

- Improve existing river banks
- Collect deposits of selenite crystals
- Help farmers who might need it
- Construct a graveyard

Summer and Winter Recreation

MFA received numerous proposals regarding various summer and winter recreation activities that could be associated with floodway expansion. They include:

- Development of a multi-use, four season, greenway/trail along the floodway
- Cross-country ski trail
- Snowmobile trails
- Toboggan hill
- Sled dog racing and training trails
- Outdoor ice rink
- Horseback riding trails
- Hang-gliding facility
- Snowboarding
- Orienteering
- Wildlife management area
- Festival site
- Rowing facility
- Gun and target range

Employment Training and Business Development

MFA received a small number of training and business development expressions of interests. These ideas were related to private investment and general economic development opportunities for First Nation and Métis residents.

MFA has initiated consultations with southern Manitoba First Nation and Métis communities regarding employment and business development opportunities. In addition, various industry, labour, Aboriginal and training organizations have been engaged in a stakeholder process to develop the training components of the project.

In light of the fact most of the current floodway is used for agricultural purposes, MFA has initiated a series of consultations with local Manitoba agricultural producers regarding any disruption caused by the construction of the floodway and any associated recreational developments. In addition, MFA has been working with local producers to explore ways that the project will benefit them in areas such as drainage, access to earth and land stewardship.

Other Opportunities

In addition to summer and winter recreation, training and business development and suggestions regarding the disposal of earth, MFA received approximately ten other ideas through the Call for Expressions of Interest, including:

- Twinning of Highway 15 floodway crossing east of Winnipeg to accommodate increased future traffic flows
- Development of a 3-D virtual reality floodway to demonstrate the project's benefits, assist the engineering design and help prepare for flood emergencies
- Re-vegetation of native grassland species in the floodway
- Develop an interpretive centre for the floodway that features flood history, educational and historic material and multi-media presentations
- Formally document and archive the project's development, public consultation and construction phases for historic and educational purposes
- Beautification of the floodway's inlet and outlet control structures

Observations and Conclusions

Since the conclusion of the Call for Expressions of Interest, MFA has reviewed the submissions in the context of the project's environmental licensing process and the guidelines described in the original "Information Package". In many cases, organizations were contacted and interviewed directly by MFA staff.

Through this process and the ongoing public consultation process, MFA has identified a number of conclusions and observations that can be drawn from the initiative:

- Increased flood security for Winnipeg and southern Manitoba will benefit all Manitobans and is in the interest of both the provincial and national economy.
- The expansion of the Red River Floodway provides an important opportunity for recreation and economic development for organizations, local communities and the public.
- Since expanding the floodway in anticipation of future floods is the primary purpose of floodway expansion, actual construction on any recreational component will be incorporated into the latter stages of project construction.
- Proposals that require summer water use of the floodway are not compatible with the primary purpose of flood protection, as identified in the Call for Expressions of Interest on March 18, 2004.
- Broad public support has been demonstrated for the development of a four season multi-use, greenway trail system along the floodway.
- There were other proposals and ideas submitted that were complimentary to the greenway trail, including the establishment of snowmobile trails, a multi-media interpretive centre and horseback riding trails.
- Opportunities exist with the millions of cubic yards of excavated earth that will result from the project – in particular as it relates to local highway construction.

- The project's design will allow Springhill Ski Facility to remain at its current location – without disruption.
- Establishment of a new ski hill, compatible with Fédération International de Ski (FIS) requirements, would require earth in excess of the amount that will be made available through excavation of the project, additional property acquisition and the application of an additional environmental license.
- There will be a need to define the engineering parameters for recreation development on the floodway – particularly regarding access to the floodway channel and environmental protection.
- No recreation or economic proposal will be authorized that has a potential negative effect on the environment. Project proponents will be required to comply with relevant environmental regulatory standards and any other applicable legislation.
- Residents and municipalities have legitimate concerns regarding uncontrolled use of the floodway for recreational purposes.
- The project's planned improvements to highway bridges crossing the floodway will have a positive impact on the economy of rural communities surrounding Winnipeg.
- There is a strong connection between success in the agriculture sector and access to quality groundwater, drainage systems and haying opportunities. MFA needs to be sensitive to these realities when considering the project's design and current lease framework.
- There is strong public support for ensuring that – to the extent possible – Manitobans are employed to construct the expanded floodway.
- There is strong public support for developing training opportunities for Manitobans through the construction of the project.
- By providing training opportunities for workers, the floodway project will have the potential to address labour shortages in the construction industry and benefit future economic development projects in the Manitoba.
- Training partnerships need to be efficient, job-oriented and accessible to Aboriginal, Métis, rural, and employment equity groups.
- Opportunities may exist to partner with the governments of Canada and Manitoba to promote skills training.
- There is a high level of appreciation that the expansion of the floodway is an historic initiative and should be documented, archived and promoted to increase public awareness of the project and its benefits. This includes Red River flood history and the construction of the original floodway.
- There are varying degrees of unregulated activity in and around the floodway – in particular enjoyment of motorized vehicles. There may be outstanding questions about legal and liability issues associated with this current "use" of the floodway.
- There is an opportunity to use leading-edge, made in Manitoba technology to demonstrate the effects of the floodway expansion and simulate various flood events, assist engineers in the project design, improve emergency response efforts and provide opportunities for young Manitobans in the new media and technology sectors.

