

Expansion proposal for the

SEINE-RAT RIVER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

To include the

Roseau River watershed comprised of the rural municipalities of
Franklin, Stuartburn, Montcalm, and Piney

October 21, 2011

INTRODUCTION

This proposal is to expand the current membership of the Seine-Rat River Conservation District to include the municipal councils of Franklin, Stuartburn, Montcalm and Piney. The new expanded area is the Roseau River watershed.

The district currently includes all or parts of the municipalities of De Salaberry, Franklin, Hanover, La Broquerie, Montcalm, Piney, Reynolds, Ritchot, Springfield, Ste. Anne, Stuartburn, Taché, City of Steinbach, Towns of Ste. Anne and Niverville, and the Village of St-Pierre-Jolys, all within the Seine and Rat River watersheds.

1. Name

The district name will remain as the Seine-Rat River Conservation District

2. Size

The proposed expansion into the Roseau River watershed is 2,684 square kilometres (1,036 square miles) with an approximate population of 5,500 people. The current area of the Seine-Rat River Conservation District is approximately 3,974 square kilometres (1,534 square miles) with a population of approximately 52,000 people. Total new district area will be approximately 6,658 square kilometres and 57,000 residents (Appendix 1).

3. Board Governance

Appointments to the sub-district and board will be in accordance with *The Conservation Districts Act*. District appointments will be expanded from 63 to 70 appointments, of which 6 are from the new municipal expansion (Appendix 2, Table 1). With the expanded area, Seine-Rat River Conservation District will have seven (7) sub-district committees consisting of the: Upper Seine River, Lower Seine River, Rat River, Tourond Creek, Manning Canal, Marsh River, and Roseau River.

Sub-districts will hold an annual election to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair. The Chair of each sub-district will act as a representative on the main board of directors.

Although First Nations land is excluded from the jurisdiction of a conservation district, First Nations can be invited to participate on the sub-district committee or on the main Board. The intent is to be inclusive of all governments that have an interest in the management and well being of the watershed. An agreement can be developed independently of the expansion proposal between the district and First Nation community.

4. District Program

a. General

The member municipalities have discussed local issues related to land and water management and will strive to work together to offer programs and develop projects to address issues and improve watershed health and sustainability. The key principle is the desire to work together in a planned approach and as a watershed community.

b. Integrated Watershed Management Plan

Manitoba Water Stewardship assists all conservation districts with the development of Integrated Watershed Management Plans. The plans are used as decision making tools to focus activities that will address priority land and water management issues in the watershed.

The *Roseau River Watershed Plan* completed in April 2007 and the *Overall Plan* for the Roseau River Watershed District (Minnesota, 2004) will assist the Roseau River sub-district establish priorities and be referenced in any future watershed management plans.

c. Administration

The Board is responsible for the overall governance of all district affairs. The board employs staff to deliver district programs, ensure financial accountability, and submit all reporting required by provincial policy.

Manitoba Water Stewardship - Watershed Planning and Programs staff provides assistance to the district for planning and delivery of land and water management programs.

d. Exclusion of Works

The following is excluded from the jurisdiction, authority and control of the Board:

- All municipal drainage works including bridges and crossings subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council
- All provincial drainage works including bridges and crossings (subject to negotiation with Manitoba Water Stewardship and Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation) – with final approval from the Lieutenant Governor in Council
- Works under the jurisdiction, authority and control of The Manitoba Water Services Board
- Provincial Dams, Reservoirs and Flood Protection works
- Provincial Wildlife Management Areas
- Federal, Provincial Parks and Forests
- Community Pastures
- Indian Reserves as defined in *The Indian Act* (Canada)

e. Integrated Approach

The Board agrees with the aforementioned exclusions and deems it necessary and in public interest to form cooperative partnerships and be inclusive while undertaking and implementing an integrated approach to land and water management programming in each of the four watersheds that they work in.

