

Netley – Grassmere Creek Watershed Public Issue Statements

In January 2008 the East Interlake Conservation District (EICD) was designated as the Watershed Planning Authority for watershed 050J by the Province of Manitoba. This designation gave the EICD the authority to create a watershed management plan for the 050J watershed (Figure 1). One of the first steps in the development of the watershed plan was to hold public forums to explore the water concerns of local residents and other stakeholders within the planning area. The issues identified at these public forums will provide direction to EICD on the scope of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan.

Early in the planning process the EICD formed a ten person Project Management Team¹ (PMT) whose role is to guide the watershed planning process from conception to completion. One of the first tasks completed by the PMT was the organization of four public forums. Meetings were held in distinct areas of the watershed with the goal of engaging more people and soliciting a range of public issues. The meetings were held in June 2008 at: Selkirk (June 19), Dunnottar (June 24), Teulon (June 25) and Stonewall (June 26).

At each of the public meetings the attendees were asked to provide their top three concerns related to water within the 050J watershed. Attendees were also asked to contribute ideas on how their issue could be resolved and what they would like the watershed to look like in 25 years. Every response was collected and compiled in a digital format, word for word, by members of the PMT. Also collected at the meetings were group issues and



Figure 1: Watershed 050J

¹ The project management team is comprised of: Jim Hardy (Chairman), Gordon Grenkow (EICD Vice-chair), Garry Peltz (R.M. of Woodlands councillor), Don Gemmill (Local producer), Rick Gamble (Mayor of Dunnottar), Cliff Dearman (Mayor of West St. Paul), Curtis McRae (Keystone Agricultural Producer representative), Sarah Coughlin (Senior Watershed Planning – Manitoba Water Stewardship), Erin Shay (Watershed Planner – Manitoba Water Stewardship) and Stephen Carlyle (EICD Manager).

solutions. This was done to allow for table discussions on issues and to obtain more general concerns within the watershed as opposed to very site specific issues garnered through individual responses. The group comments were also converted to a digital format and were used to aid in the identification and ordering of the top public issues. The complete list of public and group concerns is available on the EICD website at www.eicd.ca.

When recording the individual and group responses, the PMT members categorized the issues into a primary issue category (i.e. surface water quality) and then into a sub-category if appropriate (i.e. Lake Winnipeg). This is how the results have been reported in this document. This methodology does require some subjectivity in the categorization process but concerted efforts were made to capture the essence of the issues. In the event that several concerns were addressed in one issue statement, the first issue mentioned was categorized, or the issue for which solutions were provided was taken as the dominant concern.

The following is a summary of what 118 people told us.

Main Categorization of Issues

Top priority issues – Individual responses:

- 55 people, representing 47% of respondents, cited surface water quality as their number one concern
- 27 people, representing 23% of respondents, cited ground water quality as their number one concern
- 24 people, representing 20% of respondents, cited surface water management (i.e. drainage) as their number one concern
- 10 people, representing 8% of respondents, cited natural areas (i.e. wetlands, riparian zones and wildlife) as their number one concern

Top priority issues – Group responses:

- 9 groups, representing 39% of responses, cited groundwater quality as their number one concern
- 8 groups, representing 35% of responses, cited surface water quality as their number one concern
- 3 groups, representing 13% of responses, cited natural areas as their number one concern
- 2 groups, representing 9% of responses, cited surface water management as their number one concern

As a way to incorporate all of the issues that people had identified we proceeded to sum the total number of responses from each category for priority one, two and three. The results of this analysis are shown in Figure 2.

