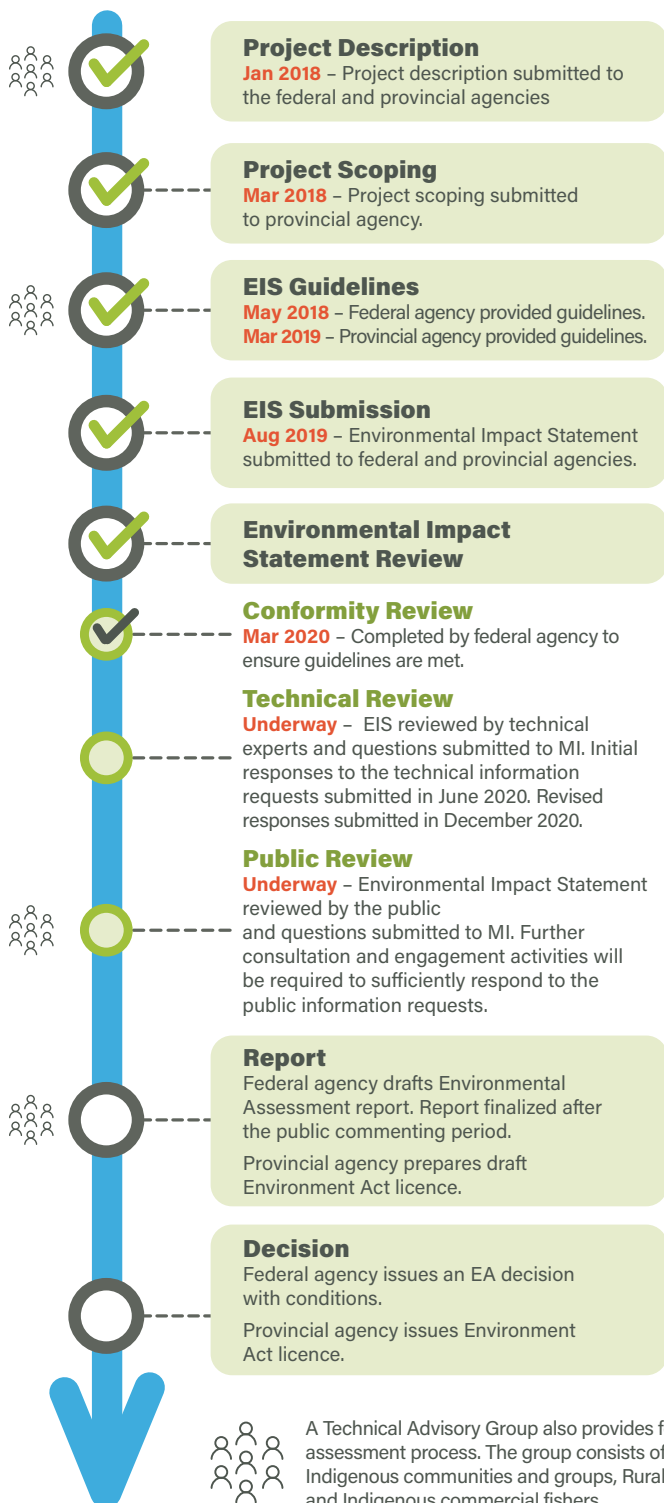


# LAKE MANITOBA LAKE ST. MARTIN

## OUTLET CHANNELS PROJECT

### NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2021 Issue 2



## Environmental Assessment Process

Manitoba Infrastructure continues to move the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels Project (Outlet Channels Project) through the provincial and federal environmental assessment processes.

Manitoba Infrastructure submitted revised responses to the federal government's technical information requests on December 7, 2020. Responses to the public information requests will follow in winter 2021 and will include additional feedback from communities and project stakeholders received in January and February 2021.

## Environmental Management Plans

Manitoba Infrastructure developed draft environmental and monitoring plans to describe actions that it plans to implement to minimize potential environmental effects from the Outlet Channels Project. They are available online at the [Outlet Channels Project website](#), and presentations and questionnaires to obtain feedback are available [here](#). Please feel free to answer the questionnaires on the virtual open house site or send comments directly to [outletchannels@gov.mb.ca](mailto:outletchannels@gov.mb.ca). Feedback on these plans will be accepted until January 30, 2021 as part of the provincial and federal environmental assessment processes.

