

Growing Outcomes in Watersheds (GROW) – FAQ

What is GROW?

Growing Outcomes in Watersheds or GROW is Manitoba's approach to encourage and support the delivery of ecological goods and services (EG&S) in Manitoba. Identified under the Water Pillar in Manitoba's Climate and Green Plan, GROW promotes the conservation of natural areas or positive changes to the agricultural landscape. GROW helps agricultural producers implement projects that work for their operations while improving local watershed health. GROW is a made-in-Manitoba initiative on working lands that focuses on "farming the best, conserving the rest."

What are the expected outcomes of GROW?

GROW focuses on watershed health, management and resiliency. The two priority outcomes for GROW are improved watershed resilience to the impacts of a changing climate (i.e., reduced flooding and drought vulnerability) and improved water quality (i.e., sediment and nutrient management). Co-benefits include improved on-farm water management, enhanced sustainable agricultural production, improved biodiversity and habitat, and carbon sequestration and storage.

How is GROW delivered?

GROW is delivered by Manitoba's watershed districts through Local GROW Committees.

Local GROW Committees include local representation from agricultural producers, watershed district members, other partners and technical experts where necessary. Local GROW Committees:

- establish local priorities and target areas within the watershed to implement GROW activities
- establish local payment rates for eligible activities and cost-shares based on GROW criteria
- establish contracts with land managers and term lengths, based on GROW criteria
- identify local landowners in the target areas and collaboratively work towards enhancing EG&S and improving watershed health

Watershed districts are ideally positioned to support the actions in their watershed management plans with delivery of GROW projects that meet local and provincial outcomes. Each district delivering GROW works with staff in Manitoba Environment, Climate and Parks, and Manitoba Agriculture to establish and support a Local GROW Committee.

What lands are eligible for GROW?

GROW projects will be primarily delivered to agricultural producers on private lands in Agri-Manitoba. However, depending on the project, there may be opportunities to include agricultural Crown Lands.

What are the Trusts?

Since 2018, Manitoba has invested \$204 million with The Winnipeg Foundation to establish three Trusts: the Conservation, GROW and Wetlands GROW Trusts. Project payments are funded through annual returns on the investment, and tracked, evaluated, and administered by the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation. Combined, the three trusts generate an average of \$9 million annually to deliver nature-based solutions that help to renew and maintain our natural landscape. More than half of these funds are dedicated to GROW. The fund also encourages private donations toward supporting these initiatives.

Where does funding for GROW come from?

Watershed districts deliver GROW on the landscape and provide a single window for producers interested in implementing projects on their lands. Watershed Districts can obtain funding to deliver GROW through a number of different sources. Applications to the Conservation, GROW, and Wetlands GROW Trusts can provide both project establishment and incentive payment costs. Additional funding programs are also in place to support the establishment and delivery of programming, including Manitoba's Watershed Districts Program, Ag Action Manitoba – Assurance: Watershed Ecological Goods and Services through Manitoba Agriculture, as well as other provincial, federal, municipal and local funding sources where priorities align with GROW.

What about areas with no watershed district?

Where a municipality is not currently a member of the Watershed Districts Program, Manitoba Environment, Climate and Parks will encourage the municipality to establish a relationship with and join a watershed district. Over the last two years, Manitoba has committed significant resources to the expansion of watershed districts where there is interest from municipalities.

How do I apply?

Interested agricultural producers should contact their local watershed district to inquire about the status of GROW in their local watershed.

More information is available at www.manitobawatersheds.ca

Why can't I apply directly to the Trusts?

Watershed districts deliver GROW and provide a single window for producers interested in implementing projects on their lands. Watershed districts apply directly to the Conservation, GROW or GROW Wetlands Trusts and other related programs for implementing projects outlined in their watershed management plans. Landowners can contact their local watershed district if they are interested in programming offered under GROW.

How does GROW differ from other incentive programs in Manitoba?

Building on the success of Manitoba's Watershed Districts Program and other historical models for delivering watershed-based incentive programming in Manitoba, projects developed under GROW will be subject to provincial parameters and guidelines. This may include an agreement or contract with an eligible producer for a specified term that could be supported with a one-time payment, ongoing annual incentive payments, or a combination of both. GROW delivery will also reflect provincial priorities outlined in Manitoba's Climate and Green Plan.

What types of projects qualify under GROW?

Local GROW committees establish local priorities and target areas based on watershed management plans, and support projects that meet provincial priority outcomes (improved watershed resilience to the impacts of a changing climate and improved water quality). Project co-benefits related to on-farm water management, sustainable agricultural production, biodiversity and habitat, and carbon sequestration and storage will also be considered. While each local GROW program is unique to meet local needs, projects can include:

- water retention
- wetland conservation, restoration or enhancement
- riparian area management
- buffer establishment – shelterbelts and multi-species buffer strips
- upland area conservation, restoration, or enhancement – e.g., woodlot management, grassland conservation
- innovative approaches - other projects that propose or develop innovative ideas to conserving or enhancing EG&S in Manitoba will also be considered (for example soil health improvements)

How does the Environmental Farm Plan fit with GROW?

The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) is a voluntary, confidential, self-assessment of a producer's own farm or ranch that assists farm managers in identifying agri-environmental assets and risks to develop an action plan to address the identified risks. EFPs began in Manitoba in 2004 and continue to be a high priority for federal and provincial governments.

By implementing an EFP, producers are able to:

- improve air, water and soil quality
- conserve biodiversity on Manitoba farmland
- contribute to environmental protection and conservation
- increase public trust and make Manitoba-grown commodities more marketable to environmentally-conscious consumers around the world
- demonstrate due diligence by identifying environmental assets and risks on their farm and implementing actions to reduce those risks

GROW is aligned with the principles of Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Program and participating producers should have an Environmental Farm Plan. For more information on the Environmental Farm Plan program, please contact Manitoba Agriculture at 1-844-769-6224.

My area is currently suffering from the impacts of ongoing drought. What does GROW do to address this?

While each local GROW program is expected to be unique to meet local needs, potential projects aimed to alleviate impacts of ongoing drought include:

- water retention
- wetland conservation, restoration or enhancement
- riparian area management
- buffer establishment – shelterbelts and multi-species buffer strips

Building climate change resilience in Manitoba watersheds is a priority for GROW. An additional activity called 'innovative approaches' could also be used to further address drought resiliency in watersheds where project activities differ from the suite of programming listed above.

What is the connection between GROW and the recent changes to provincial drainage regulations?

Regulatory provisions allow for the drainage of Class 1 and 2 wetlands (temporary and ephemeral) through a new streamlined registration approach to authorizations, providing other registration

requirements are met. Incentive payments for keeping Class 1 and 2 wetlands intact is an eligible activity under GROW. Incentives associated with these wetlands further enhances Manitoba's no net loss approach to wetland benefits beyond the regulation, and recognizes producers for keeping these valuable habitats in place.

Where can I find more information?

If you are a producer looking for more information about GROW, contact your local watershed district (www.manitobawatersheds.ca) or Manitoba Environment, Climate and Parks staff at 204-945-0002.