HOMEGROWN CONSERVATION SINCE 1986



The Conservation & GROW Trusts 2022/23



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MHHC changes name after 37 years and embraces growth with brand evolution

Building on past successes and recognizing the need to adapt and grow, Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation will be operating under a new name: Manitoba Habitat Conservancy. Our Strategic Plan outlined four stages of growth, the first pillar of which 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 keeping ourselves accountable to our goals and ensuring long-term care of conservation assets and investments. As Manitoba's largest environmental not-for-profit organization, we are committed to responsible stewardship of all that has been entrusted to us.

Executive Summary

This report outlines all Trust funded granting commitments and results made to March 31, 2023. These and future conservation results are made possible by the Province of Manitoba's decision to establish three trusts – the Conservation Trust, the GROW Trust and the Wetlands GROW Trust.

The Trusts support conservation projects with activities that cumulatively build resilience to the impacts of climate change. These projects focus on supporting natural infrastructure and nature-based solutions and include activities that supplement or improve: water quality, flood mitigation, drought resilience, biodiversity, harvestable wildlife, carbon sequestration, and soil health, ultimately delivering key ecological goods and services. As an example, the flooding in the spring of 2022 was estimated to be the sixth largest flood since 1812 and largely impacted the agricultural landscape. Trust funded wetland restoration, grassland conservation, and water retention projects result in additional storage of water on the landscape and can aid in the mitigation of floods.

As of March 31, 2023, a total of \$38.53 million in granting commitments have been made to 179 conservation projects across Manitoba.

This report aggregates outputs and estimated outcomes from 27 projects finalized in the 2022–23 Government Fiscal Year (GFY). As of March 31, 2023, there were an additional 78 Trust funded projects in progress.

Ecological Goods and Services (EG&S) outcomes from completed projects were calculated using the Trust Outcome Assessment Tool (OAT). The OAT estimated that the projects have sequestered 92,995 tCO2e, stored 67,529 pounds of phosphorus, provided 5,925 acre-feet of flood storage per event, and recharged 3,342 acre-feet of groundwater (additional outcomes are provided in Appendix A).

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

History of the Trusts

The Provincial government's Made-In-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan (2017) called for the establishment of a Conservation Trust to provide long-term support for nature-based approaches to climate change.

The Conservation Trust was established in 2018 with a \$102 million contribution from Manitoba to The Winnipeg Foundation to establish an endowment fund to generate annual revenues for conservation projects in perpetuity. Manitoba also established the GROW Trust with a contribution of \$52 million to support the GRowing Outcomes in Watersheds (GROW) initiative delivered by Watershed Districts across the Province. In 2019, Manitoba established the Wetlands GROW Trust with a \$50 million contribution to support protection of critical wetlands under GROW.

In total, Manitoba has provided \$204 million to endowment funds that have historically generated approximately \$8 million to \$10 million dollars annually for investment in conservation projects.

MHC's role in the Trusts is established by agreements between Manitoba, The Winnipeg Foundation, and MHC. Those agreements identify MHC's responsibilities for granting programs, including project selection, financial and project results monitoring, grant program evaluation, and reporting.

In 2018, MHC began to build capacity to carry out these responsibilities. Working from the purpose and objectives established for the Trusts, and consulting with a number of organizations, especially provincial government staff, MHC laid the basis for a strategic approach by developing granting categories and criteria along with an electronic grants management system in advance of its first proposal intake. The first award of funds occurred in 2019.

MHC implemented a structured proposal review process that included internal and external reviewers. Final authority to approve projects rests with the MHC Board of Directors. Prior to the Board receiving a slate of proposals for review, a technical review of proposals is conducted by the Trust Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), consisting of experts in the fields of watershed planning and management, conservation program design and delivery, agricultural sustainability and production, and environmental assessment. The TAC review includes proposal rankings by category and recommendations regarding funding amounts and modifications to projects.

The MHC Trust Team has established contribution agreements and reporting systems for grantees and continues to refine its criteria and processes. A major development in information management and reporting was made this year as MHC piloted an online grant reporting platform for GROW Trust recipients. The online platform provides GROW Trust grantees with a more comprehensive tool for both reporting and management of their grant projects. The reporting platform will continue to be refined, improved, and expanded in the coming years and will eventually include reporting functionality for the Conservation Trust.

While three Trusts are available to support granting programs, each Trust has somewhat different points of emphasis. From those three revenue sources, two annual grant proposal intakes are operated.

The Conservation Trust intake supports a broad array of conservation initiatives that promote the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of natural infrastructure in working landscapes. It is funded entirely from Conservation Trust revenues.

MHC's working definition of natural infrastructure is, " ... an area or system that is either naturally occurring or naturalized and then intentionally managed to provide multiple benefits for the environment and human well-being." The emphasis is on projects that achieve measurable change on the ground and within the project time period. Land and water conservation projects, especially those that provide multiple EG&S benefits, are preferred, with the ultimate objective of building extensive landscape resilience to the impacts of climate change.

With these fundamental priorities in mind, core outcomes were established for the Trust (see page 7). Further, the Trusts' focus is on the agricultural landscape of the province where environmental impacts have been most significant in relation to human populations, and where restoration of landscape resilience can have the most benefits for people. Trust guidelines are explained in detail at **mbhabitat.ca**

To help organize and communicate Trust priorities, and to provide a basis for notional allocations of funds, Conservation Trust funding categories were established:

- Watersheds
- Habitats and Wildlife
- Soil Health
- Innovation
- Conservation Planning
- Connecting People to Nature

For a detailed description of each category, see Conservation Trust Categories on page 19.

Eligible organizations include local and provincial not-for-profit groups, Watershed Districts, and national not-forprofit organizations with a base of operations in Manitoba. Individuals, for-profit groups, and governments are not eligible.

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy The objective of the Conservation Trust is for the largest allocation to go to the first three categories, which are landscape-based and contain projects that can deliver multiple ecological goods and services benefits on the ground. Within the Innovation and Conservation Planning categories, projects should provide significant guidance and/or new conservation tools to support conservation activities that can be effectively implemented at a large scale. The Connecting People to Nature category may be delivered in urban or high-use rural areas. These projects should result in significant new opportunities to access nature and/or nature-based education and interpretation activities by large audiences.

The Province established two additional Trusts, the GROW Trust and the Wetlands GROW Trust, to support the GRowing Outcomes in Watersheds (GROW) program, which promotes the conservation of natural areas and land use changes that provide EG&S on agricultural land. The program works with farmers to develop projects that work for their operations and maintain or improve local watershed health. With a focus on watershed health, management and resiliency, GROW projects will help reduce flooding and drought vulnerability and improve water quality and nutrient management in Manitoba. Activities supported by GROW include water retention, wetland conservation, buffer establishment, riparian area management, and upland area management. The GROW program is delivered by Manitoba's 14 watershed districts in partnership with landowners, non-government organizations, and all levels of government.

There is a separate intake for GROW proposals, however, this intake receives revenues from all three Trusts (Conservation, GROW, and Wetland GROW Trusts). Reviews follow a similar process as described above for the Conservation Trust. As with the Conservation Trust, the TAC plays a key role in reviewing and ranking proposals prior to submission to the MHC Board for approval.

Trust Priority EG&S Outcomes

WATER QUALITY

 Incremental phosphorus capture, including annual rate and cumulative retention of phosphorus resulting from Trust activities

WATER QUANTITY/FLOOD MITIGATION

Incremental water storage capacity, expressed as a volume, resulting from Trust activities

CARBON SEQUESTRATION AND SOIL HEALTH

Cumulative annual and cumulative aggregation of carbon resulting from Trust activities

HARVESTABLE WILDLIFE

- Increases in productivity and populations resulting from Trust activities
- Acres of restored or enhanced habitat

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Cumulative acres of habitat conserved, enhanced and restored

ECONOMIC

• Estimated impacts of Trust and match-funding expenditures on jobs and income, using standard methodologies



Trust EG&S Outcomes

Trust Outcomes								
		C	ONSERV		ST		GROV	V TRUST
EG&S Outcomes	Watersheds	Habitat and Wildlife	Soil Health	Innovation	Planning	Connecting People to Nature	GROW	Wetlands GROW
Improved Water Quality	•	•	•	•	•		•	•
Flood Mitigation				•	•			
Improved Drought Resistance	•		•	•			•	•
Increased Biodiversity			•	•				•
Increased Production of Harvestable Wildlife Species	•	•		•	•		•	•
Enhanced Carbon Sequestration	•		•	•	•		•	
Increased Soil Health				•				
Economic Benefits: Jobs & Income	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Recreational Opportunities to Connect People to Nature						•		
Activities that Enhance a Recognized Greenway or Equivalent Natural Area						•		
Increased Public Access to Nature								
Interpretive Programs Delivered in Natural Areas								

Results to March 31, 2023

FUNDING COMMITMENTS FROM THE TRUSTS

From inception to March 31, 2023, a total of \$38.53 million has been committed to projects from the Trusts.

