

Ripple Effect # 56

LAKE WINNIPEG NEEDS YOUR HELP

Lake Winnipeg – with its beautiful sand beaches, highly productive commercial fishery, and the tenth largest lake in the world – is downstream of all of us who live in the Red River Basin. In fact, Lake Winnipeg is downstream to 6.6 million people and over 20 million livestock who live in several other basins, stretching west to the Canadian Rockies, south to Minnesota and South Dakota, and east to near the shores of Lake Superior.

Observations by people who live and work on the lake and recent scientific data have confirmed that the lake is exhibiting the signs of excessive nutrient loading, demonstrated by extensive algal blooms that covered its surface in 2006. The health of the lake is in decline, and in response, the Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board was formed in 2003 to assist the Government of Manitoba in identifying potential solutions to the problem of excess nutrient loading to the Lake.

In addition to the Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board, several other groups have formed to address some of Lake Winnipeg's needs. One of them, the Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium, facilitates scientific research on the lake, creates educational opportunities increases public awareness of the lake, and fosters cooperation among all stakeholders. More information can be found at <http://lakewinnipegresearch.org>.

The Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board recently released their final report, in which over 100 recommendations have been made. The recommendations cover the topics of public education, water use, wastewater treatment, lagoon maintenance, cosmetic and crop fertilizer, beneficial management practices, and many others. The full report can be found at www.lakewinnipeg.org.

The Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board's report also includes a list of **What YOU Can Do Now**, such as: choose **low phosphorus** or phosphorus-free products (dishwasher detergent, fertilizers, etc); maintain and regularly pump out your **septic field** or holding tank; keep **lawn clippings** on the grass and out of waterways or sewers; prevent **soil from eroding** off your property (by using plants or shrubs as buffers); **minimize runoff** and encourage infiltration of rainwater and snowmelt water through the use of rain gardens and rain barrels. See <http://lakewinnipegresearch.org/whatyoucando.html> for more details on some of these suggestions, or contact the Red River Basin Commission for other resources.

Until the next Ripple Effect,

The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC)

The RRBC is a grassroots organization that is a chartered not-for-profit corporation under the provisions of Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota law. Our offices in

Moorhead, MN and Winnipeg, MB can be reached at 218-291-0422 and 204-982-7254, or you can check out our website at www.redriverbasincommission.org.

