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Riverton: Photo: Paul Mutch

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“It’s not going to be one miracle fix – it’s a ton of smart little moves every day.”

– Bruce Maclean, Cycling for Solutions 2017 participant

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

You are reading this newsletter because you care about the health of our lakes and rivers. Maybe you enjoy cottage life, backcountry canoe trips, provincial parks, and all the joys and inspiration that life near the water offers. While reflecting on those great memories, take a moment to consider that you are not just a lake-lover – you are part of a growing network of concerned citizens who are taking action in support of the ecological health of our lakes.

As a membership-based organization, the Lake Winnipeg Foundation serves to focus our concerns over the state of our lakes and galvanize action for solutions to these problems. Many of the root causes of the problems facing Lake Winnipeg originate far away from the lake itself, which is why the Lake Winnipeg Health Plan outlines a larger strategy for action throughout the entire watershed. It’s a big-picture, collaborative approach that recognizes the need to work together across jurisdictional boundaries.

Just as important as the big picture, however, is the collective impact of many small actions taken by ordinary people every day.

There is strength in numbers. To be part of the solution, we all must do what we can, where we can – and certainly, talking to other lake-lovers about LWF’s work is a task in which we can all take part. This will help grow our support base and expand our influence. A strong collective voice is a powerful asset when advocating governments to respond to the challenges facing our waters.

Being part of something larger is an exciting opportunity to create positive change. – Roger Mollot, LWF President



Photo: Ken Sandilands

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We’re active on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Follow us on your favourite social media network to join the conversation: we share updates about our work, photos and videos, interesting facts, and links to information on freshwater science and water stewardship.



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Become an LWF member

With an annual donation of \$50 or more, you’ll become an LWF member, adding your voice to the call for a healthy Lake Winnipeg now and for future generations. LWF members receive our newsletter twice a year and have the right to vote at our annual general meetings.

Join us today: lakewinnipegfoundation.org/donate

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ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

As the Manitoba Legislative Assembly reconvenes this fall, the health of Lake Winnipeg is on the table.

Newly appointed Sustainable Development Minister Rochelle Squires recently introduced a trio of provincial watershed planning initiatives. While details are still under development, these programs have the potential to improve water quality in Manitoba. LWF has provided input to strengthen the impact of these new programs for Lake Winnipeg.

In the fall legislative session, elected officials will also be debating proposed changes to the rules governing Manitoba's hog industry. LWF is concerned that evidence to support these changes is lacking. Before any changes are approved, robust data is needed to demonstrate that increased hog production will not increase phosphorus loading to our waterways.

Lake Winnipeg must be a provincial priority. Using the Lake Winnipeg Health Plan as a road map to evidence-based solutions, we remain committed to ensuring the voices of our members are heard by decision-makers.

Read more about our advocacy efforts online at: lakewinnipegfoundation.org/citizens



Grindstone; Photo: Paul Mutch



David Lobb accepts the 2016 Alexander Bajkov Award from LWF Executive Director Alexis Kanu at LWF's 2017 annual general meeting; Photo: Marlo Campbell

Congratulations to Dr. David Lobb, 2016 Alexander Bajkov Award winner

LWF's annual award honours those who demonstrate outstanding efforts to protect and restore the health of Lake Winnipeg and its watershed.

Our 2016 recipient is Dr. David Lobb, a soil scientist at the University of Manitoba. Dr. Lobb's research is focused on understanding and evaluating agricultural practices that affect nutrient and sediment loading to water bodies: from tillage systems to precision farming to integrated water management, in which water drained from agricultural fields is recycled for irrigation.

With a down-to-earth communication style and a commitment to collaboration, David has spent his professional life working with scientists, government staff, conservation districts, farmers and NGOs to find practical, on-the-land solutions for a healthier watershed – and a healthier Lake Winnipeg.

Congratulations to Dr. Lobb on this well-deserved award!

