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Mid Assiniboine River Conservation District

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MARCD Facts & History

Established: 2002
Current Size: 1,546km²

Key Partners and Members

RM of Cornwallis
RM of Elton
RM of Whitehead



Watershed Currents

The first in a series of newsletters from Mid Assiniboine River, Tiger Hills, Turtle Mountain and West Souris River Conservation Districts.

Volume 1, Issue 1

Newsletter Date: April 2005

Healthy Landscapes, Healthy People with Watershed Planning

Written by Kim Poppel, MARCD Manager

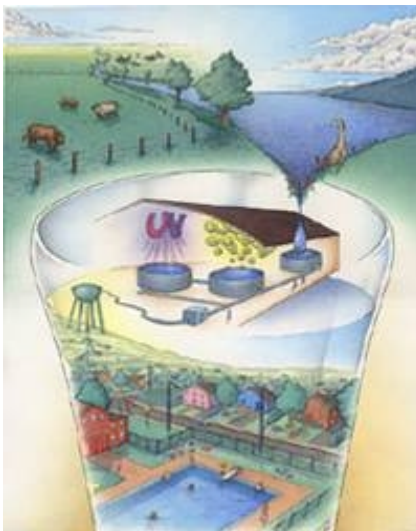
The winter of 1998/99 saw heavy snow conditions and the resulting runoff coupled with excessive spring rain caused flooding in many areas and much distress among landowners, council and RM staff. In the fall of 1999 at the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) convention, the councils made contact with municipalities who were members of conservation districts in various parts of the province. Interest developed in dealing with water issues on an area broader than a single RM. Meetings occurred with the RM's of Elton, Cornwallis and Whitehead resulting in the formation of Mid Assiniboine River Conservation District (MARCD) in March 2002.

At the MARCD board meeting in July 2002, a motion was passed to approach the province to cooperate on provincial surface water licenses (draining or holding) as three other CD's in Manitoba do. The province replied in December 2002 stating that a watershed management plan (WMP) was necessary prior to cooperating on licenses.

The MARCD has been actively working on a WMP since that time. Several CD's in Manitoba either have or are working on WMP's. These plans are in various stages of completion with varying degrees of success depending on inter-agency and landowner interest and cooperation. As this district is new and small in both size and budget, a board decision was made to start planning on the Little Souris River watershed rather than the entire district.

To date a model of the watershed has been constructed and a variety of meetings have been held to develop the terms of reference for watershed planning including estimates of both time and cost.

During 2003, meetings were held with many different agencies to determine what public information was available either on paper or electronically for the study area. This step, the State of the Watershed Report, has included participation by many agencies including 5 municipalities, 2 planning districts, 4 branches of the provincial government, 3 branches of the federal government, both railway companies, City of Brandon, Assiniboine Community College, Brandon University and 2 land management agencies. Acquiring information that is currently in the public realm takes less time and money than acquiring this information on our own. Other districts and



people familiar with this process tell us that MARCD is seeing unprecedented response to our request for information from various agencies. The district hopes to see the same degree of response from local residents. The Little Souris River State of the Watershed Report was completed on March 31, 2005. The MARCD is also starting a resource inventory of the Willow Creek north of the Assiniboine. That information will be added to the Little Souris for a snapshot of the entire conservation district.

Will any of this help with potential runoff in 2005? No. However, we are working to develop and deliver a plan to all stakeholders that will assist landowners with various surface runoff issues as soon as we can. This document will also tell us where best to spend our dollars to have the greatest benefit as well as assisting with water licensing applications.

Only you can the users, can make the conservation district work for you through your feedback and participation. The office can be reached at 752-2163.



Tiger Hills Conservation District

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THCD Facts & History

Established: 2001
Current Size: 3,010km²

Key Partners and Members

RM of Argyle
RM of Glenwood
RM of Strathcona
RM of South Cypress
Village of Glenboro



Tiger Hills Conservation District Briefs *Written by Rich Davis, THCD Manager*

On January 1, 2001 the Tiger Hills Conservation District (THCD) became Manitoba's 13th Conservation District. Formed at the southern shore of glacial Lake Agassiz during the retreat of the last ice age, the Tiger Hills are a series of low hills typical of kettle and drum topography. Alluvial deposits from the Souris, Assiniboine, and Pembina Rivers have left the Tiger Hills underlain by erodible sand and sandy loam soils, referred to as Stockton Sands, as well as silt deposits in the Assiniboine Clays. The diverse combinations of its soil types and undulating topography give the Tiger Hills a unique landscape covered with complex ecotypes of remnant coniferous forests, aspen parkland, and mixed prairie grasslands. Divided into 5 Sub Districts (SD), each responsible for a distinctive watershed drainage area, THCD was formed with the partnering of the Rural Municipalities of Argyle, Glenwood, Strathcona and South Cypress, the Village of Glenboro and the Province of Manitoba.

