



MEMBER ADVISORY

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ONSITE WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS REGULATION

February 27, 2009 – Manitoba Conservation is proposing amendments to the *Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation*, MR 83/2003 under *The Environment Act*. This regulation governs the standards, installation and management of Onsite Wastewater Management Systems (OWMS) from private dwellings and businesses which generate a wastewater flow of less than 10,000 litres (2,200 gallons) per day.

The AMM met with Manitoba Conservation earlier this week to discuss the proposed regulatory amendments, which are outlined in the attached letter. The AMM is very concerned with the impact these proposed amendments will have on municipal infrastructure, and has sent correspondence to the Minister of Conservation, Stan Struthers, stressing the need to consult with municipalities on these proposals.

In order to keep our members informed and aware of this situation, the AMM will also:

- ✓ Include this issue on the agenda for the upcoming Mayors, Reeves and CAOs meetings in March;
- ✓ Feature this discussion in a plenary session at the Municipal Officials Seminar in April, and ensure the Department of Conservation is available to answer questions immediately following the session.

Comments on the proposed amendments may be sent by letter, fax or email to:

Donna Smiley, OWMS Program Coordinator
1007 Century Street
Winnipeg, MB R3H 0W4
Fax: 204-948-2420
Phone: 204-945-2970
Email: Donna.smiley@gov.mb.ca

This is an important issue for municipalities and we encourage you to make your views known.



Conservation

Operations Division/Environmental Services
1007 Century Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 0W4
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www.manitoba.ca

January 27, 2009

Association of Manitoba Municipalities
Att: President & Board of Directors
1910 Saskatchewan Ave. W.
Portage La Prairie R1N 0P1

Dear President & Board of Directors,

RE: Proposed amendments to the *Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation* (MR 83/2003)

The current regulation governing onsite wastewater management systems (OWMS) is the *Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation*, MR 83/2003 under *The Environment Act*. The Regulation governs the standards, installation and the management of OWMS, from private dwellings and businesses which generate a wastewater flow of less than 10,000 litres (2,200 gallons) per day. This letter is to inform you of the proposed amendments to the Regulation.

The Regulation has an important role in reducing risks to human health and the environment by preventing the contamination of ground and surface water by human waste.

The proposed regulatory amendments would enhance the ability to protect water quality throughout the Province, including Lake Winnipeg, and address areas of particular concern such as vulnerable areas and the Red River corridor.

Proposed regulatory amendments:

- Prohibit the use of a disposal field for *new* systems in Sensitive Areas, Crown land cottage developments, provincial parks, and portions of the Red River Corridor.

The method of sewage disposal for new installations in these areas would be limited to a holding tank.

In areas of the province where there is inadequate sewage lagoon or treatment capacity, variances for the installation of alternative disposal or advanced treatment systems may be considered.

The attached map of the Red River Corridor identifies the designated area proposed within the Red River Corridor. Variances for the installation of advanced treatment may be considered for the designated area pending site

specific conditions. Examples of advanced treatment include:

- residential sewage treatment plants with discharge of superior quality effluent to a dispersal field;
 - the use of biofiltration systems; or
 - equivalent treatment technology.
- Prohibit the installation of *new* sewage ejectors throughout the province.

The current regulation allows a sewage ejector system to be installed on a minimum property size of 10 acres.

- Eliminate existing sewage ejectors at the time of any property transfer.

The sewage ejector must be decommissioned and replaced with an appropriate disposal field or holding tank.

- Require a minimum lot size of 8000 m² (2 acres) and minimum lot width of 60 m (198 ft.) for the installation of disposal fields.

The current Regulation does not require a minimum lot size. This new requirement is consistent with the sizing requirements for lots in rural residential subdivision as set out in the Subdivision Regulation (MR 137/2006) under *The Planning Act*. This sizing requirement allows for sufficient space to be set aside on the property for eventual disposal field replacement.

- Require decommissioning of out-of-service septic systems.

This requirement primarily applies to the proper dismantling of septic tanks and holding tanks. Dismantling the septic field is usually not necessary and may only be required under certain circumstances. A decommissioning guideline has been developed.

- Prohibit new installations or replacement of existing onsite systems in areas serviced with wastewater infrastructure.
- Require mandatory hookup to a municipal collection system in serviced areas.
- Limit new and replacement systems to holding tanks or alternative systems where wastewater infrastructure is planned but which may be 5 or more years in future.
- Extend the Regulation to the City of Winnipeg.
- Clarify the authority to grant variances.
- Require municipal wastewater management planning.

Municipal governments would be required to develop wastewater management plans for approval as part of their land use planning process.

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- Repeal Schedule B.

Schedule B sets out standards for septic tanks and disposal fields used in connection with low use water closets. This Schedule is no longer applicable and is not consistent with the requirements as set out in Schedule A.