LWF's Grants Program now accepting proposals

Need project funding? We can help. Our grants program provides financial assistance ranging from \$500 to \$10,000 to initiatives that improve water quality in Lake Winnipeg and its watershed. Applications are due Dec. 1, 2017. Find application forms, funding priorities and eligibility criteria online at: lakewinnipegfoundation.org/grants-program.

LAKE WINNIPEG HEALTH PLAN PROGRESS



TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

MOBILIZING YOUNG WATER LEADERS THROUGH EDUCATION

Educators are uniquely positioned to influence the attitudes – and actions – of tomorrow's leaders. And LWF wants to help teachers bring water lessons to life for a new generation of lake-lovers.

LWF's education program includes free in-class presentations about Lake Winnipeg challenges and solutions, and funding for transportation costs and/or entrance fees associated with water-related field trips and other educational initiatives.

"LWF is a valuable educational resource for schools to learn more about the importance of our precious lakes," says Fernando Dalayoan, a Grade 5 teacher at Lord Nelson School in Winnipeg.

LWF presented to Dalayoan's class in 2016 and provided financial support for students to take part in the Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium's 2017 Lake Ecology Field Program aboard the M.V. Namao.

"This rare learning opportunity enabled Lord Nelson School's young environmental scientists to extend their studies about our lakes beyond the classroom walls," Dalayoan says.

Manitoba teachers are increasingly interested in water-related education. From 2015 to 2016, for example, the number of school presentations delivered by LWF staff increased by more than 200 per cent.

In response to this demand, we are now scaling up our education program by creating new opportunities for hands-on outdoor learning and broadening the scope of our educational funding.

A growing number of schools in both Winnipeg and rural communities have joined the Lake Winnipeg Community-based Monitoring Network, enabling students to participate in real-world scientific fieldwork through the collection of water samples. LWF staff and science advisors provide training and support, analyze collected samples to measure phosphorus, and share results back to participating schools.

We're also expanding our focus beyond the science curriculum in recognition that water can be explored across multiple subjects including geography, social studies, technology and the arts.



Students from Lord Nelson School take part in the Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium's 2017 Lake Ecology Field Program aboard the M.V. Namao; Photo: Fernando Dalayoan

New for the 2017/18 school year is a resource for music educators. *Rise and Shine, Lake Winnipeg* is an original song written by Riverton, Man. residents Rod Palson and Lorne Martin. LWF has produced a choral score of the song to be offered at no cost to music teachers and choral directors. Music touches many and creates new opportunities for students to learn about why Lake Winnipeg is important – and why it's worth protecting.

LWF's education program aims to motivate youth into taking action as citizens of Lake Winnipeg's watershed. We are proud to support teachers and students as they explore Manitoba's waters.

Teachers: visit us online!

Information about our education program can be found in the "For Teachers" section of our website, under "Resources."

ASK A SCIENTIST

ALGAE UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

LWF science advisor Dr. Hedy Kling is a specialist in algal taxonomy, a branch of science focused on identifying and classifying different species of algae.

Q: What exactly are algae and why are they important to lake ecosystems?

A: Algae is a broad term for a variety of tiny water plants. Depending on the species, they live suspended in the water column, on rocks, on mud, in sand, among aquatic plants or floating in mats on the water's surface.

Algae are the basis of a lake's food chain – just like grass in a pasture is food for grazing animals. The nutritious algae are food for tiny aquatic animals called zooplankton which, in turn, are food for fish. Cyanobacteria (commonly known as blue-green algae) are more like weeds.

Q: How many species of algae exist in Lake Winnipeg? Is one more predominant?

A: There are most likely several thousand species, with different species dominating in different areas at different times. Usually an algae bloom does not consist of only one species but several.

With increasing environmental degradation over the past century we've seen a dramatic rise in the severity and geographical range of cyanobacteria, which are now present in water bodies around the world.

Q: Some cyanobacteria can secrete microcystin, a toxin harmful to humans and animals. What do we know about it?

