



LAKE  
WINNIPEG  
FOUNDATION

## 8. Taking Responsibility



Water connects us all. It is essential to life on our shared planet – its health is our shared responsibility. Watersheds are natural boundaries, not political boundaries. Lake Winnipeg’s vast watershed encompasses four Canadian provinces, four American states and multiple First Nations. Almost one million square kilometres in size, it’s home to more than seven million people (Government of Manitoba). When it comes to restoring and protecting the health of Lake Winnipeg and its watershed, there is no “us and them” – we’re all in this together. Addressing the complex challenges facing our lake depends on each of us accepting responsibility for our water and acting in ways that will create positive change in our personal lives, our communities and our shared watershed.

The opposite of responsibility is blame; it’s easy to point fingers at others while ignoring how our own actions are contributing to the problem. It’s also easy to do nothing – whether out of apathy, or because we feel daunted by the complexity and scale of the challenge. These types of attitudes prevent us from moving forward. It’s time to stop blaming and start acting. It’s time to start treating water as the precious, life-giving resource that it is. It’s time to do right by our lake.

Action 8 of the Lake Winnipeg Health Plan, **Taking Responsibility**, encourages Manitobans to get engaged as stewards of our shared waters, as consumers with purchasing power, and as citizens living in a democracy in which the collective voice of the people influences the laws of the land. No matter who we are, we can make a difference. Conserving our home water use. Buying phosphate-free soaps and cleaning products. Talking to our friends and neighbours. Teaching our kids. Teaching our parents. Demanding best practices from industry – and rewarding businesses that make smart choices with our patronage. Supporting environmental organizations pushing for change. Telling decision-makers that the health of Lake Winnipeg matters – and holding them accountable to their commitments. Many everyday actions will lead to a healthier Lake Winnipeg and watershed. We all have power. We all can play a role in the solution.

### [Lake Winnipeg Health Plan Action 1: Keeping Water on the Land](#)