

Healthy Watershed =
Healthy Community



LA SALLEREDBOINE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

State of the Watershed

Is the La Salle River in Trouble?

Flooding, declining water quality, soil erosion, loss of wildlife habitat, stream-bank erosion, wetland drainage, lack of drought protection and increasing water demand. These are all common concerns for many watersheds in southern Manitoba.

The La Salle River is no different. A recently completed Provincial water quality study identifies that nutrient loading to the La

Salle River, which many experts consider the greatest threat to water quality, has nearly doubled in the past 30 years. Spring and summer flooding of farm land and private property have increased in frequency and cost of damages.

As populations increase, so are demands for access to potable water. Development and intense use of areas near watercourses

contribute to water contamination and reduce the stability of sensitive river banks. Uncontrolled drainage of fields and wetlands can increase runoff intensity and reduce base flows of streams in dryer months.

These things all occur in the La Salle River Watershed but to what extent? How concerned should we be? What can we do about it?



Field near Elie, MB - April 12, 2006



May 3, 2006

The Watershed Approach—A Local Solution

The issues identified above are not singular unrelated problems. They cannot be fixed in isolation. They are symptoms of a larger concern and must be treated as a system. That system is the watershed!

Watersheds are defined as areas of land that captures precipitation (i.e. rain, snow melt) and funnels it to a river, lake or stream.

It is a community where people, business, agriculture, government, institutions, plants, and animals are interconnected by the common water resource.

The community influences the watershed and the watershed influences the community.

A watershed is a complex system and to protect its health everyone who has a stake in the watershed may have to make trade offs, compromises and maybe even some sacrifices to keep it healthy.

A healthy watershed requires a community supported plan to protect this complex resource for current and future watershed residents.

A watershed plan is a document prepared by the watershed community that describes the actions needed over time to achieve a sustainable healthy watershed.

The La Salle River Watershed Management Plan is

simply an organized way of looking at big picture issues and setting long and short term priorities for improving the La Salle River Watershed.

This plan will be holistic and will provide a venue where all watershed residents, local municipalities and government agencies can openly discuss watershed concerns and work together to develop long term solutions.



Why Do We Need a Watershed Plan for the La Salle River?

There are increasing pressures on the watershed due to a growing economy. The plan ensures the resources in the watershed are managed in a sustainable fashion.

The plan is a roadmap for the community to help plan and practice good common sense programs. The plan helps define what is important to the community.

The plan sets local priorities between need-to-do's and nice-to-do's. The plan helps communicate to the public where the work will be done.

The plan demonstrates to senior govern-

“A watershed plan helps define what is important to the community”

ments that local people are in charge of managing their own resources.

The plan sets a way to measure future

progress on meeting resource goals and objectives.

The plan will help groups like the La Salle Redboine Conservation District set programming agendas and direct limited funds to watershed priorities. Information provided by the watershed management

“A watershed plan provides valuable information to aid Planning Districts”

plan should be used by area planning districts in their development plans to avoid potential conflicts with existing or future development in the watershed.

An example would be valuable information about riparian protection or drinking water source protection included in the watershed plan used by the planning districts when land use policy statements are

being prepared.

Planning Districts and Municipalities should have input into the preparation of this plan and will be invited to participate in this process.

Tying good land use planning to improving and protecting the health of the watershed is only common sense and everyone wins.



decaying tree debris impairs water quality and threatens infrastructure

How Does the Planning Process Work?

The La Salle River watershed encompasses 2,400km² of the central plains region of Manitoba. It is home to a large number of small communities including 5 rural municipalities and portions of the City of Winnipeg. The watershed is also represented by 5 planning districts, a wide variety of producer groups, Hutterite Colonies, community associations, business associations and the La Salle Redboine Conservation District.

Under the recently enable Water Protection Act, the La Salle Redboine Conservation District has been established as the Water Planning Authority (WPA) for the La Salle River Watershed. This means that the Conservation District has been assigned the responsibility of preparing and implementing a watershed plan for the La Salle River.

This process will be a community driven and requires the support, opinions and knowledge of the residents of the watershed and technical information from the Provincial and Federal Government.

