



HOMEGROWN CONSERVATION SINCE 1986

# The Conservation & GROW Trusts

# 2023/24

IMPACT REPORT



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# MHC continues to embrace 'Homegrown Conservation'

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy (MHC) has been focused on conserving, restoring and enhancing habitat in Manitoba since 1986, with the mission to realize enduring conservation benefits through investment in, and delivery of, initiatives that achieve productive natural landscapes and community well-being. Since its inception MHC has conserved 205,563 acres of habitat and successfully delivered a variety of conservation programs. MHC has increasingly facilitated conservation partnerships and voluntary, farm-friendly conservation initiatives that promote ecosystem health and biodiversity. MHC has leveraged this experience, as well as the input of many local, regional and national organizations, in the development of the grant programs for the Trusts.

## Executive Summary

This report outlines all granting commitments from the Trusts – the Conservation Trust, Growing Outcomes in Watersheds Trust (GROW) and Wetlands GROW Trust, and profiles the Ecological Goods and Services (EG&S) outcomes generated from previous years' investments (results to March 31, 2024). These and future outcomes are made possible by the Province of Manitoba's investment in conservation funding, through the perpetual investments placed with The Winnipeg Foundation. The three 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, soil health, and access to nature, ultimately delivering key ecological goods and services.

As of March 31, 2024, a total of \$50.5 million in granting commitments have been made to 208 conservation projects across Manitoba. This report aggregates outputs and estimated outcomes from 24 projects finalized in the 2023–24 Government Fiscal Year (GFY). As of March 31, 2024, there were an additional 83 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 estimates that the projects have sequestered 58,767 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, stored 42,436 pounds of phosphorus, provided 3,757 acre-feet of flood storage per event, and recharged 2,004 acre-feet of groundwater (additional outcomes are provided in [Appendix A](#)).



# History of the Trusts

The government of Manitoba established the Conservation Trust (CT) to provide long-term support for nature-based approaches to climate change. The Conservation Trust was formed in 2017 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 then formed the GROW Trust with a contribution of \$52 million to support the 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. 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 includes: establishment of granting programs (in partnership with the Provincial government for GROW Trusts), project selection, financial and project results monitoring, grant program evaluations, and reporting. These roles are established via a three-party agreement between Manitoba, The Winnipeg Foundation, and MHC.

In 2018, MHC began to build capacity to effectively carry out its role. Working from the purpose and objectives established for the Trusts, and consulting with several organizations, especially provincial government staff, MHC laid the basis for a strategic approach by developing CT granting categories, program criteria, and processes. The first award of funds occurred in 2019.

A keystone feature of the Trust process is the structured proposal review, which includes internal and external reviewers. Applications are forwarded to a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for review, evaluation and ranking. The TAC consists of experts in the fields of watershed planning and management, conservation program design/delivery, agriculture, wildlife, and soil and water conservation. Recommendations are then forwarded to MHC's Board of Directors for review and final approval.





# On the Horizon

The Trust Team is dedicated to continued refinement and evolution of the Trust processes. In 2024 MHC continued piloting its online reporting and data management platform with the GROW Trust recipients. The platform will continue to be refined, improved and expanded in the coming years and will eventually include reporting functionality for the Conservation Trust.

## The Trust Intakes

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

## The Conservation Trust

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 the Conservation Trust revenues and is open to local and provincial not-for-profit groups, Watershed Districts, and national not-for-profit organizations with a base of operations in Manitoba.

The Conservation Trust is a competitive fund, with successful projects aiming to achieve measurable on-the-ground change. Land and water conservation projects, especially those that provide multiple EG&S benefits are preferred, with the ultimate objective of building 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 significant, and where restoration of landscape resilience can have the most benefits for people. Trust guidelines are explained in detail at [mbhabitat.ca](http://mbhabitat.ca)



To 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 17](#).

The largest allocation of CT funds go to the first three categories, Watersheds, Habitat and Wildlife and Soil Health, as these categories are landscape-based and can deliver multiple ecological goods and services benefits 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 is oriented to projects which provide significant new opportunities to access nature and/or nature-based education, and interpretation activities for large audiences. These projects may be delivered in urban or high-use rural areas.

## GROW

The GROW Trust and the Wetlands GROW Trust, support the GROW program, which promotes the conservation of natural areas and land use changes that provide EG&S on agricultural land. The GROW intake receives revenues from all three Trusts (Conservation, GROW and Wetlands GROW Trusts). The program works with farmers to develop projects that work in partnership with 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.





# Trust EG&S Outcomes

Trust Outcomes								
EG&S Outcomes	CONSERVATION TRUST						GROW TRUST	
	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, 2024

## FUNDING COMMITMENTS FROM THE TRUSTS

From inception to March 31, 2024, a total of **\$50.5** million has been committed to projects through the Trusts.

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

**Table 2: Cumulative Trust Granting Summary**

	PRIOR YEARS	CURRENT YEAR	
Stage in Process	Conservation and GROW Trusts 2018 –2023	GROW Trust 2024	Conservation Trust 2024
<b>Letter of Interest (LOI)</b>			
Submitted	264	13	30
Denied	36	0	11
Approved	228	13	19
<b>Applications</b>			
Submitted	211	15	18
Denied	37	1	3
Approved	182	14	15
<b>Funding</b>			
Trust Funds	\$38,357,802 <sup>1</sup>	\$9,751,097	\$2,218,000
Match Funds	\$63,793,829	\$19,676,150	\$5,659,151
Match Ratio <sup>2</sup>	2.6:1	3.9:1	2.6:1

<sup>1</sup>Adjusted to reflect changes in granting commitments to date

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

**Total granting commitments to March 31, 2024:**

**\$50,506,899**



# Results to March 31, 2024

The summary below reports the outputs and outcomes from 24 Trust-funded projects finalized during the 2023-24 GFY. A comprehensive table of aggregated outputs for this reporting period may be found in Appendix A. For a list of the 24 projects, their summaries and grant amounts, see Appendix C.

## WETLAND ACRES

**3,046**

Conserved

**1,874**

Enhanced

**341**

Restored

## WATER RETENTION ACRE-FEET

**448**

Temporary

**186**

Extended

**62**

Permanent

## GRASSLAND / PERENNIAL COVER ACRES

**32,817**

Conserved

**30,814**

Enhanced

**7,589**

Restored

## RIPARIAN AREA ACRES

**1,919**

Conserved

**3,368**

Enhanced

**516**

Restored

## WOODED ACRES

**3,193**

Conserved

**3,707**

Enhanced

**13**

Restored

# 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 EG&S outcomes derived from conservation efforts 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 Outcome 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 calculates an estimate of the EG&S that the project provides.

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, 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: 2023–2024 Trusts EG&S

HABITAT	WETLANDS	WATER RETENTION	WOODLANDS	RIPARIAN	GRASSLANDS	TOTAL
<b>Water Quality</b> lbs TP removed/yr	22,955.8	244.4	360.4	250.7	18,624.9	42,436.1
<b>Water Quality</b> lbs TN removed/yr	229,557.7	2,240.1	252.3	2,165.1	60,587.8	294,803.0
<b>Flood Storage</b> acre-ft storage	2,114.3	649.2	45.2	133.1	815.7	3,757.4
<b>Drought Storage</b> acre-ft storage	8,457.2	62.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	8,519.5
<b>Drought Recharge</b> acre-ft recharge/yr	1,014.9	7.5	33.0	133.1	815.7	2,004.2
<b>Biodiversity and Harvestable Wildlife</b> acres of habitat	5,146.0	0.0	4,039.2	4,111.9	48,508.8	61,805.9
<b>Carbon Sequestration</b> tCO2e/year sequestered	11,282.3	0.0	18,838.3	11,088.4	17,557.4	58,766.5
<b>Soil Health</b> tSOC content/yr	9,820.1	0.0	4,490.2	5,578.5	32,423.6	52,312.3

# GROW Trust Projects



Photo Credit: Assiniboine West Watershed District

# Activities Supported by GROW

## Water Retention

Water retention projects increase landscape adaptive capacity for climate change and ecosystem resiliency, including reducing peak flows and enhancing water supply opportunities for agricultural use. Projects including small dams, temporary backflows, 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.



