

# LAKE MANITOBA LAKE ST. MARTIN

## OUTLET CHANNELS PROJECT

### Newsletter - May 2021 Issue 6

## LET'S TALK

Manitoba Infrastructure continues to meet with Indigenous groups and communities; the Rural Municipality of Grahamdale; and federal regulatory agencies. This ongoing process of sharing information and receiving feedback is essential to completion of the permitting and licensing process required prior to construction of the Outlet Channels Project. A highlight of recent and upcoming meetings is included below:

<b>April 14 and 15</b> R.M. of Grahamdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings to present the draft Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) and obtain community feedback and local considerations</li> <li>Additional meetings are being scheduled for late May and early June to discuss groundwater, sediment and surface water</li> </ul>
<b>April 28; May 4, 5, 6</b> Fisher River Cree Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting to present the draft EMPs and discuss comments brought forward by Fisher River Cree Nation</li> <li>Additional meetings are being scheduled with Chief and Council to discuss consultation</li> </ul>
<b>April 29</b> Interlake Reserves Tribal Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular meeting to discuss consultation planning</li> <li>Additional meetings are scheduled in early June to discuss draft EMPs and potential environmental impacts</li> </ul>
<b>May 5</b> First Peoples Development Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting to provide a Project update and overview of anticipated environmental and construction jobs based on anticipated environmental monitoring and construction activities</li> <li>Manitoba Infrastructure committed to include FPDI in future discussions about Indigenous training and development opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>April 29, 2021</b> R.M. of Grahamdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting to discuss PR 239 drainage and traffic plans, bridge detours at sites</li> <li>R.M. of Grahamdale provided input on local drainage and culvert sizing</li> </ul>
<b>May 12</b> Peguis First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting to discuss the community's comments, concerns and the Project's potential environmental impacts and mitigations.</li> </ul>
<b>May 12</b> Pinaymootang First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting to discuss consultation planning</li> </ul>

### Upcoming Meetings

<b>Late May/June</b> R.M. of Grahamdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings scheduled to discuss groundwater, local hydraulics, overland drainage issues, sediment, aquatics</li> </ul>
<b>June</b> Interlake Reserves Tribal Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical workshop scheduled to discuss draft EMPs and potential environmental impacts</li> </ul>



## Indigenous Consultation

The Manitoba government is currently in Phase 2 of the consultation process. To date, highlights include:

- A contract for a Professional Facilitator to support the consultation and engagement process was awarded to MNP LLP. Manitoba Infrastructure will be reaching out to Indigenous communities and the R.M. of Grahamdale to set up facilitated sessions on the following priority discussion areas:
  - upcoming heritage resource mitigation work
  - economic opportunities and jobs, with participation by First Peoples Development Inc. (FPDI)
- In May 2021, Manitoba Infrastructure extended an offer to Indigenous communities in the Project area to hold a workshop-style meeting with each community to discuss any concerns and to assist in the understanding of the Project's environmental impacts and proposed mitigations.
- As of May 20, 2021, the Manitoba government has communicated by letter (780), meetings (189), and emails/ phone (3197) with 39 Indigenous groups and communities about the Outlet Channels Project.

## IN YOUR AREA

Following questions about field work practices from the RM of Grahamdale, Manitoba Infrastructure has confirmed that biosecurity measures are being implemented. Practices include ensuring that equipment is arriving on site clean and not tracking soil or vegetation from field to field.

### Upcoming Six Weeks:

Water Quality Data Collection – Field measurements and water samples will continue to be collected from Lake Manitoba, Fairford River, Lake St. Martin, Dauphin River, Sturgeon Bay, and in Watchorn Creek, Mercer Creek, Birch Creek and Buffalo Creek watersheds. Water quality data from cattle runoff operations along the Lake Manitoba Outlet Channel will also be collected.

Groundwater Monitoring – Water level readings were collected from areas along the Lake Manitoba Outlet Channel right-of-way, Birch Creek and the Lake St. Martin Outlet Channel right-of-way.

Access Road – Manitoba Infrastructure has extended the timeframe for 9 Indigenous communities to participate in the extended consultation discussions on the access road. Remaining work is anticipated to begin following the conclusion of this extension in late June.

Heritage Excavation – Manitoba recognizes the importance of historical sites, resources, and the use and occupation of the land by ancestors. Joined by a Professional Facilitator, Manitoba Infrastructure will be meeting with Indigenous communities to discuss any activities or ceremonies that should take place before field work begins. Field work is anticipated to begin in June and is expected to take two months to complete the excavation of the sites.

In the event that you have any concerns about upcoming field work, please respond to the contact identified in Manitoba Infrastructure's notification letters.



## Spring 2021 Aquatics Field Work

Spring field programs are underway. Final reports will be posted online by Fall 2021.

### Fish Studies

- **Larval Fish Program:** Drift traps were set in Birch Creek, Fairford River, Buffalo Creek and Dauphin River. Surface water species sampling was also conducted in the north and south basins of Lake St. Martin.
- **Fish Species Occurrence Studies:** Studies were conducted using hoop nets, drift traps, gill nets, and back pack electrofishing to determine the occurrence of species in Birch Creek and Buffalo Creek.
- **Mercury Samples:** Fish muscle tissue samples from an additional 17 walleye and 12 northern pike collected from Lake St. Martin tributaries will be analyzed for fish mercury concentration levels.

While undertaking the first round of spring field work in late April, zebra mussels were found in a drift trap set in the lower Dauphin River. This is the first known occurrence of zebra mussels at this location; however, the location lies within the Central Control Zone (Lake Winnipeg) for Aquatic Invasive Species and the occurrence of zebra mussels is not unexpected. This has been reported to the Fisheries Branch of Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development. Aquatic Invasive Species decontamination processes continue to be followed by all environmental consultants.

## We Want To Hear From You

Please share your comments on the potential effects of the project by participating in meetings, or by contacting your local project Community Coordinator, band office, government office, association or email [outletchannels@gov.mb.ca](mailto:outletchannels@gov.mb.ca). For updates on the Outlet Channels Project please visit [EngageMB.ca](https://www.gov.mb.ca/engage)

The environmental assessment is both a planning and decision-making tool. This process is iterative and evolves as additional project information and community and stakeholder feedback is received. Project design, proposed mitigations, and proposed monitoring activities can be adapted to ensure that feedback received through this process is addressed.