

HOME GROWN CONSERVATION SINCE 1986



2022

Annual Report



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Homegrown Conservation since 1986

We are proud stewards of Manitoba's habitats and wildlife, uniting our communities toward the greater purpose of conserving, restoring, and enhancing the land. Building on the efforts of this organization over the past 37 years, we are now looking to the future to sustain, grow, and bring new light to our conservation work.

No longer a corporation, Manitoba Habitat Conservancy brings a new name, a new look and feel, and new opportunities to involve our stakeholders. We are working with and for the people of Manitoba empowering teamwork, building and evolving together to conserve our landscapes, watersheds, and wildlife for generations to come.

Evolving from the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation to the Manitoba Habitat Conservancy, we are building on past successes, recognizing the need to adapt and grow. Through embracing change, we are able to stay effective in our conservation efforts to better align with the needs of our community and the ecosystems we aim to protect. As Manitoba's largest environmental not-for-profit organization, we are committed to responsible stewardship of all that has been entrusted to us.

As part of our evolution, our Strategic Plan has outlined four stages of growth. Our first pillar is encapsulated by this new identity, elevating our visibility and bringing new awareness to our conservation delivery. We knew that the growth of our organization required a brand that was recognizable and actionable with a name that aligns with who we are as we move into the future. We are invested in our growth. In keeping ourselves accountable to our goals, ensuring long-term care of conservation assets and investments, we will establish ourselves as Manitoba's premiere conservation organization.

MHC is reinvigorated and ready for new conservation opportunities and investments for the benefit of all Manitobans. We are committed to being a leader in delivering diverse habitat conservation programs through impactful partnerships, preserving our conservation legacy.

MHC Strategic Plan

VISION

Manitoba landscapes
– Alive with people
and nature

OBJECTS

To conserve, restore, and
enhance fish and wildlife
habitats and the fish and wildlife
populations that reside there

MISSION

To realize enduring conservation benefits
through investment in and delivery of
initiatives that achieve productive natural
landscapes and community wellbeing

GOAL 1

The MHC Story – Articulated, Promoted, and Recognized

Strategic Priority 1:

Inspire support and action
by elevating the MHC brand
and awareness of our
conservation delivery

GOAL 2

Empowered Experts and United Team

Strategic Priority 2:

Foster a cohesive, connected,
and collaborative MHC team

Strategic Priority 3:

Invest in a professional
learning community that
further innovation

Strategic Priority 4:

Promote a culture that
ensures staff wellbeing

GOAL 3

Resilience and Sustainability

Strategic Priority 5:

Diversify MHC's revenue
sources to ensure enduring
conservation benefits

Strategic Priority 6:

Ensure long-term care
of conservation assets
and investments

GOAL 4

Manitoba's Premier Conservation Organization

Strategic Priority 7:

Expand MHC's conservation
influence in areas including the
southern boreal and mitigation

Strategic Priority 8:

Enhance engagement
and collaboration with
stakeholders, including
Indigenous communities
and corporations

Message from the Chair and CEO



BRENT POOLES //
CHAIR



STEPHEN CARLYLE //
CEO

The Manitoba Habitat Conservancy has launched. Our staff are prepped, the plan is in play, and the new MHC is primed to achieve great heights in conservation work in our home, Manitoba. The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation has built an honest and trusted brand by actively working with producers and producer groups to affect conservation actions for nearly 40 years. Over this time, our programs and people



In 2022, our direct delivery and trust granting resulted in MHC investing more than \$17.8 million in Manitoba-based conservation.

have changed, but many of the same challenges still exist and new ones are developing. The refined Manitoba Habitat Conservancy is ready for the task.

Our organization has always prided itself on its effective delivery of conservation tools for the benefits of fish and wildlife. MHC is continuing to work with landowners, farmers, and ranchers, but we are now also supporting local groups in their individual conservation efforts by funding actions through the

Conservation and GROW Trusts. In 2022, our direct delivery and trust granting resulted in MHC investing more than \$17.8 million in Manitoba-based conservation. These are investments in wildlife, but also investments in people by supporting their positive actions and land stewardship that ultimately benefits all Manitobans and works towards MHC's vision of 'Manitoba landscapes – Alive with people and nature.'

