

Section 7.0 – Watershed Development

Section 7.6 – Environmental Licensing (source: Manitoba Conservation, Regional Operations, Portage la Prairie District)

Organisational Mandate:

The Portage District of the Manitoba Conservation's Red River Region covers the Rural Municipalities of Dufferin, Grey, Lakeview, North Norfolk, Portage la Prairie, South Norfolk, Victoria and Westbourne together with the City of Portage la Prairie, the Towns of Carmen and Gladstone, and the Villages of MacGregor, Notre Dame de Lourdes and St. Claude. The Portage office has three environment officers who are responsible for monitoring and enforcing the various acts and regulations, as follows:

The **Environment Officer / Public Health Inspector** (EO/PHI) is responsible for enforcing Public Health Act regulations on food service establishments, temporary food service, seasonal food service, food processing businesses, retail food stores, mobile food units, un-inspected meat processors, non-institutional care facilities, food-borne, waterborne and communicable disease investigations, insanitary conditions, housing, personal care services, public accommodations, recreational camps, swimming pools and whirlpools, water supplies, and atmospheric pollution. The EO/PHI is also responsible for enforcing the Non-Smokers Health Protection Act and Regulations.

The **Environment Officer / Generalist** (EO/G) is responsible for enforcing the Environment Act with regards to waste disposal grounds and transfer stations, environment act licenced developments, private sewage disposal systems and crop residue burning. The EO/G also has responsibilities for enforcing The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act regulations on petroleum retailers and bulk facilities, pesticide containers depots, and PCB storage sites, together with contaminated sites regulation under the Contaminated Sites Remediation Act.

The **Environment Officer / Livestock** is responsible for enforcing the Environment Act with regards to the Livestock Manure & Mortalities Regulation.

Description of Data Collected:

Data held in the Portage District office that is relevant to the La Salle River Watershed Management Plan includes:

Locations of municipal and private wastewater treatment systems within the western portion of the La Salle River Watershed. Files on the wastewater treatment systems include water quality data on discharges – typically BOD₅, Fecal Coliform and Total Coliform counts.

Locations of onsite waste management systems.

Locations of contaminated sites and petroleum storage facilities.

Locations of livestock operations (hog barns).

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Trends:

The most significant trend seen in the past 10 years has been the development of large scale livestock operations within the watershed. Typically these operations dispose of animal wastes on the land, usually by injection of liquid wastes into the soil.

Another trend that may affect surface water quality in the watershed is aging municipal and private wastewater treatment systems. Age-related deterioration of wastewater treatment facilities and lack of funding available to maintain the publicly owned ones may result in more discharge of nutrients to the watershed via groundwater seepage.

Areas of concern:

Areas of concern include non-point sources of nutrients going into the watershed such as run-off from farm fields that have received animal waste from livestock operations. Nutrients are also added to the watershed when municipal and private wastewater treatment systems discharge effluent to the watershed either through controlled discharges or groundwater seepage from leaking lagoons.

Besides nutrients, another other area of concern is from contaminated and impacted sites. Runoff and groundwater seepage from these sites in the watershed eventually reach the La Salle River and add to the contaminant load in the river. “Orphaned” sites where there are no responsible parties left who can pay for the clean-up are a Provincial responsibility, but funds for clean-ups are limited.

Information Gaps:

Current research within the watershed is addressing information gaps on the various non-point and point sources of biological loads on the La Salle River system.

Recommendations:

Institute “best practices” in agricultural, municipal and industrial management practices within the watershed.