

SEINE RIVER WATERSHED

Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP)

Advisory Team

Notes on Meeting #3

Date: Feb. 14th, 2007

Time: 6:45 pm

Location: Smitty's of Steinbach - Conference Room

Present:

Cornie Goertzen, Chair – Water Planning Authority & SRRCD
Art Bergmann – RM of Ste. Anne
Bob Bodnaruk – RM of Springfield
Dave Menard – RM of Tache
Don Winnicky – Manitoba Cattle Producers Assoc.
Frank Krasnianski – Seine River Wildlife Association
Garry Gaetz – RM of Reynolds
Jacques Trudeau – RM of Tache
Jake Reimer – RM Ste. Anne
Laurie Evans – SRRCD / RM of Ste. Anne
Laurie Frost – MWS, Groundwater Management
Lorne Vaags – RM of Springfield
Maria Neumann – Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation (MHHC)
Mark Hamonic – RM De Salaberry
Maurice Leclair - SRRCD / RM of Ritchot
Meagan Henke – MB Intergov. Affairs & Trade – Community Planning
Phil Kalyta - SRRCD
Randy Eros – Manitoba Sheep Association
Randy Yestrau – Towne of Ste Anne
Ray Pelletier – Dairy Farmers of Manitoba
Roland Chaput – SRRCD
Roland Gauthier – SRRCD
Wendy Ralley – MWS – Water Quality
Alan Skrepnek – MWS, Water Planning
Barry Oswald – MWS, Water Planning

Regrets: Doug Leroux, Grant Mohr, Dennis Schindler, Tamara Horechko, Kristy-Layne Carr

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Welcome from the Water Planning Authority (WPA)

Water Planning Authority (WPA) and Seine-Rat River Conservation District (SRRCD) Board Chairperson, Cornie Goertzen, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves and stated which organization they were representing.

4. IWMP Status - Alan Skrepnek, Manitoba Water Stewardship

Alan reported that IWMP process details have been posted on the **SRRCD website**: <http://www.srrcd.ca/> . On the left-side menu, click on 'Special Projects'. Heading this list is 'Seine River Watershed, IWMP' so click here and follow the links.

The first document posted is the Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) between the provincial government and the newly-designated Water Planning Authority--Board of the SRRCD.

You will then note the Terms of Reference (**ToR**) which documents the IWMP process. Our **meeting** 'minutes' **notes** (less formal than minutes) are also posted.

The State of the Watershed (**SoW**) **inputs** follow. A few glitches have caused some delays in posting these reports and reversed page order in these documents still needs to be corrected.

You will note the SoW inputs are being posted in four general categories:

- People & Community
- Land
- Water
- Wildlife & Habitat

Watch for a 'related reports' section & a bibliography to be added--as several comprehensive, directly-related reports or commissioned (consultant) studies respecting the Seine River/Watershed have been obtained and have been or are being digitized. By posting these reports on the website in this manner, watershed residents will, for the first time, have ready-access to a great deal of resource information to consider as they help develop a management plan for their watershed.

Several more reports are ready to be posted and this should occur on or about Feb. 20th when the CD manager resumes her duties.

A management team meeting was held on Feb. 1st to discuss IWMP progress and next steps. A follow-up e-mail in this respect from Barry Oswald was forwarded to all of the AT. The AT, particularly the Technical sub-group, was asked to start thinking about and identifying water issues for discussion. An initial, public open house is being considered during mid-April.

Key agriculture and surface water SoW inputs are still not completed/submitted but have been promised soon.

SoW presentations promised at the next meeting are:

- Wildlife/Habitat – Jim Duncan
- City of Winnipeg – Grant Mohr

Hopefully, the critically-important agricultural input (Dennis Schindler) and surface water input (Scott Herbert) will be available by then.

This would leave: Office of Drinking Water (Gilbert Bushati) and Envir. Regional operations/licensing rep to possibly present.

4. SoW presentations

- Groundwater Resources – Laurie Frost, MB Water Stewardship

Laurie discussed the following topics: two regional aquifer types; groundwater characteristics and water quality associated with bedrock aquifers and sand and gravel aquifers; private well sampling; water well classification, well records, construction & flood protection; interconnected aquifers; flowing wells; recharge and discharge areas; groundwater monitoring and interpretation of resulting hydrographs; MB water well act and regulations; local groundwater studies in progress; groundwater mapping; and groundwater resource evaluation.

He then discussed regional groundwater issues and concerns including: vulnerable groundwater areas and current development proposals.

A lively, lengthy question period followed.

- Water Quality – Wendy Ralley, MB Water Stewardship

Long-term trend data indicate that total nitrogen and total phosphorus in the Seine River have significantly increased from 1973 to 2001.

The Water Quality Index, which uses numerous variables in the calculations and provides an overall indication of water quality, ranged between 'Fair' and 'Good' in the Seine River from 1990 to 2005.

There may be incidents when aquatic life and wildlife may be impacted due to low dissolved oxygen levels.

There is strong evidence to suggest that nutrients, dissolved salts and minerals, suspended sediments, and turbidity increase significantly as water flows from the most upstream sites to the most downstream sites. These accumulative impacts are likely a result of land-use practices, municipal discharges, decreases in vegetated buffer strips along the Seine River and contributions from major drains.

Wendy emphasized that important related references to WQ including the Seine River can be viewed at:

1. http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/reports/quality/mwqsog_2002.pdf
2. http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/reports/quality/nutrient_loading_report_2002-04_november_2002.pdf and

3. http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/reports/quality/trend_report.pdf where there is a section on the Seine River pp. 35 -37.

- Water Use Licensing – Shannon Beattie, MB Water Stewardship

MB Water Licensing Branch is the regulatory body authorizing permits, licences, etc. under The Water Rights Act for the use of water for agricultural, municipal, industrial, irrigation, or other purposes. Water use for domestic purposes [up to 25,000 litres or 5,500 Imp. gal. per day] does not require a licence.

The intent of water rights licensing is to protect the interests of licensees, domestic users, the general public and the environment with respect to the use of water. Licences are issued on a “first in time – first in right” principal, established by the date the application is submitted.

There are presently 22 surface water projects on file with the Water Licensing Branch in the Seine River Watershed—19 for irrigation purposes. There are 144 groundwater projects--87 for agricultural purposes. These projects are associated mainly with livestock production, generally using less than 20 dam³ per year each. There are also five groundwater-sourced, municipal distribution systems in the watershed, mostly small villages and subdivisions but also including the City of Steinbach with an 1817 dam³ per year allocation.

No allocation limits have been set for the major rivers in this watershed. Current allocations are believed to be well below the sustainable yield of the major streams, based on site-specific water budget evaluations carried out during the course of issuing water rights licences.

- Riparian Habitat – Maria Neumann, MB Habitat Heritage Corporation

Important buffer vegetation to help purify runoff entering the ecosystem and to provide habitat for wildlife can be found on either side of the many waterways (streams and drains) in the Seine River Watershed—there are few lakes or ponds but there are some marshy, wetland areas which also need to be maintained and protected because of their value as natural water filtration areas for system re-charge.

Using the available Landsat land use/cover imagery and superimposing the waterway/drainage network, it has been estimated that agriculture or other development is occurring on approx. 40% of the riparian area in the watershed—right up to the water’s edge. If vegetation in these riparian zones were restored and/or increased to achieve a 95% level, habitat specialists would consider this a ‘very good’ rating in terms of watershed health.

Wrap-Up

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 pm.

Next Meeting - *Monday, March 12th, 2007 @ 6:45 pm (same location)*