Working as an organization to unite people around conservation, we look forward to more successes in 2023. Supporting this, MHC is pleased to welcome a new chair, Rhian Christie, and four new board members; Correy Myco, Jerrod Falk, Joyce Lillie, and William (Bill) Elliott. On behalf of the entire Board and staff, we also want to

recognize the many years of service that retiring Board members Caron Clarke, Cornell Pashé, Kathy Jasienczyk, and Ken Sharpe have provided to MHC, along with the efforts of our long-time team members, Tim Sopuck and Wes Pankratz. Recognizing the importance of uniting people around conservation, new in our annual report is a section on people, as it is the people of MHC that make our organization work, and it is the people of Manitoba that ultimately make conservation happen.

In 2022 MHC Achieved

222,949

kilograms of
phosphorus stored

43,273

acre-feet of water retained on the
landscape during a large rain event

154

acres of wetland
restored

20,787

acres of of wildlife
habitat secured

20,362

ducks living on habitat
conserved by MHC

15

species at risk benefitting
from MHC conservation

640

acres of fee-title lands
purchased by MHC

195,020

people engaged with
MHC and partners

673,400

metric tons of carbon
sequestered

145,119

the vehicle equivalent
of carbon removal

MHC Conservation Legacy

\$28.2M

approved grants

16,020

acres of MHC-owned,
publicly accessible lands

65,757

acres of habitat donated
by Manitobans

200,810

acres of land permanently conserved
by conservation agreements

Program Delivery Summary

The MHC program delivery team achieved a banner year in 2022. MHC staff accomplished permanent securement of 3,454 acres (1,399 ha) of habitat through conservation agreements. These easements, which conserve habitats for wildlife on private property, paid landowners \$1.3 million from various funders focusing on Manitoba's diverse landscape of wetlands, grasslands, and woodlands.

The Grassland Stewardship Program continued delivery of beneficial management practices to livestock producers. Agreements were signed with 50 livestock producers to provide funding for everything from fencing to watering systems to pasture improvements. The 20,443 acres (8,279 ha) of grassland pasture they manage are conserved with 10-year agreements and provide wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge, carbon storage, and a multitude of other benefits to society.

MHC increased its funding from groups working to mitigate habitat impacts that occur in the course of infrastructure development. Manitoba Highways continued to work with MHC to help to mitigate the impacts of road construction on wetlands. Manitoba Hydro provided funding to mitigate for three large projects, a new transmission line near Birtle,

the Manitoba–Minnesota Transmission Project southeast of Winnipeg, and the Bipole III Transmission Project. While these groups are obligated to mitigate the development impacts, they are not required to work with MHC. Having these groups place their trust in MHC to accomplish the groundwork is a testament to the work MHC does.



The Trusts Summary

The Conservation Trust (\$102 million), GROW Trust (\$52 million), and Wetlands GROW Trust (\$50 million) were established by the Province of Manitoba through the Climate and Green Plan. These irrevocable contributions are held and invested by The Winnipeg Foundation. From those investments an annual revenue stream is made available for conservation efforts and projects in the working landscapes of Manitoba through three granting streams: the Conservation Trust and the GROW and Wetland GROW Trusts. MHC's role, established through agreements made with the Province of Manitoba and The Winnipeg Foundation, is to manage and administer the granting programs including responsibilities for project selection, financial and project results monitoring, and reporting.

In 2022, a total of \$10.2 million dollars was awarded for granting by the MHC Board of Directors, supporting 20 projects through the Conservation Trust and 13 projects through the GROW Trusts. Since the inception of the Trusts, approximately \$28.2 million has been approved for granting, supporting 150 projects delivered by 46 Manitoba based organizations.

Trust funded projects have resulted in the restoration of approximately 9,784 acres

(3,959 ha) of grasslands and 129 acres (52 ha) of wetlands as well as the conservation of approximately 4,470 acres (1,808 ha) of grasslands and 1,342 acres (543 ha) of wetlands.

The purpose of the Trusts is to cost-effectively provide environmental goods and services (EG&S) outcomes derived from conservation activities and includes activities that supplement or improve: water quality, flood mitigation, drought resilience, biodiversity, harvestable wildlife, carbon sequestration, and soil health. EG&S describes the various benefits that are provided by natural infrastructure, both for society and for ecological processes. These services can often supplement or replace constructed infrastructure through their natural processes, for example by increasing flood protection or contributing to water filtration. The Conservation Trust Outcomes Assessment Tool (CT OAT), developed by the International Institute for Sustainable



Development (IISD) who reviewed scientific literature and consulted with an expert steering committee, takes the reporting information provided by the Trust recipients and provides an estimate of the EG&S that are provided.

