciprocal and respectful community partnerships to build shared purpose and common goals across new and diverse audiences.

LWF's members are our greatest strength. With a growing membership community, LWF can build a stronger advocacy voice, greater credibility and increased trust within the community.

We recognize that racism and colonialism are barriers to the success of our collective efforts to protect Lake Winnipeg. It is not enough to simply grow the number of LWF members; we will actively build diversity, equity and inclusion within LWF. As we grow and diversify our membership community, we commit to continuous learning.

# goal 2 advocacy

## **Advocate proactively for evidence-based solutions to address the largest sources of phosphorus to Lake Winnipeg**

Over the next five years we will:

- 2.1 Promote clear, evidence-based and effective solutions for Winnipeg wastewater treatment, and hold governments to account for their commitments.
- 2.2 Inform the allocation of government funds to address phosphorus hotspots.
- 2.3 Identify and communicate the links between eutrophication and other environmental and economic topics (e.g. climate change; zebra mussels; flooding; land and water use; etc.) to maintain public and policy focus on phosphorus reduction.
- 2.4 Respect Indigenous rights and jurisdiction and uplift Indigenous knowledge for the protection of Lake Winnipeg.

Tenacious, evidence-based advocacy is crucial to advancing freshwater solutions; as an advocacy organization, LWF works to influence policy, guide investment, encourage action and hold governments accountable. Our solutions-focused approach enables us to follow through with actions that will lead to measurable impact and improved water quality.

We recognize both science and Indigenous knowledge as important sources of evidence. We aim to serve as a public memory, maintaining consistent focus and collective accountability.

## goal 3 evidence

### **Understand phosphorus sources within persistent phosphorus hotspots identified by the Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network**

Over the next five years we will:

- 3.1 Maintain an active and engaged community-based monitoring network to ensure long-term phosphorus monitoring and open data-sharing.
- 3.2 Increase community monitoring capacity and resolution in persistent Seine River hotspots.
- 3.3 Identify, collect and compile other sources of phosphorus data in Seine River hotspots to understand the contributions of manure-phosphorus to Lake Winnipeg.
- 3.4 Build and support research, community and industry partnerships to fill remaining data and knowledge gaps for effective phosphorus reduction in hotspots.

Coordinated by LWF, the Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network mobilizes citizens across Manitoba to collect water samples in order to identify phosphorus hotspots – localized areas that contribute higher amounts of phosphorus than other areas.

Focusing research, resources and action in phosphorus hotspots is necessary to reduce phosphorus loading to Lake Winnipeg. Modelling the evidence-based approach we expect of other decision-makers, we will use our own data to sharpen our focus in persistent hotspots to better understand phosphorus sources and identify effective solutions.

## goal 4 resilience

### **Demonstrate excellence in non-profit governance and practice**

Over the next five years we will:

- 4.1 Improve risk assessment and risk management processes to enable purposeful risk-taking.
- 4.2 Strengthen mission-impact measurement, evaluation and reporting.
- 4.3 Develop equitable, inclusive and empowering recruitment, hiring, development, and retention practices, and model respect for diverse expertise and experience.
- 4.4 Build financial resilience and maintain mission focus by soliciting 50% of annual income from unrestricted, non-conditional private donations.

Strong governance and risk management position us to anticipate and proactively address the challenges that we face while keeping us rooted in integrity.

What gets measured gets done. We aim to foster a culture of measurement and evaluation at LWF by setting clear targets and timelines for selected performance indicators. We commit to holding ourselves accountable.

*“I was drawn to support LWF because its strong advocacy is rooted in evidence-based, workable solutions to the problems facing Lake Winnipeg. I remain inspired because I have witnessed the power of LWF’s persistence.”*

– **Dr. Greg McCullough**  
SCIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL CHAIR,  
LWF BOARD OF DIRECTORS



*“There is no thread I’ve pulled on in trying to solve this problem that does not lead to a policy decision. Policy change is necessary to protect Lake Winnipeg – and the LWF community is giving Lake Winnipeg a voice through our collective advocacy.”*

– Dr. Alexis Kanu  
LWF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR







# charities + advocacy

## LWF tenaciously advances policy solutions for Lake Winnipeg

Advocacy to improve policy for the public good is a central component of the work of Canadian charities. From poverty reduction to environmental protection, solutions to systemic challenges inevitably require policy change. Charities must actively engage in processes that develop and strengthen public policy – and facilitate public participation in these processes – in order to effect meaningful change.