# GROW Trust Helps Keep Living Roots in The Soil

Healthy soils are essential for vibrant ecosystems, providing services like carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, and flood mitigation. Soil health is a priority for the GROW and Conservation Trusts, which support various initiatives across Watershed Districts to maintain permanent cover and living roots in the soil.

## Perennial Grassland Conservation

The GROW Trust aids Watershed Districts in conserving tame and native grasslands, whose extensive root systems enhance carbon storage and soil fertility while mitigating climate change. Grasslands also offer critical habitats for at-risk species, yet they face threats from agricultural conversion and unsustainable practices. With over 60% of North American grasslands lost, immediate action is necessary.

In the Souris River Watershed District, a 75-acre native prairie restoration project has thrived under the GROW program for a decade, showcasing the value of conserving grasslands for grazing, thanks to the resilience of native species.

## Grassland Restoration on Marginal Lands

Some Watershed Districts focus on converting marginal cropland into grasslands. Neil Zalluski from Central Assiniboine notes that rising soil salinity and erosion drive this shift, which reduces nutrient runoff and enhances soil health while saving landowners time and resources.

The Seine Rat Rosseau Watershed District also converts flood-prone cropland to perennial grasses. District Manager Joey Pankiw highlights the program's success, with 535 acres transformed, aligning with their Integrated Watershed Management Plan goals to reduce nutrient runoff and boost biodiversity.

## Cover Crops & Perennial Forage Rotation

The GROW program encourages integrating perennial forage and cover crops in cropland to improve soil health. Westlake Watershed District incentivizes landowners to establish forage stands and use polycropping. Coordinator Tatiana Sarigumba notes this initiative enhances soil resilience and livestock nutrition. "Soil is improved over time," Sarigumba said. "The land becomes more resilient to flooding and drought. The nutritional quality of livestock feed from cover crops is enhanced and so is the well-being of the animals."

Whitemud Watershed District promotes perennial forage rotations for at least four years. GROW Coordinator Stephanie Kryschuk observes that many landowners continue with perennial cover, helping to maintain pastureland and reduce erosion. "[It] helps with the water flow," Kryschuk notes. "The water's not rushing down those bare slopes so, we really just want to keep that cover on the land."



Photo Credit: Seine Rat Rosseau Watershed District



# Temporary Wetlands

Temporary wetlands – shallow depressions in the landscape where water pools for a short period of time after the winter snow melt and in large rain events – are a defining feature of the agricultural landscape in southwest Manitoba. Sometimes called ‘potholes,’ these wetlands serve important ecological functions such as mitigating flooding by reducing peak flows, improving water quality, recharging groundwater, sequestering carbon and enhancing biodiversity by providing critical habitat for breeding waterfowl and other wildlife in the early spring

Despite their high ecological value, temporary wetlands are disappearing from the landscape across North America, with crop production being a primary driver of this loss. “A lot of it is the economics of farming,” explains Neil Zalluski, the manager of the Central Assiniboine Watershed District, “a lot of [farmers are] trying to get every acre they can... It’s more productive if [wetlands] are drained.” Temporary wetlands are easy to drain, removing them helps farmers get their fields seeded earlier in the season and protects crops from excessive moisture during large rain events

The Manitoban government recognized the challenges temporary wetlands pose for agricultural production and created the Wetlands GROW Trust as a solution to keep wetlands on the landscape while alleviating some of the financial pressures they create for farmers. Farmers can sign a contract with their Watershed District, agreeing not to drain or fill temporary wetlands while receiving an incentive payment for every acre that is conserved on their property. In the Souris River Watershed District (SRWD) this program has conserved over 1,000 acres of temporary wetlands to date. Dean Brooker, the SRWD Manager, explains that the program has been popular in the district and believes it is a win-win for landowners. “As long as you don’t drain the wetlands, you can still seed it. Some people think it’s too good to be true.”

Jennifer Hunnie, the GROW Program Coordinator for the Redboine Watershed District, agrees that the temporary wetlands program provides mutual benefit for the watershed district and landowners, and emphasized the importance of finding the right activity for each landowner. “I love the GROW Funding Program,” she explains, “It works so well in being able to reach out to landowners

and communicate with them because if one area of the program doesn’t fit their needs, there’s still a plethora of other options that we can work on with them, there’s so much we can offer.”

With support from the Wetlands GROW Trust, Watershed Districts across Manitoba have conserved a total of 2,555 acres of temporary wetlands to date, which are secured under 10-year agreements with landowners. These wetlands store 7,926 tCO<sub>2</sub>e of carbon and remove 51,710 kg (114,000 lbs) of total nitrogen and 5,171 kg (11,400 lbs) of total phosphorus from downstream waterflows each year. These are just some of the important ecological goods and services that are produced by keeping temporary wetlands on agricultural land. The partnership between the Wetlands GROW Trust, Watershed Districts and landowners in Manitoba ensures that these critical landscape features will be conserved and protected for years to come.



# Conservation Trust Projects



Photo Credit: Lynnea Parker

# 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.



# Reviving the Red-headed Woodpecker

The Red-headed Woodpecker, renowned for its vibrant red head and striking black-and-white plumage, is facing critical threat. Since 1972, the bird's population has plummeted by 58%, putting this once-common species, at risk of further decline.

In 2022, Nature Manitoba took a significant step toward reversing this trend by securing funding from the Conservation Trust to implement crucial recovery strategies. "The main threat to this species is habitat loss and degradation," explains Marissa Berard, Program Coordinator for the Manitoba Important Bird Area Program with Nature Manitoba.

The Red-headed Woodpecker prefers grazed woodlots and treed cattle pastures with standing dead trees for nesting and open ground without shrub cover for foraging. To protect these birds, Nature Manitoba reached out to Manitoba's cattle producers, who manage the land that is vital for the woodpecker's survival.

"The goal of our project was to conduct outreach with the public, primarily through community presentations, to create awareness about the woodpeckers and to encourage conservation of grazed woodlot habitat," Berard says. "By sharing information and making a connection with landowners, we felt we could make a big difference in the habitat that is important to the woodpeckers."

The outreach included presentations in communities such as Inwood, Selkirk, St. Laurent, Langruth, Oak Lake, and Pipestone. Each of these areas is near Important Bird Areas (IBAs)—internationally recognized zones critical for maintaining bird populations, including those at risk. "[We targeted these regions because] we knew these IBA pasture landscape areas had high concentrations of Red-headed Woodpeckers," Berard notes.

The community response has been overwhelmingly positive. "The community presentations went really well," Berard reports. "People were engaged and excited to learn more. We felt we succeeded in creating awareness and building a connection with local landowners who

were keen to implement grazing management practices to support Red-headed Woodpeckers and other bird species at risk."

The support from the Conservation Trust was pivotal in enabling Nature Manitoba to reach out effectively to landowners across the province. "We are forever thankful to the landowners who are the stewards of avian species at risk," Berard adds.

For those interested in supporting conservation efforts, Nature Manitoba invites you to learn more about their initiatives and explore ways to get involved. Visit their website for more information and find out how you can contribute to the protection of the Red-headed Woodpecker and its habitat.