Using the results from the CT OAT, Trust funded projects completed in 2022 are estimated to store 65,381 tonnes of carbon (tCO₂e) and 50,363 kg of phosphorus each year, hold back 3,936 acre-feet of water and replenish 2,287 acre-feet of groundwater supplies during each large rain event as well as having enhanced 69,466 acres (28,111 ha) of habitat for wildlife.

Message from the Accounting Manager



ELIZABETH AJIBOLA //
ACCOUNTING MANAGER

Through our transition from a Crown corporation to a private, not-for-profit charitable organization with a new name, the Manitoba Habitat Conservancy (MHC), we have remained focused on preserving our culture of strong financial responsibility

and sustainability. Our continued strategic growth was driven majorly by the substantial increase in the revenues through investment returns from Trust fund endowments, Agency fund endowment, and increases in various governmental and non-governmental grants.

As of December 31, 2022, MHC has invested approximately \$36 million in tangible capital assets and continues to build stewardship funds to maintain our long-term commitment to these conservation assets. These funds are used to maintain MHC's conservation lands in a condition that maximizes wildlife benefits and ensures our grantors' and donors' investments are protected and productive.

MHC administers funding for habitat conservation from three perpetual conservation-focused endowment funds established by the Province of Manitoba and held with The Winnipeg Foundation, plus MHC's Agency Fund, which supports our day-to-day operations. These funds are

pivotal to our recent growth and enhances MHC's commitment to communicating the importance of, and conserving, natural landscapes for wildlife and all Manitobans. MHC's governance structure and its commitment to transparency has continued to position the Conservancy as the premier conservation organization of Manitoba. With MHC's strong partnerships, presence within communities, committed employees, plus stable and diverse funding sources, we are transforming the way conservation is both delivered and perceived.

MHC strives to maintain at least 90% of its annual expenditure as a direct investment in habitat conservation. In fiscal year 2022, we achieved a 93% investment in conservation expenditures (2021 – 94%).

To all our distinguished funders, thank you for the vital role you've played in our accomplishments this past year. We look forward to your continued support.



LANDSCAPES



NATURE



PEOPLE

Overview

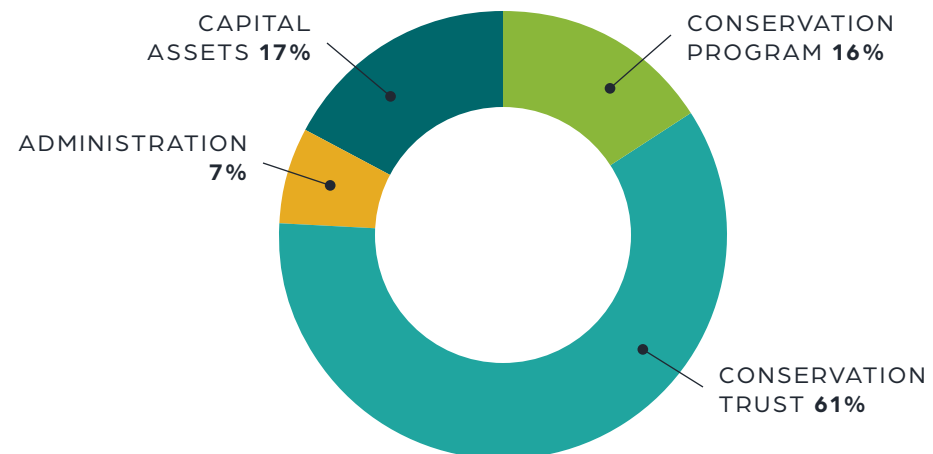
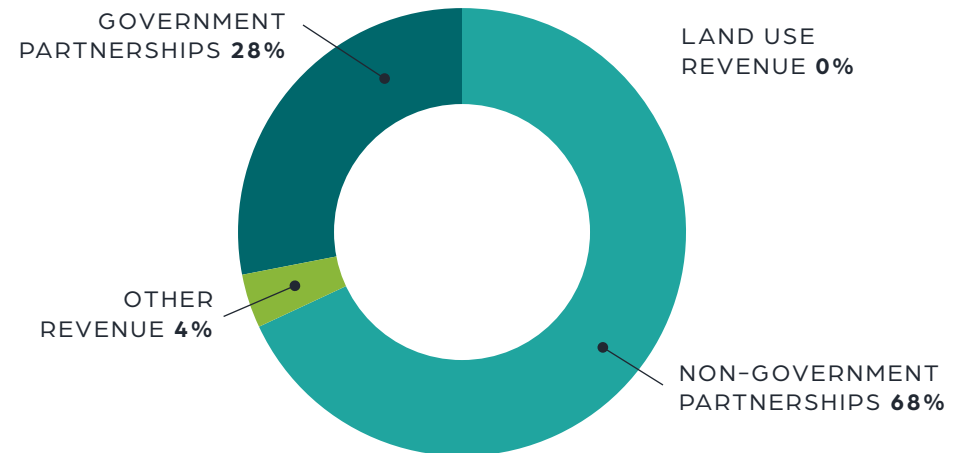
SOURCES OF REVENUE