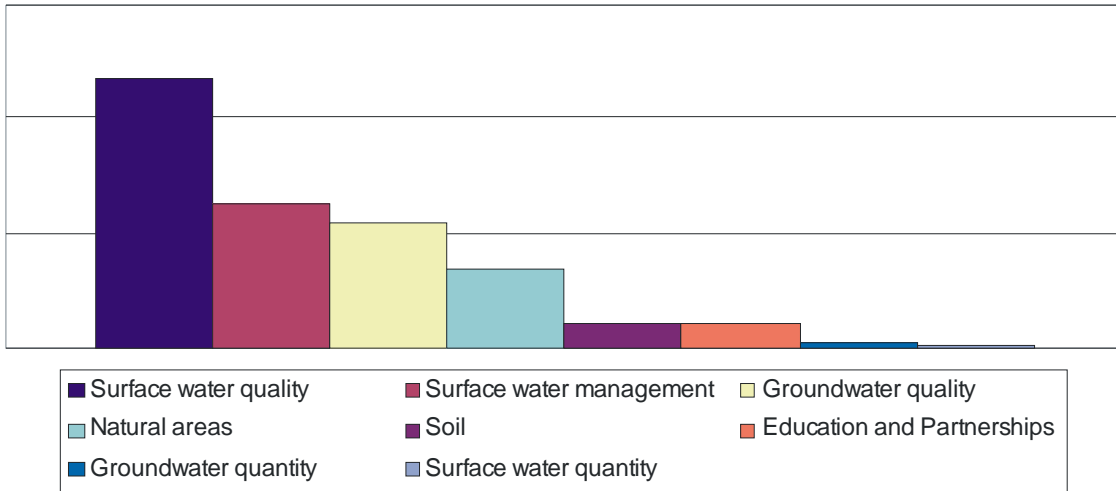


Figure 2: Ranking of public issues

The graph in figure 2, provided the PMT with a starting point but it does not factor in people’s prioritization of their issues. This is good because some people did not wish to prioritize their concerns but for those that did, this method of summing the categories does not work. In recognition of this, the PMT developed a weighting system to give issues identified as priority one concerns three times more weight (i.e. importance) than priority three issues. Figure 3 shows the results based on this weighting system.

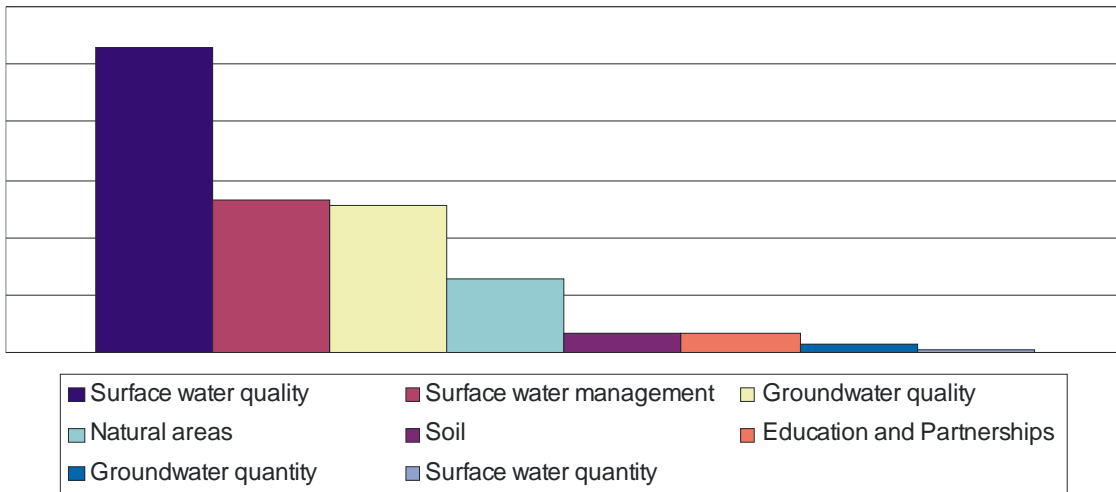


Figure 3: Weighted ranking of public issues based on priority level

It was ultimately decided that the order in which the issues would be examined would be surface water quality, groundwater quality, surface water management and natural areas. This order is slightly different than what was identified through the individual public consultation but follows the order of the group rankings. The

- Final Issue Ranking:**

 1. Surface water quality
 2. Groundwater quality
 3. Surface water management
 4. Natural areas

reversal of surface water management and groundwater quality was done because those two categories were very close, on an individual basis, but were clearly separated during group discussion (Figure 4).