International, trans-boundary cooperation is essential to successful watershed planning and implementation. As part of its routine operations, the Roseau River watershed sub-district committee is encouraged to communicate and engage with neighbouring counties in the State of Minnesota and at the Roseau River Watershed District.

f. Powers of the Board

The Conservation Districts Act provides a conservation district board with recognition as a corporate body and allows it to:

- enter into contracts and agreements
- hire staff
- acquire lands by purchase or lease
- assume responsibility for works
- recommend protected areas to municipalities
- develop and implement an Integrated Watershed Management Plan
- plan and deliver programs

g. Benefits and Opportunities

Benefits of establishing a conservation district include:

- Recognition as a watershed-based organization addressing land and water issues
- Unified voice when approaching government and other agencies
- Combination of a diverse background of people with vast local knowledge and experience
- Delivery of programs to address recommended actions within watershed plans

Opportunities:

- To develop integrated watershed management plans that address local issues
- Greater opportunity and success of acquiring external funding
- Financial, planning and technical support from Province
- Measurably improve the health of the watershed

5. Goals

The expansion of the Seine-Rat River Conservation District is designed to mutually benefit all parties through the conservation, control and sustainable management of land and water in the watersheds they work in.

The municipalities have considered the merits of the Conservation Districts Program, including identifying short and long-term sustainable land and water management goals through watershed planning processes that may include, but not limited to promoting, coordinating and implementing:

- a. Water storage/retention projects as part of an overall surface water management plan
- b. Soil conservation and erosion control programs
- c. Riparian rehabilitation programs to stabilize riverbanks, establish vegetated buffers and protect and improve aquatic ecosystems
- d. Programs to protect and conserve surface and groundwater including drinking water source protection planning and programming
- e. Nutrient reduction programming
- f. Watershed management education and extension programming to District residents

6. Financial Implications

Under the current funding policy the Province of Manitoba provides operating grants through the annual budget process. District grant distribution is based on the Conservation District Framework for the Future funding formula. The district is required to obtain a minimum of 25% levy from the municipal partners. Conservation Districts have the option to acquire additional municipal levy or form partnerships for projects extended beyond the scope of the regular provincial grant.

The Conservation Districts Act requires a schedule for the District setting the upper and lower mil rate that a Board can levy against a municipality. Municipalities must approve the schedule before it becomes law. For purposes of this proposal, the minimum and maximum levies have been set at 0.3 and 3.0 mills, respectively, on land portion of the assessment. The municipalities are required to approve a by-law indicating how the levies are to be raised (land, buildings or general revenue).

The base minimum municipal levy contribution for municipal partners in the Roseau River watershed will be set at \$1,500 annually. Additional municipal levy contributions above \$1,500 will be generally based on portioned land assessment, area, and population.

The 2011 portioned land assessment and proposed levies for the municipalities in the Roseau River watershed are located in Appendix 2, Table 3.

The Conservation District Act also requires that the schedule attached to the Order in Council have an established maximum amount that a district may borrow. The current approved borrowing authority for the district is \$50,000.00.

7. Proposed Budget

The proposed budget (example provided in Appendix 3) will be determined through discussions with member municipal partners. The budget will outline municipal, provincial, and external funding.

Districts are required to develop budgets based on the watershed management plan(s) and an annual work plan prior to submitting a request for provincial funding to the province for review and approval by the Conservation Districts Commission.

When the expansion proposal is approved by the Conservation Districts Commission, a request is made through the department's regular budget process. This may take up to 18 months for final approval.