A breakdown of commitments, by funding category, is provided in Table 2 below. Details of funding commitments by category are provided in Appendix B.

Table 2: Cumulative Trust Granting Commitments to Date (As of March 31, 2023)

	PRIOR YEARS	CURR	ENT YEAR
Stage in Process	Conservation and GROW Trusts 2018 – 2022	GROW Trust 2023	Conservation Trust 2023
Letter of Interest (LOI)		
Submitted	226	12	26
Denied	34	0	2
Approved	192	12	24
Applications			
Submitted	176	12	23
Denied	32	1	4
Approved	152	11	19
Funding			
Trust Funds	\$28,182,100 ¹	\$7,569,048	\$2,786,654
Match Funds	\$47,233,772	\$10,144,305	\$6,415,752
Match Ratio ²	2.4:1	2.5:1	2.3:1

¹Adjusted to reflect changes in granting commitments to date

²Incentive payment amounts are not included in the calculation of match ratio for GROW projects

Total granting commitments to March 31, 2023:

\$38,537,802



Results to March 31, 2023

This brief summary reports the outputs and outcomes from 27 Trust-funded projects, which were finalized during the 2022-23 GFY. A comprehensive table of aggregated outputs for this reporting period may be found in Appendix A. For a list of the 27 projects, their summaries and grant amounts, see Appendix C.

WETLAND ACRES

6,912 Conserved

2,660 Enhanced 64 Restored

WATER RETENTION ACRE-FEET

338 Temporary 76 Extended

1,073 Permanent

GRASSLANDS/ PERENNIAL COVER ACRES

27,436 Conserved **33,395** Enhanced **8,439** Restored

RIPARIAN AREA ACRES

2,058

2,331 Enhanced 136 Restored

WOODED ACRES

826

Conserved

6,867





Other Significant Activities

- Number and/or length of trees and shrubs planted (in shelterbelt, farmyard, and other settings)
- Structures for wildlife (e.g. duck nesting structures)
- Structures (trails, signage, kiosk, etc.) commonly related to Connecting People to Nature projects
- Communications activities (advertisements, workshops, etc.) in relation to Trust-funded projects
- Decision support tools developed

It should be noted that a small number of projects do not have deliverables that are easily expressed in acres impacted on-the-ground. This is particularly true for the Innovation, Conservation Planning and Connecting People to Nature categories. If a project has the potential to impact a definable region (e.g. a plan affecting a certain watershed), those acres are identified in the table as "influenced". While these projects do eventually result in EG&S benefits, they are not directly comparable to projects whose impacts are direct and can be measured in the current project period.

Trust Outcomes

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 Trust Outcomes Assessment Tool (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.

In 2020, IISD completed the first phase, a literature review to identify quantitative/qualitative values and ranges for the EG&S outcomes related to activities most supported by the Trusts. This literature review resulted in the Evaluation Matrix (Matrix), which was validated by an experienced steering committee.

To analytically quantify EG&S outcomes from Trust funded projects, phase two saw the development of the OAT. This tool facilitates the actual calculation of the EG&S outcomes and operate off of two primary variables. The first variable, Acres of Habitat, provides the primary input for determining the magnitude of the EG&S calculated, while the second variable, the Additional Required Input Data, represents the EG&S value of the habitat. Currently the second variable is assessed by Unit Change in Land. Unit Change in Land determines the relative benefit of EG&S calculations, which is dependent on initial land use for a given project activity. For situations where the land use does not significantly change, for example with conserved habitat, the tool utilizes the concept of avoided loss to represent the EG&S outcomes.

TABLE 3: 2022–2023 Trusts EG&S

ΗΑΒΙΤΑΤ	WETLANDS	WATER RETENTION	WOODLANDS	RIPARIAN	GRASSLANDS	TOTAL
Water Quality Ibs TP removed/yr	41,888.3	1,130.7	679.6	167.7	23,662.2	67,528.5
Water Quality Ibs TN removed/yr	418,882.5	10,362.2	475.7	1,448.7	76,985.3	508,154.4
Flood Storage acre-ft storage	3,858.1	682.4	87.6	89.4	1,207.5	5,925.0
Drought Storage acre-ft storage	15,432.2	1,072.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	16,504.9
Drought Recharge acre-ft recharge/yr	1,851.9	128.7	64.8	89.4	1,207.5	3,342.2
Biodiversity and Harvestable Wildlife acres of habitat	9,390.1	0.0	7,616.9	2,751.4	61,636.8	81,395.2
Carbon Sequestration tCO2e/year sequestered	20,587.3	0.0	35,327.1	7,324.0	29,757.1	92,995.4
Soil Health tSOC content/yr	17,919.1	0.0	8,334.7	3,725.2	38,062.3	68,041.3

GROW Trust Projects

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

Activities Supported by GROW

Water Retention

Water retention projects increase adaptive capacity for climate change landscape and ecosystem resiliency, including reducing peak flows and enhancing water supply opportunities for agricultural use. Projects including small dams, temporary backfloods, or on-farm water retention basins, can reduce flooding downstream, improve water quality, and provide local habitat benefits.

Wetland Conservation, Enhancement and Restoration

Wetlands store water, sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus and carbon, thereby contributing to watershed resilience and water quality, while providing numerous benefits related to biodiversity, habitat and climate change.

Buffer Establishment

Buffers are natural or engineered transitions between landscape features, including:

Shelterbelts: reduce wind-based soil erosion, create habitat, and increase yields.

Perennial cover buffers: between field edges and riparian areas provide protection from nutrients, chemicals and mechanical disturbance.

Eco-buffers: multiple rows of a variety of native local ecozone trees and shrubs.

Buffers and grassed waterways: permanent vegetation in low or highly sloped areas to channel water flow during runoff and heavy rain events.

Riparian Area Management

Riparian areas are the transition zone between waterbodies and surrounding uplands. Riparian areas provide riverbank and shoreline stabilization and erosion control, and capture sediments, pathogens, nutrients and pesticides from surface runoff before entering waterbodies.

Upland Area Management

Upland area management includes practices on annual cropland, pasture, hayland, wooded areas, and sensitive soils that influence watershed resilience and water quality. Encouraging management appropriate to soil types and topography will provide benefits to soils (reducing erosion, improving both water holding capacity and carbon sequestration), biodiversity and habitat.



Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District Project Preserves Old Oak Forest

The Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District (SRRWD) partnered with the GROW (GRowing Outcomes in Watersheds) Trust program to preserve 110 acres of old oak forest on private land near St. Anne. A 10 year agreement was signed with landowners Heather Dean and Philip Carter providing financial assistance to preserve the ecologically sensitive forest and protect it from future agricultural or residential development.

"This is a unique property," said Joey Pankiw, Manager of the SRRWD. "The forest is mostly big oak trees, many well over 100 years old. Some trees are so big you can't put your arms around them."

The protected forest areas are on ecologically sensitive river bottom land, on river lots that are bordered by the Seine River. Over 50 years ago the International Biological Program surveyed the property and recommended it be protected as an ecological reserve.

The objective of the SRRWD 'Upland Preservation Program' is to provide financial assistance to landowners to help preserve special areas under permanent cover, like native grasslands and forests. Current land values on the river lots exceed \$6,000 per acre. Adjacent lands have mostly been cleared and cropped and the area is very attractive to residential development.

Landowners Heather Dean and Philip Carter have owned the river lots for 45 years. "We want to protect and preserve the forest for the future," said Heather. "The upland habitat protection program with the Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District is absolutely wonderful. Participating in the program is a statement that the forest is important, and it offers an alternative to other development."