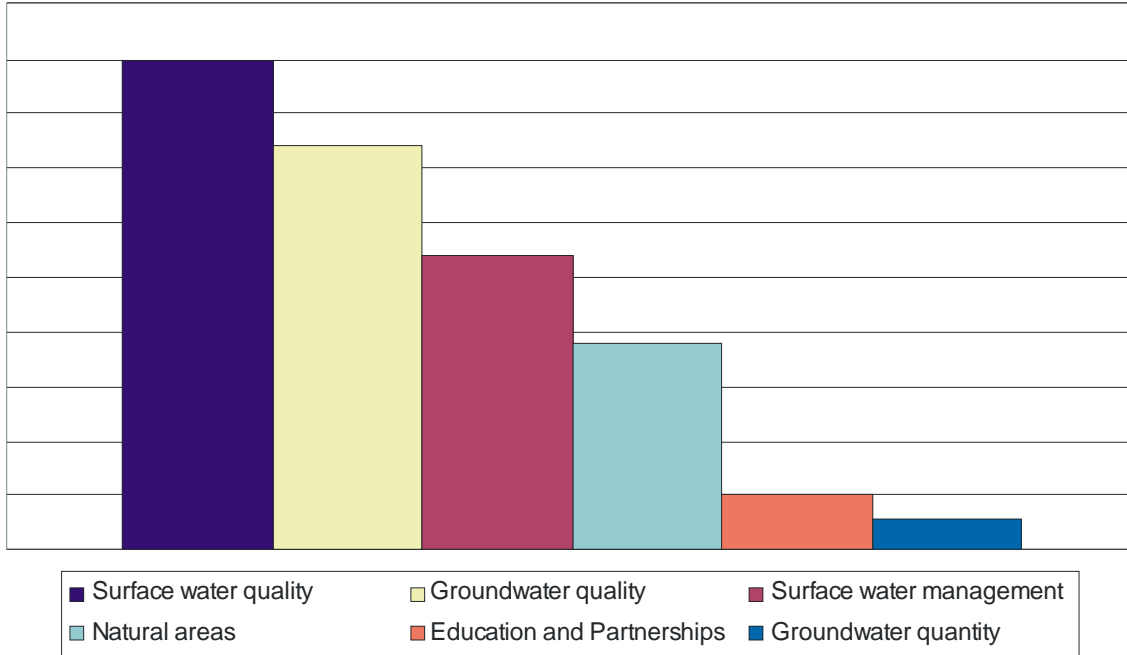


Figure 4: Weighted ranking of group issue statements based on priority level

Sub-Categorization of Issues

In order to capture the most information possible out of the public’s input, the PMT established sub-categories to assist in the identification of problem sources within each main category. The glossary of the sub-categories can be found at the end of this document.

The first priority issue identified was concern regarding the surface water quality of our waterways and lakes. Figure 5 shows the breakdown of perceived issues affecting surface water quality based on individual responses. The PMT then ordered these concerns based on their individual rankings and the rankings developed through public group discussion; the final rankings are numbered on the top of the bars. Figures 6 – 8 show the remaining top priority issues that were identified by the public.

