

Surface Water Management

General Comments for all four Assiniboine River Watersheds:

Under *The Water Rights Act*, Water Control Works are defined as any dyke, dam, surface or subsurface drain, drainage, improved natural waterway, canal, tunnel, bridge, culvert borehole or contrivance for carrying or conducting water that (a) temporarily or permanently alters or may alter the flow or level of water, including but not limited to water in a water body, by any means, including drainage, or (b) changes or may change the location or direction of flow of water, including but not limited to water in a water body, by any means, including drainage.

With respect to drainage, one area of concern within all four sub-watersheds is the creation of new drainage works and maintenance of historic drainage works without authorization under *The Water Rights Act*. The authorization process allows for consideration of impacts in project design and operation.

Surface Water Management Plans (SWMP) and Land Use Management Plans (LUMP) are directly related in that the aspects of one plan influence the other. For example, if a SWMP dictates that development (drainage) of CLI Soils Class 6w not be undertaken, this would influence the options for land use on those soils. Stakeholders in the IWMP process should consider developing Surface Water Management Plans which, if approved, would influence land development and use in the watershed. Approval of the province should be garnered for SWMP's, just as it is for IWMP's, in order to influence authorization of proposed drainage projects.

With respect to dams, many dams have been constructed within the study area and authorized under the act based on the terms of agreements with private landowners. Many of these agreements are reaching an end and, as a result, the water control projects are being decommissioned. In most cases, the decommissioning of a dam results in restoration to pre-project (natural) conditions. Consideration should be given to offsetting any reductions in water storage or the ability of wetlands to temporarily store peak flows and reduce sediment transfer downstream which may occur as a result of project decommissioning.

With respect to construction of any surface or subsurface water control works, efforts should be made to prevent erosion of soils or transport of nutrients which may increase nutrient transfer into the receiving water body.

Comments specific to the Lower Shell River Watershed:

Given that this watershed is inter-provincial in nature, consideration should be given to coordination and communication between agencies involved with construction or authorization of water control works in both jurisdictions.

Comments specific to the Upper Birdtail Creek Watershed:

Same comments as Lower Shell River Watershed

Comments specific to the Lower Oak River Watershed:

Same comments as Lower Shell River Watershed

Issues at the forefront in this watershed include flood protection for the Town of Strathclair and management of Salt Lakes water levels, including the impact of flows from the Town of Strathclair directed to Salt Lakes.

The ability (in inability) of the Oak River system to transport runoff to the Assiniboine River without affecting a wide floodplain along the way, is also of concern. The Oak River system, like many other watercourses in the study area, is not deeply incised and has a limited capacity to transport runoff without flooding of a large floodplain of mainly agricultural lands. Agricultural operations are effected by the timing of the runoff event and may also experience longer term impacts when flood waters are trapped and cannot return to the channel following a flood event due to the presence of a high point of land.

Comments specific to the Central Minnedosa River Watershed:

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