"There is a lot of Metis history and Manitoba heritage connected with the river lots," Philip said. "The forest offers tremendous biodiversity, with lots of big oak trees, poplar and ash. There are some huge cottonwoods, one with a 17 foot (5.2m) circumference. It's also home to many birds and animals, including deer and black bears." This was a first of its kind project for the Upper Seine River Subdistrict in the SRRWD. "The project was a perfect fit for our watershed plan to maintain the aesthetics and biodiversity of ecologically sensitive lands along the Seine River," said watershed technician Dani Gosselin.

"The GROW Trust funding has been a game changer," said Joey. "It has really helped the Watershed District. It is nice to offer programming that rewards landowners for providing ecological good and services that benefit the watershed."

RECIPIENT: Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District PROJECT: 2022 GROWing EG&S in the Seine Rat and Roseau Watershed District

> Landholders Heather Dean and Philip Carter Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District. Photo Credit Carter Family

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

Whitemud's GROW Program Supports Farmers and Tackles 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, GROW Trust 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 annually generates more than \$10 million dollars for program delivery. Manitoba's Watershed Districts deliver GROW programs across the province."

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

"Our GROW programming is designed to keep natural areas intact that are at risk of being converted to

RECIPIENT: Whitemud Watershed District PROJECT: Whitemud Watershed 2020–21 GROW Program FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$490,116 TOTAL BUDGET: \$1,903,651

cultivated cropland," said Stephanie Kryschuk, GROW program coordinator for the Whitemud Watershed. 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 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. Contact your local Watershed District for information.

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

Souris River Watershed District

"The Temporary Wetland program has proven to be very popular in the Souris River Watershed District" said Souris River Watershed District General Manager Dean Brooker.

With a combined total of over 1048 acres of Class 1 and 2 wetlands, and over 2000 acre-feet of water storage, the 2020 Water Retention and Wetland Conservation project secured 624 acres while the 2021 project secured 424 acres in the Souris River Watershed with a total of 600 basins.

1521 acres of upland area was secured under ten-year GROW agreements. A project highlight is the ten-year securement of 75 acres of restored native grass prairie.

Seven alternative watering systems were established to eliminate 3389 cattle from riparian areas. Additionally, 192 acres of riparian areas were secured through 10-year GROW agreements. Whitewater Lake had 153 acres restored as part of the Watershed District's Upland program.

The Souris River Watershed District constructed 8 water retention structures throughout the District resulting in the storage of 756 acre-feet of water, another great accomplishment for SRWD and the GROW program. PROJECTS: Water Retention & Wetland Conservation Programming in the Souris River Watershed- 2020 and Wetland Conservation and Restoration in the Souris River Watershed-2021 FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$989,442 TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$1,680,742



Assiniboine West Watershed District

Assiniboine West Watershed District (AWWD) engaged with over 200 watershed residents to increase the amount of local ecological goods and services provided.

"The amount of growth over the past four years has been unprecedented" said AWWD General Manager Ryan Canart. "For our municipality's conservation investments, AWWD has been able to provide an almost tenfold return in resource protections and increased watershed resilience. Through Trust funding we have been able to implement hundreds of practices to improve the health of our watershed ."

This includes wetland conservation and enhancement work on over 7000 basins and in protecting over 1020 acres of vulnerable Class I & II wetlands. In addition AWWD has enhanced an additional 156 acres of wetlands. The District developed seven small dams with 50 acre-feet of peak flow runoff storage, to further flood proof the region and downstream communities. PROJECT: Building A Resilient Green Manitoba- GROW Trust 2021 FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$1,139,754 TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$2,066,846

Tree projects have involved almost 15,000 trees, enhancing and conserving 70 acres of woodland, and establishing 9 acres of shelterbelts.

Grassland enhancement and restoration projects have impacted over 5700 acres with 2387 of those acres converted to permanent cover. In addition AWWD has partnered to establish 544 acres of multi-species cover crops to improve soil health and protect the watersheds' upland areas.

Through work with participating landholders AWWD has enhanced 696 riparian acres and installed 31 off-site watering systems, 40 km fencing, and seven livestock crossings.

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

Conservation Trust Projects

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

Conservation Trust Categories



HABITAT & WILDLIFE

Projects designed to improve habitat quality and quantity.



WATERSHEDS

Projects that have water quality and quantity (water retention, drought mitigation, etc.) as key EG&S outcomes.



SOIL HEALTH

Activities that build soil organic matter, decrease soil erosion, and increase carbon sequestration through perennial cover management, or other cropping practices that maximize the period of living roots in the soil on agricultural lands.



INNOVATION

On-the-ground pilot projects that are designed to focus on new approaches to the conservation of land, water, and wildlife. Deliverables must be tied to on-the-ground projects within the grant period.



CONSERVATION PLANNING

Large area planning initiatives in an eco-regional, basin, or multi-species scale.



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

Successful projects in the Connecting People to Nature category have included landscape enhancements, infrastructure enhancements, and in-person outdoor-based interpretive programming.



Manitoba Organic Alliance Builds Soil Fertility On Organic Farms

Manitoba's soils are being degraded by unsustainable farming practices. The result is reduced yields, lost farm income and less food production.

Prior to settlement, soil organic matter in Manitoba's agricultural soils was 10 to 15 percent. Today, most ag based soils contain 2 to 7 percent of soil organic matter.

"Soil health needs to be a priority," said David Lobb, a soil scientist at the University of Manitoba. His study showed Canadian farmers are losing \$3 billion a year in reduced yields. This issue affects all of society. "More needs to be done to properly assess the problem of lost soil fertility and promote methods to reverse it," Lobb said.

The Manitoba Organic Alliance (MOA) received \$100,000 from the Conservation Trust fund to promote new initiatives to improve soil health. Manitoba organic producers, 80% of whom grow field crops, are potential early adopters of regenerative and organic agricultural practices to build soil and store carbon.

The goals of the MOA project are to increase farmer knowledge and adoption of soil building practices in Manitoba's organic farms, increase the number of farmers implementing such practices, improve crop rotation complexity through various methods, and add livestock to organic systems to build soil health.

Elizabeth Karpinchick, Chairperson of MOA reported excellent project outcomes, especially with extension programs to increase farmer knowledge of organic farming and building soil health. Videos on organic farming were produced and are available on You Tube, and 3 podcast episodes of 'Grain On The Brain" were produced and are available as an ongoing resource.

MOA also developed a custom grazing exchange online platform in partnership with the Manitoba Forage and Grasslands Association to support livestock integration into cropping systems.

Marc and Lindsay Boulanger operate a certified organic crop and cattle farm west of Hartney with Marc's

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy RECIPIENT: Manitoba Organic Alliance PROJECT: Improving Soil Stewardship on Manitoba Organic Farms FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$100,000 TOTAL BUDGET: \$287,523

parents Gaston and Nicole, and brother Daniel and sisterin-law Aerin. Marc participated in the MOA cost shared incentive program, planting cover crops and installing cross fencing for rotational grazing.

"We use cover crops to add fertility to our soil and we use cattle to cycle the nutrients," said Marc. "We count on livestock to keep our soil fertility up, and to increase soil microbial density and organic matter by the addition of manure."

"It all comes back to restoring the biology of the soil," Marc relayed. "It is obvious which fields we have given back to this year with cover crops and manure to build soil fertility."

"We appreciate the cost shared programs offered by Manitoba Organic Alliance and the funding support from the Conservation Trust," said Marc. "Any funding that supports improved soil health and good farm management practices is helpful to farmers."



Grace Lake Boardwalk and Boreal Forest Trail

After five years of planning, design, and fundraising the Opasquia Trails committee were pleased to hold the grand opening for the Grace Lake Boardwalk and Boreal Trail this summer.

The floating boardwalk and boreal forest walking trail is located along the shores of Grace Lake, just east of The Pas. The trail was a labor of love and community cooperation for the Opasquia Trails committee, with representatives from Opaskwayak Cree Nation, the Town of The Pas, the R.M of Kelsey, and volunteers such as Alan McLauchlan. Many donors and partners, such as the Kelsey Watershed district who hosted the Trust funded project, also played a key role.

Alan, who worked on the Trust proposal to the Manitoba Habitat Conservancy said "the original goal of the project was to provide an easily accessible educational and recreational trail for everyone".