MHC generates revenue from four primary sources:

- Non-governmental partnerships include grants from organizations such as The Winnipeg Foundation, Delta Waterfowl Foundation, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and Manitoba Beef Producers.
- Government partnerships include grants from federal (Canada and US), and provincial governments.
- Land use revenue, including fees collected on leasing MHC land to ranchers for grazing activities.
- Other revenue includes management fees, interest income, and individual donations.

USES OF FUNDS

At MHC, we pride ourselves in the judicious spending of every dollar received from our funders. We ensure the funds are spent on projects that produce the greatest conservation results in Manitoba by upholding high standards of transparency, accountability, and trust. Through the past fiscal year, our organization has continued to provide outstanding conservation returns on the partners' investments.



Financial Commitment

During fiscal year 2022, MHC invested 93% of funds received into habitat conservation, of which 16% was for conservation program expenses, 17% in capital assets (perpetual and term agreements) and 61% for granting activities through the Trusts.

USES OF FUNDS	2022		2021	
	Goals	Results	Goals	Results
Conservation Trust	11,598,889	10,885,064	15,214,767	16,694,147
Investment in Tangible Capital Assets	3,914,075	2,982,263	2,903,753	3,452,855
Conservation Program	3,294,908	2,787,752	5,339,892	2,827,346
Administration	1,478,007	1,190,947	1,482,732	1,421,709
Total	20,285,879	17,846,026	24,941,144	24,396,057

Note: MHC had an extended fiscal year 2021, because of its transition from Crown corporation to a private not-for-profit charitable organization and a change of fiscal period from April – March to January – December. Fiscal Year 2021 is made up of the last 10 months as a Crown corporation (April 2020 – January 2021) and 11 months as a private not-for-profit charitable organization (February 2021 – December 2021).

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023

MHC is growing and planning to realize \$21.1 million in gross revenue.

SOURCES OF REVENUE/CONTRIBUTIONS	2022	2021	2020	2019
Government Partnerships	5,205,771	4,972,838	2,652,734	2,921,535
Non-Government Partnerships	12,485,115	19,418,707	4,128,040	1,430,736
Land Use Revenue	91,890	241,021	76,559	66,747
Other Revenue	658,691	727,027	324,483	282,587
	18,441,466	25,359,593	7,181,816	4,701,605



CONSERVING MANITOBA'S
Landscapes

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Adapting to Climate Change

Climate change experts warn our weather is going to become more unpredictable and volatile. This could seriously challenge Manitoba's weather-dependent agriculture industry.

Manitoba will face earlier and more severe changes to our climate than many other parts of the world. Climate change predictions suggest we will see warmer and wetter winters and longer, warmer, and drier summers. Precipitation is likely to vary more from year to year. Extreme weather, such as heat waves, droughts, floods, and more intense storms, will become more common.

How will agricultural producers prepare for, cope with, and recover from extreme weather events? Are programs and funding available to help farmers to prepare for the negative impacts of climate change?

"Yes, there are," said Megan Porath, grants associate with Manitoba Habitat Conservancy. "The Growing Outcomes in Watersheds (GROW) program is part of Manitoba's Climate and Green Plan. The Province of Manitoba endowed \$204 million in Trust funds with The Winnipeg Foundation that has historically generated between \$8 to \$10 million dollars annually for investment

in conservation program delivery. Manitoba's Watershed Districts deliver GROW programs across the province."

GROW program funding supports on-farm sustainable land use practices that provide



Our programming includes funding to restore grasslands, plant cover crops and forages to protect soils, restore wetlands for water storage, and plant trees.

STEPHANIE KRYSCHUK //

GROW PROGRAM COORDINATOR
FOR THE WHITEMUD WATERSHED DISTRICT

ecological goods and services that help store carbon and reduce climate change impacts like flooding and drought. Programs and funding are offered that encourage water storage and infiltration, improved soil health, improved water quality, and sustaining biodiversity in natural areas.