A: Actually, cyanobacteria can produce several different toxins. Microcystins have been found to be the most common – but they also are easiest to measure, so the focus has been on them.

Q: Can we tell the difference between nutritious algae and toxic blue-green algae just by looking at a bloom?

A: No – and even with a microscope, a specialist can only tell you whether the algae is potentially toxic; tests on the specific species would need to be run to know for sure.

Q: Some people have said this year's blooms were the worst they've ever seen. Has the amount of algae on Lake Winnipeg increased over the past decade? What's causing it?

A: The amount of algae varies depending on multiple factors. During the flood of 1997, for example, a lot of nutrients came into the lake. For several wet years after this, algae seemed to increase each year. During warm, dry periods in late July and September, blooms are common. Also, if the water is calm for periods of time, algae can accumulate on the surface, making the density of the bloom appear thick.

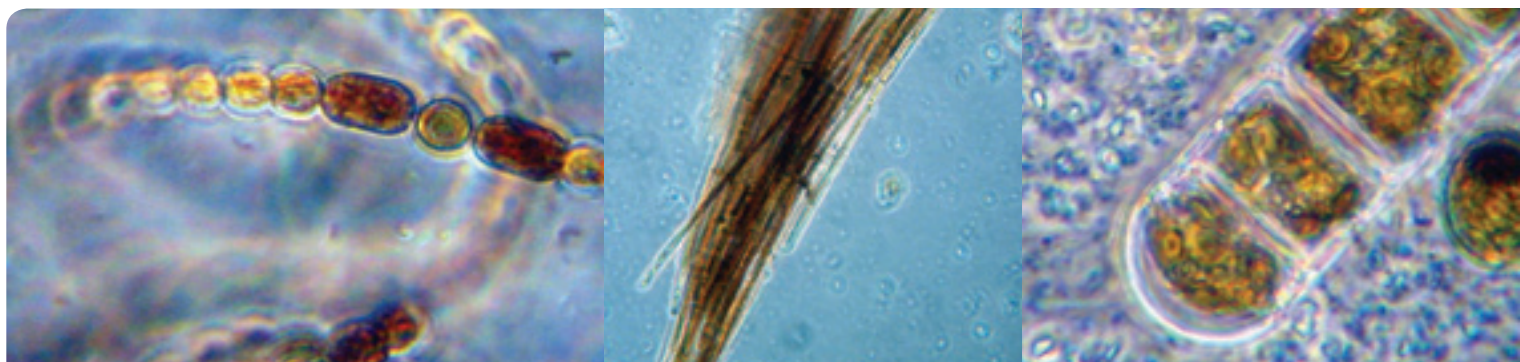
We won't know whether this year was any worse than previous high-bloom years until the analysis of the summer 2017 samples is compared to those of previous years, later this fall.

Q: Why does the east side of Lake Winnipeg get so much more algae washing ashore than the west side?

A: The east side is always worse than the west side because the prevailing winds are from the west or northwest, which pile the algae on the east side of the lake.

Q: What should people do during an algae bloom?

A: Avoid swimming in a bloom, letting small children play in them, letting dogs or other animals drink from a bloom area, or using the water for washing dishes, cooking and/or showers. Citizens can also report blooms to Manitoba Sustainable Development at: forms.gov.mb.ca/algal_report.



Left to right: *Dolichospermum lemmermanii* and *Aphanizomenon flos-aquae* complex are two species of potentially toxic cyanobacteria found in Lake Winnipeg; *Aulacoseira islandica* is a commonly found non-toxic diatom species of algae; All photos: Hedy Kling

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

THE LAKE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION THANKS ALL OUR VALUED SUPPORTERS

LWF is proud to be part of a passionate community of lake-lovers. Thank you to the following individuals and organizations who gave generously between Sept. 10, 2016 & Sept. 30, 2017. Together, we're ensuring our lake is healthy and safe, now and for future generations.

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\$42,009 RAISED

266 participants

341 pledges

50 volunteers

1 big thank you from LWF!