The community project is a total of 2.2 km long in summer with 0.6 km floating boardwalk and 1.6 km boreal forest trail. An additional km of trail can be used in the winter for snowshoeing and walking on the lake. The boardwalk is wheelchair accessible with plans to have the trail section accessible in 2024. The trail includes a lookout, a hotspot for bird watching and outdoor enthusiasts, complete with two sets of exceptional wildlife viewing binoculars.

The community has been very excited to see this project come together after some COVID related delays and even prior to the opening Opasquia Trails committee members were organizing interpretive events.

Participants in a canoe trip to the trailhead, interpretative guided walks and snowshoe trips with educational teachings have spotted many birds and diverse wildlife such as otter, fox muskrat,

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy RECIPETIENT: Kelsey Watershed District and Opasquia Trails Incorporated THE CONSERVATION TRUST FALL 2019 TRUST FUNDING : \$50,000

beaver, amphibians, and even some endangered and rare plant specimens such as the Monotropa uniflora, also known as Ghost Pipe, an Indigenous plant that may have historically been used for medicinal purposes for pain relief. The Saskatchewan River Delta is largest freshwater delta in North America and the Grace Lake trail provides the only drivable access to experience the Delta.

> Four generations using the new Grace Lake Boardwalk and Boreal Trail Photo Credit: Cheryl Antonio

Opasquia Trails committee members open the trail on July 14th 2023. Photo Credit: Alan McLauchlan

The trail has already attracted local families, school children, elders, seniors, and outdoor enthusiasts including visitors from across Manitoba, Canada and overseas. In addition to a strong social media presence featuring many visitor pictures, the Committee is partnering with Information Technology specialists using QR codes, along with a guest book, to capture visitor numbers. An estimated 14,000 visitors will walk the boardwalk this year. Trail visitor Cheryl Antonio's recent picture of four generations out enjoying the boardwalk perfectly captures the hopes and dreams of the Opasquia Trails committee come to life. The project has exceeded expectations in providing a place for families to get together and enjoy nature in Northern Manitoba.

Manitoba Habitat

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Indigenous Youth Storytelling Program

Launched in 2021, the Indigenous Youth Storytelling Program is a partnership between the Seven Oaks School Division's Mino Bimaadiziwin program (meaning "the good life" in Anishinaabemowin) and the Assiniboine Park Conservancy.

This program is youth-led in its creative outcomes. In 2021, youth developed and shared their own personal narratives in a way that honoured the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing around connection to the land and each other. Visitors accessed full story pieces including audio/video format through QR codes on trail signage throughout Assiniboine Park. The signage also allowed youth to be able to see their stories being shared physically, increasing the sense of value of their own stories and their own cultural knowledge at the Park. Whereas in 2023, the program moved from signage to a mural component, while the audio/video content remains accessible online.

In 2022, Carly, of Berens River First Nation, was one of 30 urban Indigenous youth participating in the Indigenous Youth Storytelling Program at Assiniboine Park

Conservancy. Through weekly summer visits to the park, connections with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Storytellers, workshops and traditional activities, Carly and other participants experienced many contemporary and traditional story telling mediums.

Carly said "One Thursday

Kevin Settee [filmmaker and

writer] came in. He shared

Assiniboine Park Conservancy-Indigenous Stories Trail about four documentaries. The first documentaries. River. And in the video, there was an elder speaking and the elder said that if you destroy the land around you, we won't survive as people. And that teaching was very important to me because think about where we are in this world. There's so many people that are just destroying the land so if you destroy all of it, what do you RECIPIENT: Assiniboine Park Conservancy THE CONSERVATION TRUST SPRING 2021/22 TRUST FUNDING : \$20,000

have left? And it's the land. So that's very important to me."

Throughout the program, themes have emerged including self-determination, autonomy, the impacts of colonialism, and reconciliation. The program will continue to evolve as directed by the youth participants.



The Indigenous Youth Storytelling Program (IYSP) practices reconciliation in action by building and bridging communities, encouraging visitors to think about their experiences in the park from a different perspective. IYSP is part of an environmental interpretive movement away from looking at nature solely as a natural resource to a living relationship including identity, experience, and storytelling. The project fosters mentoring relationships, encourages cross-cultural connections, and connection with all living beings on Treaty 1 Territory and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

IYSP was funded under the Conservation Trust's Connecting People to Nature category. Elder Mary Courchene, a mentor who helped guide the youth through this program, said, "This type of learning or this type of experiencing is extremely important because young people are developing and everything that they do is an experience. Especially something like this, where they've never had a chance to do something like this before. Most of them grew up in an urban setting, it's not the best way of life to experience living on the land. You know, when you're on the rez, at least you have land that you can communicate with, however you communicate. The youth that we had this past year were just so very, very keen. And the keenness in their movements and in the way that they communicate with each other was just a joy to see."

See <u>bit.ly/46winm1</u> for a documentary of the 2023 Youth Indigenous Youth Storytelling Program participants' experience.

Appendix A

Trust Outputs for Fiscal Year 2022–2023

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

Trust Outputs

		TRUST-FUNDED		MATCH-FUNDED			TOTAL			
	ACTIVITIES	Acres	Number of Basins	Acre Feet	Acres	Number of Basins	Acre Feet	Acres	Number of Basins	Acre Feet
_	Conserved	4,094.5	7,488.0	2,403.9	2,817.4	1,125.0	1,109.2	6,912.0	8,613	3,513
anc	Enhanced	2,454.5	15.0	15.9	205.5	_	-	2,660.0	15	16
Vet	Restored	64.1	21.0	-	_	_	-	64.1	21	-
1	Total	6,613.1	7,524.0	2,419.8	3,022.9	1,125.0	1,109.2	9,636.0	8,649	3,529
c	Conserved	1,511.7	-	-	547.0	-	-	2,058.7	-	-
aria	Enhanced	1,601.2	-	-	729.7	-	-	2,330.9	-	-
zipo	Restored	68.6	-	-	66.8	-	-	135.5	-	-
	Total	3,181.5	-	-	1,343.5	-	-	4,525.0	-	-
, <u>v</u>	Conserved	21,097.4	-	-	6,338.5	-	-	27,435.9	-	-
slar	Enhanced	25,487.7	-	-	7,907.0	-	-	33,394.7	-	-
Uplo	Restored	7,369.1	-	-	1,070.1	-	-	8,439.2	-	-
- 0	Total	53,954.1	-	-	15,315.7	-	-	69,269.8	-	-
1.73	Conserved	199.7	-	-	626.7	-	-	826.4	-	-
and-	Enhanced	6,575.1	-	-	291.4	-	-	6,866.5	-	-
	Restored	25.0	-	-	-	-	-	25.0	-	-
	Total	6,799.8	-	-	918.1	-	-	7,717.9	-	-

Note: Acres are double counted if an enhancement or restoration activity also includes conservation (securement) within the project period

	TRUST-FUNDED		MATCH-FUNDED			TOTAL				
	ACTIVITIES	Acres	Number of Basins	Acre Feet	Acres	Number of Basins	Acre Feet	Acres	Number of Basins	Acre Feet
د ۵	Temporary	13.5	5.5	99.5	77.3	15.0	238.8	90.8	20	338
ter ntior ture	Extended	8.5	5.0	39.5	41.2	9.0	36.4	49.7	14	76
Wa Retei Struc	Permanent	124.0	24.6	165.3	118.7	15.1	907.4	242.7	40	1,073
	Total	146	35	304	237	40	1,183	383	74	1,487

		TRUST-FUNDED		матсн	-FUNDED	TOTAL	
	ACTIVITIES	Acres	Number	Acres	Number	Acres	Number
	Nest Structures Installed	200.0	200.0	_	_	200	200
10	Cover Crop- Single Species	2,958.9	-	2,148.2	-	5,107	-
her put:	Cover Crop- Multi Species	10,330.2	-	1,946.7	-	12,277	-
Out	Alternative Water Sources	4,797.5	125.0	1,649.0	44.0	6,447	169
Ŭ	Cattle Excluded	_	9,222.0	_	6,872.0	-	16,094
	Livestock Crossing	1,412.3	31.0	2,400.0	23.0	3,812	54

