

Water Use Licensing Report: Westlake Watershed

Protective Process:

Water Rights Use Licensing is done under the authority of the Manitoba *Water Rights Act* which came into force in 1930 when Manitoba took control of its natural resources which had previously been administered by the Federal government. The Act provides for hydrologically based legal framework that balances human and environmental needs. The licensing process takes into consideration the appropriate social, economical, political and administrative aspects of water management. At the core of the licensing process is the requirement for water to be legally appropriated and put to beneficial use by the licensee.

The intent of water rights licensing is to protect the interests of licensees, domestic users, the general public and the environment with respect to the use or diversion of water or the construction and operation of water control works under licence. In Manitoba, water withdrawals of less than 5500 l/day (25,000 L) do not require licensing. These projects are protected under the domestic exemption. Licenses are issued for municipal, agricultural, industrial, irrigation and “other” purposes. Projects that fall into the “other” category include air cooling/heating; aquaculture; fire protection; water bottling; water slides; etc.

The general and specific conditions that are included on all licenses reflect, in part, the information received from the technical and management studies that have been carried out for the project and/or water body. For surface water projects, this determination is based on an analysis of stream flow data, riparian needs, the water use requirements of senior water users, domestic needs, and instream flow requirements. For groundwater projects, this determination is based on an assessment of hydrogeological information including; geological information on aquifers, aquifer sustainable yield estimates and water allocation budgets, where available, as well as the water use requirements of senior users and domestic needs. [Note – Projects withdrawing more than 200 cubic decameters of water in a year are also subject to Environment Act licensing which has a formal public notification process.]

Water Rights Projects in the Westlake Watershed:

There are three Water Rights Licenses within the boundaries of the Westlake Watershed. These include a groundwater sourced irrigation licence, an irrigation project sourced from a tributary of Lake Manitoba and one municipal licence.

The Rural Municipality of Lakeview’s rural pipeline is the highest water user from a volumetric perspective with an allocation of 31 dam³ of water from Lake Manitoba. Both irrigation projects have been allocated 12 dam³ (Figure 1).

Purpose	Allocated Under Licence (dam ³)		Total Allocation (dam ³)
	Groundwater	Surface Water	
Agricultural	0.0	0.0	0.0
Industrial	0.0	0.0	0.0
Irrigation	12.0	12.0	24.0
Municipal	0.0	30.8	30.8
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	12.0	42.8	54.8

Figure 1: Amounts Allocated Under Licence

Figure 2 illustrates the locations of all the Water Use Licensing projects within the Westlake watershed.

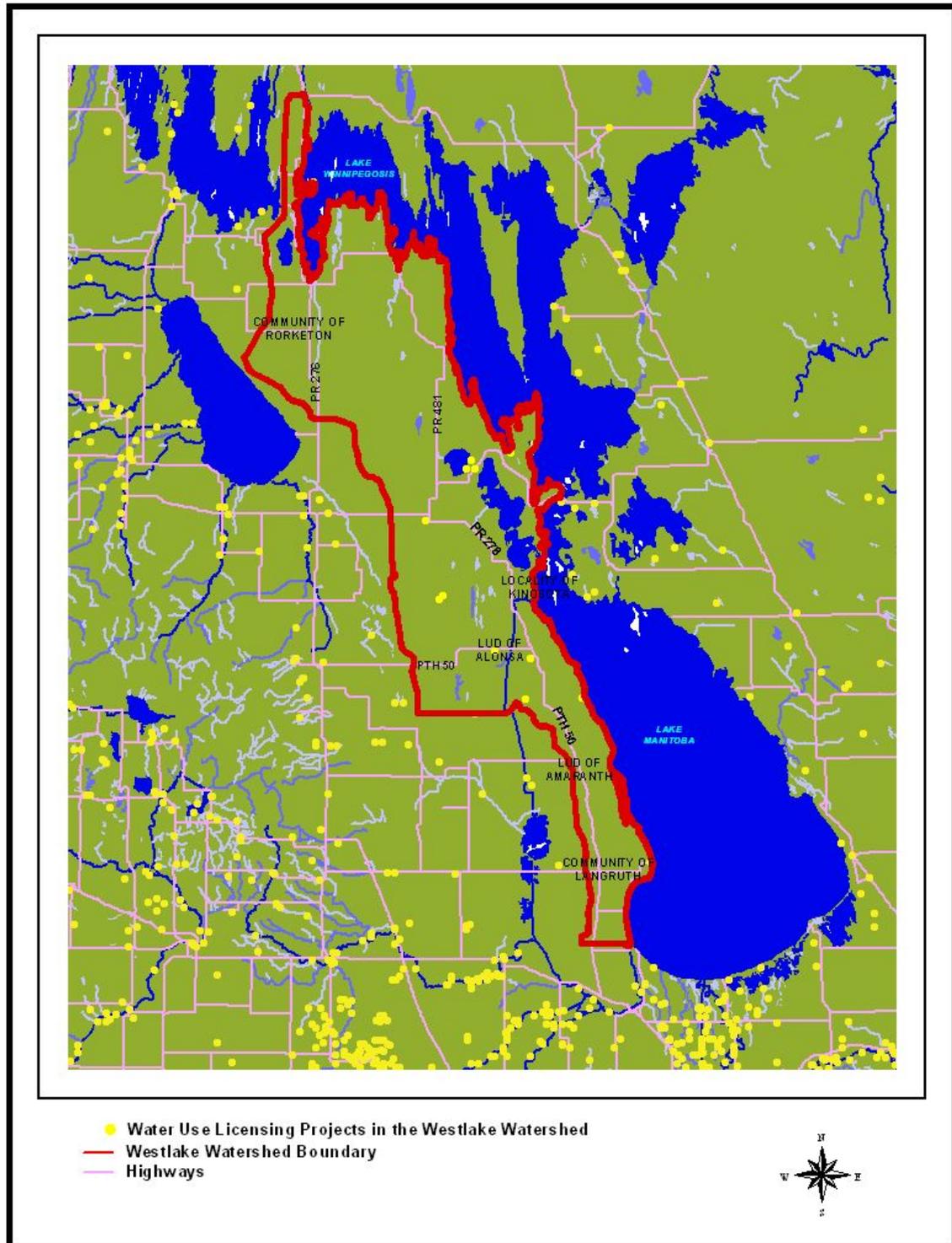


Figure 2: Location of all Water Use Licensing Projects in the Westlake Watershed

Data Gaps:

Aquifer or whole stream budgets have not yet been established in the Westlake watershed; therefore, licensing decisions are based on an individual site specific evaluation. Current allocations are believed to be well below the sustainable yield of the major streams and aquifers. Water Budget Models are developed by the Groundwater and Surface Water Management Sections to set allocation limits for major streams and aquifers. These models divide aquifers and waterways into individual sub-basins and reaches. Each sub-basin or reach is assigned a specific amount of water that is available for allocation. By inputting an allocation amount the model computes the amount of water available for allocation at all other points in the sub-basin or along the reach and adjacent reaches affected by the allocation. Such models have not been done for this watershed.