

# LAKE MANITOBA LAKE ST. MARTIN

## OUTLET CHANNELS PROJECT

**Newsletter - 2022 Year-End Wrap-up** Issue 20

## ADVANCING CONSULTATION - WORKING TOWARDS RECONCILIATION

2022 has been an eventful year for the proposed Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels Project (the Project).

On August 17, 2022, members and leaders of the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council (IRTC) met with Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations (IRNR) Minister, the Honourable Dr. Alan Lagimodiere, and Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) Minister, the Honourable Doyle Piwniuk, to discuss engagement and consultation specifically around the proposed Project.

Jointly, the Honourable Ministers Lagimodiere and Piwniuk released a statement acknowledging that the government has "fallen short in our responsibilities to collaborate fully in the true spirit and intent of reconciliation, and we deeply appreciate this opportunity to hear directly from Indigenous leadership and listen to their concerns." (<https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=55940&posted=2022-08-17>)

After the meeting, IRTC released a statement noting the change in the Manitoba government's approach to consultation and engagement with the First Nations that will be affected by the proposed Outlet channels project. IRTC also noted their "interest in working with the provincial government in

addressing project gaps and willingness to move forward as true partners." (<https://irtc.ca/2022/08/the-irtc-and-the-government-of-manitoba-hit-the-reset-button-on-the-proposed-outlet-channels-project/>)

These collaborative efforts are critical to strengthening relationships between the Manitoba government and Indigenous governments and people. They are also critical to ensure the success of this historic project, which will improve flood protection and increase resilience against climate change.

The Manitoba government acknowledges there is still much work to do to advance reconciliation. While Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) has been working through the environmental assessment process, recognizing the importance of water, land, and resources, MTI is also working to ensure the proposed Project recognizes and considers traditional knowledge and Indigenous understanding of the area.

The recent dialogue is encouraging. It represents a change in the approach to this vital relationship, and how Manitoba, Indigenous groups, and the Project team will move forward together.



### From left to right:

Councillor Darrell Shorting (Little Saskatchewan First Nation), Chief Kurvis Anderson (Pinaymootang First Nation), Minister of IRNR, the Honourable Dr. Alan Lagimodiere, Minister of MTI, the Honourable Doyle Piwniuk, Chief Cornell McLean (Lake Manitoba First Nation), Chief Glenn Hudson (Peguis First Nation), Chief Rod Traverse (Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation), Chief Lawrence Letander (Dauphin River First Nation) and CEO IRTC Karl Zadnik

## BILATERAL CONFERENCE CALL WITH MMF PRESIDENT DAVID CHARTRAND

On August 11, 2022 the Minister of MTI, the Honourable Doyle Pivniuk, and the President of the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), David Chartrand, discussed engagement and consultation for the proposed Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels Project. Both Minister Pivniuk and President Chartrand expressed this as a necessary step forward for the government-to-government relationship. The two officials agreed to make formal plans to meet at a future date to continue building this relationship and to provide updates on the progress of the proposed project.

## INDIGENOUS CONSULTATION AND ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

The Manitoba government is currently in phase two of its four-phase consultation and engagement process. This phase includes planning and implementing community-specific consultation processes and activities with each Indigenous community.

Most recently, the team working on the proposed Project met with several communities to hear directly from community members about their thoughts and concerns.

The following meetings were held in in fall 2022:

| DATE              | COMMUNITY                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| October 19, 2022  | Lake St. Martin First Nation |
| October 27, 2022  | Fisher River Cree Nation     |
| November 14, 2022 | Lake Manitoba First Nation   |
| November 17, 2022 | Peguis First Nation          |
| November 24, 2022 | Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation |

MTI is working with community leadership to schedule more meetings in early 2023, including Pinaymootang First Nation, Dauphin River First Nation, Little Saskatchewan, Dauphin River Northern Affairs Council, and others. Staff have learned from each of the previous meetings and are working continuously to provide better information to community members to ensure that they have what they need during these meetings and moving forward.

MTI extends its thanks to these communities for allowing the Project team onto their land to discuss the proposed Project. The team heard many people express what they care about and what is important to them and their families. The team indicated that they were grateful for all the comments that were shared, and acknowledged that it might have been difficult for some community members to share their personal experiences and concerns.

The department's intent with these meetings is to provide information so that individual community members can understand the project and provide the meaningful feedback. The information community members shared is valuable in helping MTI to ensure that this proposed Project does as little harm as possible, while protecting the people who live and survive on Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

The Project team acknowledged that, even where there has been disagreement about the proposed Project, all of the communities have shown the team generous hospitality and kindness.

## NEW ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED

On Aug 17, 2022, the Manitoba government announced \$3.1 million in funding to implement an Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) for the proposed Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels Project.

The intent of this new committee is to offer advice throughout the construction and operation phase of the proposed Project to improve water regulation and reduce the likelihood of flooding along Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin. Going forward, this committee is expected to have a role in keeping communities informed while providing a venue for voicing questions, concerns and observations to help to avoid negative impacts.

"As planning and implementation work on the project continues, this Environmental Advisory Committee will formalize that ongoing engagement process to ensure meaningful input, accurate information and constructive feedback are openly shared," said Transportation and Infrastructure Minister, the Honourable Doyle Pivniuk.

This announcement affirms the Manitoba government's commitment to collaboration in the true spirit and intent of reconciliation.

## NEW INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND ANNOUNCED

On October 5, 2022, the Manitoba government announced a new \$15-million fund to support Indigenous economic development opportunities related to the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels Project. This fund is a tool to help communities unlock more meaningful economic benefits that last beyond the project construction dates.

MTI staff will be contacting communities soon to discuss if and how they wish to collaborate on the development of the fund to ensure that it meets community needs.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please share your thoughts on the Project. You can participate in the way that works for you! Come to meetings; contact your local Community Coordinator, Band office, government office, or association. Send us an e-mail at [outletchannels@gov.mb.ca](mailto:outletchannels@gov.mb.ca).

If you are not yet ready to share your opinion, but want to learn more about the Project, please visit <https://www.manitoba.ca/mit/wms/lmbismoutlets/index.html>

Please note that the Project is still in the environmental assessment process, which is both a planning and decision-making tool. That means MTI needs your input to understand what needs to be done to mitigate your concerns if the proposed Project proceeds.

To learn more about the regulatory review of the project, or to provide commentary to federal and provincial regulators, please visit the provincial and federal Public Registries:

- Manitoba Environmental Assessment and Licensing Branch – Public Registry:

• <https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/eal/registries/59661stmartin/index.html>

- Canadian Impact Assessment Registry:

• <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/80148>