

## **Turtle Mountain Conservation District nominated for Lieutenant Governor's Greenwing Conservation Award**

Turtle Mountain Conservation District (TMCD) has been working to preserve wetland habitat and create public awareness on the values of wetland ecosystems and benefits to waterfowl, wildlife and people through a partnership with Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation (MHHC) for the past three years and more recently with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC). Thanks to these partnerships the TMCD has been able to secure 193.7 acres of wetland and 1499 acres of upland habitat.

As a result of these partnerships and the progressive measures taken by the TMCD to conserve and protect wetland habitats in our watershed we were nominated by Kevin Teneycke from MHHC for the 2006 Lieutenant Governor's Greenwing Conservation Award. Other nominees included Barry Waito from Louisiana Pacific (Swan River), David Barnes an educator from Brandon and the 2006 winner, Robert Adamson, an educator from Fort Richmond Collegiate in Winnipeg, Mb. The award ceremony was held on January 30, 2007 at the Government House in Winnipeg, Mb where The Honourable John Harvard, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, presented the award and recognized all three nominees. "The organizations and individuals who have led the efforts to understand and protect wetlands across Manitoba have had a real impact on the health and quality of life of our province," said Lieutenant Governor Harvard. "And their impact will continue in the future, so long as the wetlands they have worked to protect remain."

As part of the awards ceremony each nominee was recognized with a brief summary of their efforts which brought them there. The summary for TMCD read as follows "The TMCD is one of 18 conservation districts in Manitoba with a mandate of assisting local producers with addressing local soil and water management issues. TMCD programs provide local producers with solutions for sustainable soil and water management, preserve wildlife habitat in the district, and help to educate the public on the importance of conserving wetlands and other key environmental issues.

The TMCD, comprised of a group of local people, plays a leading role by working in partnership with Manitoba Water Stewardship to maintain and improve sustainability within the district.

The TMCD has been a conservation leader in the Boissevain-Deloraine area for over 30 years. In 2002, TMCD became the first Conservation District to initiate an integrated watershed management process. TMCD demonstrated tremendous leadership and insight in developing their watershed management plan for the East Souris River (ESR) Watershed.

In January 2006, TMCD became the first group in Manitoba to submit their Watershed Plan to the Minister for approval. The development of this plan is a landmark accomplishment in the conservation community in Manitoba and this plan will serve as a template to assist other groups in preparing their watershed plans in the future. The ESR Watershed Plan recognized the important role natural habitat and wetlands play in the watershed and identified the need to preserve and restore lands as one of the action items in the plan.

The TMCD also became the first conservation district to partner with DUC in wetland conservation. The varied landscape in the area plays a vital role in breeding, nesting, and staging for more than 200 species of birds, and TMCD has taken significant steps to address the treats and problems created by wetland drainage. TMCD and DUC have developed a Conservation Agreement partnership program, working cooperatively towards securing and restoring wetland in the East Souris River Watershed. TMCD has also taken advantage of wetland educational programming offered by DUC's Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre, sponsoring several visits to communities within the District from the Centre's Legacy outreach program.

Finally, the TMCD has partnered with the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation under a similar Conservation Agreement that will seek to preserve native habitat in the headwaters of the Turtle Mountains.”

Since the presentation of the Greenwing Conservation Award, the East Souris River Watershed Management Plan has been approved by Manitoba Water Stewardship Minister, Christine Melnick. As a result of this provincial approval it allows the TMCD additional support to continue working towards the many objectives set in the Watershed Plan. Some of these objectives include providing incentives for the conservation of wetlands and promotion of the ecological goods and services payments concept. To achieve these objectives the TMCD will continue working and developing partnerships with organizations with similar goals such as wetland and upland habitat preservation.