

The River Current

Fall 2019



Our Mission: Promoting watershed sustainability through awareness, linkages and stewardship.

Lake Winnipeg: Where Waters Meet Conference **September 30, October 1 and 2, 2019** **Gimli, Manitoba** **Early Bird Deadline September 2, 2019**

Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin is pleased to announce that our annual conference will be held in Gimli, Manitoba, September 30, October 1 and 2, 2019. The theme for this year's conference is "Lake Winnipeg: Where Waters Meet". The theme of the conference is "Partnerships for Watersheds".

The conference will be the premiere opportunity for partners working across the entire Lake Winnipeg Basin to gather to discuss collaborative efforts to improve watershed health.

Gimli is located in the Lake Winnipeg Basin, a vast watershed spanning 953,000 km², four Canadian provinces, and three US states. The Lake Winnipeg Basin is also made up of five smaller basins - Saskatchewan River, Assiniboine River, Lake Winnipeg, Red River and Winnipeg River, all with drainage occurring either directly or indirectly into Lake Winnipeg. Improving point source and non-point source control of nutrient loading into Lake Winnipeg hinges on successful collaborative efforts across the entire Lake Winnipeg Drainage.

Our 2019 conference provides an opportunity to examine and strengthen the partnerships that are already in place among the various watershed groups across the Prairie Provinces. It also presents the opportunity to grow additional partnerships, and increase collaborative efforts for the benefit of Lake Winnipeg and its watershed. There is the opportunity to learn from other groups, enhance opportunities and encourage the engagement of interested stakeholders, including Indigenous peoples, organizations and communities.

The Early Bird Registration deadline for registering for the conference is rapidly approaching! Register early and book your accommodations BEFORE September 2 to take advantage of savings! Visit www.wherewatersmeet2019.com to see the full lineup of speakers and topics and to register for the conference.

Accommodations at the Lakeview Gimli Resort are available at the following conference rate: \$119.00 per night plus all applicable taxes for a Standard Room with two Queen Beds. There is an additional charge of \$15.00 for each additional guest per room. Rooms can be booked through the Lakeview Gimli Resort at the conference rate until September 2, 2019. Please contact the Lakeview Gimli Resort directly at 1-877-355-3500. Guests must specify Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin Conference when reserving to access the special conference rate.

Please go to the conference website: www.wherewatersmeet2019.com for more information and to register, or call 306-665-6887 to speak with us directly.

We hope to see you there!



Saskatchewan has about 100,000 lakes, the majority of which were formed by glaciation during the Quaternary period. As the glaciers retreated, the resulting run-off left these lakes behind. At one point during our history, these bodies of water nearly covered the whole province. The Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation estimates that more than 200,000 anglers visit our lakes each year. And according to a recent survey by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, people either directly or indirectly spend about \$500 million on recreational fishing activities in Saskatchewan annually.

Moopher's Amazing Facts

Prussian Carp Research

A University of Regina graduate student, Shayna Hamilton, is conducting research into Prussian carp in Saskatchewan, to determine how far carp might have spread throughout the province and what the density of their populations might be. Shayna is a researcher with the Saskatchewan Sportfish Research Group, a joint project between the university and the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. The two-year research program is concentrated at 11 sites along the South Saskatchewan River, from the Alberta border to Tobin Lake in Saskatchewan.

The research team has requested that anglers send them photos of fish believed to be Prussian carp so that the research team can correctly identify them. Photos can be emailed to: reportinvasivecarp@swf.sk.ca with the angler's name, the date and the location of where the fish was found. So far, the team has identified four Prussian carp from photographs submitted by anglers. Because Prussian carp look similar to many native species, photos are preferred to ensure accuracy.

One of the four fish was found at the weir in Saskatoon, which led the researchers to expand their search to include the Saskatoon area. It was originally thought that the Gardiner Dam might act as a barrier to keep the fish from expanding further, but the presence of the carp in Saskatoon proved that theory false.

