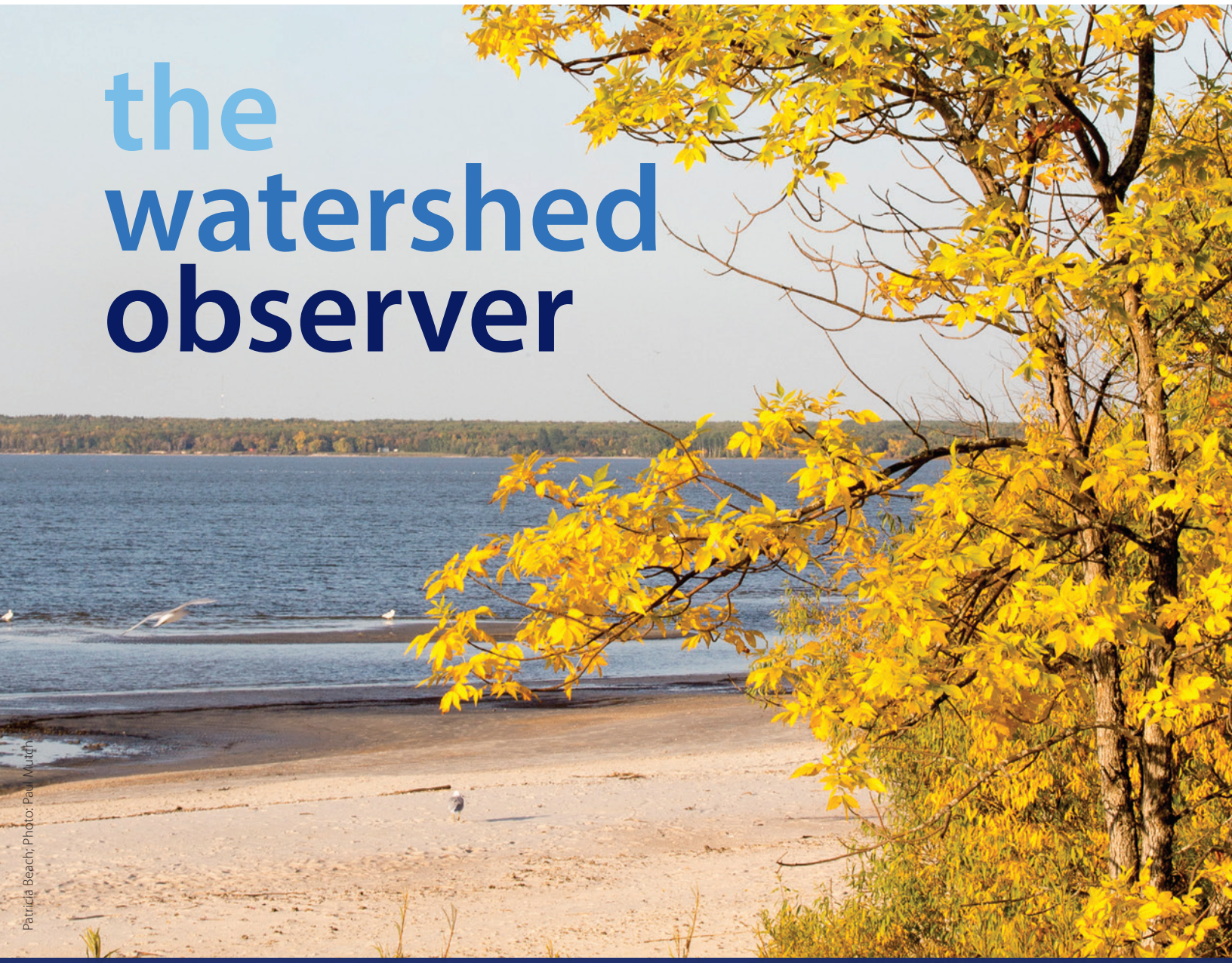
LWF LAKE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION

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Patricia Beach; Photo: Paul Muzdi

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message from our chair

It is a privilege for me to step into the role of board chair for the Lake Winnipeg Foundation. Since joining the board in 2020, I have been consistently impressed by the hard work and dedication of LWF's staff, my fellow board members, volunteers, and LWF's members as a whole. I joined the board out of a desire to contribute to rebuilding Lake Winnipeg's health, and I am inspired by the LWF community's commitment to that same goal.