8. Roseau River Sub-District

a. General

- The new expanded area known as the Roseau River watershed will operate as an autonomous sub-district. The sub-district will conform to the operational and financial policies of the Seine-Rat River Conservation District.
- All programming will be based on the recommended actions within the Roseau River Watershed Plan (2007), local priorities, and conform to the mandate of the Conservation Districts Framework for the Future document.
- The future intent of the sub-district is to become an independent conservation district.

b. Governance

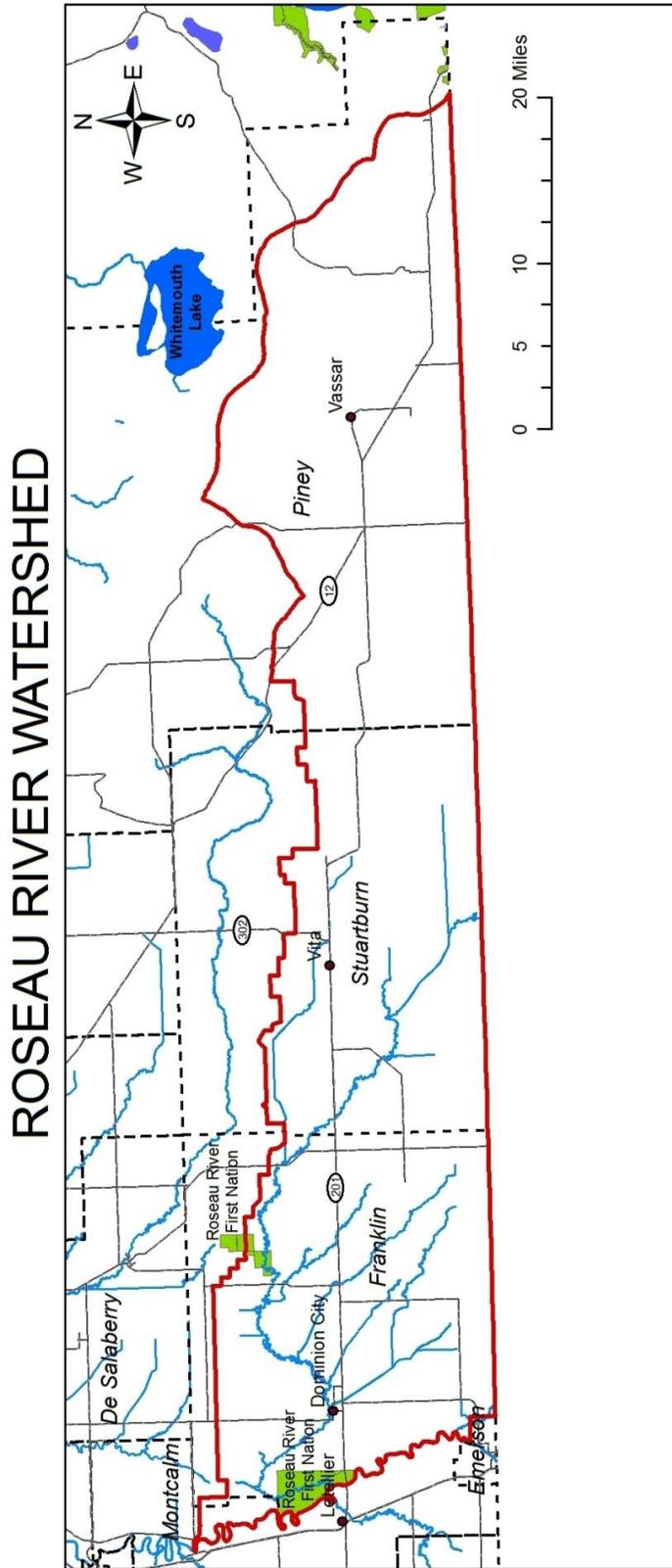
- The sub-district will be a seven member committee with the municipality of Franklin, Stuartburn and Piney each appointing two members and Montcalm appointing one based on the appointment (Appendix 2, Table 1) process identified in *The Conservation Districts Act*.
- The sub-district will elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson. The chairperson acts as the representative on the main board and will provide a brief update on the Roseau River sub-district activities.

c. Administration

- The sub-district will be administered through the regular accounting system established by the Seine-Rat River Conservation District. All revenue and expenses will form part of the annual audit process.
- The district administrator will provide direction and guidance to ensure sub-district operations conform to established administrative standards and policies.
- The Roseau River sub-district will contribute an amount mutually agreed to by the board to offset administrative costs.
- The board will be responsible to administer the person hired to work for the sub-district.