**RECIPIENT:** Nature Manitoba  
**PROJECT:** Redheaded Woodpecker Habitat Preservation

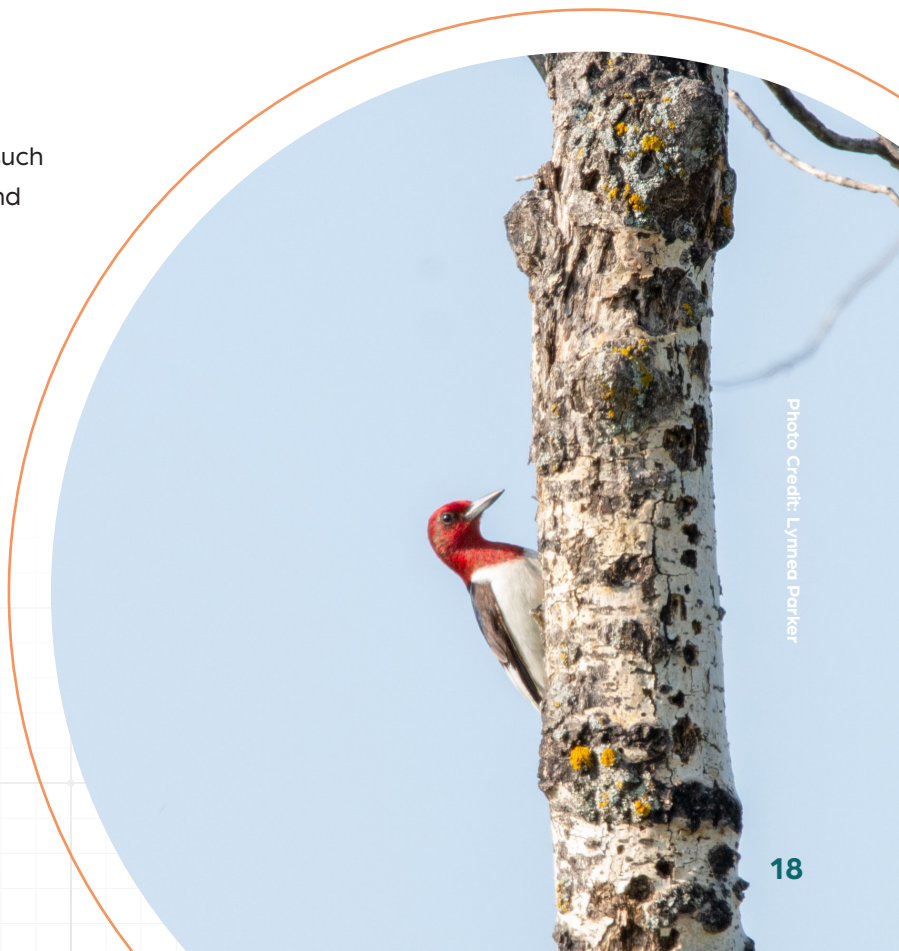


Photo Credit: Lynnea Parker



# Using the Bird Friendliness Index to Assess BMP Impacts

Canadian grasslands are one of the most threatened biomes on the planet due to their high rate of conversion to cropland. The birds that call these habitats home are equally at risk, with a 60% reduction in grassland birds noted over the last 50 years. Through funding provided by the Conservation Trust, Birds Canada launched a two-year project aimed at slowing the decline of grassland neotropical migratory bird species that depend on these habitats by adapting their Bird Friendliness Index – a score-based biodiversity indicator – to the Manitoba landscape.

With much of the remaining grasslands existing on private lands, a key to reversing this trend lies in assessing the impacts of beneficial management practices (BMPs), engaging landowners in conversation around these BMPs, and incentivizing the conservation of these crucial habitats. For example, the Baird's Sparrow, an endangered grassland bird in southern Manitoba, generally avoids nesting in areas of shortgrass, such as heavily grazed pastures, and cropland. Additionally, breeding pairs prefer to establish territories in areas dominated by native mixedgrass prairie. With research showing higher nesting success in grassland patches of 155 acres (63 hectares) and larger, highlighting the importance of conserving large contiguous plots of habitat.

With the support of the Conservation Trust, Birds Canada was able to adapt their BFI and gain insight into the impacts of BMPs, and how well grassland birds are faring in the province.

Over the course of the two-year project, Birds Canada sampled an impressive 111,990 acres of land in the agricultural working landscape of Manitoba, revealing

above-average bird community numbers via the BFI. This success not only demonstrates the high conservation value of these lands (with most of the properties being part of conservation efforts through Manitoba Habitat Conservancy or otherwise) but also proves that the BFI is a valuable tool for guiding recommendations on best management practices.

The success of this project is evidence of what can be achieved when dedicated organizations and funders come together. However, the work doesn't stop here. Birds Canada is continuing to refine the BFI and explore ways to further integrate the tool into conservation strategies and incentives for landowners. Birds Canada

has already received funding from the Conservation Trust for another project that will help ensure these vital habitats continue to be a haven for many bird species for years to come.

"The support from the trust has really been invaluable to advancing this work – without that support, we wouldn't have been able to make nearly as much progress in developing the BFI in Manitoba," said Cook.

"We're really grateful for the data we got, and that they supported the work and saw the value in it."



**RECIPIENT:** Birds Canada

**PROJECT:** Using the Bird-friendliness Index to assess impacts of Best Management Practices for grasslands

# CPAWS Outdoor Learning Program

Spending time in nature provides a multitude of benefits to children, ranging from improved social, emotional, and physical health to inspiring stronger connections to the natural world. Carly Gray and David Swan, from the Manitoba chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), know firsthand how impactful these experiences in nature can be on the attitudes, behaviours, and interests of children. CPAWS coordinated environmental education programming for 6,493 children in 2023/2024, with support from the Conservation Trust (CT). Programs included outdoor learning workshops, after-school programs and activities focused on getting kids outside, engaging in hands-on, placed-based learning.

This year, the CPAWS Outdoor Learning Program expanded to serve children in rural areas. “[Rural schools] don’t get access to the same kind of programming that the city gets, the same kind of professional development, the same kind of support,” Gray explains. After turning down requests to offer programming outside of the city due to a lack of capacity in the past, this year CPAWS was able to create significant program expansion, enabled in part by CT funding.

The program also included facilitating field trips for urban and rural students to places such as Bird’s Hill Park. For some students, this was one of their few opportunities to be outside of an urban setting. “I brought them to the Chickadee Trail... And they saw a forest for the first time,” Gray recounts, “They were saying, ‘I want to bring my mom here. I want to bring my dad here. This is the coolest thing ever, to see a forest.’ And [that is] because they’d only ever really been in a city, in maybe a park, but not like Bird’s Hill Park where you really see everything living in front of you.”



RECIPIENT: CPAWS

PROJECT: CPAWS Manitoba Outdoor Learning Program – Beyond Winnipeg

One of the benefits of CPAWS’ programs, which also include outdoor education training for teachers, is the opportunity they provide to integrate experiential, nature-based experiences into classroom learning. Gray explains that students and teachers alike are inspired when they return to the classroom, using what they learned in the program as a springboard for further inquiry into topics related to wildlife, ecosystems, and environmental protection.

This is affirmed by Chantelle Gagnon, a grade 2 teacher at Riverbend School who shares, “The learning integrated into our adventure at Birds Hill Park has carried forward into our classroom, this being themes of land acknowledgments, living on the land, animal and plant species, as well as [place names] and history of the land around us.”