For over two decades, LWF has operated on the principle that evidence-based solutions can change Lake Winnipeg's future. We work to better understand the problems facing the lake and use that knowledge to advocate for policies that will effectively address them.

Nowhere is that approach more evident than in the work of the Lake Winnipeg Community Based Monitoring Network. Every year, volunteers collect samples from dozens of sites across the Lake Winnipeg watershed. Those samples are then compiled and analyzed to build a detailed picture of phosphorus hotspots across the watershed. That data is now available at **phophorusexplorer.ca** so that researchers and policy makers can target their efforts to most effectively support the lake's health.

None of this happens without the support of the LWF community. Whether you're one of the volunteers collecting samples, a donor who helps keep the lights on, or a member who uses their voice to support our advocacy, you are the reason LWF can keep doing this work year after year.

As I begin this role, I'm looking forward to contributing to those efforts to build the evidence and push for the policy changes this lake needs.

– Jonathan Paterson
Chair, LWF Board of Directors



Point Lobos, California; Photo: Angeline Ryan

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news

Nibi Gathering 2026

This fall, LWF staff attended the Nibi Gathering, an annual event celebrating *Nibi Onje Biimaadiziwin* ("Water is Life" or "Everything Needs Water to Live"). The gathering explored three interconnected themes: *Mino-biimaadiziwin* (living a good life), *Nindigaweminadoog* (all my relations), and *Anishinaabemowin* (the language). In a place of healing, unity, and connection, we came together to honour the sacredness of water.

Participation in gatherings like this reflects our commitment to uplifting Indigenous knowledge for the protection of Lake Winnipeg. Through opportunities like the Nibi Gathering, our staff deepen their understanding of Indigenous perspectives and learn from Indigenous knowledge systems that have guided relationships with water since the beginning of time.

Datastream's ten-year anniversary

On Sept. 20, LWF Programs Director Chelsea Lobson joined partners, data users and policymakers on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to celebrate ten years of DataStream, an open-access online platform for sharing water quality data.

LWF has been the regional partner for **Lake Winnipeg DataStream**, one of five hubs across the country, since its launch in 2019. DataStream filled a critical gap by providing a place to share our community-based monitoring data so that it can be easily accessed and used by volunteers, researchers, and policymakers.

We are proud to partner with DataStream and be part of the national network of community-based monitoring organizations connected through the platform. We look forward to another decade of working together to make freshwater data more open, accessible, and useful across Canada.

Our Science Advisory Network

The Lake Winnipeg Foundation's Science Advisory Network (SAN) plays a vital role in grounding our work in credible science. Evolving from the former Science Advisory Council, the SAN reflects LWF's growing focus on issues across Lake Winnipeg's watershed, including wastewater infrastructure and agricultural sources of phosphorus.

The network has been reinstated with support from its new chair, Dr. Scott Higgins. A senior research scientist at IISD Experimental Lakes Area, Scott's research interests include algal ecology and physiology, and ecosystem ecology of freshwater lakes.

"It has been a pleasure to work as a LWF Science Advisor for many years and to recently take on the duties of chairing the new Science Advisory Network," says Scott. "Our job is to provide the LWF with the most current scientific evidence so it can advocate for solutions that work to improve the health of Lake Winnipeg."

Learn more:
lakewinnipegfoundation.org/science-advisors



Red River; Photo: Karl Friesen-Hughes

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a lake for everyone



Members of Caring for Our Environment Manitoba enjoy an afternoon at Patricia Beach. Photo: AH! Photos WPG.

