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February 2, 2009

Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*
DA-09-0034

Manitoba Water Stewardship
Attn: Jonathan Wiens
Box 11 - 200 Saulteaux Crescent
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3J 3W3

Dear Mr. Wiens:

Subject: Request for Information, Pembina River Integrated Watershed Management Plan

Thank-you for providing Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO) with the opportunity to review the draft Pembina River Integrated Watershed Management Plan (PRIWMP, November 2008). This letter is intended to provide DFO's continued support for your planning initiative and to commit to DFO's ongoing involvement in the planning process, as our resources permit. This letter also clarifies DFO's regulatory responsibilities under the *Fisheries Act* that may affect our participation and any response to undertakings that could result from a planning exercise.

The document through which DFO administers the *Fisheries Act* throughout Canada is the *Policy for the Management of Fish Habitat* (DFO, 1986). The overall objective of the Policy is a Net Gain in natural productive capacity of habitats for Canada's fisheries resources. This is achieved through the goals of fish habitat conservation, restoration and development (enhancement). These goals are supported by eight (8) implementation strategies including Integrated Resource Planning and Cooperative Action. As stated in the *Policy*, DFO has a strong interest in and encourages and supports the development of integrated resource management plans in cooperation with other resource management agencies.

DFO recognizes that natural resource interests such as forestry, fishing, mining, energy development and agricultural sectors make legitimate demands on water resources. In keeping with the integrated resource planning strategy outlined in the *Policy for the Management of Fish Habitat*, DFO fish habitat management objectives will, where possible, be integrated with the objectives and plans of other resource managers and users.

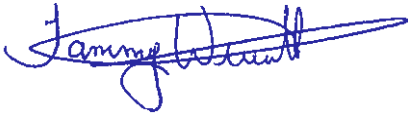
While DFO is pleased to be actively engaged in the PRIWMP process through participation on the Technical Advisory Group, it must be made clear that DFO has a primary responsibility as a regulator pursuant to the federal *Fisheries Act* as well as the

Species at Risk Act. Accordingly DFO must advise that our participation in the planning process in no way constitutes approval under the *Fisheries Act* for any undertaking or project proposals resulting from the planning process.

Notwithstanding the above, we support and endorse the valuable initiatives, collaborative approach and innovative solutions for resolving differences in opinion being undertaken by the PRIWMP board in this planning process. We feel that completion of the draft PRIWMP is a valuable step in the promotion of healthy and productive aquatic ecosystems and the sustainable management of resources in the Pembina River Watershed.

Should you have any questions or comments, please contact me directly by telephone at (204) 622-4068, by fax at (204) 622-4066, or by e-mail at Tammy.Wruth@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

Yours sincerely,



Tammy Wruth
Fish Habitat Biologist
Manitoba District