# Field Work

The Manitoba government is undertaking several phases of field work to further understand the existing environmental conditions before construction of the Outlet Channels Project. The first phase of field work provided a summary of existing environmental conditions of the Outlet Channels Project area and supported the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement. The information gathered during the second phase of field work supports the planning and design phases of the project. Monitoring activities will continue throughout the construction and operation phases to confirm predictions of the environmental assessment, determine if unanticipated effects are occurring and whether modifications to planned mitigation measures are required. Final field work reports are posted to the [Outlet Channels Project website](#).

Below are highlights of recent environmental field work that was completed in 2020. Engineering field work will be featured in upcoming newsletter issues.

## Summer 2020 Environmental Field Work

Pre-construction environmental field work reports covering vegetation, wildlife, and wetland investigations are finalized and posted online at the [Outlet Channels Project website](#).

### Vegetation

- Rare plant surveys and associated plant community characterization surveys were conducted during two survey periods in July and August 2020.
- Results from these surveys build on the initial findings from previous field work reported in the Environmental Impact Statement. The presence of invasive plant species (weeds) and plant species of cultural significance to Indigenous communities were also investigated.
- Monitors from the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council accompanied the field crew to some of these sites.



### Wildlife

- Breeding surveys and sound recordings were conducted in July and August 2020 to detect the presence of rare birds.
- The studies focused on red-headed woodpecker and eastern whip-poor-will. Other bird Species at Risk detected during the field surveys include yellow rail, common nighthawk, barn swallow and bobolink.
- Results from these investigations build on the initial findings from previous field work reported in the Environmental Impact Statement and contribute to the development of follow-up monitoring and/or mitigation for these species, as outlined in the draft environmental management plans.

### Wetland

- Wetland mapping and in-field surveys were conducted along and near potential project development areas.
- Monitors from the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council accompanied the field crew to some of these sites.



## Fall 2020 Environmental Field Work

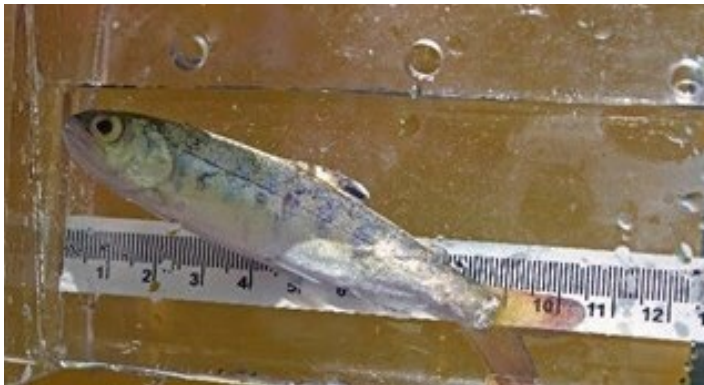
Water quality, sediment quality, fish studies reports will be posted online by Spring 2021.

### Water and Sediment Quality Sampling

- Water samples were analyzed for water quality parameters including: nutrients, metals, and major ions.
- Sediment samples were analyzed to determine baseline sediment quality conditions.

### Fish Studies

- Lake whitefish studies were conducted to understand the timing and size of whitefish spawning movements in the Dauphin River and Lake St. Martin system.
- Fish use studies were conducted to assess the use of the Fairford River and Birch Bay in southern Lake St. Martin by spawning lake whitefish.
- Fish muscle tissue samples from fish captured in Sturgeon Bay and Fairford River were analyzed to provide baseline concentrations for future fish mercury concentration monitoring.
- Monitors from the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council accompanied the field crew to some of these sites.



### Heritage Resource Impact Assessment

- A desktop screening process was conducted for the Outlet Channels Project to identify areas with a high potential for heritage use.
- The field crew conducted pedestrian surveys at nine locations in the Lake St. Martin Outlet Channel area to verify the potential presence of artifacts. Six of the locations also had shovel testing.
- The field crew conducted assessments in 22 quarter-sections in the Lake Manitoba Outlet Channel area. Assessments involved pedestrian survey and 13 quarter-sections also had shovel testing.
- Monitors from the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council accompanied the field crew to some of these sites.



## We Want to Hear From You

The review process for the Environmental Impact Statement and draft Environmental Management Plans is an essential opportunity to hear concerns and incorporate Indigenous and stakeholder knowledge into ongoing planning for the Outlet Channels Project.

Please share your concerns about the potential effects of the project by participating in meetings, or by contacting your local project Community Coordinator, band office, government office, association or email [outletchannels@gov.mb.ca](mailto:outletchannels@gov.mb.ca). For updates on the Outlet Channels Project please visit [EngageMB.ca](https://www.gov.mb.ca/engage)