Field trips for newcomers create a sense of community at the lake.

What if a visit to Lake Winnipeg was out of reach? For newcomers to Canada and other racialized communities, this is often the case. Transportation, unfamiliarity with the region, and other barriers can make the lake feel inaccessible.

Kanak Kulhari, LWF's Community Engagement Coordinator, knew this feeling firsthand. In 2019, he moved from India to Manitoba to study Environmental Science at the University of Manitoba. Without a car, he found himself visiting Winnipeg's parks – easily accessible to someone still getting acquainted with a new city. The city's green spaces gave the opportunity to spend time outdoors and begin cultivating a sense of belonging to the place he now called home.

Visiting Lake Winnipeg was something he had always hoped to do. In 2022, he finally made the trip, and the size of the lake amazed him. "I hadn't expected a lake to stretch so far that I couldn't see the other side," he recalls.

Now working with LWF, Kanak recognized that others might benefit from similar experiences. He partnered with several community organizations to organize summer field trips to the Brokenhead Wetland Interpretive Trail and Patricia Beach. By providing transportation, food, and a welcoming environment, the trips created opportunities for participants to experience the beauty of Lake Winnipeg.

Participants walked the boardwalks of the Brokenhead Wetland, learned about local ecosystems, shared meals, and spent time along the shores of the lake.

For Kanak, one of the most important lessons to emerge from the trips was "how important it is to leave room for people to enjoy a place in their own way." For some, it was taking the time to learn about plants along the trail. Others valued the opportunity to relax at the beach, spend time with family and friends, or enjoy a day outside.

The field trips also demonstrated the close relationship between nature and community. "Parks, trails and beaches give us places to gather and make those memories," Kanak says. "I think caring for nature is also connected to caring about who gets to enjoy it and feel welcome there".

Ultimately, the goal of the field trips extends beyond a single day at the lake. Kanak hopes it sparks a lasting connection: "When participants hear about Lake Winnipeg afterwards, I hope they can picture a place they know, a place they have their own memories of and want to see protected."

sewage delay stinks

As minister extends deadline, it's time to double down on phosphorus solution

On March 20, 2026, Manitoba minister of environment Mike Moyes granted yet another deadline extension to the City of Winnipeg for upgrades to Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Center (NEWPCC). Now, the largest sewage treatment plant in the province has been given until 2032 to meet its environmental limits, a completion date that's 18 years later than the original 2014 deadline.

Thanks to the tireless advocacy of LWF members and partners, an interim chemical phosphorus-reduction system was built at NEWPCC to offset the ongoing phosphorus pollution that fuels harmful algae blooms in Lake Winnipeg. However, that phosphorus-reduction system remains underused, two years after it was completed.

Ferric chloride – a chemical that binds to phosphorus and pulls it out of the liquid waste released to the Red River – is only being added at the plant at a fraction of the recommended rate. Yet both the minister and City Council seem content to ignore this ready-made solution – rather than leveraging it to achieve phosphorus compliance years earlier than currently planned. To make matters worse, politicians keep asking Winnipeggers to invest in a billion-dollar future project, while they let the $17 million system we've already paid for go to waste.

NEWPCC wastewater operators have shown that when the chemical dose is dialed up – closer to levels recommended in the original design – NEWPCC can successfully achieve its phosphorus limit. In March 2026, sewage plant operators increased ferric chloride while the treatment plant's UV system was shut down. With the increased dose, phosphorus concentrations dropped below the 1 mg/L limit for three days that month.

Three days of phosphorus compliance is hardly sufficient to offset 18 years of delay – but those three days offer a clear demonstration that the chemical phosphorus-reduction system works. It's an investment we can't afford to waste.

It's time to ensure we're getting our money's worth from the sewage investments we've already made. Contact your **city councillor** and your **provincial MLA** to demand they use the chemical phosphorus-reduction system at its full potential.

