

the watershed observer



Birds Hill Provincial Park; Photo: Paul Mutch

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Thank you for making LWF's 20th summer a resounding success

message from our chair

As the leaves fall and days feel chillier, I have been reflecting on summer and the hugely successful fundraising events that occurred in support of LWF. These events were organized by phenomenal volunteers who selflessly contributed significant time to ensuring their success. My highlights are:

- The return of the Walk for Water in Dunnottar, the community where LWF began. We were honoured to celebrate our 20th birthday with many of LWF's founding members and can already feel the momentum building for next year.
- The 6th Bike to the Beach smashing its previous fundraising record, even though smoke prevented the formal ride from occurring. Many of the riders met the following day at the Victoria Beach gate for an informal ride on a much sunnier, clearer day!
- An expanded Victoria Beach Walk for Water with pancakes, a fireside chat hosted by Anne Mahon, and a special guest: the Honourable Mike Moyes, provincial Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

I had the opportunity to hear Minister Moyes speak in Victoria Beach, where he acknowledged the power of LWF's advocacy work. He spoke of the important role the public plays in keeping Lake Winnipeg issues on the government's radar. He confirmed that governments are responsive to people – so we will continue to advocate on behalf of Lake Winnipeg and encourage you, our members, to do the same.

But it is also time for the government to step up and start taking the health of our waterways and our biggest lake more seriously. Based on Minister Moyes' message at the Walk for Water, here are some direct actions that I'd like to see from the province in the coming months:

- **Stricter phosphorus targets for Lake Winnipeg.** The existing targets established by this government are actually higher than current phosphorus levels in Lake Winnipeg's north basin.
- **Real collaboration and action to meet phosphorus limits at the north end sewage treatment plant.** We continue to hear different levels of government blaming each other for the lack of progress on phosphorus reduction.
- **Transparency about the new Lake Winnipeg Stakeholder Working Group.** The mandate of this group (announced by Minister Moyes at the Walk for Water) must be clear to ensure it does not become an industry lobbying group. For example, Manitoba Pork will have a seat at the table, but LWF has yet to be invited.

As always, I encourage all LWF members to work together to hold various levels of government accountable for protecting Lake Winnipeg.

Thank you for your invaluable support.

– Kathryn Dompierre, Chair, LWF Board of Directors

Claudeboye; Photo: Jesse Vanderhart

board of directors

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Amanda Karst
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news

■ Phosphorus levels increase at the north end sewage treatment plant

A leaky pipe at Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC) is increasing phosphorus levels in effluent released to the Red River.

The pipe, known as the Waste Activated Sludge Line, is central to the design of the chemical phosphorus reduction solution at NEWPCC, serving as the most effective dosing point for the chemical ferric chloride. On June 1, 2025, deterioration of the aging pipe led to a leak that forced ferric chloride dosing at this location to be shut down – less than a year after the chemical solution was put in place.

Phosphorus levels have jumped at the plant following the shut-down – from an average of 2.2 mg/L (January – March) to 3.8 mg/L (April – June).

Meanwhile, the provincial department of Environment and Climate Change has still not responded to the City's latest NEWPCC upgrade plan, submitted in February 2025. Eight months later, the deadline for completion of NEWPCC upgrades remains uncertain.

Previously, provincial director of Environmental Approvals Agnes Wittman has rejected the City's request for an extension to 2032, sticking to the already twice-extended deadline of 2030.

■ Welcome new members!

LWF is excited to welcome over 400 new members who joined our community this summer! Together, we are building a diverse, passionate and empowered community of water advocates, focused on addressing phosphorus – the root cause of Lake Winnipeg's algal blooms. Our voice is stronger with you on board!

■ Water Canada Awards

On Oct. 16, LWF was honoured to receive the 2025 Water Canada Policy Award, recognizing exceptional leadership in driving meaningful change to improve water quality policies and practices.

This award acknowledges the important contributions of the Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network (LWCBMN) in increasing publicly available water data, fostering collaboration with government, and advancing evidence-based water policy.

"This award is dedicated to all LWF members who have called on their elected officials for change," said LWF Programs Director Chelsea Lobson. "Coming up with evidence-based policy recommendations is only one part of the advocacy process – our members' commitment to holding governments accountable is what transforms our ideas into meaningful change."



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water protectors

The Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective hosts its first meeting of the members

By Daniel Gladu Kanu, Director
Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective

On Oct. 17, 2025, the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective marked a major milestone as an independent Indigenous-led non-profit organization – we held our first meeting of the members.

The meeting began by honouring water through ceremony with Lana Sutherland from Peguis Nation and Carl Stone from Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. Ceremony grounds our work together and reminds us of essential teachings, including humility and respect.

At the meeting, an Indigenous board of directors was elected by members to govern the collective. The five elected directors exemplify water protection and leadership in their own unique ways.

For the past 10 years, financial and administrative support from LWF has enabled us to engage in advocacy and public education about Indigenous priorities for the lake, and to develop an Indigenous monitoring network (read about this on page 5). Now, as an independent Indigenous-led organization, we'll continue building on these successes and strengthening partnerships that contribute to a healthy lake for all future generations.

For more information on becoming a member, visit lwic.org/membership.

Meet our board of directors

Becky Cook from **Misipawistik Cree Nation** was raised among a family of fishers and earned her PhD in geology. She now coordinates land guardians and land-based education in her community.

Owen Bear from **Poplar River First Nation** is the youngest board member. He is a land guardian and advanced drone pilot bringing technical skills to protect the community and their lands from wildfire and pollution.

Mike Sutherland from **Peguis First Nation** is a trapper and manages environmental projects for his community. He has been the driving force in building the environmental capacity of Peguis First Nation to protect the land and educate youth.