		TRUST-FUNDED		ΜΑΤ	MATCH-FUNDED			TOTAL		
	ACTIVITIES	Acres	Length (km)	Width (km)	Acres	Length (km)	Width (km)	Acres	Length (km)	Width (km)
	Fencing	11,609.8	154.4	_	517.7	100.0	_	12,127.5	254.5	-
	Streambank Stabilized	3.5	1.0	0.1	8.3	0.5	-	11.8	1.5	0.1
	Bufferstrip Established	42.6	4.9	1.0	10.0	-	-	52.6	4.9	1.0
מושמוש	Bufferstrip Enhanced	16.2	1.4	0.4	-	-	-	16.2	1.4	0.4
5	New Pollinator Habitat	4.1	-	-	-	-	-	4.1	-	-
	Shelterbelt Established	20.8	47.6	0.2	73.4	41.1	1.7	94.2	88.7	1.9
	Shelterbelt Enhanced	_	_	0.0	195.2	79.0	0.0	195.2	79.0	0.0



Other

ACTIVITIES	TOTAL QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
Events	161	Number of events carried out (seminars, webinars, workshops, tours, etc.)
People engaged	20,283	Number of active participants at events
Communication materials produced	174	Number of pieces produced (Brochures, booklets, flyers, etc.)
Communication outreach	1,003,145	Number of people reached via media (print, radio, web, social media, etc.).
Producers with Conservation Contracts	465	Number of producers

		TRUST-FUNDED		матсн-	-FUNDED	TOTAL	
	ACTIVITIES	Quantity	Units	Quantity	Units	Quantity	Units
	Decision making tools developed	3	Number	0	Number	3	Number
	Square kilometers influenced by decision making tools	51,087	km²	0	km²	51,087	km²
	Nest structures enhanced	1,900	Number	0	Number	1,900	Number
ņ	Pasture pipeline installed	18.5	km	3	km	21.5	km
h	Trails enhanced/created	4.1	km	0.3	km	4.3	km
	Structures supported (boardwalks, canoe racks, docks, etc)	0	Number	0	Number	1	Number
	Trees planted	3,129	Number of trees	32,088	Number of trees	35,217	Number of trees
	Grazing Exchange Website	_	Number	_	Number	1	Number

Engagement

Additional

Appendix B

List of Funded Projects By Funding Category 2023

List of Funded Projects By Funding Category 2023

Granting Commitments

CONSERVATION TRUST 2023	\$2,786,654
GROW TRUST 2023	\$7,569,048
TOTAL	\$10,355,702

Conservation Trust Projects 2023

PROJECT CATEGORY	ORGANIZATION NAME	PROJECT NAME	TRUST FUNDED AMOUNT
	Association of Manitoba Community Pastures	Advancing Sustainable Range Management Objectives on Manitoba's Community Pastures	\$ 400,000.00
	Delta Waterfowl	Wetland conservation and enhancement in Manitoba to improve duck reproductive success - Spring 2024	\$ 93,400.00
	Ducks Unlimited Canada	Prairie Habitat Restoration in the Working Landscapes of Manitoba – Part 2	\$ 200,000.00
	Manitoba Beef & Forage Initiatives Inc.	Amplifying success in grassland restoration and enhancement: Connecting extension, agronomy, and incentive programs	\$ 400,000.00
	Manitoba Beef Producers	Grassland Enhancement Program 2023	\$ 400,000.00
Habitat and Wildlife	Pembina Valley Watershed District	Discovery Nature Sanctuary (DNS) Native Grass Reclamation: Planting and Establishment – Phase II	\$ 8,500.00
	Save Our Seine River Environment Inc.	Innovative Approaches to the Seine River Greenway Urban Restoration and Enhancement	\$ 100,000.00
	The Nature Conservancy of Canada	Improving grazing management systems and conserving wetland and forest habitat in the Interlake Region of Manitoba	\$ 100,000.00
	The Nature Conservancy of Canada	Enhancing Grazing Systems to Support Grassland Biodiversity	\$ 96,600.00
	The Nature Conservancy of Canada	Enhancement of Riparian Habitat on Souris River Tributaries (Graham Creek and Jackson Creek)	\$ 34,750.00
			¢ 4.077.050.00



Conservation Trust Projects 2023

PROJECT CATEGORY	ORGANIZATION NAME	PROJECT NAME	TRUST FUNDED AMOUNT	
Connecting People to Nature	Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Manitoba Chapter	CPAWS Manitoba Outdoor Learning Program – Beyond Winnipeg	\$	50,000.00
	Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre	Re-envisioning Oak Hammock	\$	17,500.00
	The Fort Whyte Foundation Inc. o/a FortWhyte Alive	Outdoor classroom to connect people with nature	\$	50,000.00
	The Nature Conservancy of Canada	Grasslands Education Program	\$	42,000.00
	West Interlake Watershed District	West Interlake Watershed Pollinator Gardens	\$	9,000.00
			\$	168,500.00
Innovation	Bird Studies Canada - Manitoba office	Implementation of the Bird-friendliness Index as an outcome based indicator of biodiversity	\$	85,000.00
			\$	85,000.00
Soil Health	Holistic Management Canada	2024 Regenerative Accelerator: Adoption of Farming Practices to Enhance Manitoba's Natural Infrastructure	\$	200,000.00
	Manitoba Organic Alliance	Improving soil stewardship on Manitoba farms	\$	199,904.00
			\$	399,904.00
Watersheds	Ducks Unlimited Canada	Prairie Habitat Restoration in the Working Landscapes of Manitoba – Part 1	\$	300,000.00
			\$	300,000.00



GROW Trust Projects 2023

PROJECT CATEGORY	ORGANIZATION NAME	PROJECT NAME	TRUST FUNDED AMOUNT	
GROW	Assiniboine West Watershed District	Water Management on the Agricultural Landscape	\$	2,197,515.00
	Central Assiniboine Watershed District	Farming the best - Conserving the rest within the Central Assiniboine Watershed District - 4	\$	672,500.00
	East Interlake Watershed District	GROW Conservation Auction 2023-24	\$	52,000.00
	North East Red Watershed District	NRWD GROW Program	\$	94,000.00
	Pembina Valley Watershed District	Pembina Plum Initiative #4	\$	989,500.00
	Redboine Watershed District	RBWD GROW Program 2023–25	\$	460,000.00
	Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District	GROWing EG&S in the Seine Rat and Roseau Watershed District 2023-2024	\$	328,500.00
	Souris River Watershed District	Soil and Water Programming in the Souris River Watershed District - GROW 4	\$	1,330,000.00
	Swan Lake Watershed District	Enhancing Swan Lake Watershed Health 2023	\$	528,400.00
	West Interlake Watershed District	Building Watershed Resiliency in the West Interlake Watershed District	\$	630,500.00
	Westlake Watershed District	2023 Westlake Watershed District Wildlife and Upland Enhancement Projects	\$	286,133.00
			\$	7,569,048.00



Appendix C

Project Summaries for Finalized Projects for Fiscal Year 2022 – 2023

The Conservation Trust Spring 2022

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Association of Manitoba Community Pastures
- PROJECT NAME: Land Stewardship through Grazing Management Improvements
- CATEGORY: Habitat and Wildlife
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$400,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$800,000
- FINAL MATCH: \$1,200,000

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

Enhancing the numerous ecological goods and services of Manitoba's prairie landscapes requires active management efforts. Thanks to the Conservation Trust and match support, the Association of Manitoba Community Pastures delivered a series of management improvements that enhanced over 17,000 acres of rangelands in 2022. New investments were directed to fencing, watering improvements, livestock crossings, and brush management controls. The project was supported by wildlife surveys at eight Community Pastures throughout Manitoba, with species-at-risk confirmed at all Pastures demonstrating the importance of grazing lands in providing key habitat.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Manitoba Chapter
- PROJECT NAME: Nature Club After School Environmental Science Program
- CATEGORY: Connecting People to Nature
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$35,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$70,000
- FINAL MATCH: \$105,000

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The goal of the After-School Environmental Science Program of CPAWS Manitoba's Nature Club is to encourage children to develop a connection with nature and spark their interest in the natural sciences and conservation. Modeled after the Mad Science program, the CPAWS Manitoba Nature Club strives to promote a passion for nature and environmental science by providing hands-on learning opportunities that inspire a lifelong appreciation for the environment.