Learn more at **lakewinnipegfoundation.org/cleaning-up-sewage**.

path to
phosphorus compliance

2005 — **The first NEWPCC operating licence** requires upgrades to be complete by 2014.

2014 — Manitoba government **issues a deadline extension for NEWPCC upgrades**, requiring completion by 2019.

2019 — **Manitoba government declares NEWPCC out of compliance** with its Environment Act licence, requiring an interim chemical phosphorus-reduction system to address environmental impacts.

2022 — Winnipeg City Council **approves $17 million for construction of the chemical phosphorus-reduction system**.

2024 — The new phosphorus-reduction system begins operating, with the chemical ferric chloride **dosed at 11% of the recommended rate**.

2025 — The City of Winnipeg announces that biological nutrient removal at NEWPCC is now **estimated to cost $1.5 billion**.

2026 — Manitoba government issues **another deadline extension for NEWPCC upgrades**, requiring completion by 2032 – "with no additional nutrient reduction."

supporter spotlight



Herb (second from right) and the Comets at the finish line of Bike to the Beach 2024. Photo: Carla Buelow

Herb Vielhaber reflects on the power of community through Bike to the Beach

Herb Vielhaber loves an adventure. He's a proud grandfather, general handyman, and avid outdoorsman, finding opportunities to be outside in any season, no matter the weather.

At two years old, Herb visited Lake Winnipeg for the first time. From then on, he looked for any excuse to visit the lake, even proposing to his wife Brenda on its shores. Now, he and his family have a cottage at Victoria Beach, where Herb's adventures continue. He has logged more than 3,000 nautical miles sailing Lake Winnipeg's waters – even a boating accident that resulted in 25 stitches did not diminish his love for being on the lake. He has always enjoyed pushing the limits of what some might consider a comfortable swim and can be found in the lake in almost every season. "My records for a swim in the lake are May 8th and November 24th," says Herb. "Who says we don't have six months of summer in Manitoba?!"

Herb wants future generations to experience the same sense of belonging that Lake Winnipeg has provided him throughout his life. That's what first drew him to Bike to the Beach, LWF's annual charity cycling event. While some might see the 133-kilometre ride as a competition, for Herb it is a chance to connect with a group of people who feel like family. No one in Herb's peloton is left behind – the team starts and finishes together.

The ride also creates something increasingly rare: uninterrupted time together. Whether riders are pushing through a tough stretch of road or coasting side by side, Herb treasures the hours spent talking and connecting with one another. "Real people having real conversations for five captive hours," he says. "That warms my heart."

Today, Herb's commitment to Bike to the Beach extends beyond participating. As he steps into the role of event chair in 2027, he's helping guide an event that brings people together around a shared appreciation for Lake Winnipeg. The most inspiring part of the ride, says Herb, is "the ability of the group to work together to go faster and farther as a team than one expects. It is truly like the geese we see flying over our heads every spring and fall, literally pulling each other along incredible distances." This description fits not just Bike to the Beach, but also the collective efforts of LWF's membership community, which achieves incredible things by working together, side by side.

building a healthy future

Did you know you can now donate publicly traded securities to the Lake Winnipeg Foundation?

When you give appreciated stocks or mutual funds instead of cash, you avoid paying tax on capital gains and receive a charitable tax receipt for the full market value of the shares.

As the end of the year approaches, a gift of securities can be a tax-smart way to maximize your charitable impact while supporting our work to restore and protect Lake Winnipeg.

Visit canadahelps.org/en/charities/lake-winnipeg-foundation/ and click on Donate Securities.



Seine River; Photo: Paul Mutch

LWF **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:

*** Your donation of $20+ makes you an LWF member!**

☐ $1,000 ☐ $500 ☐ $100
☐ $50 ☐ $20* ☐ $ _____ (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



Photos: AHI Photos WPG

LWF LAKE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION

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

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