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Wading into water issues: tips for community foundations

January 20, 2010 – Water is one of our most precious resources in Canada. And, while we're incredibly lucky in terms of this liquid resource, it's obvious we need to be very careful in protecting our fresh water.

To that end, Community Foundations of Canada has spearheaded the Foundations in the Lake Winnipeg Watershed Initiative, a collaborative effort to protect and restore the health of this area.

Protecting our oceans, lakes, rivers, streams and ponds is an important issue for many groups and individuals across the country, and their involvement can and will have a positive impact.

There are many ways foundations can make a difference. The Foundations in the Lake Winnipeg Watershed Initiative offers these ideas:

- Appoint one person as liaison for the Lake Winnipeg Watershed Initiative so we can build a communication network. This will facilitate the passing on of information and build awareness of local issues and actions. Contact vickiburns@mts.net to join
- Promote awareness of water concerns by publishing articles about local water issues in foundation newsletters; submit articles to local newspapers; distribute PSAs about water issues. Material for these can be supplied by CFC or local interest groups and can be slightly revised depending on locale. Promote screenings of *Choking Lake Winnipeg*, a documentary by Jim Byrne to be released in spring 2010
- Learn about groups working on water issues in your area and consider convening a public meeting to help educate people about the issues
- Encourage local municipal councils to consider Low Impact Development principles (permeable parking lots and road surfaces) and upgraded wastewater treatments such as engineered wetlands or passive filtration projects (eg. The Morden Foundation's project)
- Support in principle the concept of ecological goods and services and compensation for farmers to reintroduce wetlands to their land
- Make grants to watershed groups in the areas of Conservation or Pollutant /Nutrient Reduction through Education/Public Awareness Campaigns or direct funding of hard costs like dual flush toilets, constructed wetlands, etc.
- Contact Vicki Burns, coordinator, Foundations in the Lake Winnipeg Watershed Initiative, for more information on ways to get involved: vickiburns@mts.net or 204-489-3852