

Meet your Provincial Department Manitoba Conservation

Manitoba Conservation was formed in 1999 by combining the former departments of Natural Resources and Environment. Its goal is to protect the environment while sustaining and conserving the province's abundant natural resources. Conservation staff is dedicated to providing quality services in Manitoba communities, parks, rural and northern areas. As the most far-reaching provincial government department, with 58 locations, staff members work in virtually every part of the province.

The department has four divisions:

- Regional Operations
- Conservation Programs
- Environmental Stewardship
- Corporate Services

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Regional Operations Division

Regional Operations is responsible for delivering environmental and resource programs including:

- wildfire response
- environmental emergency response
- park operations and maintenance
- a range of environmental programs

The Fire Program detects and suppresses wild fires and manages the people and equipment needed to fight wild fires on provincial Crown land. Staff monitors weather patterns, lightning strikes, soil moisture and forest conditions to determine the probability and location of wild fires. Staff works closely with forest fire fighting agencies and jurisdictions including municipalities.

The Environmental Emergency Response Team handles emergency response calls through a 24-hour line. The team, along with regional staff, helps police forces in Manitoba:

- identify, remove and dispose of chemicals
- evaluate site contamination

Natural resource, environment and park patrol officers work across the province. They interact with the public to ensure the safety and security of people and protection of the environment.

Environmental Operations and Environmental Services deliver environmental programs throughout the province. Environmental Operations staff is responsible for program delivery at the regional level, including:

- inspection
- compliance and enforcement
- responding to complaints, inquiries and environmental emergencies

Operations staff is also involved in the administration and enforcement of Environment Act licences.

Environmental Services is responsible for program development and co-ordination, including legislative initiatives, policy development and special services. Program areas include the management of:

- contaminated/affected sites
- hazardous waste
- petroleum storage
- livestock manure and mortalities
- wastewater

Environmental protection is of critical importance to the Department as shown by recent regulatory initiatives and the hiring of new front-line environment officers. Current initiatives include the management of the Department's own environmental liabilities and the enhanced inspection of existing onsite wastewater management systems.

Conservation Programs Division

The Conservation Programs Division is responsible for Manitoba's parks, lands, forests and wildlife.

The Parks and Natural Areas Branch manages provincial parks, ecological

reserves and the Canadian Heritage Rivers program for Manitoba. It also administers vacation homes on leased, permitted and private land in parks and manages relations with private-sector business operators.

Provincial parks are tourist attractions providing economic benefits to municipalities and area residents. Parks and ecological reserves also preserve and protect Manitoba's natural environment. The Department has agreements with many municipalities to provide municipal services including 911 emergency services in parks. In 2009, the Province announced free entry to provincial parks for the next two years. This will help families enjoy Manitoba's outdoors during tough economic times.

The Forestry Branch plans, manages and allocates forest resources for the long-term social, economic and environmental benefit of Manitobans. Crown forests are managed sustainably for all users. Harvest and renewal activities are practised to conserve ecosystem diversity. The branch advises and helps the public and industry with forest health issues on Crown land, private woodlots and urban forests.

The branch:

- protects forests from pest damage
- helps wildfire management
- ensures all harvested Crown lands are renewed to maintain ecosystem integrity

The Dutch Elm Disease (DED) management program helps reduce the effect of DED on urban elm populations. The program manages DED in 37 Manitoba communities through annual cost-share agreements. The communities and province are each responsible for implementing specific DED control measures.

To conserve biological diversity and protect habitat, the Wildlife and Ecosystem Protection Branch manages wildlife resources and habitat on Crown and



*The Honourable
Stan Struthers,
Minister of Conservation*

private lands. It also monitors the effects of land use activities on ecosystems. Permits and licences are administered by the branch, which delivers a number of programs including:

- hunting
- wildlife management
- wildlife disease
- big game monitoring
- problem wildlife
- furbearer management

For many years, the province has offered its Problem Beaver Management Program consisting of summer removal of beavers and winter subsidies. The program features workshops to demonstrate non-lethal ways to address problem beavers.

The department remains vigilant in its efforts to prevent chronic wasting disease from spreading into the province and continues to monitor and consult with other jurisdictions. Bovine tuberculosis also continues to be monitored and tested through hunter-submitted samples.

The Lands and Geomatics Branch manages and controls provincial Crown lands and provides mapping and remote sensing services throughout the province. The branch is also responsible for the:

- review, approval and transfer processes for treaty land entitlement and other Aboriginal land programs
- Cottage Lot Program
- Wild Rice Program
- Manitoba Geographical Names Program

Environmental Stewardship Division

The Environmental Stewardship Division is responsible for:

- policy management
- environmental assessment and licensing
- pollution prevention programs
- Aboriginal relations

The Aboriginal Relations Branch helps build relationships between the department and the Aboriginal people of Manitoba. The branch takes a lead role in encouraging discussion about natural resource issues.

The Sustainable Resource and Policy Management Branch co-ordinates department policy, natural resource allocation and Crown land use planning. It also helps municipalities and planning districts prepare development plans and zoning bylaws by providing advice and planning information. Resource-based tourism licenses and permits for outfitters and lodge owners are also issued through this branch. The Protected Areas Initiative, a unit of the branch, ensures the province protects representative samples of our natural regions. It identifies protected areas to conserve ecosystems and maintain biodiversity for each of the 18 natural regions and sub-regions of the province. Protected areas contribute to Manitoba's action on climate change, biodiversity conservation and habitat protection commitments.

The Environmental Assessment and Licensing Branch is responsible for minimizing harmful environmental and public health effects of developments through appropriate licences and permits. All new or expanded developments within Manitoba must first apply for, and receive, an Environment Act licence before development begins. The branch conducts thorough public and technical reviews when making licensing decisions, to ensure the sustainability of Manitoba's diverse environment is maintained.

The branch is also responsible for administering the pesticide regulation and issues over 250 permits each year. Each permit has terms and conditions to ensure products are used safely and in accordance with federal and provincial requirements. Included in this area are the permits required for the City of Winnipeg's annual mosquito control program that reduces the risk of public exposure to the West Nile virus. Staff also certifies water and wastewater facility operators and classifies all wastewater and water treatment and distribution facilities across the province. This program is essential in ensuring public

health and the environment is protected.

The Pollution Prevention Branch works co-operatively with municipalities and stakeholders to protect air quality and minimize pollution and waste. The Air Quality Management Section monitors outdoor air quality in select urban areas and industrial locations. Other programs promote producer responsibility, target waste reduction, support improved waste management facility operations and planning, and protect the stratospheric ozone layer. The branch also manages the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund (SDIF) which provides grant funding support to innovative environmental sustainability projects developed by community organizations throughout the province.

A new Packaging and Printed Paper Stewardship Regulation was approved in December 2008, which targets plastic bags as part of a new multi-material stewardship program. The branch is working with Green Manitoba and Multi-Material Stewardship Manitoba (MMSM), to finalize this plan. MMSM is the Industry Organization responsible for developing and funding the new program.

Corporate Services Division

Corporate Services provides essential, internal administrative support to all divisions in the department by co-ordinating finances and human resources. The Division also provides library and public information services, and its Distribution Centre serves the public with mapping and aerial photo products.

Manitoba Conservation is committed to working with municipalities in applying the principles and guidelines of sustainable development to ensure a healthy and prosperous environment for Manitoba's communities today and into the future. For more information about Manitoba Conservation and its programs visit manitoba.ca/conservation; call 945-6784 in Winnipeg; toll-free 1-800-214-6497 or speak with any of the department's staff located in your area of the province. 🌿