The more familiar young people are with the natural world around them, the more likely they are to understand their interconnection with nature and care about its protection. Gray emphasizes that this relational, experiential, and land-based approach to teaching children is derived from Indigenous pedagogy and science, which children may not have exposure to in a traditional classroom setting. As she explains, “We’re positively reinforcing how to be respectful with nature, how to live in harmony with it, how to see themselves as part of the web of life, not separate from it.”

These experiences can last a lifetime and build a long-term appreciation of nature, says Swan. “[Enjoyment of the outdoors is] not a given for people. It happened because they had a couple of experiences early on. And then [they] want that forever. Sometimes that can be one or two impactful experiences. And that’s it. It doesn’t necessarily have to be an entire childhood out in the woods. It can just be a day camp, or the right field trip, or the right educator that helps you get there.”

# Trust Partnership Spotlight: NCC

Since its inception, the Conservation Trust has partnered with Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), investing almost \$1.5M into 17 conservation projects to date. These projects have spanned the Trust funding categories of Habitat and Wildlife, Innovation, Conservation Planning and Connecting People with Nature, highlighting the diversity of work that NCC is undertaking and its complementary goals of both protecting habitat and increasing public awareness about the importance of conservation in the face of rapid biodiversity loss and climate change.

NCC began working in Manitoba in 1977. Since then, the organization has conserved 33,700 hectares in the province, preserving critical habitat and protecting species at risk. This work is accomplished by protecting, restoring and sustainably managing large-scale landscapes, with NCC developing management plans for every property under its stewardship.

Lisa Maskus, NCC's Regional Program Coordinator in Manitoba, points to one project funded by the Trust as an example of NCC's innovative approach: an initiative aimed at increasing native seed production in Manitoba. "Right now, a lot of native seed isn't produced in the province, it's actually produced elsewhere," she explains.

"A focus has been to determine that there is a user market for native seed in Manitoba and if there are producers to meet the need. A market needs survey assessment has recently been completed by users and producers to determine the need and key species."

The ongoing project aims to build the capacity and scalability of the local native seed market to stabilize variability in the supply, quality, and prices of native seeds for large-scale restoration projects.

Maskus also highlights the important role the Trust has played in building and maintaining partnerships that are essential to the collaborative spirit of NCC. Funding from the Trust helps bring partners on board, strengthening projects. "There's not a lot of environmental funding out there specific to Manitoba. So, [the Trust] allows us to continue those relationships," says Maskus.

"It's allowed us to build relationships, especially under the connecting to nature [category]. But it's also allowed us to leverage funding for partners. We're able to do some of these projects and bring in partners who might not otherwise receive the funding."

Another positive aspect of the partnership between the Conservation Trust and NCC is the Trusts' understanding of the need to support activities that are not always widely recognized as being part of conservation work. For example, property management plans, a cornerstone of NCC's work as a steward of natural ecological systems, often include grazing cattle. As Maskus explains, "Cattle are used to mimic what bison used to do for grasslands, maintaining a disturbance regime that ensures prairie plants and animals adapted to these processes flourish... NCC works really closely with Manitoba producers in both grazing and haying and some of that work isn't necessarily recognized as much but it's really important to our stewardship work."

Grazing cattle has material costs, such as fencing, watering systems and land assessments to determine when and for how long cattle are kept on a property, all of which have all been supported by the Conservation Trust over the years that it has partnered with NCC. "The Trust has been a great partner and a great resource for us in the province."

The urgent need to conserve and protect Manitoba's biodiversity while mitigating the impacts of climate change remains critical. Through partnerships with organizations like NCC, the Conservation Trust strives to lead in addressing these important issues.



# Appendix A

## Trust Outputs for Fiscal Year 2023–2024



Photo Credit: Ducks Unlimited



# Trust Outputs

	ACTIVITIES	TRUST-FUNDED		MATCH-FUNDED		TOTAL	
		Acres		Acres		Acres	
Wetland	Conserved	902.5		2,143.5		3,046.0	
	Enhanced	1,406.4		467.8		1,874.2	
	Restored	341.4		467.8		341.4	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,650.2</b>		<b>2,611.3</b>		<b>5,261.5</b>	
Riparian	Conserved	1,224.1		695.0		1,919.1	
	Enhanced	2,611.7		695.0		3,368.2	
	Restored	261.6		254.0		515.6	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,097.5</b>		<b>1,705.5</b>		<b>5,803.0</b>	
Upland-Grassland	Conserved	25,465.3		7,351.3		32,816.6	
	Enhanced	23,759.8		7,054.0		30,813.8	
	Restored	7,589.2		-		7,589.2	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>56,814.3</b>		<b>14,405.3</b>		<b>71,219.6</b>	
Upland-Wooded	Conserved	3,193.4		-		3,193.4	
	Enhanced	3,707.2		-		3,707.2	
	Restored	5.0		7.7		12.7	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,905.7</b>		<b>7.7</b>		<b>6,913.4</b>	

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

	ACTIVITIES	TRUST-FUNDED			MATCH-FUNDED			TOTAL		
		Acres	Acre-feet	Number of Basins	Acres	Acre-feet	Number of Basins	Acres	Acre-feet	Number of Basins
Water Retention Structures	Temporary	215.2	211.6	4.4	247.8	236.0	3.0	463.0	447.6	7.4
	Extended	2.0	31.0	1.0	116.8	155.0	1.5	118.8	186.0	2.5
	Permanent	5.1	50.3	3.6	3.0	12.0	1.5	8.1	62.3	5.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>222.3</b>	<b>292.9</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>367.6</b>	<b>403.0</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>589.9</b>	<b>695.9</b>	<b>15.0</b>

	TRUST-FUNDED		MATCH-FUNDED		TOTAL		
	Acres	Number	Acres	Number	Acres	Number	
Other Outputs	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>						
	Nest Structures Installed	350.0	350	1.0	1	<b>351.0</b>	<b>351</b>
	Alternative Water Sources	7,897.3	84	4,910.0	60	<b>12,807.3</b>	<b>144</b>
	Cattle Excluded	-	2,340	-	2,275	<b>-</b>	<b>4,615</b>
	Livestock Crossing	32.0	1	9.0	9	<b>41.0</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>						
	Fencing	Acres	Length	Acres	Length	Acres	Length
	Fencing	11,431.9	182.0	3,660.0	74.5	<b>15,091.9</b>	<b>256.5</b>
	Streambank Stabilized	54.0	2.6	0.5	0.1	<b>54.5</b>	<b>2.7</b>
	Shelterbelt Established	32.9	21.8	14.8	9.9	<b>47.7</b>	<b>31.7</b>
Shelterbelt Enhanced	0.2	0.1	6.4	4.3	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.4</b>	

	TRUST-FUNDED		MATCH-FUNDED		TOTAL	
	Acres		Acres		Acres	
Other Outputs	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>					
	Cover Crop- Multi Species	2,965.4		3,923.0		6,888.4
	Bufferstrip Established	149.3		133.0		282.3
	Bufferstrip Enhanced	46.5		-		46.5
	New Pollinator Habitat	8.0		-		8.0
	Enhanced Pollinator Habitat	1.8		-		1.8

	TOTAL QUANTITY		DESCRIPTION	
Engagement	Events	418	Number of events carried out (seminars, webinars, workshops, tours, etc)	
	People Engaged	21,606	Number of active participants at events	
	Communication materials produced	616	Number of pieces produced (Brochures, booklets, flyers, etc)	
	Communication Outreach	888,102	Number of people reached via media (print, radio, web, social media, etc).	
	Producers with Conservation Contracts	432	Number of producers with conservation contracts	
	Producers with Conservation Contracts with EFPs*	34	Number of producers under contracts with Environmental Farm Plan receiving annual incentive payments	
	Producers with Conservation Contracts with EFPs receiving annual incentive payments*	14	Number of Producers under contracts with Environmental Farm Plan receiving establishment and/or annual incentive payments	
	Partnerships Established	46	Number of partnerships established	