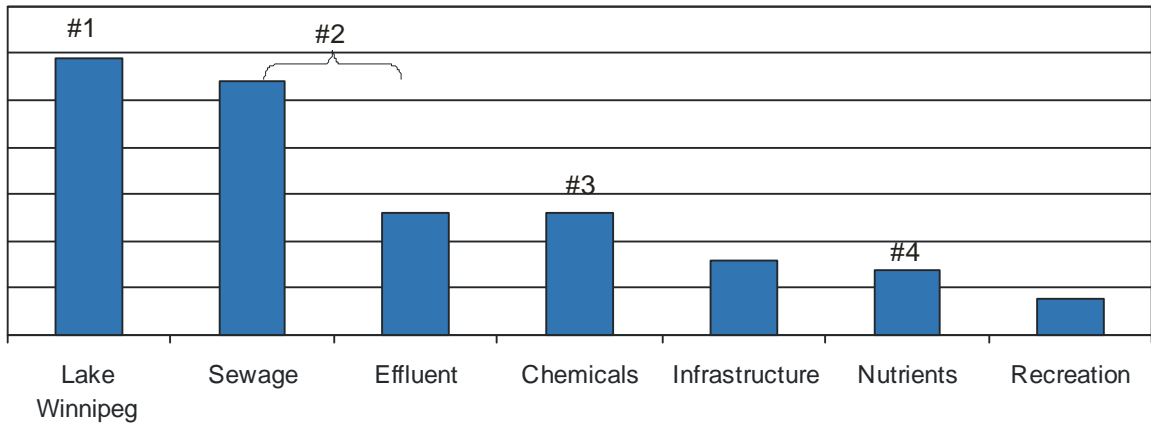


Figure 5: Sub-category issues related to surface water quality

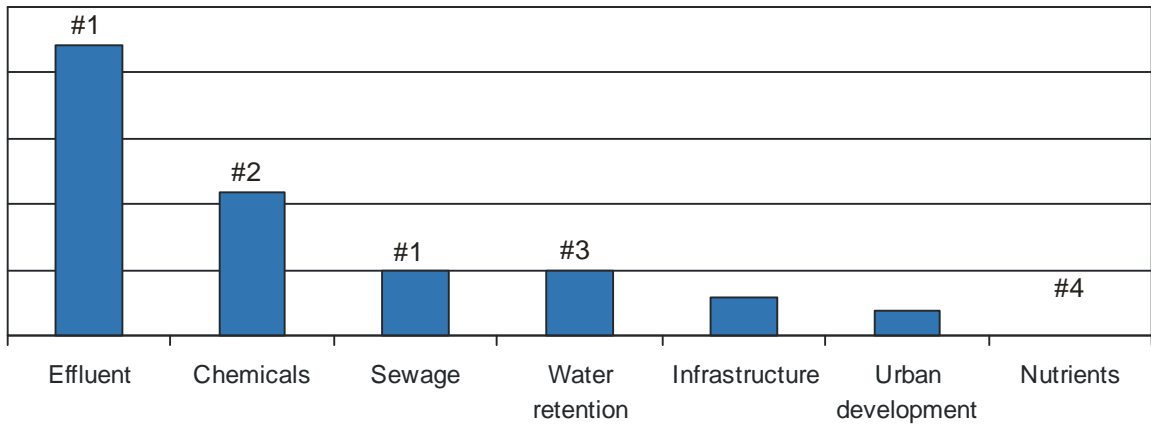


Figure 6: Sub-category issues related to groundwater quality

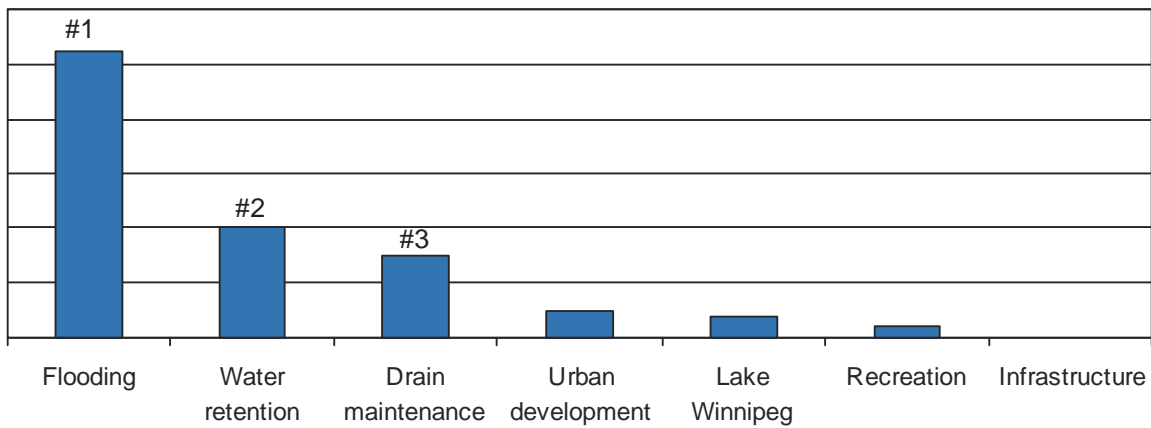


Figure 7: Sub-category issues related to surface water management (i.e. drainage)