Over the course of The Conservation Trust grant period, 221 students participated in this six-week outdoor enrichment program pilot, engaging in enjoyable, educational, and captivating activities across 13 schools in Manitoba. This translates to a total cumulative attendance at 78 workshops of 1,325 students or 1,989 additional hours of meaningful outside time gained for children in Manitoba!

Thanks to The Conservation Trust, we now have a robust and proven program that will last for years to come. This will remain a valuable resource for our outdoor education programing, providing countless opportunities for children to deepen their understanding of nature, and foster a lifelong connection to the environment.

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

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- ORGANIZATION NAME: Delta Waterfowl
- PROJECT NAME: Wetland conservation and enhancement in Manitoba to improve duck reproductive success Spring 2023
- CATEGORY: Habitat and Wildlife
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$89,705
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$263,699
- FINAL MATCH: \$353,404

Delta Waterfowl designed this project to conserve and enhance habitat for breeding waterfowl and other wetland dependent species. Funding from the Conservation Trust helped Delta Waterfowl enhance 2,100 wetland habitat acres through our Hen House program, including the installation of 200 new Hen Houses and enhancement or replacement of another 1,900 nest structures in Prairie Habitat Joint Venture Target Landscapes. Hen Houses remain the most effective method of producing additional mallards. Delta Waterfowl and our project partners also worked with private landowners to complete conservation easements and permanently protect 166 acres of wetland habitat and 288 acres of upland/ nesting habitat in Manitoba.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Manitoba Forage & Grassland Association
- PROJECT NAME: A new approach to restoring profitability, wildlife habitat and soil health-PHASE 3 (2022)
- CATEGORY: Habitat and Wildlife
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$239,800
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$679,884
- FINAL MATCH: \$919,684

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The tremendously successful partnership between the MB Forage and Grassland Association (MFGA) and Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) under the third and final phase of "A new approach to restoring profitability, wildlife habitat and soil health" successfully restored 4,002 acres of perennial forage and protected 1,427 wetland acres within planted fields in 2022. Thanks in part to the generous funding made available through the Trust, project partners promoted forage programming to 174,936 people in SW MB through extensive communication efforts, signing 72 landowner agreements, and securing all project acres under long term agreements (ie, 10 years) for the benefit of MB farmers, wildlife, and society.

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- ORGANIZATION NAME: Winnipeg Metropolitan Region
- PROJECT NAME: Building Resiliency in the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region
- CATEGORY: Conservation Planning
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$25,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$59,700
- FINAL MATCH: \$84,700

The Winnipeg Metropolitan Region (WMR) with its technical partner Strategic Systems Engineering completed a hydrographic analysis across Treaty 1 Territory's area of approximately 45,900 square kilometres. The hydrographic analysis consists of a geospatial dataset that identifies water flow paths and upstream flow areas that can inform resilient planning for green infrastructure water solutions and conservation. To demonstrate this utility, a geospatial dataset of wetland features across Treaty 1 Territory were combined with the hydrographic data to provide an indication of wetlands receiving upstream flow. Combining these two datasets in this way can help to inform prioritization decisions for green infrastructure and conservation investment with respect to water retention objectives, such as flood and drought mitigation. This data was visualized in the WMR's Resiliency Portal, a web-based mapping tool for resilient planning.



Conservation Trust Spring 2021

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Assiniboine Park Conservancy
- PROJECT NAME: Indigenous Youth Storytelling
- CATEGORY: Connecting People to Nature
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$20,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$50,000
- FINAL MATCH: \$70,000

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Indigenous Youth Storytelling Program at the Assiniboine Park Conservancy honours the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing and supports an environmental interpretive movement that reframes nature from natural resource to living relation through identity, experience, and storytelling. Over 2 years, this program has supported the development and sharing of 30 urban Indigenous Youths' personal narratives of their connection to the land and each other. This broad connection to the land theme is designed to accommodate narratives that speak to self-determination, autonomy, the impacts of colonialism, and reconciliation.

Through weekly visits to the park throughout the summer that included time with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and story tellers as well as facilitated workshops and traditional activities, youth participants were able to experience many different mediums of story telling including traditional and contemporary.

The physical presence of the youths' narratives, added to an increased sense of value of their own stories and in facilitation of their own cultural knowledge at APC. This was done through signage in the park that linked visitors to the park website for access to the full story pieces.

This program is an example of reconciliation in action by building and bridging communities, encouraging approximately 1,500 visitors to think about their experiences in the park from a different perspective. To form cross-cultural connections, and connection with this land and all living beings on Treaty 1 Territory and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

Elder Mary Courchene, a mentor that helped guide the youth through this program, said, "This type of learning or this type of experiencing is extremely important because young people are developing and everything that they do is an experience. Especially something like this, where they've never had a chance to do something like this before. Most of them grew up in an urban setting, it's not the best way of life to experience living on the land. You know, when you're on the rez, at least you have land that you can communicate with, however you communicate. The youth that we had this past year were just so very, very keen. And the keenness in their movements and in the way that they communicate with each other was just a joy to see."

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Ducks Unlimited Canada
- PROJECT NAME: Restoring Manitoba's Natural Landscapes Part 2
- CATEGORY: Habitat and Wildlife
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$300,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$935,243
- FINAL MATCH: \$1,235,243

As part of the Restoring Manitoba's Natural Landscapes – Part 2 project, Ducks Unlimited Canada used incentive-based, long-term programming to restore and conserve wetland and grassland habitat in the prairie pothole region of Manitoba. Accomplishments of this project include the restoration of 56 acres of wetland and 924 acres of upland, in addition to the conservation of 824 acres of wetlands and 1,264 acres of grasslands. The enhancement of 515 acres of intact grassland for improved wildlife cover through grazing management was also achieved. These achievements align with the priorities of the Conservation Trust by improving habitat quantity and quality for wildlife species, conserving biodiversity, and providing a suite of ecological goods and services to Manitobans like carbon sequestration, and improved water quality.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Manitoba Beef Producers
- PROJECT NAME: Grassland Enhancement Program
- CATEGORY: Habitat and Wildlife
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$300,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$942,535
- FINAL MATCH: \$1,242,535

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

Grasslands are vitally important habitats, providing essential ecological goods and services such as drought and flood resistance, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat and so much more. Many of Manitoba's remaining grassland habitats are working landscapes stewarded by cattle producers. With funding from the Conservation Trust, Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP) has worked with cattle producers to increase the health of grassland habitats and the species they support by implementing beneficial management practices (BMPs). Under this program, a total of 14,230 acres of grassland habitat has been enhanced by BMPs implemented by 43 landowners, including the installation of 119 km of fencing, installation of 55 watering systems, 13,927 m of pasture pipeline, 540 acres of shrub control mowing, 140 acres of perennial cover establishment and 26 acres of invasive species control. These BMPs improve grassland health through improved grazing practices and land management. BMPs delivered under this project are associated with 10-year securement agreements, which have resulted in 12,299 acres of grasslands secured.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Manitoba Organic Alliance
- PROJECT NAME: Improving soil stewardship on Manitoba organic farms
- CATEGORY: Soil Health
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$100,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$187,523
- FINAL MATCH: \$287,523

The Manitoba Organic Alliance (MOA) aimed to increase farmer knowledge and adoption of soil-building practices in Manitoba's organic farms, increase the number of farmers implementing such practices, and improve crop rotation complexity through various methods. MOA conducted a baseline survey and engaged an agronomist to design programming. Due to COVID-19, the in-person training events were shifted to virtual formats, such as virtual farm tours and podcasts. Over 2,000 people engaged in our training events, podcasts, and project outreach. MOA also developed a custom grazing exchange website in partnership with the Manitoba Forage & Grassland Association. In year 2, 14 organic producers were accepted into the cost-share program, resulting in the conversion of 3,461.5 acres of land to environmentally beneficial practices. Of these, 11 producers also participated in the agronomy cost-share program, and the agronomist consulted with them to help develop regenerative management plans. Overall, MOA's programming has helped to increase farmer knowledge and implementation of soil-building practices on Manitoba organic farms, as well as increase the number of farmers adopting these practices. In addition, MOA's efforts have helped to improve crop rotation complexity and promote more sustainable farming practices in Manitoba.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Mennonite Heritage Village
- PROJECT NAME: MHV Basin People with Nature
- CATEGORY: Habitat and Wildlife
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$50,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$122,850
- FINAL MATCH: \$172,850

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

With the funding of Conservation Trust, the consultation of Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District and the service of Steinbach & Area Garden Club the 450m length of our pond has now been stabilized. The shoreline is now permanently sloped, the seeded grass is growing well, some of the native pond plants are thriving as well as some dogwoods and willow trees. A 0.5-kilometer limestone trail with a 60-foot dock bridge that allows for complete circumnavigation of the pond has been installed and is working well. Every week, a dozen or more people are visiting the pond whereas before it was maybe one or two people.