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THE LAKE WINNIPEG INDIGENOUS COLLECTIVE

FIRST NATIONS TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT SACRED LAKE WINNIPEG

First Nations around Lake Winnipeg have been living in close connection to the land and waters since time immemorial. Many rely on the lake not only for the social and economic benefits it provides, but also for their cultural and spiritual wellbeing. With deteriorating water quality in the lake over recent decades, the impacts felt by First Nations are direct and profound – yet First Nations are often excluded from the mainstream conversation.

The Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective (LWIC) hopes to change this. Formed in 2014 and administered through a strategic partnership with LWF, LWIC is working to amplify the voice of First Nations, using traditional Indigenous knowledge to inform solutions to ongoing environmental challenges.

Traditional knowledge is a way of understanding the natural environment cultivated through extensive observation, spiritual connection and lived experiences. Often this knowledge is captured via oral histories, and passed down through generations and between resource users.

In July, LWIC partnered with Fisher River Cree Nation for a fish-habitat assessment project. This project compiled traditional knowledge

to identify how fish-spawning habitats are being impacted by land-use changes in the watershed, and collected recommendations on how to restore these areas for future generations. Over three days, 83 community members shared observations and suggestions informed by years of experience on the lake. LWIC is looking forward to continuing this project with other First Nations to gain a more complete understanding of Lake Winnipeg fisheries.

LWIC also partnered with Misiwastik Cree Nation to host a gathering for Indigenous youth, held in August at the beautiful culture camp in Grand Rapids, Man. Here, local youth heard from elders about the history of hydro-electric development in their territories, received traditional teachings about the importance of water to all living things, and learned to set nets and dress fish. The gathering ended with youth creating signage for the community to help keep the shorelines free from litter. The hope is to build on this gathering next year, hosting youth from all First Nations around Lake Winnipeg to inspire the next generation of Indigenous water protectors.

With Indigenous leadership from both the southern and northern basins of Lake Winnipeg, LWIC is advancing common goals through on-the-ground projects and ongoing policy initiatives to protect their sacred lake.

“The lake is really in trouble,” says Loretta Mowatt, LWIC north basin representative. “We need to be the drivers of change.”

By Johanna Thérout, LWIC Co-ordinator

Visit lwic.org to learn more about the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective and watch videos about the impacts of Lake Winnipeg’s deteriorating health on three First Nations.



Youth from Misiwastik Cree Nation learn how to dress fish. Photo: Johanna Thérout

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

PEOPLE POWER MEETS PEDAL POWER

The algae Bruce Maclean encountered at Grand Beach this August was as bad as he's ever seen – but it also served as motivation.

Maclean was one of six participants in September's Cycling for Solutions, a three-day, 500 km road trip from Winnipeg to the IISD Experimental Lakes Area research facility in northwest Ontario. This was Bruce's third year riding. Though he survived the strong winds and rain, broken bike spokes ended his journey 36 km from the finish line, preventing him from slogging through the muddy muck of the gravel camp road. "I was so crestfallen," he says. "I do the first 460 km just to do that last part; that's the kind of riding I like."

The 2017 ride was a fundraiser for the Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) Network, which trains citizens to collect water samples which are then tested for phosphorus. This year's effort raised more than \$12,000, a success Bruce credits to the enthusiastic support of the cyclists' personal networks.

Bruce is passionate about citizen science, having spent the past decade working on CBM programs, most recently with the Mikisew Cree and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations in northern Alberta. He feels strongly that all water users must be included in monitoring programs. First Nations have lived on Lake Winnipeg's shores for generations, he points out, making water-quality challenges more than just a cottage-owner issue.

Improving the lake's health will take collaboration and dedication. "It's not going to be one miracle fix – it's a ton of



Broken spokes made Bruce's bike inoperable at the very end of this year's Cycling for Solutions ride; Highwind Lake Road, Photo: Roger Mollot

smart little moves every day," he says. "It's going to take everyone doing something."