- The Rural Municipality of Stuartburn will supply an office for the Roseau River sub-district employee.
- d. Project Management
- The sub-district will hire an employee to develop and delivery programming based on the recommended actions within the Roseau River Watershed Plan and priorities of the sub-district.
 - The district administrator and manager will provide direction and expectations for all facets of project management including: purchasing, invoicing, accounts receivable and payable, record keeping, personnel management, contractor and landowner agreements, and file management for audit purposes.
- e. Budget
- Roseau River will develop and operate within a defined budget based on the amount of levy generated from participating municipalities within the Roseau River watershed. The budget format will conform to provincial policy and reporting will be the responsibility of the Seine-Rat River Conservation District.
 - An example budget (Appendix 3, Table 3) is provided.
 - The district manager will provide direction and guidance to ensure sub-district operations and activity reports are received on time for inclusion into the reporting requirements for provincial funding.

Appendix 1 Roseau River Sub-District



APPENDIX 2

Municipal appointments to Roseau River sub-district.

Table 1 Roseau River Sub-District Appointments

MUNICIPALITY	MEMBERS
Franklin	2
Stuartburn	2
Piney	2
Montcalm	1
TOTAL	7

NOTE: Appointments are based on municipal land area within the sub-district as guided by *The Conservation Districts Act*.

<u>Square Miles</u>	=	<u>Appointments</u>
- 5 or less	=	1 but not obligated
- 5 – 15	=	1 member ⁽¹⁾ ⁽³⁾
- 15 or more	=	2 members ⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Appointments are councillor and ratepayer or two ratepayers – cannot be two councillors

⁽²⁾ Where one appointment is required, it may be the council(s) choice.

⁽³⁾ Roseau River First Nation may be invited to participate by the district Board.

Roseau Land Assessment

Table 2 Roseau River municipal assessment and levy

Municipality	Portioned Land Assessment in Roseau River Watershed 2011	Watershed Levy based on .53 Mil
Stuartburn	9,538,880	\$5,000
Montcalm	1,167,490	\$(580) 1,500.
Franklin	31,324,430	\$16,500
Piney	7,418,520	\$3,800
TOTAL	\$49,449,320	\$26,800

Appendix 3

Roseau River Sub-District 2012-13 Operations Budget

Sub-District Resolution #
Draft Approved: Board
Resolution #
Final Approval: Board
Resolution #

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	PROVINCE	BOARD		EXTERNAL	TOTAL	TOTAL %	2011/2012 EXPENDED
		LEVY	LOCAL				
ADMINISTRATION (to off-set SRRCD staff costs)	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,000.00	3.7%	
ASSETS (laptop computer, printer, software)	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 350.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,400.00	1.3%	
GOVERNANCE & POLICY (sub-district and chair remuneration)	\$ 4,650.00	\$ 1,550.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,200.00	5.8%	
WATERSHED EXTENSION	\$ 750.00	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ 4,050.00	\$ 1,000.00	.9%	
PROGRAM SUPPORT (Roseau river staff salary and \$2,000 for expenses)	\$ 27,450.00	\$ 9,150.00	\$ -	\$ 2,470.00	\$ 36,600.00	34.1%	
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION							
Roseau River Watershed	\$ 43,500.00	\$ 14,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 58,000.00	54.1%	
Surface Water Management	\$ 34,500.00	\$ 11,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 46,000.00		
Source Water Protection	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,000.00		
TOTAL	\$ 80,400.00	\$ 26,800.00	\$ -	\$ 6,520.00	\$ 107,200.00	100%	\$ -

Note: Administrative expenses incurred by Seine-Rat River CD will be monitored, reviewed, and reimbursed bi-annually