

AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE

CENTRAL ASSINIBOINE AND LOWER SOURIS RIVER INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. PREAMBLE

This Agreement in principle is a good faith agreement between the Province of Manitoba, the Central Assiniboine and Lower Souris River Water Planning Authority and the stakeholders of this watershed to work toward the development and implementation of an integrated watershed management plan. This agreement in principle is **not a legally binding document** nor does it interfere with any existing laws, agreements, treaties or policies.

This agreement supports the intent to manage water using an integrated watershed approach.

2. INTRODUCTION

Manitoba's vision for water is "The best water for all life and lasting prosperity". Striving to attain this vision, Manitoba has undertaken many water related initiatives including the review and consolidation of existing water legislation. As a result, Manitoba developed *The Water Protection Act* which was proclaimed in January of 2006. The purpose of *The Act* is to provide for the protection and stewardship of Manitoba's water resources and aquatic ecosystems.

Part 3 of *The Water Protection Act* relates to watershed management. It describes the designation, role and responsibilities of a Water Planning Authority, required content of a watershed management plan, required consultations, process for plan approval and amendments, establishment and purpose of the Water Stewardship Fund, and the establishment, role and responsibilities of the Manitoba Water Council. Further, it identifies the importance of developing plans to address land drainage and flood control, protect drinking water sources, and identify ways that the plan can be implemented, monitored and evaluated.

In October 2008, through a Memorandum of Understanding signed with Manitoba Water Stewardship, the Assiniboine Hills Conservation District (AHCD) became the Water Planning Authority for the Central Assiniboine and Lower Souris River (05MH – Central Assiniboine and 05NG – Lower Souris). The Planning Area for the Central Assiniboine and Lower Souris River Integrated Watershed Management Plan is shown in Figure 1.

The mandate of the AHCD is to "promote the sustainable use and management of the land, water and related resources within their watersheds".

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of the IWMP is to identify priority land and water-related issues in the watershed, determine projects or policies targeted to address the issues, and identify how land and water management programming will be cooperatively applied throughout the watershed.

4. PARTICIPANTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

WATER PLANNING AUTHORITY (WPA)

The Water Planning Authority is the organization deemed responsible for the development and implementation of an integrated watershed management plan for a watershed.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding signed with Manitoba Water Stewardship on October 17, 2008, the Assiniboine Hills Conservation District became the Water Planning Authority for the Central Assiniboine and Lower Souris River (Figure 1).

The roles of the WPA are identified in *The Water Protection Act*.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM (PMT)

The Project Management Team, also known as the Steering Committee or Planning Team, is the secretariat to the Water Planning Authority and guides the overall management and development of the plan.

Responsibilities:

- Identify a Chairperson to plan meetings, agendas, lead discussions, and be the spokesperson for the group
- Coordinate all plan related meetings and advertising
- Establish a Watershed Team
- Facilitate and lead the public consultation and stakeholder meetings;
- Manage the budget and plan schedule
- Record and distribute meeting minutes to the Water Planning Authority and Watershed Team members and post on WPA website
- Collect and compile all information submissions, technical reports and consultation inputs
- Engage participation and interest from the watershed community
- Ensure adherence to the Terms of Reference and *The Water Protection Act*
- Clearly identify who will write and edit the plan
- Provide input and edits to the plan (draft and final)
- Develop a communications strategy to inform watershed residents of the IWMP
- Complete other tasks as required

Membership:

- Representative(s) from Water Planning Authority
- Manitoba Water Stewardship - Watershed Planner
- Representatives from key stakeholder groups

WATERSHED TEAM

The Watershed Team is a large group (~30 people) and is comprised of representatives from organizations with background knowledge and specialization in certain areas of land, water, agriculture or natural resource management. They are initially expected to provide an overview of existing information to facilitate stakeholder discussions and understanding of the watershed, and later to identify issues, assess options, and provide recommendations and approaches to address specific watershed issues.

Membership:

- Manitoba Water Stewardship – Planning and Coordination Branch, Office of Drinking Water, Water Control Systems Management, Water Science and Management, Fisheries Branch
- Other Provincial departments
- Rural Municipalities
- First Nations
- Planning Districts

MINISTER OF WATER STEWARDSHIP

As identified in Section 18 of *The Water Protection Act*, the Water Planning Authority must submit its watershed management plan to the Minister of Water Stewardship for approval. Upon receiving a proposed plan, the Minister may refer it to the Manitoba Water Council for review and comment.

5. PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Mutual Dependence Water, land and related resources are interdependent and must be managed as such.

Accountability Each of us is responsible for the social, economic and environmental consequences of our decisions and accountable for our actions.

Transparency Actions must be based on relevant information, and team members must use an accessible, open and informed decision making process.

Respect	All interactions must be fair and respectful and provide for an environment for sharing ideas and solutions. Everyone has an important role.
Balance and Integration	Consideration of social, economic and environmental costs and benefits must be an integral part of all decision making.
Be Local	Watershed management and planning will provide forums that will encourage and provide opportunity for consultation and meaningful participation in decision making.
Coordinated and Cooperative Efforts	Coordinated and cooperative efforts are needed among all government and non-government interests.
Recognition	There must be recognition of existing rights, treaties, agreements and obligations in all decision making.
Transition Takes Time	Sustainability is a journey that requires constant feedback, learning and adjustment. In the short-term, the elements of sustainability may not always be in balance.
Commitment	Watershed management requires a long-term commitment, with continual adaptation and modification based on information provided by regular monitoring and updates.
Support	Actions require resources. Support for the planning process extends beyond meeting participation, and is best shown through action on the ground.

