

Section 3 – The Watershed Plan

Section 3.1 - The Planning Process, Key Players and Terms

The Process:

In 2002, the La Salle Redboine Conservation District was formed in the South Central region of Manitoba to address soil and water management issues in the La Salle River watershed. The need for a strategic watershed management plan quickly became evident as a prerequisite to success of limited funding for conservation programming on the landscape.

With numerous resident organizations and separate planning bodies in the watershed, it is imperative for proper watershed function that a uniform holistic plan be adopted to manage resources and development in the La Salle River watershed.

In January 2005, the Province of Manitoba passed the Water Protection Act¹. This Act outlines various mechanisms to address concerns and protect water resources in the Province of Manitoba. One avenue for this to occur was through watershed management planning. The Water Protection Act set out specific guidelines to follow when developing integrated watershed management plans. As part of this process a Water Planning Authority (WPA) is assigned the responsibility for preparing and implementing an integrated watershed management plan for a specific watershed.

Pursuant to the spirit of the Water Protection Act, the La Salle Redboine Conservation District spearheaded the formation of the La Salle River Watershed Planning Authority to oversee the creation and implementation of an integrated watershed management plan (IWMP) for the La Salle River Watershed.

To be declared a Water Planning Authority for a watershed an organization must first sign a memorandum of understanding with the Province of Manitoba and develop a terms of reference to guide the planning process. To help offset the cost of developing a watershed plan, a grant of \$25,000 dollars is provided to each Water Planning Authority. Once these steps are satisfied the actual watershed planning process begins.

The planning cycle involves a two year process for the La Salle River Watershed Plan as outlined below:

<u>Month/Year</u>	<u>Deliverable/Task</u>
Mar/06 to Oct/06	Get organized, form planning committee or Water Planning Advisory Team (WPAT) with community members, associations and government agencies
Oct/06 to April/07	Review and compile state of the watershed report with WPA and WPAT

¹ A copy of The Water Protection Act can be found on-line at:
<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/2005/c02605e.php>

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Mar/07	Consult the community about their concerns for the watershed
May/07	Present state of the watershed report to community
May/07 to Dec/07	Assemble draft plan with input from all watershed stakeholders process guided by WPA and WPAT members
Jan/08 to Feb/08	Present draft plan to community for feedback
Feb/08	Assemble final plan with revisions from community feedback
Mar/08	Distribute final plan to community and forward final plan to Province of Manitoba for approval
Apr/08	Implement recommended actions from plan and monitoring of progress
April 2018	Full Evaluation of Watershed Plan

Watershed planning is a perpetual cycle where a road map to watershed protection and improvement is outlined in consultation with as many stakeholders as possible (technical and non technical advice). This road map is then followed and monitored for its success on the landscape. Every ten years the watershed plan is to be re-evaluated and fine tuned to meet the needs of the watershed and local community.

The Players:

The Water Planning Authority (WPA):

The Water Planning Authority for the La Salle River Watershed is the La Salle Redboine Conservation District². The WPA ensures that all provisions for preparing the IWMP, contents of the IWMP, consultation and public meetings, and plan review, revision and approval process are completed in accordance with the Water Protection Act. This group must also consider Provincial water and land best management practices, policies, legislation and actively engage members of the public in developing the watershed plan.

The Water Planning Advisory Team (WPAT):

This is a group comprised of key watershed resident associations and technical support staff. The mandate of this group is to: 1) help the WPA collect key information throughout the process, 2) design appropriate public consultation methods, 3) voice

² More information about the La Salle Redboine Conservation District can be found on-line at: www.lasalledboine.com

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opinions about La Salle River Watershed management issues and 4) help engage participation from area residents.