Prussian carp are well established in Alberta and they are most likely the reason some native species have become endangered. Prussian carp are able to out-compete all other species and it has been shown that once established in an area, they can make up 95% of the species in an ecosystem in as little as 10 years. Prussian carp are predominantly female and are able to reproduce through a form of asexual reproduction called gynogenesis. The females lay their eggs into other species external fertilization, using the sperm of other species to start their own egg development by excluding the DNA of the other species, essentially making clones of themselves. This reproduction strategy, along with the ability to spawn up to four times a year, means the carp are able to increase their numbers rapidly, leading to the decline of other species.

If you are fishing this year and hook a questionable fish, please take the time to contact the researchers. Your assistance will help with their research and increase our knowledge of this invasive species.

Yellow Fish Road™ and World Rivers Day

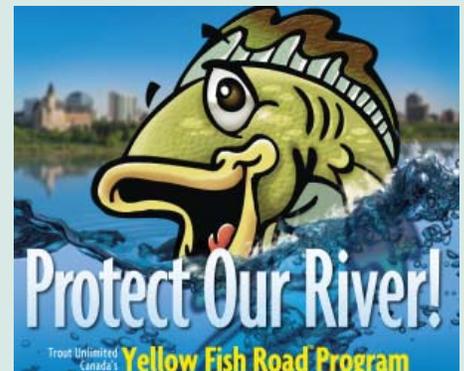
World Rivers Day is Sunday, September 22. In 2005, the United Nations launched the Water for Life Decade to help create a greater awareness of the need to better care for our water resources. Following this, the establishment of World Rivers Day was in response to a proposal initiated by internationally renowned river advocate, Mark Angelo, and has been focused on the importance of freshwater and the need for its sustainable management. Water is essential to all living things. What would life be like without clean, clear water? Try to imagine a 'normal' day if when you turned on a tap, dirty smelly water trickled out or no water at all!

Canada has one fifth of the world's freshwater supply, however only about 7% of this water is 'renewable'. The rest of the water is fossil water – retained in lakes, underground aquifers and glaciers. Since we have so much water available, we tend to take it for granted. We must remember that water is our most precious resource and this resource is finite. When it is gone, it is gone.

What's the problem? Unwanted household products discarded in storm drains flow directly into our river untreated. These harmful products include used motor oil, pesticides, herbicides, gasoline, antifreeze, paint thinner, paints, pet waste, cigarette filters and other common household products. These products do not go through the sewage treatment plants and they endanger fish and other aquatic wildlife.

One way you can celebrate World Rivers Day is by participating in the Yellow Fish Road™ program! Pick a date and paint storm drains at your school or in your neighbourhood with yellow fish and the words "RAIN ONLY"! This helps to remind citizens that what goes down our storm drains impacts our rivers.

To learn more, please go to the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin website: www.saskriverbasin.ca, or call 306-665-6887.



Wetlands

What is a wetland? Simply put, a wetland is any area that holds water either temporarily or permanently. Some wetlands hold water year-round while others may only hold water for one or two months each spring. Depending on where you live, wetlands may commonly be known as sloughs, ponds or marshes.

Wetlands function as natural retention ponds, preventing flooding, and helping to filter and purify water. Wetlands replenish and store groundwater, reduce erosion and protect shorelines. Wetlands provide exceptional biodiversity and one-third of Canada's species at risk depend on wetlands for all or part of their life-cycle. While wetlands occupy only six percent of the world's land surface, wetlands hold twice the carbon found in the tropical forests of the world.

Every spring, 70 percent of waterfowl in North America migrate to what is known as the Prairie Pothole Region of the northern United States, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, to nest, raise young and molt. When the glaciers from the last Ice age receded across this landscape more than 10,000 years ago, they left millions of shallow wetlands depressions that today are known as prairie potholes. These fertile potholes are rich in plant and aquatic invertebrate life, supporting populations of breeding waterfowl unmatched anywhere in the world. Saskatchewan has the most acres of high-density duck habitat in this region, with about 68 percent of the land (23 million acres) considered highly productive for breeding waterfowl in the Prairie Provinces.