"We have a local GROW committee that works with farmers in our watershed

to develop projects that work for their operations," said Rodney White, manager of the Whitemud Watershed District. "Many of these projects provide ecological services that benefit the entire watershed."

An example of building watershed resilience includes the Whitemud Watershed District's cover crop program which gained the interest of both crop and livestock producers, influencing over 7,300 acres. "Cover crops work well for livestock producers as they can be grazed and hayed. The benefit for crop producers is a bit longer timeline

when addressing things like weed control or improving field nutrients," said Stephanie Kryschuk, GROW program coordinator for the Whitemud Watershed District. The program aims to keep the soil covered with living plants in order to increase soil organic matter, reduce erosion, provide weed control, increase biodiversity, and contribute to carbon sequestration.



Climate change risks to farmers and watersheds can be lowered by protecting or restoring natural areas. Forests, grasslands, wetlands, pasturelands, and riparian areas have tremendous capacity to moderate the impacts of storms. “Our GROW programming is designed to keep natural areas intact that are at risk of being converted to cultivated cropland,” said Stephanie.

“GROW programs pay incentives to conserve, not drain, temporary wetlands on cultivated cropland and to keep forested areas on the landscape,” said Stephanie. “Our programming also includes funding to restore grasslands, plant cover crops and forages to protect soils, restore wetlands for water storage, and plant trees. GROW programming with producers is voluntary.”

Fourteen Watershed Districts across Manitoba are in partnership with the GROW Trust Program. They all offer programs and funding to support sustainable agricultural practices that will help farms to reduce risks from extreme weather in the future.



PROGRAMS

Wolfe Creek Project Counters Climate Change, Supports Habitat

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy (MHC) purchased 640 acres of prime waterfowl habitat in 2022 near Oakburn in the Prairie Pothole Region. Half of the land was cultivated cropland and the other half was a mix of grazed native grassland, wetland, forest, and riparian area.

"The cultivated cropland is marginal, with saline low areas and eroded stoney knolls," said Roy Bullion, MHC habitat conservation specialist out of the Shoal Lake regional office. "But it is good cattle pastureland interspersed with many wetlands in a high-density waterfowl area."

Taras Chwaluk sold the land to MHC. Taras worked previously with Roy to sign a Conservation Agreement (CA) protecting the wetlands in 2004. "Taras was one of the first landowners to work with MHC to install duck nesting structures in the CA protected wetlands," Roy relayed. "In some years every nest structure was occupied, a reflection of the high duck numbers in the area."

"About five years ago Taras asked me if MHC would be interested in buying the land," said Roy. "We had worked together, he was happy with MHC, and I coached his son in high school hockey, so Taras felt comfortable discussing a possible land sale to MHC."

MHC purchased the land in 2022, funded through Environment and Climate Change Canada's Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund. All cultivated crop acres were seeded to a grass mix that would mimic the structure of native prairie. Grasslands offset carbon emissions by sequestering and storing carbon in their root mass and soil.

Wolfe Creek flows through the purchased property and empties into the Oak River watershed. The creek will be fenced off and the riparian habitat will be managed for a broad variety of wildlife and plant species. The wetlands will never be drained, and the perennial grass cover will support increased water

infiltration and reduce runoff, all benefiting the downstream watershed.

"It's a good project," said Roy. "The grazed grasslands still contribute to the local agricultural community. It is a nature-based climate solution project that will be managed with the use of grazed grasslands, storing carbon, and providing benefits to wildlife, biodiversity, and the watershed."



PROGRAMS

Balancing the Loss and the Need

It is a reality of modern life, in order to do our daily tasks, at work or play, we need resources from our planet. The sad reality is that inevitably our needs have consequences. Whether we are driving on the highway to visit our grandparents' home-quarter, visiting our favorite provincial park, or simply heating our homes and keeping the lights on (hopefully they are LED!), we consume Earth's resources. The conscious effort to avoid and minimize the consumption of these resources are the first two of three steps in the mitigation process. When you have done everything to avoid negative impacts, or to minimize your impacts, the final step is to offset your impacts.

Purchasing offsets is becoming increasingly common. For example, the next time you purchase an airline ticket or attend an event, you may be given the chance to buy carbon credits. Typically, these are programs where funds are accumulated and then used to support conservation actions that would not have otherwise happened and result in the protection or sequestration of

carbon through Conservation Agreements, reforestation, wetland restoration, or other beneficial actions.