\*Reported only by GROW projects



		TRUST-FUNDED	MATCH-FUNDED	TOTAL	
ACTIVITIES		Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	Units
Additional Outputs	Ecological Health Monitoring	22,851	1,905	24,756	Acres
	Soil Health Projects (Nitrogen Management)	-	96,129	96,129	Acres
	Birds Survey Area	-	-	111,900	Acres
	Decision making tools developed	-	-	1	Number
	Trees planted	30,151	4,680	34,831	Number
	Nest structures enhanced	1,000	400	1,400	Number
	Pasture pipeline installed	10.8	1.6	12.4	km
	Trails enhanced/created	-	0.5	0.5	km
	Interpretive sites created	1	-	1	Number
	Interpretive signs installed	5	-	5	Number

# Appendix B

## List of Projects Funded By Funding Category – 2024



# List of Funded Projects By Funding Category 2024

## Granting Commitments

CONSERVATION TRUST 2024	\$ 2,218,000
GROW TRUST 2024	\$ 9,751,097
TOTAL	\$ 11,969,097

## Conservation Trust Projects 2024

PROJECT CATEGORY	ORGANIZATION NAME	PROJECT NAME	TRUST FUNDED AMOUNT
Habitat and Wildlife	Association of Manitoba Community Pastures	Grazing Management for Prairie Rangeland Health and Diversity	\$ 275,000.00
	Delta Waterfowl	Wetland conservation and enhancement in Manitoba to improve duck reproductive success – Spring 2025	\$ 45,450.00
	Ducks Unlimited Canada	Habitat Restoration and Enhancement in Manitoba's Prairie Pothole Region – Part 2	\$ 225,000.00
	Manitoba Beef & Forage Initiatives Inc.	Amplifying success in grassland restoration and enhancement: Connecting extension, agronomy, and incentive programs – Phase 2	\$ 332,300.00
	Manitoba Beef Producers	Grassland Enhancement Project 2024	\$ 400,000.00
	Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve	Vermillion Park Revitalization	\$ 35,000.00
	The Nature Conservancy of Canada	An integrated approach to restoring mixed-grass prairie on Yellow Quill Prairie	\$ 135,000.00
	The Nature Conservancy of Canada	2024 – Enhancing Grazing Systems to Support Grassland Biodiversity	\$ 100,000.00
			<b>\$ 1,547,750.00</b>



## Conservation Trust Projects 2024

PROJECT CATEGORY	ORGANIZATION NAME	PROJECT NAME	TRUST FUNDED AMOUNT
Connecting People to Nature	Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - Manitoba Chapter	Expanding Access to Outdoor Education with CPAWS Manitoba	\$ 50,000.00
	Mennonite Heritage Village	MHV Watershed Advancement	\$ 32,000.00
	The Nature Conservancy of Canada	Community Knowledge Exchange	\$ 50,000.00
			<b>\$ 132,000.00</b>
Conservation Planning	The Nature Conservancy of Canada	Interlake Habitat Protection and Planning	\$ 25,000.00
			<b>\$ 25,000.00</b>
Innovation	Watersheds Canada	The Natural Edge - Shoreline Naturalizations along the Boyne River	\$ 38,250.00
			<b>\$ 38,250.00</b>
Soil Health	Holistic Management Canada	2025 Regenerative Accelerator: Adoption of Farming Practices to Enhance Manitoba's Natural Infrastructure	\$ 200,000.00
			<b>\$ 200,000.00</b>
Watersheds	Ducks Unlimited Canada	Habitat Restoration and Enhancement in Manitoba's Prairie Pothole Region - Part 1	\$ 275,000.00
			<b>\$ 275,000.00</b>

## GROW Trust Projects 2024

WATERSHED DISTRICT	PROJECT NAME	TRUST FUNDED AMOUNT
Assiniboine West	Striving for Watershed Resilience 2024	\$ 2,434,002.00
Assiniboine West	Rolling River Watershed Modeling Project	\$ 25,000.00
Central Assiniboine	Farming the Best - Conserving the rest within Central Assiniboine Watershed District - 5	\$ 627,500.00
East Interlake	GROW Conservation Auction 2024-25	\$ 515,756.00
Inter-Mountain	IMWD GROW Program	\$ 129,500.00
NorthEast Red	NRWD GROW Program	\$ 133,333.00
Pembina Valley	2024 Pembina Plum Initiative #5	\$ 1,310,000.00
Redboine	RBWD GROW Program 2024-26	\$ 520,000.00
Seine Rat Roseau	GROWing EG&S in Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District 2024-2026	\$ 376,000.00
Souris River	Soil and Water Conservation Programming in the Souris River Watershed - GROW 5	\$ 1,370,000.00
Swan Lake	Enhancing Swan Lake Watershed Health 2024	\$ 541,084.00
West Interlake	Building watershed resiliency: A Sustainable path	\$ 777,302.00
Westlake	2024-2026 Westlake Watershed District's Upland Restoration, Riparian Enhancement, and Wetland Conservation Projects	\$ 294,620.00
Whitemud	Project D: 2024-2026	\$ 697,000.00
		<b>\$ 9,751,097.00</b>

# Appendix C

## Finalized Project Summaries for Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024





# Conservation Trust

- ORGANIZATION NAME: [Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Manitoba Chapter](#)
- PROJECT NAME: [CPAWS Manitoba Outdoor Learning Program – Beyond Winnipeg](#)
- CATEGORY: [Connecting People to Nature](#)
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: [\\$50,000](#)
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: [\\$176,956](#)
- FINAL MATCH: [\\$126,956](#)

## BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The CPAWS Manitoba Outdoor Learning Program gets kids outside and teaches them to appreciate the wonders of nature through games and activities that spark curiosity and connection to nature. Thanks to the support of the Conservation Trust, CPAWS was able to surpass their original goal, and deliver a total of 311 programs, events, workshops, and activities to children and students. This equates to 7,035 cumulative extra hours spent outdoors. What's more, this program reached an estimated 80,298 people through print and internet media.

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- ORGANIZATION NAME: [Delta Waterfowl](#)
  - PROJECT NAME: [Wetland conservation and enhancement in Manitoba to improve duck reproductive success](#)
  - CATEGORY: [Habitat and Wildlife](#)
  - FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: [\\$93,400](#)
  - TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: [\\$442,925](#)
  - FINAL MATCH: [\\$349,525](#)

## BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

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 1,750 wetland habitat acres through our Hen House program, including the installation of 350 new and replacement Hen Houses and enhancement and/or maintenance of another 1,400 nest structures: totaling 1,750 Hen Houses in the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture Target Landscapes. Hen Houses remain the most effective method of adding mallards to the population by protecting nesting hens during the incubation period. Delta Waterfowl and our project partners also worked with private landowners to complete conservation easements and permanently protect 292 acres of wetland habitat and 302 acres of upland/ nesting habitat in Manitoba; totaling 594 acres.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: **Manitoba Beef & Forage Initiatives Inc.**
- PROJECT NAME: **Amplifying success in grassland restoration and enhancement: Connecting extension, agronomy, and incentive programs**
- CATEGORY: **Habitat and Wildlife**
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: **\$400,000**
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: **\$1,349,641**
- FINAL MATCH: **\$949,641**

