

## **East Souris River Watershed Management Plan – 1<sup>st</sup> to be approved in Manitoba**

On April 3, 2007 Manitoba Water Stewardship Minister Christine Melnick announced that Turtle Mountain Conservation District (TMCD) is the first to receive approval for the completion of a Watershed Management Plan for the East Souris River. This plan was reviewed by various organizations for comment and accepted by the province as meeting the provisions as set by the Water Protection Act for Integrated Watershed Management Planning.

The TMCD will now work with Manitoba Water Stewardship to develop a Terms of Reference for the Watershed Plan. This will help to guide the amendment, implementation and regular review of the plan.

The East Souris River Watershed Management Plan took approximately 3 years to complete under the coordination efforts of the TMCD in partnership with various stakeholders in the watershed. Engaged in the development of the plan were over 40 provincial and local agencies, organizations and interest groups. On January 12, 2006 the stakeholder group approved the plan and submitted it to the Province for approval.

The East Souris River Watershed consists of 4 smaller sub-watersheds: Chain Lakes, Medora Creek, Waskada Creek and Whitewater Lake. Approximately 4,300 people live in the watershed which encompasses an area covering roughly 2,900 km<sup>2</sup>.

To identify concerns and issues within the East Souris River Watershed, seven public meetings were held in the fall of 2004. A State of the Watershed report, which identifies the current status of the Watershed, was compiled for the watershed and the document can be viewed on the TMCD website ([www.tmcd.ca](http://www.tmcd.ca)). The stakeholders group prepared action plans to address the various resource-related issues and the draft plan was presented to the public at seven public meetings in November 2005 for input.

Now you may ask "Why is a Watershed Plan important". There are pressures on the watershed due to a growing economy. This plan ensures the resources in our watershed are managed in a sustainable fashion. It is used as a tool to set local priorities between need-to-do's and nice-to-do's. It helps to communicate to the general public where the work will be done. It also demonstrates to the government that local people are in charge of managing their own resources. Lastly, it will help the TMCD acquire external money for community projects.

If you are interested in reviewing this document you may contact the TMCD office at (204) 747-2530 to have a copy sent to you or you may visit our website at [www.tmcd.ca](http://www.tmcd.ca).