Thanks to progressive policies in Manitoba, similar programs have been occurring well before offsets were common. Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) was the first provincial department to implement paid compensation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands that can occur during highway construction. Since the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway in 2004, MTI has invested more than \$1 million in conservation projects with MHC. These funds were used to perpetually protect and/or restore wetland and upland habitat on private lands. Currently, MTI is working to implement the largest wetland offsetting program in the history of the Province, which is associated with the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels Project.

Building on the lead set by MTI, impacts to habitats from the development of hydro infrastructure is also compensated. Recent offset payments were made for projects including Bipole III, a transmission line project

developed to improve electrical reliability, as well as a first-of-

its-kind grassland offset program when a transmission line needed to cross native grasslands in western Manitoba. These and other projects have resulted in \$2 million in conservation work, implemented by MHC.

Jonathan Wiens, environmental specialist with the Manitoba Hydro, noted that "the conservation offset agreements made in partnership with MHC, in combination with the extensive mitigation efforts applied during project planning and construction, demonstrate Manitoba Hydro's commitment to meeting Environment Act license conditions and being an innovator in environmental stewardship in Manitoba."

The Earth is resilient, but we have an obligation to future generations to ensure that the legacy we leave is not one of loss, but one of careful balance between investments in people-needs, like safer highways and reliable power supplies, and investments in planet-needs, like habitat protection and restoration.





CONSERVING MANITOBA'S

Nature

20,787

acres of wildlife
habitat secured

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ducks living on habitat
conserved by MHC

15

species at risk
benefitting from
MHC conservation



TRUSTS

Prairie Tunnels

If you have ever taken a trip through the pothole region of Manitoba, say around Minnedosa, you will likely have seen straw-filled tubes in the middle of the many wetlands dotting the landscape. Known as Hen Houses, these structures are a key tool in the conservation toolbox.

“Hen Houses are one of the most effective ways to increase duck production in prairie Canada,” says Matt Chouinard, waterfowl program director with Delta Waterfowl Foundation. “People are often surprised to find out just how few nests actually result in hatched ducklings; it can be less than 1 in 10. Hen Houses increase the success rates of nests to 60 – 70% as the structures make it much harder for predators to find and eat the eggs.”

Of all bird types, waterfowl are one of the most studied and understood. This has been the result of conservationists making continued investments into waterfowl research for the past 100 years. Investments to support this work comes from a variety of sources, including US and Canadian federal governments, not-for-profit groups like Wildlife Habitat Canada, and directly or indirectly from hunters through licence sales and/or conservation stamps.

A specific outcome of the Conservation Trust is to enhance wildlife populations using proven tools and strategic implementation. For years, Delta has researched ways of enhancing duck production and the installation of Hen Houses has consistently proven to be both effective and cost efficient.



Hen Houses increase the success rates of nests to 60 – 70% as the structures make it much harder for predators to find and eat the eggs.

MATT CHOUINARD //

WATERFOWL PROGRAM DIRECTOR
WITH DELTA WATERFOWL FOUNDATION

Delta has previously received funding through the Conservation Trust for its Hen House program and did once again in 2022.

“Under a coordinated, tri-national, North American effort, regional plans are developed to manage and support waterfowl populations,” stated Chouinard.

“These plans outline a range of programs that are delivered by conservation partners, including us at Delta Waterfowl. By working with groups like MHC, we are delivering long-term habitat conservation, but we are also addressing immediate production needs through conservation tools like Hen

Houses. Currently, Delta is running its ‘Million Duck Campaign,’ where we are aiming to use Hen Houses and other conservation tools to annually produce 1,000,000 mallards per year.”

Stephen Carlyle, chief executive officer of MHC noted, “success in conservation cannot be achieved through just one program or one

group. We are proud that MHC can support great partners, like Delta, in the delivery of programs that will benefit the entire wildlife conservation movement, the people of Manitoba, and ultimately, folks from across the continent.”

TRUSTS

The Need for Beef

Within the agricultural zone of southern Manitoba, there are 59 different plants and animals that have been identified as being a "Species at Risk". While many of these species are in peril because of habitat degradation, fragmentation and loss, many of these species, particularly those that rely on grasslands, likely only remain because of the way cattle producers manage their pastures. However, the Manitoba cattle herd is in decline and the pasturelands that once supported these herds are increasingly being converted to cropland. This is a concern for the future of grasslands and species at risk in Manitoba.