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The inaugural year of the partnership between Manitoba Beef & Forage Initiatives (MBFI) and Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) proved successful, impactful, and beneficial to project partners, and Manitoba farmers. Thanks in part to the generous funding made available through the Trust, project partners promoted forage programming to an audience of 143,138 (program ads) in Southwest Manitoba, signed 76 landowner agreements, restoring 4,119.38 acres of perennial forage and enhancing 313.03 acres of existing tame grasslands via sod seeding. All program acres are secured under long term agreements (i.e. 10 years) for the benefit of Manitoba farmers, wildlife, and society.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: **Ducks Unlimited Canada**
- PROJECT NAME: **Habitat Restoration and Enhancement in Manitoba’s Working Landscapes – Part 2**
- CATEGORY: **Habitat and Wildlife**
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: **\$400,000**
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: **\$1,934,851**
- FINAL MATCH: **\$1,534,851**

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The Habitat Restoration and Enhancement in Manitoba’s Working Landscapes – Part 2 project conserves, restores, and enhances wetland and grassland habitat in the prairie pothole region of Manitoba by utilizing incentive-based, long-term programming with landowners. Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) with support of the Conservation Trust have successfully restored 107 acres of wetland and 1,148 acres of grassland as part of this project. Combined Trust and match funding have also conserved 684 acres of wetlands and 2,346 acres of grassland through termed and perpetual agreements with landowners. Enhancement activities to improve cover for wildlife and nesting waterfowl were also implemented on 691 acres of intact grasslands as part of this project. Project accomplishments align with the priorities of the Conservation Trust, such as improving habitat quantity and quality for wildlife species, conserving biodiversity, improving water quality, and providing numerous ecological goods and services to Manitobans.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: **Ducks Unlimited Canada**
- PROJECT NAME: **Habitat Restoration and Enhancement in Manitoba’s Working Landscapes – Part 1**
- CATEGORY: **Watersheds**
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: **\$350,000**
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: **\$1,415,928**
- FINAL MATCH: **\$1,065,928**

## BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

With the use of long-term, incentive-based partnerships with landowners, Ducks Unlimited Canada with the support of the Conservation Trust successfully restored, conserved, and enhanced wetland and grassland habitat in the prairie pothole region of Manitoba. Results of the Habitat Restoration and Enhancement in Manitoba's Working Landscape - Part 1 project include 234 acres of wetland restored, 86 acres of wetland conserved, 1,082 acres of grassland restored, 964.6 acres of grassland conserved, and 574 acres of grassland enhanced. Leveraging match funding, DUC also conserved an additional 621 acres of wetland and 1,334 acres of grassland perpetually as part of a conservation easement. The project outputs align with the priorities of the Conservation Trust, which include improving water quality, mitigating the effects of flooding and drought, and enhanced carbon sequestration in the province of Manitoba.

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- **ORGANIZATION NAME:** [Holistic Management Canada](#)
- **PROJECT NAME:** [Regenerative Accelerator: Adoption of Farming Practices to Enhance Manitoba's Natural Infrastructure](#)
- **CATEGORY:** [Soil Health](#)
- **FINAL GRANT AMOUNT:** [\\$200,000](#)
- **TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT:** [\\$602,500](#)
- **FINAL MATCH:** [\\$402,500](#)

## BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

This project enhanced soil health and ecological services on 5,605 acres of land on 11 farms across Manitoba. It supported the farmers' capacity to implement regenerative agricultural practices on 15,047 acres to improve ecosystem function for the benefit of current and future generations of Manitobans.

Producers in the program received:

Project planning support: Experts in Holistic Management worked with them on selecting a project that fit their goals and context. This included financial planning and grazing planning.

Project expertise: Holistic Management Canada covered the cost to hire experts to assess and support the implementation of regenerative projects.

Project funding: Participating farms received money to cover a portion of the costs of implementing a regenerative project.

Science-based data: Ecological monitoring was completed to inform producers on how the ecosystem processes on their farm are functioning and how management can improve it. We baselined each participating farm using the Savory Institute's Ecological Outcome Verification TM program."

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- ORGANIZATION NAME: **Manitoba Beef Producers**
- PROJECT NAME: **Grassland Enhancement Program 2022**
- CATEGORY: **Habitat and Wildlife**
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: **\$400,000**
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: **\$1,481,900**
- FINAL MATCH: **\$1,081,900**

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Grasslands are one of the most threatened habitats in Canada, and many of the species that depend on grasslands to survive are at risk due to habitat loss and degradation. Grasslands are also key as working landscapes for cattle producers in Manitoba, who often also depend on and are stewards of this threatened habitat for their livelihood. With funding from the Conservation Trust, Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP) has worked with cattle producers to increase the health of grassland habitats by implementing beneficial management practices (BMPs) and secure grasslands through term agreements. Under this program a total of 17,448.6 acres of grassland habitat have been enhanced by BMPs implemented by 51 landowners. These BMPs that enhance grassland include the installation of 136.3 km of fencing, the installation of 74 watering systems, 6,099.1 m of pasture pipeline, and 276.4 acres of shrub mowing. 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 15,324 acres of grasslands secured.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: **Nature Manitoba**
- PROJECT NAME: **Reaching Landowners about Avian Species at Risk**
- CATEGORY: **Habitat and Wildlife**
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: **\$8,081**
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: **\$36,545**
- FINAL MATCH: **\$28,464**

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The Manitoba Important Bird Areas Program's "Reaching Landowners About Avian Species at Risk" project focused on raising awareness of two Species at Risk, the Red-headed Woodpecker and the Eastern Whip-poor-will, on working landscapes. This project directly engaged over 150 landowners across southern Manitoba on the many ways to incorporate Species at Risk conservation into everyday practices, and seven landowners signed up as 'Conservation Champions' with the goal of conserving Species at Risk habitat on their property. This project also included the collection of survey data on both target species, through formal surveying by staff as well as citizen science monitoring opportunities. Through 4 public presentations, the creation of a webpage, and the distribution of outreach materials, this project successfully engaged hundreds of landowners, citizen scientists, and others members of the public on avian Species at Risk.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: **The Fort Whyte Foundation Inc. o/a FortWhyte Alive**
- PROJECT NAME: **Revitalize Wetland Trail and Improve Recreational and Interpretive Value at FortWhyte Alive in Winnipeg**
- CATEGORY: **Connecting People to Nature**
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: **\$25,000**
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: **\$180,000**
- FINAL MATCH: **\$155,000**

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

This project, undertaken at FortWhyte Alive, resulted in the improvement of trails and habitats in a 1.2 acre wetland riparian zone. Public pathways were upgraded with new surfacing, deteriorating bridge crossings along the trail were replaced with new structures and a wheelchair accessible pathway was built connecting the Elliott Lake canoe dock with the main trail system. Solar lighting was installed on some of the pathways adjacent to the buildings. Overall the project has increased accessibility, improved habitat resilience and enhanced the interpretive and educational potential of this area. Overall an estimated 2500 visitors will benefit on an annual basis from these improvements.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: **Birds Canada – Manitoba Office**
- PROJECT NAME: **Using the Bird-friendliness Index to assess impacts of Best Management Practices for grassland conservation.**
- CATEGORY: **Habitat and Wildlife**
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: **\$140,000**
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: **\$556,296**
- FINAL MATCH: **\$416,296**

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The support of the Conservation Trust enabled Birds Canada to make significant progress towards developing and adapting the Bird-friendliness Index to the Manitoba working landscape. In 2021–22 Birds Canada implemented sampling of grassland birds in Manitoba during the breeding bird seasons in 2021–2022. In all, we sampled 995 survey stations locations at 59 unique sites representing >111,900 acres in the agricultural working landscape in Manitoba, detecting 6 different grassland bird Species at Risk and 11 other bird Species at Risk.