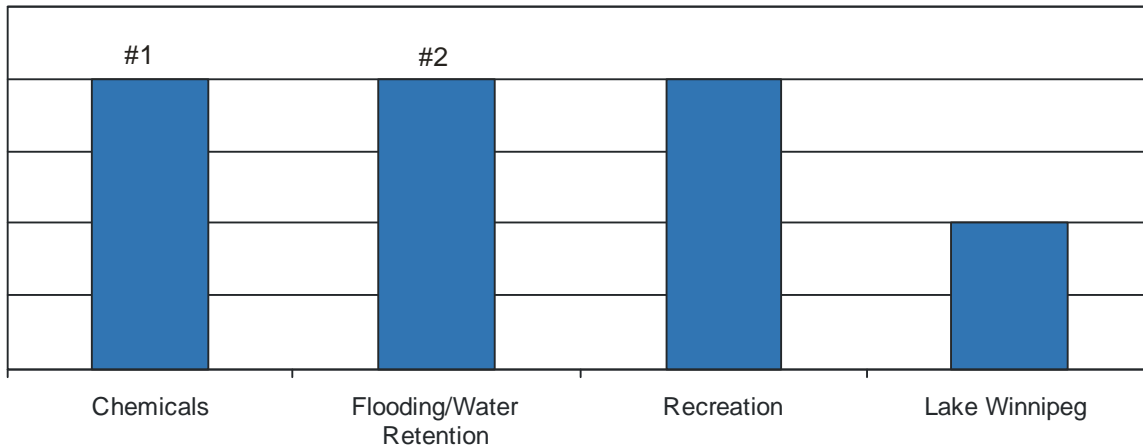


Figure 8: Sub-category issues related to natural areas

Summary

This analysis was completed as a way of identifying the concerns of the public and prioritizing them so we can address the watershed needs in an appropriate manner. In the final watershed management plan the four primary areas directing our work will be *surface water quality, groundwater quality, surface water management and natural areas*. Now that the public has identified their main concerns we will send requests to the remaining watershed stakeholders and people that can provide us with technical/scientific input on these four issues. Through the technical input we will be able to establish appropriate actions to help address each of the public concerns.

Glossary

Main Categories

Main categories were established based on the statements provided to the PMT by the public. The PMT used the following definitions when categorizing comments into main categories.

Surface water quality – The health of any water body on the surface of the land including water runoff, creeks, rivers, wetlands and lakes.

Surface water quantity – The volume of water in areas of pooled surface water.

Surface water management – The control of surface water, primarily runoff, through the drainage network.

Groundwater quality – The health of water found under the Earth’s surface. Mainly refers to drinking water sourced from aquifers.

Ground water quantity – The volume of that is typically accessible from aquifers.

Natural areas – A generic term referring to wetlands, riparian areas, wildlife habitat and parks. This term does not necessarily refer to water but may refer to areas that are typically seen as beneficial to water quality.

Education and Partnerships – This category refers to a lack of public knowledge and/or a need for relationships amongst stakeholder groups.

Soil – The impact of soil on waterways and lakes which primarily refers to soil and shoreline erosion.

Sub-Categories

Sub-categories were established based on the statements provided to the PMT by the public. The PMT used the following definitions when categorizing comments into sub-categories.

Chemicals – Primarily refers to agricultural chemicals including herbicides, pesticides and insecticides

Drain Maintenance – The general up-keep and cleaning of drains to allow swift flow of water

Effluent – The waste derived from domesticated animals

Flooding – Excess water found on the land for extended periods of time

Infrastructure – Large public work operations such as the installation of a sewage treatment plant

Lake Winnipeg – The main body of Lake Winnipeg

Nutrients – Primarily refers to the agricultural use of fertilizers such as nitrogen and phosphorous

Recreation – Human activities done for pleasure such as boating, fishing and the use of ATVs

Sewage – The waste derived from humans

Urban Development – The expansion of communities due to urban growth and/or sprawl

Water Retention – An area of land designated to be a water holding area, this can include but is not limited to wetlands

Note: If you would like more information on the procedure we used or have further questions please feel free to contact Stephen Carlyle, EICD Manager at (204) 642-7578.