Resident members and government representatives will form a Water Planning Advisory Team (WPAT) that will debate the issues and provide expertise to the WPA for consideration in the final plan.

Information about the state of the watershed will be collected and presented to all members of the WPAT and WPA. The

“The watershed plan will be prepared based on local opinions, community needs and up to date scientific information collected in the watershed.”

issues will be identified and reasonable solutions will be recommended.

Community consultations will also take place at various times during the planning process in several communities throughout the watershed. At these meetings information will be provided to the public

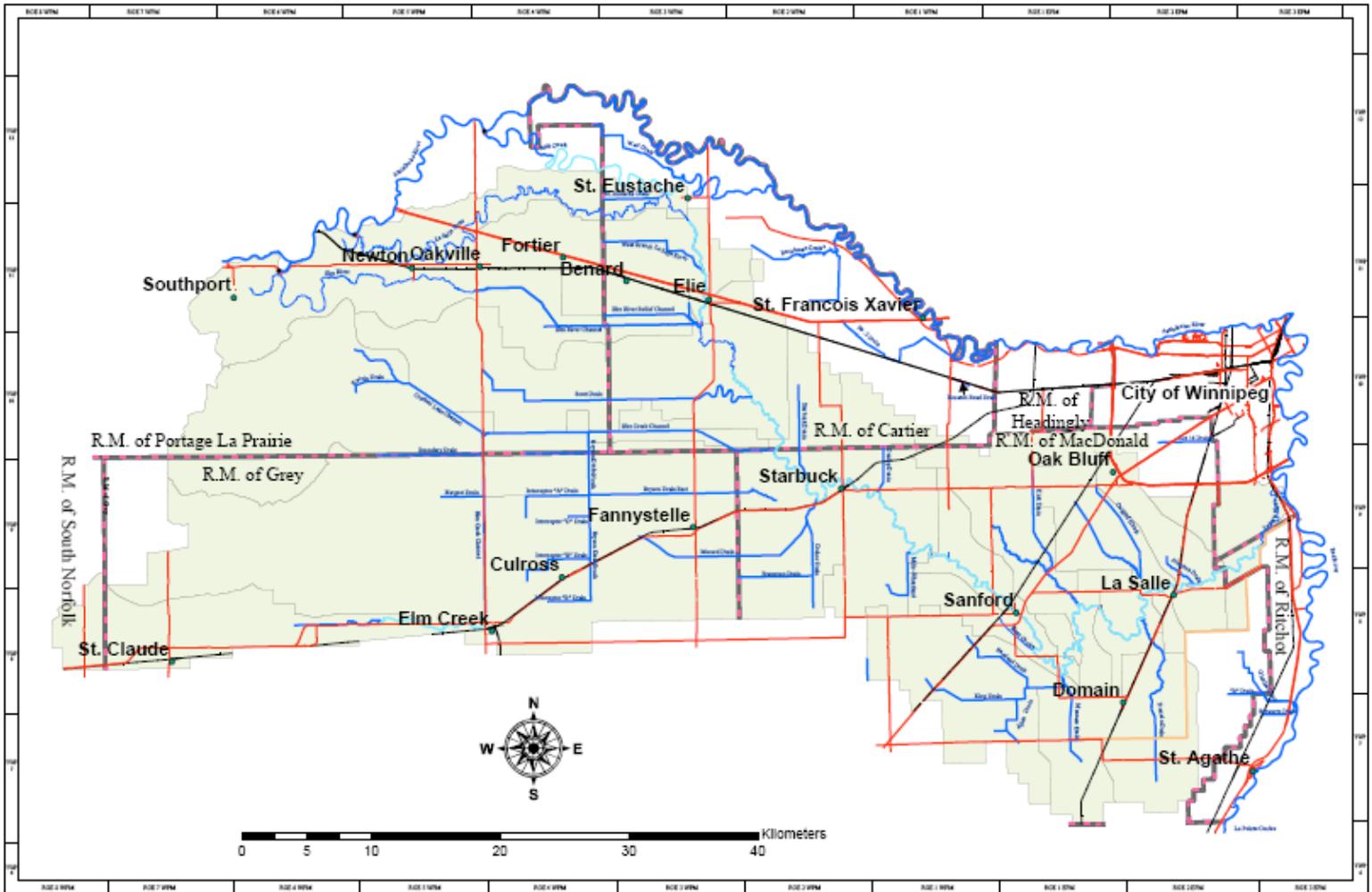
about the progress of the plan and the state of the watershed. The public is encouraged to provide feedback to the WPAT & WPA for consideration in the final plan.