In 2023, we will begin the education component in earnest. We have many school groups starting in May and through the summer. We plan to make this pond basin an option for their tours and provide activities to 100+ school children with it.



- ORGANIZATION NAME: Pembina Valley Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: Prairie Habitat Restoration Discovery Nature Sanctuary Winkler Manitoba
- CATEGORY: Habitat and Wildlife
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$6,666
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$20,170
- FINAL MATCH: \$26,836

The objective of work at the Discovery Nature Sanctuary in Winkler Manitoba in 2022 was to prepare for active native grass revegetation in 2023 on 6.77 acres of land. The major tasks that were undertaken in 2022 were; 1) weed control and 2) the purchase of native seed mixes to be seeded in 2023. Weed control/eradication is considered complete for the entire 6.77 acres to be restored to prairie vegetation. A sufficient amount of native seed was sourced to enable complete drill seeding over the project area. This Pembina Valley Watershed District-led project was a partnership with the Conservation Trust, the Discovery Nature Sanctuary Committee, City of Winkler, and, Ecologist Chris Penner of Prairie Restoration Services.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: The Nature Conservancy of Canada
- PROJECT NAME: Native Prairie and Wildlife Habitat
- CATEGORY: Restoration and Enhancement
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$140,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$644,000
- FINAL MATCH: \$784,000

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Nature Conservancy of Canada's (NCC) objective of this project was to restore and enhance native prairie and wildlife habitat in Manitoba's Aspen Parkland, Boreal Transition & Lake Manitoba Plain eco-regions. Through the support of the Conservation Trust, the Nature Conservancy of Canada enhanced and restored over 750 acres of grassland habitat. 400 acres of woody species encroachment was controlled on 6 properties, to improve the health of grassland habitat for species at risk. 350 acres of cultivation was seeded with a cover crop to prepare sites for future prairie restoration, and 50 previously cultivated acres were restored to native prairie. 4 km of unnecessary fencing was removed to improve connectivity for wildlife on NCC properties. To ensure land management continues to meet the needs of the species at risk that call our lands home, seven NCC properties were assessed for condition of habitat for 13 species at risk that occur on these lands. Finally, NCC secured additional lands on the Fort Ellice property and purchased native prairie seed to be used for prairie restoration on this property.

Conservation Trust Fall 2019

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Kelsey Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: Grace Lake Boardwalk and Boreal Forest Trail
- CATEGORY: Connecting People to Nature
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$500,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$429,096
- FINAL MATCH: \$479,096

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Grace Lake Boardwalk and Boreal Trail was an exciting project which offers both a floating boardwalk and boreal forest walking trail along the shores of Grace Lake, located just east of The Pas. The trail is a total of 2.2 km long with 0.6 km floating boardwalk and 1.6 km boreal forest trail. In addition, an extra 1km of trail can be used in the winter for snowshoeing/walking on the lake while it is frozen. The Opasquia Trails committee members have organized multiple events in the past 6 months which have been very successful and attractive to the community and community groups. The various events that have been offered in both summer and winter have included canoeing to the trailhead with an interpretative guided walk as well as guided snowshoe trips complete with educational teachings. These events alone have attracted well over 100 people to the trail as a start. The "lookout" which was built in 2019 has been used multiple times daily during the summer months. It is a hotspot for bird watching and outdoor enthusiasts complete with two sets of exceptional wildlife viewing binoculars. The free and open trail is being used daily by numerous people both in the winter and summer months already. The community is very excited to see this project come together and attract families, school children and groups, elderly, and outdoor enthusiasts.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Pembina Valley Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: Natural Infrastructure Systems Design in the Pembina Valley Watershed District using LiDAR
- CATEGORY: Innovation and Planning
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$25,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$62,500
- FINAL MATCH: \$87,500

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Pembina River Watershed is a unique, valuable, and threatened Manitoba ecosystem. Threats to it are increasing with climate change. The Pembina Valley Watershed District (PVWD) is applying newly available LiDAR data for the upstream Pembina Watershed to identify natural infrastructure networks based on distributed retention storage as a water security and climate adaptation strategy. The Upper Pembina Sub-District area is intensely cultivated, and a nutrient-loading hotspot but also has topography conducive to distributed water retention. Building a natural infrastructure network based on the retention storage will reduce flood and drought risk, improve water quality and improve habitat quantity and quality, all of which are prioritized in the Pembina IWMP. The natural infrastructure network design process utilized newly available LiDAR for the region and culvert inventory information to optimize retention site selection using Value for Money (VfM) and total economic valuation (TEV) principles.

Key project deliverables are:

- A natural infrastructure system investment plan for the PVWD optimized to demonstrate value for money (VfM) based on flood and drought risk minimization, and water quality and habitat benefit maximization
- Priority retention storage sites identified with key benefits monetized including expected water quality benefits (as kg of phosphorus and nitrogen as potential credits within a water quality trading system as envisioned in Manitoba's Climate and Green Plan.
- A GIS-based decision support system for the PVWD for their ongoing use in project planning and monitoring (including of GROW-funded projects).

An outcome of the project is an investment-ready IWMP implementation strategy that will improve municipal water supply, decrease eutrophication stress and improve aquatic habitat quality in the key ecological feature of the region, the Tri-Lakes chain (Pelican, Rock, Swan).

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Souris River Watershed District*
- PROJECT NAME: Optimized design of surface water retention in the East Souris River Watershed
- CATEGORY: Innovation and Planning
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$50,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$106,423
- FINAL MATCH: \$156,423

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

A large scale (3831km2) fully integrated groundwater- surface water model (HydroGeoSphere) was developed for the East Souris River Watershed in 2021 that was used to model changes in wetland/pothole water storage capacity, soil health/permeability, and field surface roughness. A series of scenarios for the 2009–2015-time interval was run to determine land management factors involving soil health, field surface conditions and wetland/pothole loss. It was found that with increased surface roughness on the landscape led to largest peak flow reduction in both the Elgin Creek and Medora Creek with peak flows reduced in 2014 flood simulation by 18% and 23% respectively. With reduced wetland/ pothole storage saw a 30% increase in the Elgin Creek and 43% increase in the Medora Creek with reduced surface roughness. A total of 16 scenarios were developed for Whitewater Lake, it was noted that the permeability of topsoil and the soil column had the greatest influence on lake levels. Increased soil column permeability and topsoil permeability reduced lake levels by 0.18 meters and 0.12 meters, respectively.

GROW Trust Spring 2022

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: GROWing EG&S in the Seine Rat and Roseau Watershed District
- CATEGORY: 2022-2023 GROW

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

This project provided preservation protection for 100 acres of old Oak Forest along the Seine River under a 10-year preservation contract in the Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District.

GROW Trust Spring 2021

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Assiniboine West Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: Building a resilient, green Manitoba
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$1,139,753
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$927,092
- FINAL MATCH: \$2,066,845

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

Assiniboine West Watershed District worked with watershed residents to increase the amount of ecological services provided from our watershed, by:

- Protecting 1008.5 acres of vulnerable Class I & II wetlands and developing an additional 49.7 acre-feet of peak flow runoff storage, to further flood proof our region and downstream communities.
- Converting 2386.5 acres to permanent cover, establishing 544 acres of cover crops, enhancing and conserving 70 acres of woodland, and installing 31 off-site water systems, to improve soil health and protect the watersheds' upland areas.



- ORGANIZATION NAME: Pembina Valley Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: 2021 Pembina Plum Initiative #2
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$648,298
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$1,152,771
- FINAL MATCH: \$1,801,069

In project #2 funded by GROW, Pembina Valley Watershed District was able to complete many projects, develop relationships with land-owners and continue to educate locals about the program.

