



Issue #1

The Manitoba Water Strategy

Information current as of: July 2005
Manitoba Public Registry File #: 4705.00

Summary and Current Status:

The Manitoba Water Strategy (2003) is the current policy document for guidance on decisions in the areas of water quality, conservation, use & allocation, water supply, flooding, and drainage. One of the primary goals of Manitoba's water strategy is "to develop watershed based planning across the entire province to ensure that future management of specific water issues is done carefully".

Elements:

The 2003 Manitoba Water Strategy

- originates from a process begun in 1989 to develop water policies for Manitoba. This resulted in a 1990 document entitled *Applying Manitoba's Water Policies*. These policies were also used for the review that led to the *Manitoba Water Strategy 2003*
- released April 2003 following 2-year process led by a government-appointed Steering Committee and multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee. Two documents were released prior to the final Strategy: a public discussion paper and a Steering Committee report (see list of key publications below)
- intended to be a holistic and integrated water strategy with a primary goal of developing watershed based planning across the entire province employing a participatory process that considers present and future anticipated demands on water, within a sustainable vision
- contents include discussions of current initiatives in the areas of water quality, conservation, use & allocation, water supply, flooding, and drainage
- 3 crucial elements of water strategy implementation framework are: new legislation, improved financial foundations, and management on a watershed basis

Weaknesses / Omissions of 2003 Manitoba Water Strategy:

- ignores important recommendations of the 2002 Steering Committee report which were to:
 - review Manitoba's water policies (the 1990 policies that are now 15 years old)
 - include demand side water conservation strategies within the overall strategy
 - include Aboriginal and northern perspectives and issues, and to complete a public participation process for northern Manitoba
 - better account for Manitoba Hydro's role and responsibilities in water management
- contains limited content addressing Lake Winnipeg and Red River pollution issues
- no reference to the precautionary principle
- public education initiatives are also missing

Key Publication(s) & Links:

- *Applying Manitoba's Water Policies* (1990)
http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/licensing/mb_water_policies.pdf
- *Water: A Proposed Strategic Plan for Manitoba* (October 2001)
http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/reports/planning_development/water_strategy_plan.pdf
- *Steering Committee Report to the Manitoba Minister of Conservation on the Water Strategy Discussion Document* (April 2002) (document is no longer available on the internet)
- *Manitoba's Water Strategy* (April 2003)
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/waterstrategy/pdf/index.html>
- Government of Manitoba: The Manitoba Water Strategy
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/waterstrategy/index.html>
- Manitoba Wildlands – Manitoba Water Initiatives
http://manitobawildlands.org/water_mb.htm#provincial

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