Once all information has been received, community comments evaluated and final plan prepared, the recommendations of the plan will be implemented by agencies as indicated in the plan.

The plan will be completed within a two year time frame and ready to be implemented in early 2008. A full scale review of the progress of the plan will also be completed in 2013 to identify successes, failures and to introduce refinements to ensure the plan is up to date with the needs of the watershed.



Welcome to the La Salle River Watershed!



Join Us, Be Part of the Solution!

Other Benefits from the Planning Process!

State of the Watershed Report—

This document will pull information from several sources to quantify the current state of the La Salle River Watershed. The information contained in the report will be extensively used to evaluate the requirements of the final watershed plan.

Watershed Report Cards—

This simplistic report will be widely distributed throughout the watershed and will contain provincial indicators for the health of the watershed. These report cards will be completed periodically in the future and will be useful in presenting

and evaluating the success and shortcomings of the watershed plan.

Source Water Protection Plan—

This plan will be prepared for drinking water sources in the watershed. Using available information this plan will identify, assess and mitigate threats to domestic drinking water supplies.

Public Awareness—

This is probably the single most important deliverable from the entire process. A heightened public awareness about the health issues and potential solutions to concerns of the La Salle River Watershed.



watershed tour 2005 identifying issues of the La Salle River Watershed

How Long Will the Process Take?

The Watershed Management Plan will take approximately 24 months to complete. The planning process began in March 2006 and will be implemented in March of 2008.

| Month/Year | Deliverable/Task |
|-------------------|--|
| Mar/06 to Oct/06 | Get organized, form planning committee (WPAT) with community members, associations and government agencies. Compile technical information and complete of state of the watershed report. |
| Oct/06 to Jan/07 | Review of state of the watershed report with WPA and WPAT (watershed issues identified) |
| Jan/07 to Feb/07 | Consult community about their concerns for the watershed. Present state of the watershed report to community. |
| Mar/07 to Sept/07 | Assemble draft plan with input from all watershed stakeholders process guided by WPA and WPAT members. |
| Sept/07 to Nov/07 | Present draft plan to community for feedback. |
| Nov/07 to Jan/08 | Assemble final plan with revisions from community feedback. |
| Jan/08 to Feb/08 | Forward final plan to Province of Manitoba for approval. |
| Feb/08 to Mar/08 | Distribute final plan to community |
| Apr/08 to Apr/13 | Implement recommended actions from plan and monitoring of progress |

What is the La Salle Redboine Conservation District?

The La Salle Redboine Conservation District was formed as a partnership between 12 member municipalities and the Province of Manitoba in January 2002. This not for profit watershed organization was created under the Conservation Districts Act to provide conservation programming according to a developed plan based on watersheds.

The La Salle Redboine Conservation District currently offers 16 soil and water management programs designed to protect and enhance watershed functions. Programs include wetland restoration, small dam construction, streambank enhancement, abandoned well sealing, erosion control works and pasture management programs to name a few. To date the La Salle Redboine has partnered with over 600 landowners and completed 150 projects throughout the Conservation District.

The Conservation District is governed by

a 50 member board of directors consisting of 50% local councilors and 50% local residents. This group also strives to educate watershed residents about the health of their watersheds and has provided watershed education programming to over 3,000 resident school kids.

La Salle Redboine Conservation District member municipalities include the Rural Municipalities of Ritchot, Cartier, Macdonald, Grey, Dufferin, Portage la Prairie, Victoria, South Norfolk, and the communities of Portage la Prairie, Carman, Treherne, and St. Claude.