Cycling for Solutions is Bruce's 'something.' It's also an apt metaphor.

"Doing this ride is super-fun but it's also really challenging," he says. "That's the nature of the solution to Lake Winnipeg: Yeah, you have to work hard. But it's also community and family and friends working together."

THANK YOU! We are always inspired by the outpouring of community support from lake-lovers who join together each summer to promote healthy water. Whether you participated in our events, organized your own activities or reached out to us to share your concerns, your commitment is the lifeblood of our foundation.



Walk for Water Victoria Beach broke its own record in 2017 with 181 walkers, four babies in strollers and 16 dogs taking part; Photo: Paul Mutch

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ADVOCACY AND ACTION FOR LAKE WINNIPEG

Recent months have been tough ones for Lake Winnipeg, with the ongoing spread of invasive zebra mussels and the appearance of pervasive blue-green algae blooms. But we've also had some good news. In July, federal Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna announced \$25.7 million in funding for Lake Winnipeg over the next five years. Combined with anticipated provincial funding for ecological restoration and other agricultural best management practices in the Lake Winnipeg watershed, we have an opportunity to turn the tide of bad news.

It won't be easy. Over the past 10 years, the government of Canada has invested upwards of \$36 million in Lake Winnipeg – but the impact of that investment has been far from impressive. According to the federal government's own evaluation, total phosphorus reductions achieved over the past five years have been less than one per cent of what goes into the lake on an annual basis.

In other words, the program hasn't even made a dent in the problem.

Obviously, something isn't working.

New investments won't make much difference unless they are strategically targeted. To that end, the Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network is uncovering phosphorus hotspots in rural Manitoba – areas that are contributing a disproportionate amount of phosphorus to Lake Winnipeg. And of course, we can't continue to ignore ongoing delays in addressing one of the most concentrated sources of phosphorus in Manitoba – the City of Winnipeg's sewage treatment plants.

We need resources to better understand and target phosphorus hotspots. And we need commitments from all levels of government to make decisions based on evidence so that our investments have greater impact.

We have our work cut out for us in the coming year, but I am hopeful. From the beginning, LWF's founders understood the importance of citizens working together towards solutions. LWF members have been tirelessly advocating for action for over a decade. This past summer – perhaps the busiest in LWF history – has reminded me of how impactful our collective voice can be.

In the words of anthropologist Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

By Alexis Kanu, LWF Executive Director

Alexis, trying her hand at seine netting; IISD Experimental Lakes Area;
Photo: Marlo Campbell



As an LWF member, here are three things you can do for Lake Winnipeg this fall:

1. **Contact your elected representatives.** Let your local, provincial and federal representatives know that you expect evidence-based action and investment to improve Lake Winnipeg's water quality.
2. **Renew your LWF membership.** As a member, you make our collective efforts possible. We're stronger when we speak together for the health of our lake.
3. **Recruit a new member.** Invite a friend who shares your love of the lake to join LWF. Healthy lakes are important to Manitobans and Canadians from all walks of life.

THROUGH THE EYES OF OUR MEMBERS

ALGAE BLOOMS REMIND US OF THE NEED FOR ACTION

This past summer was a heartbreaking one for many lake-lovers, who watched day after day as severe algae blooms washed up on Lake Winnipeg's shores. Many LWF members sent us photos of their beloved beaches, coated in soupy green.

Though devastating, the algae blooms of 2017 have further galvanized us.

Throughout Manitoba, and across Canada, LWF members are making a commitment together – to speak up for the health of our lake; to take action in our homes and in our communities; to protect our precious fresh water for our kids and grandkids.

Because summer isn't the same when you can't swim in the lake.

Algae on Lake Winnipeg (top to bottom): Victoria Beach, July 26, submitted by Bob McLandress; Victoria Beach, Aug. 18, submitted by Vic Janzen; Gimli, Sept. 19, submitted by Audrey Boitson.



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