As long as a charity's **public policy dialogue and development activities** further its charitable purpose, the Canadian Income Tax Act, as amended in 2018, places no limit on these advocacy activities.

But this wasn't always the case. For many years, charities across the country faced an "advocacy chill." In 2003, a federal policy statement limited charities' political activities to no more than 10 per cent of their time and resources. In 2012, with increased resources to enforce this "10 per cent rule," the Canada Revenue Agency undertook a series of well-publicized political-activity audits on dozens of Canadian charities. With these special audits stretching over multiple years and costing charities hundreds of thousands of dollars, the sector understandably backed away from advocacy activity, undertaking this work only with extreme caution – if not outright fear.

Today, charities across the country have **Canada Without Poverty (CWP)**, an Ottawa organization, to thank for our current freedom to advocate. Under a political-activity audit for upwards of four years, in 2016 CWP launched a legal challenge, arguing that the Income Tax Act's limitation on political activities violated freedom of expression, as enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In July 2018, the Ontario Superior Court of Canada agreed with CWP, finding that the Income Tax Act's 10 per cent rule violated the Charter. In December 2018, the federal government amended the Income Tax Act accordingly. While all partisan activities remain prohibited, Canadian charities can now undertake unlimited public policy dialogue and development activities to advance their charitable purpose.

LWF's charitable purpose, provided as part of our charitable registration in 2005, is to "advance education and benefit the community by carrying out research, educating the public about protection of the environment, and working to preserve and protect Lake Winnipeg and the surrounding area as a renewable resource." Alongside our members, we proudly advocate all levels of government for evidence-based policy that advances this purpose and contributes to the greater public good.

# measuring our impact

## Our 2023-2027 strategic plan charts an ambitious path forward for evidence-based advocacy

Key performance indicators for each goal allow us to monitor our progress, measure our impact and ensure we are staying on track. We commit to reporting on these indicators annually.

### goal 1: measuring membership

All lake-lovers – regardless of donation level – should feel valued as part of the LWF community and understand the impact of their support. We will review our current membership structure and make any needed changes to ensure LWF is inclusive and representative of all those who care about Lake Winnipeg.

**TARGET: 10,000 members**

### goal 2: measuring advocacy

Achieving our vision of a healthy Lake Winnipeg requires evidence-based policy change. We will be persistent and fearless in our focus on phosphorus to address eutrophication, and steadfast in our call for the meaningful inclusion of Indigenous peoples in freshwater governance. We will assess the impact of our advocacy by monitoring the policy and programs of federal, provincial and municipal governments.

**TARGET: LWF advocacy messages are publicly adopted by municipal, provincial and federal governments**

### goal 3: measuring evidence

Our water-monitoring efforts have identified recurring phosphorus hotspots within Manitoba's Seine River watershed. Now, we need to identify the sources of this phosphorus. We will seek out existing data on phosphorus sources such as sewage effluent and livestock waste, and generate our own high-resolution phosphorus data. This information will be used to develop evidence-based solutions.

**TARGET: LWF has access to relevant data sources within targeted phosphorus hotspots**



## goal 4: measuring resilience

We recognize the need to purposefully engage new, diverse communities to ensure that our organization is safe and inclusive of all who seek to find belonging and connection around Lake Winnipeg. With targets based on The Winnipeg Foundation's **Vital Signs 2022 report**, we will build diversity, equity and inclusion into LWF's staff team and board of directors, broadening the expertise, knowledge and skills available to advance our mission.

### **TARGET: LWF staff and board directors identify as:**

- **Black, Indigenous and/or People of Colour (32%)**
- **Female, non-binary or gender diverse (52%)**

Financial donations are a vote of confidence in our work – and make our advocacy possible. In contrast to grants from governments and other funding agencies, which often restrict spending on advocacy, donations from our supporters provide LWF with the resources necessary to advocate for the health of Lake Winnipeg. We will nurture and develop this important support, focusing on membership growth and retention, and exploring strategies to increase the amount of recurring, smaller gifts.

### **TARGET: 50% of LWF's annual income comes from unrestricted, private donations**

*"This strategic planning process highlighted and strengthened the vision that both staff and board have for LWF. It also paved the way for all of us to be on the same page with regards to the future work of LWF."*

– Frank Indome  
SECRETARY,  
LWF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Lake Winnipeg Foundation**    

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