The technical support staff is comprised of members of the provincial and federal public service that have key science based information about aspects of the watershed that is important to the planning process. These individuals are responsible to provide comment on all available watershed technical information about their respective fields to the WPAT. Information provided to the planning group would focus on, 1) identification of areas or criteria of concern within the watershed (e.g. soil erosion risk, or development within floodplains etc.), 2) the extent of current impacts, a historical review of impacts and potential of future impacts based on data available and 3) recommendations to the WPAT based on future information needed about the watershed and the adoption of best management practices to address concerns within the watershed.

A complete listing of members of the WPA and WPAT is provided in *Table 1*.

The Terms of Reference for the Watershed Plan:

The purpose of developing the La Salle River Watershed Integrated Watershed Management Plan is:

- To establish the current state of the watershed in order to identify issues and target areas for remediation work and conservation programming;
- To establish surface water management policies, including retention and drainage requirements;
- To identify water quality standards for the watershed to be able to begin setting watershed goals;
- To identify source protection zones to assist in protecting water, aquatic ecosystems or drinking water sources;
- To empower the local WPA to protect their own water, aquatic ecosystems and drinking water sources;
- To address, identify or establish:
 - Water quality standards, objectives and guidelines;
 - Water quality management zones and regulations;
 - Studies required relating to water, land use, demographics, the environment, etc.;
 - Encourage public input;
 - Water management principles;
 - Provincial land use policies, development plans, and zoning by-laws;
 - Ways for a planning district or rural municipality to adopt the plan
 - Implementation, monitoring and evaluation strategies
 - Required watershed maps
 - Plan review date
 - Any other relevant information.
- To plan for drinking water source and aquatic ecosystem protection on a watershed boundary; and

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- To develop a cooperative funding effort between local watershed and provincial interests.

The purpose is not to:

- Commit the La Salle Redboine Conservation District nor any Planning District to programming outside of their respective mandates
- Infringe on confidentiality nor target watershed residents

The Water Protection Act outlines key considerations and contents of a watershed management plan. As such, the IWMP will address the following issues.

Section 15 of the Act states that a WPA must consider the following:

1. water quality standards, objectives and guidelines that apply to the watershed;
2. whether a water quality zone is included within any part of the watershed, and if so, any regulations made under section 4 respecting the zone;
3. studies that the authority considers relevant relating to water, land use, demographics, the capacity of the environment to accommodate development, and any other matter related to present or future physical, social or economic factors;
4. comments received through public consultation or public meetings held under section 17;
5. prescribed water management principles;
6. relevant provincial land use policies, development plans, and zoning by-laws;
7. any other information that the authority considers relevant.

Section 16 of the Act states that a water management plan:

1. Must deal with the protection, conservation or restoration of water, aquatic ecosystems and drinking water sources in the watershed:
2. Must contain objectives, policies and recommendations regarding some or all of the following:
 - a) protection, conservation and restoration of water, aquatic ecosystems and drinking water sources,
 - b) the prevention, control and abatement of water pollution, including wastewater and other point-source discharges, and non-point sources of pollution,
 - c) land drainage and flood control, including the maintenance of land drainage and flood control infrastructure,
 - d) activities in water quality management zones, riparian areas, flood areas, flood plains and reservoir areas,
 - e) water demand management, water use practices and priorities, the conservation of water supplies, and the reduction of water use and consumption during drought and other periods of water shortage,
 - f) the supply, distribution, storage and retention of water,

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- g) emergency preparedness to address spills, accidents and other emergencies that may affect water, aquatic ecosystems or a drinking water source
- 3. Must specify linkages between water management and land use planning so as to facilitate the adoption, in a development plan or other planning instrument, of some or all of the provisions of the watershed plan.
- 4. Must identify ways in which the plan can be implemented, monitored and evaluated.

The desired outcome of the integrated watershed management planning process (IWMP):

The IWMP will provide the watershed residents with a water management plan, a source water protection plan, a business plan for delivering the watershed plan, and a monitoring plan for long term success. Once implemented, these components combined will provide the first barrier in a multi-barrier approach to aquatic ecosystem and drinking water source protection.