6. SCHEDULE AND BUDGET

Manitoba Water Stewardship provides a watershed planning grant of \$25,000 to the Water Planning Authority. The eligible expenses for the planning grant are outlined in the MOU.

Manitoba Water Stewardship and other Provincial and Federal government departments provide in-kind technical assistance throughout the planning process, as required.

The Assiniboine Hills Conservation District provides significant financial and technical assistance throughout the planning process.

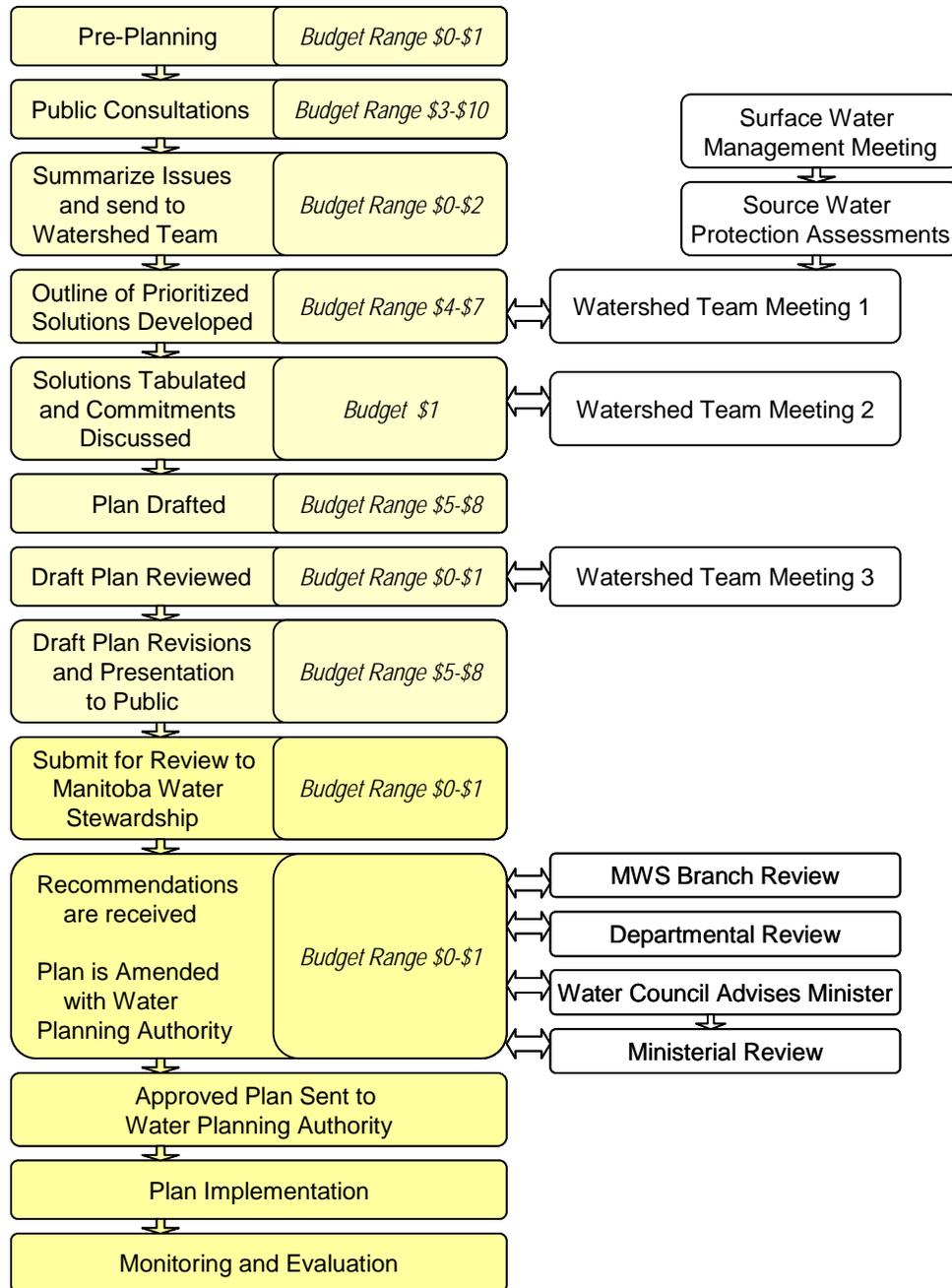


Figure 2. This chart demonstrates the schedule and estimated budget costs for developing an integrated watershed management plan (based on previous examples).

7. ENDORSEMENT

The following partners support the principles of integrated watershed management, and agree to work together to develop the Central Assiniboine and Lower Souris Integrated Watershed Management Plan and implement the recommendations in the plan that fall within the mandate of their organization.

The intent of endorsing this document is to gain support and build partnerships and cooperation among people and organizations in order to assist with the protection, conservation and restoration of water, aquatic ecosystems and drinking water sources in the Central Assiniboine and Lower Souris Watershed.