Pelican/Rock Lake SD # 56

A tributary of the system, Pelican Lake flows into the Pembina River and through Rock Lake on its way to the Red River Basin. The SD has representation from the RM's of Argyle and Strathcona. A major concern for the SD continues to be excessive nutrients and sediments entering the lakes. THCD has taken the long-term approach to solving problems such as algal blooms, winterkills, and low fish harvest by addressing upper watershed erosion.

Elgin Creek SD # 68

Flowing north from the southern edge of the Turtle Mountains, Elgin Creek enters the Souris River at the town of Souris in the RM of Glenwood. Local flooding during rain events continues to cause property damage and remains a concern for local residents. The SD is trying to address these

concerns by encouraging planned water management and demonstrating Beneficial Management Practices (BMP's) in areas of saline encroachment.

Upper Oak Creek SD # 70A

Starting at Huntley Ridge, Lower Oak Creek winds its way through farm land entering Glenboro Marsh from the east. Slowing the flow of this extensively modified waterway is a priority to the residents of the SD.

Lower Oak Creek SD # 70B

Source point protection of water resources continues to be the priority of SD # 70B. Keeping livestock from entering surface water sources keeps the water clean, improves livestock health, and protects natural habitats. Sealing abandoned wells was also a program offered and without the support of external funding, we would not have been able to cap 12 potential groundwater contamination sites.

Central Assiniboine SD # 99

The SD lies overtop of the southern edge of the Assiniboine Delta Aquifer and drains into the Assiniboine River as it flows east. The light sandy soil makes access to groundwater a simple affair as sand-point wells can be installed virtually anywhere, but the same soils also make cultivation and farming a tricky affair. At the north end of the SD a large tract of coniferous forest remains and early pioneering attempts at farming often caused massive erosion and blowouts in the sand dunes. Modern farm practices have introduced BMP's that address these problems but are still being fine-tuned. Zero till cultivation, rotational grazing, and herd management have had dramatic results on repairing past damages.

THCD, through its 5 SD's, continues to address local water and land issues while conserving economic opportunities for all Manitobans.

Conservation Districts Partner with Department of Water Stewardship

Written by Phil Weiss, Manitoba Water Stewardship

Conservation Districts have responded well to the Provincial direction outlined in the Manitoba Water Strategy. Since no single conservation agency can do it all these days, CD's are moving in the right direction in promoting integrated watershed management in your community. Here's four examples:

MOVING TOWARDS WATERSHED BOUNDARIES

All CD's are active as neighbors in adjusting their boundaries from municipal to the true watershed boundary. It just makes sense to manage on watershed boundaries. Although the adjustments will take time, progress has been good to date. Stay tuned for further developments!

Habitat Protection in the Turtle Mountains *Written by Sheldon Kowalchuk, TMCD Manager*

Throughout Manitoba and across this country, we are blessed with a diversity of wild spaces and southwest Manitoba is no exception with the Turtle Mountains, Whitewater Lake, the native grasslands of the Souris River Valley and various other smaller parcels of native habitat. When we look at these areas we all see different things; habitat for wildlife, tourism potential, recreational opportunities, economic development opportunities plus many others. Regardless of our viewpoint, these areas are valuable and more importantly they provide society with benefits in healthy functioning ecosystems.

Within the Turtle Mountain region, approximately 35,000 acres of forested habitat exists on private land in addition to the land in the Turtle Mountain Provincial Park and PFRA Pasture. In an effort to ensure native habitat remains a part of the landscape, the Turtle Mountain Conservation District (TMCD) Board is preparing to form a partnership with the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation (MHHC) to secure habitat through Conservation Agreements (CA's).

Conservation Agreements are voluntary agreements between landowners and a recognized conservation organization where an agreement is established to protect natural areas and that agreement is registered with the property. In exchange for signing a CA, landowners either receive a one-time financial payment or if donated they can receive a tax receipt. Landowners still retain title to their property, they pay taxes, control access on the property and deal with all aspects of managing the lands. Once the CA is registered to the property it also ensures

that the wishes of the current landowner will be maintained with any future transaction of the land.

Retaining natural areas in the Turtle Mountains has many benefits to residents and landowners within the watershed. The benefits of natural areas include; reduced soil erosion, reduced peak flows during runoff events, increased infiltration, wildlife habitat and with proper management the woodlot can provide a sustainable source of income. The TMCD Board understands the benefits of preserving forested areas in the Turtle Mountains and they will be seeking external funding from various sources in addition to allocating some of the TMCD funds to help deliver the program. The MHHC will sign the CA's and be responsible for the ongoing monitoring of the CA's.

If you are interested in leaving a lasting legacy of conserving natural lands in the Turtle Mountains or anywhere across south western Manitoba, contact the TMCD or a local conservation agency to discuss how a Conservation Agreement may suit your goals of ensuring a diverse landscape will exist for the benefit of current and future generations.