The Manitoba Beef Producers is directly addressing this loss through funding from the Conservation Trust and Environment and Climate Change Canada to deliver information and incentives to cattle producers to enhance grass quality for their herd and maintain healthy habitats for species at risk.

"In short, the program sold out," said Manitoba Beef Producers general manager Carson Callum. "The \$972,000 budget was fully allocated. The funding impacts 24,000

acres of grazed pasture in Manitoba with projects that include fencing, watering systems, habitat restoration, shrub control, and grassland improvements. A total of 74 cattle producers participated in the program in 2022."

One of these 74 producers were Valerie and Jarret Sollner, who operate a mixed farm near Plumas. "We participated in the Grassland Stewardship Program this year," said Valerie. "Our cow-calf business includes nine quarter sections that we graze. We liked that the incentive funding included fencing materials and cattle watering systems. Jarret and I wanted new fencing that would allow us to rotate the cattle to improve our grass management and prevent overgrazing. We installed almost 10 miles of 4-strand barbed wire fence along with a new dugout."

"Applying to this program was easy," Valerie relayed. "There was very little paperwork. As soon as the agreement was signed, Manitoba Beef Producers cut us a cheque

for 50% of the incentive payment, which really helped with the cost of materials. We feel this is the best support program for cattle producers in the province."

"We have very good news for 2023," said MBP GM Carson Callum. "Manitoba Beef Producers is working to secure funding to offer the Grassland Stewardship Program again in 2023. Our plan is to offer the same program criteria and funding incentives to cattle producers."





PROGRAMS

Wolfe Family Committed to Conserving Mixed Grass Prairie

In 2022, Manitoba Habitat Conservancy (MHC) entered into a Conservation Agreement with Reed and Catherine Wolfe to protect 300 acres of native mixed grass prairie in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada. Native mixed grass prairie habitats are among the most endangered ecosystems on the planet.

The Wolfe Conservation Agreement (CA) land is located near Sioux Valley within an area identified as the Mixed Grass Prairie Priority Place. This area is especially notable for rare grassland birds. The Wolfe CA provides breeding and foraging habitat for four bird species that are on the national species at risk list.

"This property is awesome," said Kasie Cullen, habitat conservation specialist with MHC. "There are other development opportunities for the land, but Reed and Catherine are committed to grassland conservation. MHC was pleased to support their conservation initiative, including their managed livestock grazing land use practices that have sustained the habitat."

"The native grasslands have been in our family for about 100 years," said landowner Reed Wolfe. "Our family holds the land dear. We have a strong sentimental connection to it. It's hard to explain, but you feel at peace when you go to 'the hills'."

"We know the endangered birds are there," Reed relayed. "You don't often see them, but you hear them. They have very distinct songs."

"We chose to partner with MHC to conserve and protect the grasslands,"

Reed said. "MHC's pasture management and grazing systems philosophy seemed more flexible and better aligned with how we manage the pasture."

"Grasslands are important habitat to species at risk, and their preservation is vital to conserve biodiversity," said Curtis Hullick, habitat field manager for MHC. "MHC will continue to offer programs to support rural Manitoba landowners to conserve and protect wildlife habitat, water quality, and biodiversity."



Thank You to Our Program Partners



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada





People

16,020

acres of MHC land ready to
be explored by Manitobans

195,020

people engaged with
MHC and partners

673,400

metric tons of
carbon sequestered

145,119

the vehicle equivalent
of carbon removal

TRUSTS

Mennonite Heritage Village Wetland Project Connects People With Nature

Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) in Steinbach received a \$50,000 grant from the Conservation Trust to restore the eroded shoreline of a wetland on the museum grounds. The funding kick-started a wetland restoration project aimed at helping visitors to connect with nature.

"The goal was to get the wetland shoreline stabilized and then add features to attract visitors to the village," said Gary Dyck, MHV's executive director.

"The first steps were to reshape the eroded shoreline and plant a variety of trees to stabilize the banks," Gary said. "Then we planted native grasses and wetland plants, added a floating dock, installed a water fountain, and created a walking path around the periphery of the wetland. We wanted to maximize the wetland potential of the pond."

Conservation Trust funding for bank stabilization work was the catalyst for additional grants and donations to the wetland restoration project. "It was beautiful how one thing led to another," said Gary.

"The Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District (SRRWD) was a big help to the project. Overall, Trust funding covered about 40% of the total project costs."

The Watershed District was pleased to contribute around \$15,000 to the project. "We put in considerable time to design the site plan for the wetland project and helped with construction of the new shoreline," said SRRWD manager Joey Pankiw.