Ducks Unlimited Canada's research has shown that wetland drainage increases annual flows in an average prairie watershed by 62 percent. Wetland drainage also increases downstream nutrient loading into rivers and lakes, which contributes to algae blooms, and releases significant amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. In Saskatchewan, we lose 28 acres - nearly 14 football fields - of wetlands every day!

Article courtesy Ducks Unlimited Canada

Shoal Lake 40 Reconnected

A Manitoba First Nation that was cut off from the mainland in 1915 finally has a new road connecting them to the rest of the province. The 24-kilometre stretch of gravel nicknamed the "Freedom Road" will also make it easier for those living at Shoal Lake 40 First Nation to access clean tap water of their own.

Minister of Indigenous Services Seamus O'Regan spoke at a ceremony marking the opening of the link to the Trans-Canada Highway and reiterated the government's commitment to build a new water treatment facility, which could finally end a decades-old boil water advisory. "This is just the beginning," he said. The government also plans to build a new school.

Shoal Lake 40, located on the Ontario-Manitoba border, was cut off from the mainland in 1915 when an aqueduct was built to supply water to the Manitoba capital. Ever since, residents have had to use boats in summer and ice roads in winter to do basic errands. Spring and fall, when the lake freezes and thaws, were dangerous. Resident Lillian Henry remembers walking across the ice as a child for groceries. "It'd be sunrise when we got up and got ready to go to the store and it would be sundown by the time we walked home," she recalled.

Chief after chief fought for the \$30 million in funding required to have the road built, including the current man in charge, Erwin Redsky. "What this moment truly means for us is a new beginning," he said.

Former chief Herb Redsky was also pleased to see the project complete after decades of lobbying. "I want to acknowledge and say thank you to the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba and the federal government for having the courage to do the right thing,"

Article courtesy CTV News, June 8, 2019, CTV Manitoba Bureau Chief Jill Macyshon

Caring for our Watersheds Top Ten Teams



Caring for our Watersheds is an international program, with branches in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan, as well as the United States and Argentina, dedicated to encouraging students to care about the health of their local watersheds and brainstorm ideas on what they can do to ensure that health. Open to all grade 7 to 12 students who live in areas where Nutrien, Inc. has operations, individuals or groups of up to 4 students are asked to research their local watershed, identify an environmental issue, and offer a realistic solution to the question of, "What can you do to improve your Watershed?"

Competitions in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan have been completed for the 2018/2019 contest year. We are delighted to be able to list the winning teams from our prairie provinces.

Central Alberta

Neel Patel, Muhammad Ali Qureshi,
Sparsh Patel and Darsh Patel
Clearwater Cleanup
Westwood Community High School, Fort McMurray

Southern Alberta

Madisson Hoskins
Plant a Better World
Centennial High School, Calgary

Manitoba

Colin Hildebrand, Jooryn Buchanan,
Donovan Kimball and Riley Kimball
Pilot Mound Rain Gardens
Pilot Mound Collegiate Institute, Pilot Mound

Saskatchewan

Rafay Ahmed, Josh Bell, and Saabir Yousuf
No Plastic is Fantastic
Greystone Heights School, Saskatoon

Conference Listings

Western Canada Water

Annual Conference & Exhibition
September 17 - 20, 2019
www.wcwwa.ca

Edmonton, Alberta

Lake Winnipeg: Where Waters Meet

Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin
September 30, October 1 - 2, 2019
www.wherewatersmeet2019.com

Gimli, MB

Power of Water Canada Conference & Tradeshow

World Hydropower Congress, Ontario Waterpower
October 21 - 23, 2019
www.owa.ca

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario

National Water and Wastewater Conference

Canadian Water and Wastewater Association
November 3 - 6, 2019
www.nwwc2019.ca

Banff, Alberta

If you have an event you would like to include under our listings, please email us at partners@saskriverbasin.ca.

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