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TMCD Facts & History

Established: 1973
Current Size: 4,518km²

Key Partners and Members

- RM of Arthur
- RM of Brenda
- RM of Cameron
- RM of Morton
- RM of Turtle Mountain
- RM of Winchester
- Town of Boissevain
- Town of Deloraine
- Town of Killarney
- Village of Waskada



Conservation Districts Partner continued

HIT THE TARGET

Through the Boards and their watershed citizens looking beyond the fence posts, good progress is being made in preparing local watershed plans. The plans make it easier to target and focus limited money to high priority areas of the community. Five year action plans for the sub-watershed committees give clear direction to put the money in the right places. Its only common sense!

HELPING YOUR NEIGHBOUR

Hats off to the CD Boards and their staff for going the extra mile to cooperate, share and work together on a wide variety of tasks. Whether it is equipment, staff, mapping or GIS help, the Boards are trying harder to stretch their resources through cooperation. We are all in the same boat.



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WSRCD Facts & History

Established: 1995
 Current Size: 4,352km²

Total Board and Sub-District Membership:
 35

Key Partners and Members

- RM of Albert
- RM of Arthur
- RM of Cameron
- RM of Edward
- RM of Pipestone
- RM of Sifton
- RM of Wallace



Buried Valley—You don't say!!! *Written by Glen Campbell, WSRCD Manager*

Every now and then someone applies a word or phrase to something and soon we have a new “buzz word” or “catch phrase” that seems to get used over and over again. Words like “sustainable” or “stewardship” and phrases like “beneficial management practices”. About two years back if you used the words “Pierson”, “buried” or “valley” in conversation most likely people might have been able to relate something about the community of Pierson and surrounding area. Today, mention “Pierson Buried Valley” and there truly is a buzz.

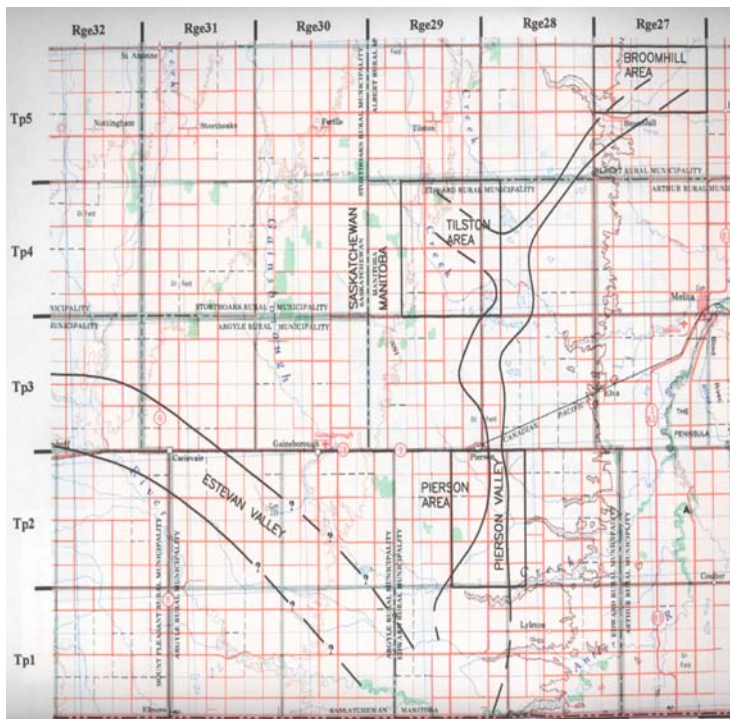
about? Well, (or I should say “Wells”) the Pierson Buried Valley is a deep and ancient river valley that is a potentially significant groundwater source for south-western Manitoba.

In the fall of 2003 exploratory drilling was done in three areas (Pierson, Tilston and Broomhill) through a cooperative effort between West Souris River Conservation District (WSRCD) and PFRA. Funding for the project came from the National Water Supply Expansion Program administered by PFRA.

Ten test holes ranging from 41 to 123 meters were drilled and the findings were positive in all areas. Estimated volumes ranged from 30 to 150 Imperial gallons per minute with the portion south of Pierson looking the best. Water quality was good!

The drilling that took place in 2003 verified that there was a deep buried aquifer. PFRA and WSRCD are planning to expand the test drilling in 2005 to better define the extent of the valley and developmental potential of the aquifer. Exploration may include portions of south-eastern Saskatchewan in cooperation with the Four Creeks Watershed Advisory Committee and Saskatchewan Watershed Authority.

So what is all the talk and excitement



Conservation Districts Partner continued

THE POWER OF LEVERAGE

The CD Boards have an amazing ability to follow the money. There are many public and private sources of watershed management money to support high quality CD projects. Finding the money is a tough job but the CD Boards seem to be up to the challenge. Over one million dollars of external watershed management dollars have been levered into the four CD's through the member RM's contribution of \$250,000 dollars. 4:1 leverage is a good return on the investment in our books.

Location of the MARCD, THCD, TMCD and WSRCD in relation to all the Conservation Districts within Manitoba