The one-half kilometer trail around the pond showcases a mix of wetland vegetation and many wetland bird species that have made the pond their home. The trail goes right past the Dirk Willems Peace Garden and a section of the Berlin Wall – features of the Village grounds that visitors sometimes missed.

"Kids love the new floating dock, especially when they get it rocking!" said Gary. Over 5,000 students per year

tour the Mennonite Heritage Village to learn the history of Mennonite settlements and agriculture in Manitoba.

"We would love to develop more educational awareness for wetlands with this project in the future," Gary relayed. "Today we just turn on a tap, with little thought to how important clean drinking water was to the early settlers and how wetlands were connected to water quality and biodiversity."





PROGRAMS

Working with the Ranchers

If you listen to certain organizations or media outlets, you are likely hearing negative things about meat production and consumption. But behind the attention-grabbing headlines, is all livestock production bad for the environment? Could there be positive environmental impacts associated with livestock production?

"Livestock production plays a valuable role in maintaining grasslands, providing wildlife habitat, enhancing biodiversity, building soil fertility, sequestering carbon, and building climate change resiliency," said Curtis Hullick, habitat field manager with MHC. "That's a lot of positive impacts! Cattle producers and their livestock are fundamental to the future of the grassland environment."

With cattle production, a well-managed grazing system increases plant density and diversity. "This is beneficial for the cattle, increases farm profitability, and provides habitat for wildlife," Curtis relayed. "Grassland nesting birds are at-risk in Manitoba and Canada, primarily due to habitat loss and fragmentation. Their future

survival depends on maintaining healthy grasslands and the vegetation management performed by livestock."

To recognize the grassland bird habitat that cattle producers provide, MHC received funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada and partnered with Manitoba Beef Producers, to deliver a 3-year Rangeland Management Plan initiative. The intent is to enhance grassland productivity with grazing systems that supports the economic viability of the producer while also providing wildlife benefits.

"Rangeland management is the utilization of livestock to influence grazing distribution, carrying capacity, and timing to sync with grass development and performance," said Carol Graham, habitat conservation specialist with MHC. "It requires a vegetation inventory to identify plant species, define unique landscape features, and identify areas that are distinct grassland types."



"Cattle producers are the stewards of their grasslands," noted Carol. "Rangeland Management Planning is simply a support tool for producers that helps improve management decisions, which ultimately helps to achieve healthy and productive pastures."

"There are a number of very good initiatives happening in Manitoba with sustainable livestock production and rangeland management planning," said Curtis. "We are proud to be partners with Manitoba Beef Producers who are working to enhance biodiversity on the landscape, raise high quality nutritious food, and support a healthy rural economy."

PROGRAMS

Cheers to Conservation!

A South African brewer, a local business, an internationally renowned wetland, and a conservation organization can take global connections to local action. Transforming itself from a Crown corporation to an independent, environmental charity, MHC has been rapidly evolving to further its conservation work and influence. A key part of this change comes from the people of Manitoba and support that MHC is receiving for its Homegrown Conservation actions.

Out of the Lake of the Woods Brewing Company's modern brewing facility in downtown Winnipeg, came an idea for a local beer that would support wetland conservation. "One of our environmental sustainability goals is water resource conservation. Brewing a Manitoba-made beer with a local conservation group that conserves wetlands was just a natural fit" James Vandal, Manitoba territory manager at LOWBREWco.

With wild hops harvested from the beach ridge of Delta Marsh, came 'Wetlands Wild' a custom-brewed ale crafted by the skilled hands of head brewer Chris Marsh of Lake of the Woods Brewing Company.



Brewing a Manitoba-made beer with a local conservation group that conserves wetlands was just a natural fit.

JAMES VANDAL //

MANITOBA TERRITORY MANAGER AT LOWBREWCO

Chris highlighted the many ways they work to make their operation sustainable. "At Lake Of The Woods Brewing Company, we like to give back to the land whenever we take

from it. All our spent grain goes to farmers for their livestock, we are currently working on ways to re-use hops for bittering in the boil that have been used for dry hopping in fermentation, we have re-forestation programs

where we plant 10,000 trees a year, and the list goes on."

"This is why this project was so important to us, taking the hops from the Delta Marsh to give back financially so that the team from MHC can do what they do best."

100% of the beer sales were donated to MHC.



MHC Offices

Main Location

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MINNEDOSA

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SHOAL LAKE

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