

# LAKE MANITOBA LAKE ST. MARTIN

## OUTLET CHANNELS PROJECT

**NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2021** Issue 3

## Consultation and Engagement

### Indigenous Consultation

The Manitoba government is strongly committed to fulfilling our responsibility for consultation under Section 35 of the Constitution Act before proceeding with construction of the Outlet Channels Project.

### INDIGENOUS CONSULTATION PROCESS

#### Proposed Government Action or Decision

#### PHASE 1

##### ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

- Initial assessment
- Scale/scope of consultation
- Initial community contact
- Determine interest

#### PHASE 2

**We Are Here**

##### IMPLEMENTATION

- Develop and implement consultation plans and budgets
- Documentation of community concerns
- Discussion of Issues or Concerns

#### PHASE 3

##### REVIEW AND CONSIDER INFORMATION

- Review and analysis of consultation information
- Internal reporting of results of consultation processes to Crown decision makers
- What we heard and Manitoba responses

#### PHASE 4

##### EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND FINAL DECISION

- Concerns heard from the community
- How the community input was incorporated into the decision
- How the community concerns were (or will be) addressed or accommodated

**The Manitoba government is currently in Phase 2 of its consultation and engagement process. To date, highlights include:**

- Six Crown Aboriginal Consultation Participation Fund Agreements, covering eight communities, have been signed.
- The Environmental Impact Statement was shared with all Indigenous communities in March 2020.
- A summary of initial concerns of what Manitoba has heard to date was shared with all Indigenous communities in September and October 2020.
- The Environmental Management Plans and Questionnaires have been shared with all Indigenous communities. Meetings to discuss these plans have been offered and responses to Environmental Management Plans and Questionnaires are requested by February 28 2021.

- Community meetings to discuss the Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Management Plans have been ongoing throughout 2020 and 2021.
- Indigenous community work on Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Studies is ongoing.
- As of February 23, 2021, the Manitoba government has communicated by letter (649), meetings (175), and emails/ phone (2,720) with 39 Indigenous groups and communities about the Outlet Channels Project.

# Consultation and Engagement *continued*

## Addressing Community Concerns

The Manitoba government is committed to responding to community concerns about the Outlet Channels Project, including through ongoing consultation meetings, within formal responses through the consultation process, and in responses to the public information requests through the federal environmental assessment process.

As an example, concerns were raised about The Narrows at Lake St. Martin. Based on these concerns, further analysis was undertaken on the impact of the Outlet Channels Project on The Narrows and the design of the Lake St. Martin Outlet Channel Inlet Control Structure is being revised.

A fact sheet on The Narrows and these design changes has been posted on the [Outlet Channels Project website](#).



Continued discussions with Indigenous groups and communities through this phase will help the Manitoba government to further understand potential impacts, interests and concerns related to the Outlet Channels Project.

The Manitoba government anticipates advancing to Phase 3 after the community work plans are complete.

## Consultation during a Pandemic

Due to the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, all in-person meetings and non-essential travel to Indigenous communities were placed on hold. Manitoba made adjustments and adapted the consultation and engagement processes to respect public health orders and to prevent and avoid the spread of infection while continuing to obtain feedback and facilitate important discussion with Indigenous communities and groups.

Various means for engaging in distance-friendly and meaningful ways have been carried out, including:

- offering virtual meetings
- providing technological support
- offering additional resources and funding
- being flexible on scheduling
- extending response timelines



## Stakeholder and Public Engagement

Stakeholder and public engagement to address the flooding in the area began following the 2011 flood event, with meetings and discussions with the Rural Municipality of Grahamdale, other rural municipalities, landowners, fishers, hunters, trappers, cottage owners, recreational users, and the public. The outcome of these discussions included the confirmation that new flood protection infrastructure was required.

Between 2017 and 2019, Manitoba held four rounds of [open house events](#) to solicit public and stakeholder feedback about the Outlet Channels Project. Open house events were held in Moosehorn, Portage la Prairie, St. Laurent and Winnipeg.

Additional open house events to share results will be scheduled once the environmental assessment process is complete.



## Update - Heritage Resources Field Work

Results from the heritage resources field work completed in the Fall of 2020 revealed two archaeological sites located within the Lake Manitoba Outlet Channel right-of-way:

- A substantial and intact archaeological site: the pottery and lithics discovered suggest a complex site with multiple cultural components.
- A pre-contact site: a subsurface pre-contact campsite including a substantial, intact archaeological site.

The Manitoba government will be hiring a Heritage Resource Consultant through an RFP process to develop a detailed

mitigation and excavation plan, and to undertake the excavation and associated works. Manitoba Infrastructure will coordinate with communities to ensure that Indigenous Environmental Monitors are present throughout the excavation work.

Manitoba anticipates beginning this work in the spring, with the excavation expected to take two months to complete. Completion of the work is required in order to receive a permit under the Heritage Resources Act. This authorization under the Heritage Resources Act is required before construction of the Outlet Channels Project can proceed.

### We Want To Hear From You

The review process for the Environmental Impact Statement and draft Environmental Management Plans is an essential opportunity to hear concerns and incorporate Indigenous and stakeholder knowledge into ongoing planning for the Outlet Channels Project.

Please share your comments on the potential effects of the project by participating in meetings, or by contacting your local project Community Coordinator, band office,

government office, association or email [outletchannels@gov.mb.ca](mailto:outletchannels@gov.mb.ca). For updates on the Outlet Channels Project please visit [EngageMB.ca](http://EngageMB.ca)

The environmental assessment is both a planning and decision-making tool. This process is iterative and evolves as additional project information and community and stakeholder feedback is received. Project design, proposed mitigations, and proposed monitoring activities can be adapted to ensure that feedback received through this process is addressed.