Lyle Morrisseau from **Sagkeeng Anicinabe Nation** is a former councillor. He is continuously building new relationships to support the environmental and socio-economic health of his community and of the Winnipeg River.

Dylan Kensick from **Sagkeeng Anicinabe Nation** is the land manager for Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, leading food sovereignty and monitoring initiatives. Educated as an environmental scientist, he is also an interpreter for the Brokenhead Wetland trail.



pinesiw maskihkiy totem



The name Pinesiw Maskihkiy Totem was beautifully painted into our logo by Jackie Traverse from Lake St. Martin First Nation.

By Kianna Durston, Program Lead
Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective

As part of our ongoing partnership with LWF, the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective has developed an Indigenous land guardian network with five First Nations across Lake Winnipeg. Together, we are called the *Pinesiw Maskihkiy Totem*, which translates from *Ininimowin* to Thunderbird Medicine Clan. The name was given to us in ceremony led by Rob Apetagon from Norway House Cree Nation, during our 2024 fall gathering.

The word *Pinesiw* refers to the Thunderbird, a sacred being who not only brings thunder and rain but also renewal and healing to the world. *Maskihkiy Totem*, meaning Medicine Clan, reminds us that healing comes in many forms – through ceremony, reciprocity, community, and through the spirit of the land and water itself. As *Pinesiw Maskihkiy Totem*, our role is to work together in preparing the land and the lake for healing.

Through *Pinesiw Maskihkiy Totem*, guardians around Lake Winnipeg are coming together to embody this

teaching – listening to the waters, recording changes in the land, and renewing relationships and connections. Guardians in the network all have their own focuses and approaches, using Indigenous knowledge, ceremony, data and science to answer their specific local questions and needs. As a network, we share lessons and resources to assist each other, and are collaborating on a shoreline-erosion monitoring initiative.

At the heart of our name and logo is a small but mighty teacher: the mosquito. The mosquito feels the earliest changes in water and weather, teaching us that the health of even the smallest insect is tied to the health of the entire lake. While often seen as a nuisance in the summer, the mosquito reminds us that all beings – no matter how big or small – have purpose. Where we are united in purpose, we cannot be ignored. The mosquito represents every guardian and water protector who prepares the way for the Thunderbird to come. Through their monitoring, restoration and protection, guardians prepare the path to heal and bring balance to the lake.

phosphorus in manure

LWF calls for a review of the hog industry's environmental sustainability

LWF has written to provincial environment minister Mike Moyes, asking that he direct Manitoba's Clean Environment Commission (CEC) to review the 2007 report, **Environmental Sustainability and Hog Production in Manitoba** and provide an update on progress made towards the recommendations included therein.

This 2007 report was produced by the CEC at the request of Manitoba's then-minister of conservation. The report included 48 recommendations, of which 26 relate directly to the impacts of hog production on Manitoba's water quality. Chief among these was a call for a full review – within five years – of the effectiveness of provincial regulations in managing phosphorus from hog manure.

The Commission warned that "the regional imbalances that have developed between the application and removal of nutrients and the potential impact of these nutrients on water resources constitute the most serious environmental sustainability issues facing the industry."

In March 2008, the provincial government announced its acceptance of the Commission's report and its 48 recommendations, and halted hog industry expansion in southeastern Manitoba, the Red River Valley and the Interlake. These three regions were recognized as intensively developed, high-risk, and ecologically sensitive, respectively. The government also strengthened environmental protections in the Livestock Manure and Mortalities Management Regulation.

Almost a decade later, in 2017, the provincial government again amended manure management regulations, this time removing regional restrictions on hog industry expansion. These changes were made in the absence of any evidence demonstrating that industry growth – and the associated increase in manure application to agricultural fields – could be undertaken without increasing phosphorus runoff to Lake Winnipeg.

To date, the comprehensive regulatory review requested by the CEC in 2007 has not been undertaken.

Now, we are urging Minister Moyes to engage the CEC's newly appointed chair and commissioners in a fulsome review of the environmental impacts of Manitoba's hog industry. In particular, we emphasize the need to address long-standing gaps in our understanding of hog manure's contribution to phosphorus loading to Lake Winnipeg. We also call for an up-to-date evaluation of the effectiveness of the current regulatory framework in protecting water quality.

Read our full letter to Minister Moyes online at lakewinnipegfoundation.org/news/cec-hog-industry.

Take action! Add your voice to the call for a Clean Environment Commission review of the hog industry. Email Minister Mike Moyes at minecc@manitoba.ca.

Environment minister Mike Moyes joins LWF members at the Victoria Beach Walk for Water. Photo: Leslie McLeod



reaching new heights

Thank you for making LWF's 20th summer a resounding success!

More people than ever before organized, volunteered and participated in community events in 2025. Together we raised a record-breaking \$300,000 for evidence-based advocacy to reduce Lake Winnipeg's algal blooms!

This advocacy is funded solely by donations from you, our members. The grants LWF receives cannot be used for advocacy, so policy change to protect Lake Winnipeg is only possible with your support!



Victoria Beach; Photo: Leslie McLeod



Donate online at:
lakewinnipegfoundation.org/donate

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

Please find a cheque attached for:

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* Your donation of \$50+ makes you an LWF member!

*\$20 in celebration of
our 20th anniversary!*

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



Thank you, Dunnottar!



Together, we brought Walk for Water back to the community that started it all.
Thank you for welcoming us with open arms!

Walk for Water in Dunnottar; Photo: Carla Buelow



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Advocating for change and coordinating action to improve the health of Lake Winnipeg
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