



AGRICULTURE IN OUR WATERSHED

The **Lesser Slave Watershed Council (LSWC)** is in the process of developing an **Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP)**. This process involves input from government, industry stakeholders, and individuals to address issues and concerns about our watershed, including ecosystem health, water quality, and sustainable water usage. Using the information we collect, the IWMP will assess these concerns and develop appropriate solutions.



SNAPSHOT OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN OUR REGION

● Livestock and crop farming



Agricultural activity is fundamentally important to the lives of people in the Lesser Slave Watershed and beyond. Special care must be taken to ensure we can continue to grow the food that sustains us while protecting the aquatic ecosystems that sustain the land.

The IWMP will collect input from agricultural producers, government departments, and other stakeholders. Working together, we will determine strategies and practices to balance desirable economic outcomes with environmental concerns.

Quick Facts:

- Agricultural activities are highly concentrated in the low-lying western areas of the Lesser Slave Watershed, particularly along the Heart and East and West Prairie Rivers.



Solar waterers are a proven strategy for keeping livestock away from fragile shorelines



WATERSHED RISKS

- Excess nutrients and chemicals from agricultural land can become contaminants when they move downstream to rivers and lakes.
- Livestock and infilling can damage riparian areas (land adjacent to bodies of water) and wetlands. These sensitive areas provide critical habitat for rare and diverse plants and wildlife, and protect lakes and streams from erosion and pollution.
- Algal blooms can develop into blue/green algae which pose serious health risks.



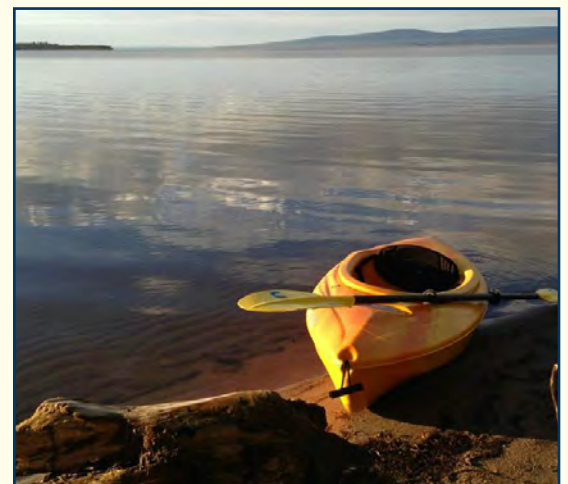
PRACTICES TO REDUCE RISKS

- Conservation tillage: Leave residue from previous year's crop to hold moisture in the soil and reduce soil erosion and runoff.
- Manure management: Capture feedlot runoff to prevent nutrients and pathogens from reaching streams, rivers, and lakes.
- Fence areas bordering streams and lakes (riparian zones) to keep livestock away from environmentally sensitive areas. A border of healthy native vegetation also helps filter contaminants and prevent erosion.
- Proper fertilizer and pesticide management to minimize pollution risks.

ALGAE BLOOMS



The above image shows an algal bloom in Lesser Slave Lake as seen from space (Google Earth, 2005). When excessive nutrients from agricultural activity move downstream into the lake, they feed the algae and cause these blooms. Algal blooms compromise the safety of our drinking water and restrict recreational activities.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

The health of our watershed impacts the well-being of our environment, plants and animals, and the people who live and work here. The more information we have, the better equipped we are to offer sustainable, effective solutions to issues facing our watershed.

Your opinions and experiences are a crucial part of a successful plan.

We want to hear from you! To talk to us, learn more, or get involved, please call the LSWC at **780-523-9800** or visit **www.lswc.ca**