The proposed amendments can be found on the Manitoba Conservation website at the following link:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/envprograms/wastewater/index.html>

Comments on the proposed amendments may be sent by letter, fax, or email to:

Donna Smiley
OWMS Program Coordinator
1007 Century Street
Winnipeg MB R3H 0W4
Fax : (204) 948-2420
Donna.smiley@gov.mb.ca

If you would like to arrange for a presentation, please do not hesitate to contact me in Winnipeg at (204) 945-2970 or by email at donna.smiley@gov.mb.ca.

Sincerely






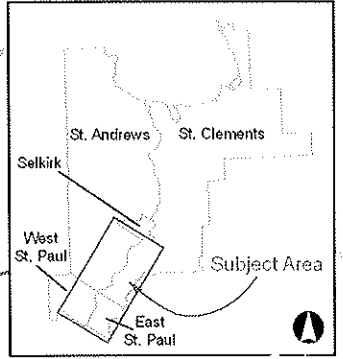
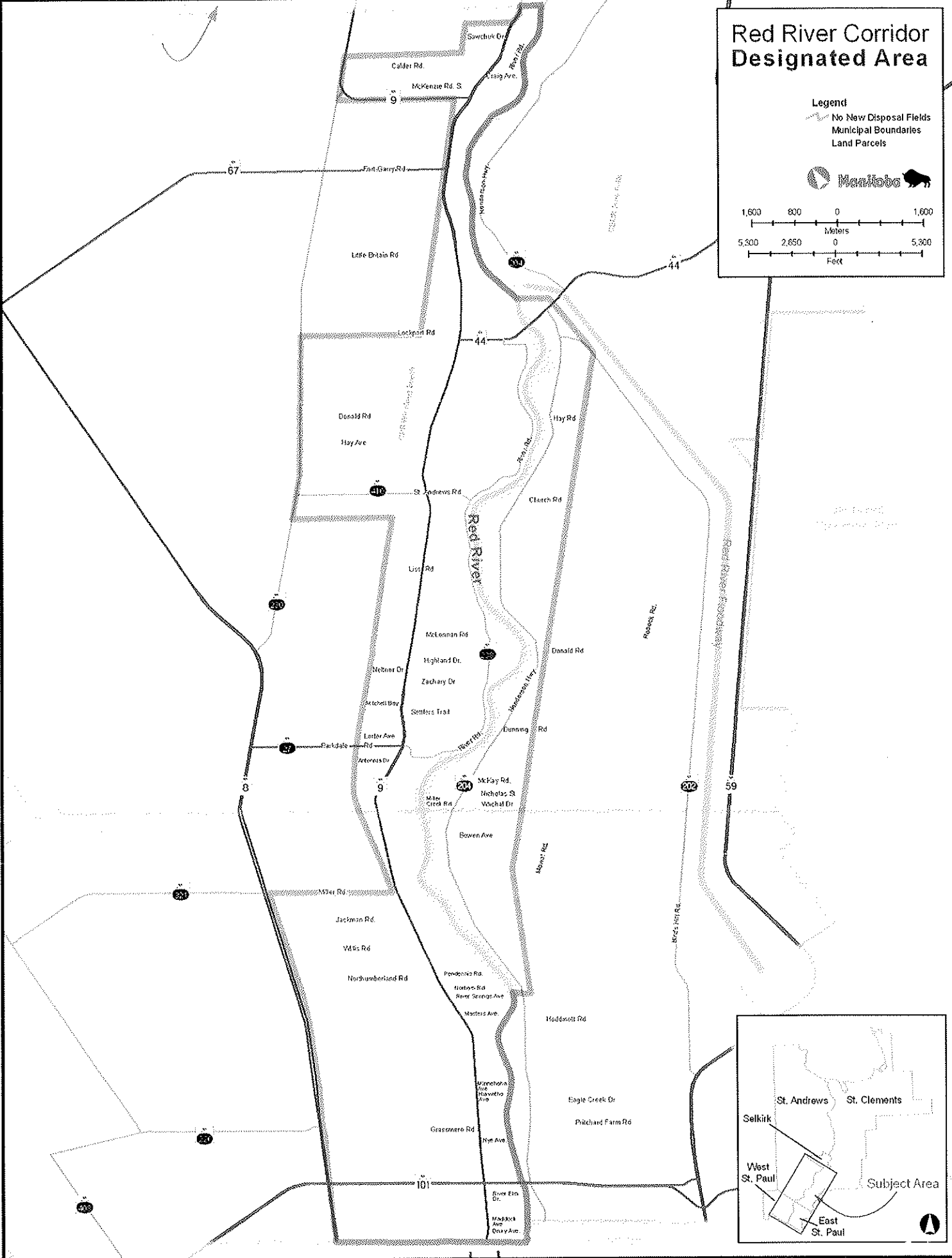
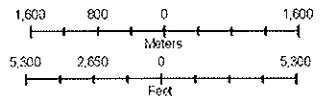
Donna Smiley
Coordinator, Onsite Wastewater
Management Systems Program

Attachment

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Red River Corridor Designated Area

- Legend**
-  No New Disposal Fields
 -  Municipal Boundaries
 -  Land Parcels



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