Through this Conservation Trust funded project Birds Canada was able to make significant progress in adapting the Bird-friendliness Index to the Canadian Prairies as a tool to:

1. Serve as an indicator to enable producers, land managers, conservation organizations, and funders to quantify and evaluate the impact that management and conservation programs are having on grassland birds in order to guide management
2. Act as a mechanism to enable innovative and effective incentive tools and help create a market environment that incentivizes biodiversity and rewards producers for conserving birds on their land and help shift birds and biodiversity from being an externality of the Canadian agricultural system to important output.

- **ORGANIZATION NAME:** [Holistic Management Canada](#)
- **PROJECT NAME:** [Accelerating Adoption of Regenerative Farming to Enhance Manitoba’s Natural Infrastructure: Phase 2](#)
- **CATEGORY:** [Soil Health](#)
- **FINAL GRANT AMOUNT:** [\\$200,000](#)
- **TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT:** [\\$598,065](#)
- **FINAL MATCH:** [\\$398,065](#)

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

This project enhanced soil health and ecological services on 4750 acres of land on 11 farms across Manitoba. It supported the farmers’ capacity to implement regenerative agricultural practices on 9,709 acres to improve ecosystem function for the benefit of current and future generations of Manitobans.

Producers in the program received:

- **Project planning support:** Experts in Holistic Management worked with them on selecting a project that fit their goals and context. This included financial planning and grazing planning.
- **Project expertise:** Holistic Management Canada covered the cost to hire experts to assess and support the implementation of regenerative projects.
- **Project funding:** Participating farms received money to cover a portion of the costs of implementing a regenerative project.
- **Science-based data:** Ecological monitoring was completed to inform producers on how the ecosystem processes on their farm are functioning and how management can improve it. We baselined each participating farm using the Savory Institute’s Ecological Outcome Verification TM program.

- **ORGANIZATION NAME:** [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#)
- **PROJECT NAME:** [Planning for the Future: Enhancing Climate Resilience in Integrated Watershed Management Plans](#)
- **CATEGORY:** [Conservation Planning](#)
- **FINAL GRANT AMOUNT:** [\\$25,000](#)
- **TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT:** [\\$80,501](#)
- **FINAL MATCH:** [\\$55,501](#)

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Integrated Watershed Management Plans (IWMPs) provide a roadmap for watershed-based planning in Manitoba. With the aim to build climate resilience at the watershed level, this project developed a guidance to enhance integration of climate change adaptation into the IWMP planning process for Watershed Districts. Its application will ensure that IWMP processes consider and respond to potential climate change impacts, ensuring that investments made today build climate-resilience for tomorrow. This project was implemented by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) with the support of the ClimateWest hub.



- ORGANIZATION NAME: **The Nature Conservancy of Canada**
- PROJECT NAME: **PINE: Preserving Interest in Nature through Engagement.**
- CATEGORY: **Connecting People to Nature**
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: **\$50,000**
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: **\$150,000**
- FINAL MATCH: **\$100,000**

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

PINE provided Manitobans a connection to nature through outreach activities targeted at a variety of interactive, hands-on programs aimed at diverse audiences and that engaged communities in a variety of important conservation issues. Despite the impact of COVID-19, we met the project objective of bringing people into contact both with amazing habitats in Manitoba, and with the work being done to conserve it. The project collaborated with 28 community partners. Through connections with our partners and with a COVID-adapted delivery strategy, we reached 7,899 people across 14 virtual and 11 in-person events, in addition to other outreach efforts. This included 80 volunteers who were involved in stewardship and training activities on conservation lands and 98 students through education programming. In total, we installed 25 property signs across Southern Manitoba and five interpretive panels at one new interpretive site at Douglas Marsh.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: **Lake Winnipeg Foundation, Inc.**
- PROJECT NAME: **Indigenous Youth Leadership for Lake Winnipeg .**
- CATEGORY: **Connecting People to Nature**
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: **\$50,000**
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: **\$265,000**
- FINAL MATCH: **\$215,000**

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Indigenous peoples have lived along the shores of Lake Winnipeg for thousands of years – developing a culture deeply connected with the lands and waters, and passed on through generations in songs, stories, teachings and ceremonies. The loss of wetlands, reduced water quality, shoreline degradation and decline in biodiversity, combined with dwindling opportunities for youth to learn from their elders and the land, has become a threat to the lake and to Indigenous culture. The “Indigenous Youth Leadership for Lake Winnipeg” project aims to inspire, mentor, support and strengthen emerging Indigenous youth leaders around the conservation and health of Lake Winnipeg. Over the past three years, this project focused on providing land-based and virtual learning opportunities all around Lake Winnipeg. We engaged 71 Indigenous youth in activities learning from and share with elders, water protectors and each other. In this way youth were able to build connections and community, practice language and culture and strengthen their own approaches to protecting the land and waters.

# GROW Trust

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Redboine Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: RBWD GROW Program
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$427,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$1,480,554
- FINAL MATCH: \$1,053,554

## BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Redboine Watershed District 2022–24 GROW Program helped mitigate the effects of drought across our watersheds as we worked with landowners to conserve, restore, and enhance 686 acres of wetlands, 112 acres of riparian area, and 3,980 acres of upland areas across our district. GROW Program and partnering projects planted 4,000 trees in 5 acres of restored woodlands and 5 km of shelterbelts, implemented 109 acres of buffer between cropland and natural areas, excluded 250 livestock from sensitive riparian and wetland areas through 10 kilometres of riparian and pasture fencing and the installation of 2 alternate watering systems. We also worked with landowners to implement 3,393 acres of soil health initiative BMPs through cover crop projects.

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- ORGANIZATION NAME: Westlake Watershed District
  - PROJECT NAME: 2022 Westlake Watershed District Wildlife and Upland Enhancement Projects
  - CATEGORY: GROW
  - FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$54,069
  - TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$214,647
  - FINAL MATCH: \$160,578

## BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

Westlake Watershed completed a tour of one of board members very successful Demo plots that were funded through GROW. Approximately 35 people attended this tour and we had Covers & Co come out to speak on the benefits and reasoning behind the seed that was used. Everyone was very impressed with the forage, Hairy Vetch, machinery, and pollinator plot. Westlake Watershed District applied for a 1 year GROW project in 2022, with the goal to complete 1000 acres of land seeded to perennial forage, 2 offsite watering systems, 60 acres of year 2 demonstration plot seeded poly-crops and perennial forage, and 40 acres poly-crop.

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- ORGANIZATION NAME: Central Assiniboine Watershed District
  - PROJECT NAME: Farming the Best – Conserving the Rest within the Central Assiniboine Watershed District – 2
  - CATEGORY: GROW
  - FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$716,653
  - TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$1,341,653
  - FINAL MATCH: \$625,000

## BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Central Assiniboine Watershed District through the Growing Outcomes in Watersheds (GROW) program, looked at implementing projects that improved the overall health within the Central Assiniboine Lower Souris Integrated Watershed Management Plan. A few of our major objectives were to reduce the impacts of flooding and erosion along the Assiniboine and Souris Rivers, reduce peak flows within tributaries that feed the larger waterways within the watershed, protect and maintain waterways to protect cropland and reduce downstream erosion and to protect and restore natural areas to maintain the habitat. To achieve those objectives the following activities were implemented: small dams, class 1&2 wetlands protection, riparian and rotational fencing and restoring perennial cover. The projects implemented impacted a total of 3,212.1 acres while reducing peak flows by slowing or permanently storing 138 acre feet of water. All water retention projects were secured with 10 year contracts to ensure project longevity and success.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: [Westlake Watershed District](#)
- PROJECT NAME: [Westlake Watershed District Wildlife and Upland Enhancement Projects](#)
- CATEGORY: [GROW](#)
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: [\\$53,102](#)
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: [\\$362,285](#)
- FINAL MATCH: [\\$188,890](#)

## BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

Westlake Watershed District planned to seed 1,600 acres of land to perennial forage production, establish 6 miles of exclusion fence, assist in one livestock off-site watering system, and create an 80 acre demonstration plot including 8 acres of pollinator habitat showcasing benefits of annual and perennial poly-crops and pollinator habitat, resulting in a high intensity, short duration planned grazing rotation.