Next Steps and Recommendations

Based on the submissions received through the Expression of Interest process and the ongoing public consultation process, MFA will consider a number of next steps as the project moves forward:

- 1) Establishment of a Floodway Recreation Working Group to:
 - Examine issues of recreational use along the floodway.
 - Examine the overall planning and design work process of the recreational component.
 - Work in collaboration with MFA staff on this component as planning and design work on the floodway project is undertaken.
 - Consider legal and liability issues associated with current unregulated “use” of the floodway site.
 - Consider ongoing maintenance issues related to potential developments.
 - Identify opportunities for financial support.
- 2) Establishment of a multi-use, four season greenway trail along the floodway within the project's pre-design.
- 3) Incorporate a four lane crossing in the planning for the PTH 15 Bridge to meet projected traffic flows.
- 4) Initiate a formal process that will allow Manitobans to access the excavated earth from the floodway channel. This process will be initiated and advertised closer to the start of construction in 2005. The following principles will guide this process:
 - No increase in project costs.
 - No delay of floodway construction.
 - Priority for local highway construction and rural flood protection.
- 5) Examine the possibility to create a virtual reality 3D floodway model that will recreate much of Manitoba's Red River Basin, simulate flood scenarios, illustrate the floodway's effects and help to increase public awareness of the project.
- 6) Examine options to help capture, document and archive the project's development and construction.
- 7) Ensure that the project does not disrupt the operation of the Lockport Children's Festival site.
- 8) Distribute the “Opportunity Report” to the members of the public, key stakeholders, local municipalities, the Province of Manitoba and Government of Canada and the independent environmental review team.

Three activities that MFA will **not** consider as part of the expansion project are:

- 1) Any proposals that require water in the floodway (as identified in the Expression of Interest).
- 2) Acquisition of additional lands for the sole purposes of recreational development.
- 3) Development of a new ski-hill.

In addition, MFA will **not** consider the following activities *within (in and around the wetted area) the floodway channel*:

- No permanent or temporary structures.
- No earth trails.
- No earth trails in areas subject to sediment transport into the floodway channel.
- No hazardous material storage.
- No sewage or solid waste.

As the project proceeds, MFA will continue to consider the following priority areas:

- Ensure rural Manitoba communities realize economic benefits from the floodway expansion project;
- Examining opportunities to maximize employment opportunities for Manitoba workers and contractors;
- Maximize training opportunities associated with the floodway expansion;
- Identify opportunities for the governments of Manitoba and Canada to support skills partnerships and other opportunities identified in the report;
- Work with local municipalities to help facilitate improved local drainage systems and mitigate any potential impacts to groundwater supplies.

Acknowledgements

MFA would like to thank the following organizations that either submitted an expression of interest or provided input through our consultation sessions:

- Cross Country Ski Association of Manitoba
- Parkland Mews, Falconry & Bird of Prey Education Centre
- Lockport Children's Festival
- Winnipeg Rock & Mineral Club
- Manitoba Orienteering Association
- University of Manitoba
- Lockport Exchange Organization
- Manitoba Industrial Technology Centre
- Manitoba Rowing Association
- Rivers West
- Red River Corridors Inc.
- Sutherland Advisory Services
- Manitoba Hang Gliding Association
- Springhill Winter Park Action Committee
- Group'Action Saint-Norbert
- Manitoba Sled Dog Association
- Red River College
- Manitoba Métis Federation
- Manitoba Horse Council
- Snowmobilers of Manitoba
- TAG Creative Studios
- Save Our Seine River Environment Inc.
- DBC Management Resources
- Manitoba Chamber of Commerce
- Business Council of Manitoba
- Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce
- Manitoba Building and Construction Trades Council
- Manitoba Heavy Construction Association
- Winnipeg Heavy Construction Association
- Manitoba Federation of Labour
- Rural Municipalities of Taché, Springfield, East St. Paul, Ritchot, St. Clements Morris, West St. Paul, MacDonald, St. Andrews
- City of Winnipeg
- City of Selkirk
- Keystone Agriculture Producers

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