We hired 2 new coordinators in this year as well as a new manager of the district.

Overall there was a 2 month span where the district had no coordinator employed, so after training coordinators on projects and processes, we signed up many producers and filled 83% of our GROW budget.

Some of the highlights of our application was that we were able to fill our entire soil health, water retention, erosion control and 98% of our fencing and watering projects.

We have engaged with approximately 200 farms over the two years and thousands of people through workshops, seminars, media and community engagement. We conserved over 300 acres of shallow wetlands, planted 20km of shelterbelts, funded over 1500 acres of cover crops and restricted thousands of livestock from riparian areas. We had nearly 20 erosion control or water retention enhancement projects as well.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Redboine Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: RBWD GROW Program Watershed Management in Action
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$350,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$702,026
- FINAL MATCH: \$1,059,026

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Redboine Watershed District, together with landowners & Municipalities located within the district, partnered to create and implement the Redboine Watershed District (RBWD) GROW program to help increase the resiliency of our watersheds to a changing climate and help increase the health of our soil, water, and watershed resources. The RBWD GROW program implemented a number of beneficial management projects including 31 GROW funded projects and numerous match funded projects that stored a total of 198 acre-feet of run-off in 14 retention areas, protected and enhanced 483.1 acres of wetlands, protected and enhanced 1,811.2 acres of upland area, and protected and enhanced 83 acres of riparian area.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Souris River Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: Wetland Conservation and Restoration in the Souris River Watershed
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$596,373
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$215,700
- FINAL MATCH: \$812,073

The 2021 Wetland Conservation and Restoration project achieved the securement of 424.3 acres of Class 1 and 2 wetlands in the Souris River Watershed; including a total of 600 basins with approximately 1273 acre feet of water storage.

Additionally, a total of 28.5 riparian acres were conserved throughout 10-year GROW agreements, as well as 1,105.6 acres conserved again through 10-year GROW agreements. 152.5 acres at Whitewater Lake were restored as part of the Watershed District's Upland program.

Three alternative watering systems were established to eliminate cattle from riparian areas, excluding 2,789 cattle.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Swan Lake Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: Streambank Stabilization and Enhanced Vegetated Buffer
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$61,200
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$329,500
- FINAL MATCH: \$390,700

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Swan Lake Watershed District's (SLWD) project achieved the stabilization and restoration of approximately 1.02 km of streambanks and 4.78 acres of riparian areas from erosion. The SLWD was also able to partner with eight (8) different landowners, including 2 partner Municipalities to complete these projects. Returning streambanks back to its natural function helps encourage riparian zones to filter nutrients and increase water holding capacity on land. In addition, 1 water retention structure was constructed that would retain 25 acre-feet of water; and offsite watering systems enhanced 15 acres of riparian areas, removed 500 livestock from watering in surface water, 3 km of fencing completed, and 800 acres of grasslands enhanced.

Watersheds and GROW Trusts 2020

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Central Assiniboine Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: Farming the Best Conserving the Rest within the Central Assiniboine Watershed District
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$435,738
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$1,083,693
- FINAL MATCH: \$1,519,431

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Central Assiniboine Watershed District through the Growing Outcomes in Watersheds (GROW) program looked at implementing projects that improved overall watershed health within the Central Assiniboine Lower Souris Integrated Watershed Management Plan. A few of the major objectives were to improve water quality, reduce peak flows, protect and restore natural areas. To achieve those objectives the following activities were implemented small dams, class 1 & 2 wetland protection, riparian and rotational fencing, restoring perennial cover. The projects implemented achieved a total of 4936.66 acres impacted while reducing peak flows by slowing or permanently storing 92 acre feet of water. All, but one was secured with 10 year contracts to ensure project longevity and success.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Northeast Red Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: NRWD GROW Program
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$24,794
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$57,424
- FINAL MATCH: \$82,218

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Northeast Red Watershed District was able to create a small water retention site. The project was completed in the Cooks-Devils Creek Watershed and addresses several items that were identified in the Cooks-Devils Creek Integrated Watershed Management Plan. The water retention project was completed in the Upper Cooks Creek Sub Watershed.

The project has the capability of storing 6 acre feet of water and reduces peak flows. The project manages a contributing drainage area of 87 acres.

The District was also able to restore and enhance 2 wetlands in the Cooks-Devils Creek Watershed. The District restored 20 acres of wetland which has the capability of storing 13 acre-feet of water. The projects manage a contributing drainage area of 85 acres.

The District also restored and conserved 50 acres of riparian area through a conservation contract. A total of 50 acres of buffer strips were established.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Pembina Valley Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: Pembina Valley Watershed District Pembina Plum Initiative
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$474,316
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$1,322,349
- FINAL MATCH: \$1,796,666

In Pembina Valley Watershed District's first Pembina Plum Initiative we were able to reach many producers and goals. We reached over 40,000 people through all different forms of media, and partnered with approximately 200 farms over the two years. Through these partnerships we were able to conserve 673 acres of at risk wetlands, restrict 4,000 cattle from riparian areas with 15 km of fencing, protect 120 riparian acres, create 112 acre-feet and have a space between 112 and acre-feet of water storage, plant 3,382 acres of cover crops and plant over 24 km of shelterbelts that help recharge aquifers. This funding has helped us better our relationships with local producers and has had a meaningful impact for years to come.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Souris River Watershed District*
- PROJECT NAME: Water Retention & Wetland Conservation Programming in the Souris River Watershed
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$393,069
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$475,600
- FINAL MATCH: \$868,669

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The 2020 Water Retention and Wetland Conservation project achieved the securement of 624 acres of Class 1 and 2 wetlands. The temporary wetland program has proven to be very popular in the Souris River Watershed District.

A total of 415 acres of upland area were secured under ten-year GROW agreements. One project to highlight is the securement of 75 acres of restored native grass prairie. The restoration took place in 2017 prior to GROW, but the landowner signed a ten-year agreement to conserve this landscape through a GROW agreement.

Four alternative watering systems were established to eliminate cattle from riparian areas, excluding 600 cattle.

Additionally, 135 acres of riparian areas were secured through 10-year GROW agreements.

The Souris River Watershed District constructed 8 water retention structures throughout the District resulting in the storage of 756 acre–feet of water, another great accomplishment for us and the GROW program.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Westlake Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: Integrated Watershed Management Plan Fulfillment Project
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$31,374
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$361,001
- FINAL MATCH: \$392,375

This project resulted in 750 acres seeded in the Upland Enhancement Forage Seed Program, 1 Riparian Area Enhancement (1.7 km Exclusion Fence) to exclude cattle from District Drain and Lake Manitoba, and 3 aerial surveys completed for watershed analysis and project planning for water retention projects.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Whitemud Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: Whitemud Watershed 2020-21 GROW Program
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$490,116
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$1,413,535
- FINAL MATCH: \$1,903,651

BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

Whitemud Watershed District (WWD) was able to achieve 154 acre-feet of water stored through various water storage projects throughout the district. Whitemud Watershed Local GROW Program was able to develop a cover crop program to help introduce producers to use cover crops in their crop rotations and develop a pasture management program for the district. The cover crop program was a huge success helping fund 7,348.5 acres of cover crops. Through the pasture program and other programming, WWD was able to assist producers with 30 km of fencing and contribute to 3 off-site watering systems on the landscape. These projects benefited 619 acres of grassland vegetation, 287.5 acres of wooded vegetation, 111 acres of wetlands and 107.1 acres of riparian. 5 acres of riparian was restored through bank stabilization. WWD was able to conserve 34.4 acres of temporary wetlands and conserve 460.5 acres of upland wooded vegetation through GROW and local programming. Additionally WWD was able to restore 527.5 acres of grassland and conserve 357.5 acres of native grassland. With local funding the district was able to put 374 acres into forage/tame grasses to increase permanent cover on the landscape to help improve watershed health. WWD tree program contributed to 20,515 trees planted over the years, established 29 km of shelterbelts and enhanced 79 km of shelterbelts. WWD developed 10 acres of grassed runways and 10 acres of perennial buffers were planted.

TOTAL PROJECTS: 27 TOTAL FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$6,545,984.55 TOTAL FINAL MATCH AMOUNT: \$13,501,314.99 TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$20,047,299.54

MHC Offices

Main Location

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RESTON

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TREHERNE

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