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- ORGANIZATION NAME: [Whitemud Watershed District](#)
  - PROJECT NAME: [Whitemud Watershed District 2021–Project B](#)
  - CATEGORY: [GROW](#)
  - FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: [\\$571,500](#)
  - TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: [\\$2,682,347](#)
  - FINAL MATCH: [\\$2,110,847](#)

## BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

Project B conserved 136 acres of temporary wetlands and 198.5 acres of woody upland. The forage program helped restored 1,132.4 acres of grassland by converting annual cropland into tame/native grasses. The pasture program enhanced 37 acres of wetlands, 688 acres of uplands and 70 acres of riparian through a total of 15.4km of fencing and 7 off-site watering systems. The project helped establish 1,207.5 acres of multi-species cover crop and enhanced 50 acres of riparian through a streambank stabilization project. The district was able to plant a record of 20,150 trees that contributed to 20.7 km of shelterbelts established and 4.3 km of shelterbelts enhanced. One livestock crossing and 4 acres of grassed runways were established through the project. GROW contributed to 12 acre-feet of water stored and Whitemud contributed to an additional 94 acre-feet of water stored. The PWCP program contributed to 51,353 acres enhanced during the first year of the program.

# Watersheds and GROW Trusts

- ORGANIZATION NAME: [Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources](#)
- PROJECT NAME: [Nutrient Reduction Innovation: Pilot Projects for a Regional Water Quality Trading Regime](#)
- CATEGORY: [Watersheds](#)
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: [\\$150,000](#)
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: [\\$524,569](#)
- FINAL MATCH: [\\$374,569](#)

## BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:

In partnership with four communities across southern Manitoba in Treaty 1 territory, the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) planned and implemented four natural infrastructure pilot projects. Each of these projects used different methods to enhance the health of lands and waters in the implementing community and across the region. Where the Winnipeg River meets Lake Winnipeg, CIER partnered with Sagkeeng First Nation on a shoreline stabilization project by grading a section of shoreline and planting native trees (primarily willow and silver poplar) with fast-growing, deep root systems that stabilizes the slope and reduces runoff of nutrients and other pollutants, creates habitat, and sequesters carbon. On the southern shore of Lake Winnipeg, CIER partnered with the Village of Dunnottar to implement a full-scale lagoon vegetation project to reduce phosphorous discharge from the Dunnottar lagoon via the growth and harvest of duckweed. Just outside of Winnipeg, CIER partnered with the Rural Municipality of Rosser to harvest biomass from locations within the RM in order to remove phosphorous from landscape and provide fuel for a planned biomass heating system in an RM building. On the western shore of Lake Manitoba, CIER partnered with Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation to plant over 5,000 trees around the community that will achieve a range of benefits, including reducing beach erosion, protecting critical wetland habitats, creating snow and windbreaks, improving the availability of foods and medicines, improving air quality, sequestering carbon, improving soil health, and creating opportunities for land-based learning activities.

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- ORGANIZATION NAME: **East Interlake Watershed District**
- PROJECT NAME: **Wetland and Riparian Area Restoration/Enhancement and Protection Program (WRAPP)**
- CATEGORY: **GROW**
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: **\$111,475**
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: **\$340,094**
- FINAL MATCH: **\$228,619**

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

This project worked towards the goals and actions of all four East Interlake Watershed District Integrated Watershed Management Plans. All four IWMP's recognize that the two actions of a) building a network of water storage/wetland projects with b) strategically placed upland rejuvenation and riparian enhancement projects can work towards objectives such as: Protection and enhancement of surface and ground water, Protection of agricultural communities from flood and drought events and protection and enhancement of natural areas.

EIWD partnered with 18 landowners to enhance 67.8 acres of wetlands that store 61 acre feet of water, enhance and conserve 45 acres of riparian area by excluding 710 cattle, enhance 274.7 acres of upland area by incorporating regenerative agriculture practices of integrating livestock and planting trees, protect 25 acres of class 1 and 2 wetlands, protect 7.7 acres of forest restoration and protect 86.6 acres of wetland enhancement area.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: **Redboine Watershed District**
- PROJECT NAME: **James Valley Retention Project**
- CATEGORY: **Watersheds**
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: **\$45,000**
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: **\$329,855**
- FINAL MATCH: **\$284,855**

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

In partnership with the Redboine Watershed District and using Conservation Trust funding, Scotswood Links Golf Course constructed a 40-acre foot retention pond along the Elm Creek to help slow spring and heavy summer flows, mitigate flood risk, and act as a summer water source for irrigation needs on the golf course. The storage area was designed to hold water from major contributing drain near where it empties into the Elm Creek. The project will help alleviate flooding in the area, while reducing the surface flow of the drain as it enters the Elm Creek. In combination with the storage area, 3 acres of riparian area was enhanced with reed and rush species, and 5 acres of wetland was enhanced from the additional water storage capacity.

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: GROWing EG&S in the Seine Rat and Roseau Watershed District
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$334,726
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$1,036,726
- FINAL MATCH: \$702,000

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District was able to store 273 acre feet of water retention over 379.4 acres, fence off 148 acres of riparian acres to restrict access to cattle, 234 acres of perennial grasses were seeded in riparian areas with 120 acres of those being conserved through incentive payment contracts. Also, SRRWD was able to put 10 acres of Old Oak forest in a incentive payment contract for the purpose of conservation.

The SRRWD GROWing EG&S program is voluntary. Farmers, ranchers, and community members work together to identify environmental priorities and implement solutions.

## SEED Watersheds and GROW Trusts

- ORGANIZATION NAME: Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District
- PROJECT NAME: Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District – GROW
- CATEGORY: GROW
- FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$250,000
- TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$330,000
- FINAL MATCH: \$80,000

**BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District was able to improve water quality, built resiliency to climate change and reduced erosion of marginal or environmentally targeted soils across 383 acres by implementing both water retention and riparian area management projects. Additional benefits include the creation of wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration

**TOTAL PROJECTS: 24**  
**TOTAL FINAL GRANT AMOUNT: \$5,105,005**  
**TOTAL FINAL MATCH AMOUNT: \$12,688,540**  
**TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$17,913,838**

# MHC Offices

## Main Location

### HEAD OFFICE

302-140 Bannatyne Ave.  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3B 3C5  
204.784.4350  
granting@mbhabitat.ca

### BRANDON

930 Victoria Avenue East  
Brandon, MB  
R7A 2A4  
204.724.0583

## Field Offices

### HAMIOTA

Box 16  
Hamiota, MB  
R0M 0T0  
431.235.3058

### MINNEDOSA

30 Main Street  
Box 1044, Minnedosa, MB  
R0J 1E0  
204.573.4840

### RESTON

402 4th Street  
Box 189, Reston, MB  
R0M 1X0  
204.821.4943

### ROSSER

302-140 Bannatyne Ave.  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3B 3C5  
204.471.9663

### SHOAL LAKE

306 Elm Street  
Box 28, Shoal Lake, MB  
R0J 1Z0  
204.729.7592

### TREHERNE

208 Railway Ave  
Box 164, Treherne, MB  
R0G 2V0  
204.871.1569

