



Release

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RECREATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES REPORT RELEASED

Authority to Establish Working Group To Identify Future Opportunities and Next Steps

Winnipeg, Manitoba – The Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA) has released a “Recreation and Economic Development Opportunities Report” that identifies potential future opportunities and outlines next steps associated with the Red River Floodway expansion project.

The report reflects ideas received from a public call for expressions of interest last spring as part of MFA’s extensive public consultation process. MFA received over fifty written submissions from the public and additional suggestions through a series of public open houses and meetings with municipal governments and stakeholder groups.

“This report is a compilation of the various ideas that Manitobans have on the future use of the floodway for recreational activities,” said Reg Alcock, President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. “It will be useful in facilitating further discussion amongst local municipalities, recreational and grassroots organizations, and the public about this long-lasting component of the floodway project.”

“Over the years, there has been general discussion about the potential use of the floodway for recreation and economic possibilities,” said Steve Ashton, Minister of Water Stewardship. “The floodway expansion project provides an excellent opportunity to examine these possibilities and determine if they are compatible with this critical flood protection project. We look forward to building on these recommendations as the floodway project proceeds.”

“The report concludes that increased flood security for Winnipeg and southern Manitoba will benefit all Manitobans and is in the interest of both the provincial and national economy,” said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of MFA. “In addition to creating thousands of jobs, the project also provides an opportunity for recreation and economic development for local organizations, communities and the public.”

As part of the expression of interest, MFA identified a number of working principles to guide future recreation activities including compatibility with the primary purpose of floodway expansion, minimal ongoing maintenance costs to taxpayers, stakeholder participation and environmental stewardship.

The Report confirms the project will not disrupt the current operation of the Springhill Ski Facility or the Lockport Childrens' Festival. It recommends next steps and serves as a general framework for pursuing future opportunities and partnerships. To this end, MFA will:

- Establish a Floodway Recreation Working Group to examine issues of recreational use along the floodway including overall planning and design work process, liability issues, ongoing maintenance and financial support
- Consider a multi-use, four season greenway trail and designated snowmobile trails along the floodway within the project's pre-design
- Initiate a formal process that will allow Manitobans to access the excavated earth from the floodway channel
- Incorporate a four lane crossing in the planning for the PTH 15 Bridge to meet increased future traffic flows and facilitate economic opportunities and population growth in the Rural Municipality of Springfield
- Consider creating a virtual reality 3D floodway model to demonstrate the floodway's operation, recreate flood scenarios and potentially assist emergency preparedness efforts
- Initiate further consultation with local municipal governments and stakeholders before proceeding with any detailed design plans

Based on the working principles and further examination by the MFA staff, the following activities will not be pursued as part of the initiative:

- Proposals that require water in the floodway
- Acquisition of additional lands for the sole purpose of recreational development
- Development of a ski-hill

Once completed, the Red River Floodway expansion project will provide a 1 in 700 year level of flood protection, protect in excess of 450,000 residents from flooding, avoid untold environmental damage and prevent more than \$12 billion in potential flood damages to the Manitoba and Canadian economy.

In 2003, Canada and Manitoba announced their financial commitments to the floodway expansion project. Canada has recognized the project as a national infrastructure priority. Canada and Manitoba have also invested \$110 million to improve flood protection in for rural Manitoba communities since 1997.

The report can be viewed at www.floodwayauthority.mb.ca or by contacting the Manitoba Floodway Authority at 945-4900.

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Media Contact:

Ronuk Modha,
Manitoba Floodway Authority
(204) 945-4900, (204) 945-4178 or 1-866-356-6355

Jacquie Sippola
Western Economic Diversification
Government of Canada
(204) 983-0280

Paul White
Communications Services Manitoba
Province of Manitoba
(204) 945-8124