



## AVIVA COMMUNITY FUND

We would like you to vote for our project:

: "Canadians, Please Help us Preserve the Lizard Lake Wetland"

Please go to this website to vote for us!

<http://www.avivacommunityfund.org/ideas/acf10981>

Round 1 Voting begins October 3 until October 19th, you can vote 15 times.

Also, please let everyone in your address book know the link so they can help us out. The Lizard Lake infrastructure has been in place for approximately 25 years and needs major dollars to repair. This AVIVA COMMUNITY FUND can help us repair this project.

"Canadians, Please Help Us Preserve the Lizard Lake Wetland"

Budget – Medium \$100,000

Category – Environment

Organization – Pembina Valley Conservation District

Location: Lizard Lake Project 10 km northeast of Manitou, MB

“As people alive today, we must consider future generations: a clean environment is a human right like any other. It is therefore part of our responsibility toward others to ensure that the world we pass on is as healthy, if not healthier, than we found it.” ([Dalai Lama](#))

The 580 acre wetland and 1560 acre “back-flood” Lizard Lake Wetland Project is a world class model of what partners can do in successfully managing a wetland for both wildlife and agriculture. This dynamic site is unique and shows the benefits of preserving wetlands by providing a better quality of life and water resources, protection of our environment and a climate change solution. It seems there is more incentive for landowners to drain than to keep wetlands, this is a major problem for all Canadians and is why we need everyone to help. We have to stop this loss across Canada; our best investment is protecting wetlands like the Lizard Lake project.

There was a long history of disagreement between those wanting to drain the wetland and those interested in retaining it prior to construction of the project in 1985. Since then people have learned the valuable role it plays in the watershed by helping maintain groundwater levels and water quality; minimize downstream flooding; as well as benefits for wildlife and agriculture. Construction of the ring-diked central or marsh cell ensured the continued presence of the wetland and wildlife habitat. Surrounding this, a back-flood ie temporarily flooded cell of about 1,560 acres was created. Each spring, the temporary flooding within the back-flood allows optimum growth of the grasses and sedges, providing an abundance of hay when the water level is lowered. This temporary water also provides important pair, loafing and feeding sites for waterfowl. Attesting to its biodiversity, a variety of animals are part of this eco-system including geese, ducks, mink, muskrats, beaver, terns, rails and bitterns.

In normal runoff years, operation consists of setting the control structures allowing the back-flood cell to fill to the desired level. Controls in the ring dike are adjusted allowing water back into the marsh cell by means of gravity flow to the desired operating level. This operating level on the marsh cell may vary from year to year. Any excess water flows out of the back-flood controls and down the outlet ditch. In years of normal or greater than normal spring runoff, desired levels on both cells are attained.

Water from the back-flood cell is normally released starting in late May in order to allow the hay land to dry out sufficiently for hay operations in mid-summer. Water is released at a rate so as not to exceed the flow capacity of the ditch. If flow capacity is exceeded, then water will spill outside of the ditch and may cause problems for downstream landowners.



Hay bales on the Lizard Lake back-flood

Education is a very important aspect of the site; it is used by surrounding communities and by schools and universities for educational purposes. The Miami Collegiate and Manitou’s Nellie McClung Collegiate both use the site for various types of water testing, using their River Watch equipment, ecological succession, adaptations, food webs and interaction and human impacts on ecosystems.

In the media we hear about protecting the Lake Winnipeg Basin; algae blooms are a problem because of excessive phosphorous and nutrient loading going into the lake. We have learned that our wetlands act as filters to clean nutrients from water; they are sponges slowly releasing water into the watershed and helping

alleviate overland flooding; they are carbon sinks helping reduce greenhouse gases. For these three reasons alone, the societal benefits of wetlands like Lizard Lake are enormous.

This operational part of this project has been working great since 1985 but the deteriorating water control infrastructure now threatens the ability of the partners to continue its successful management and requires refurbishment and significant investment. We have brought all the stakeholders together, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Pembina Valley Conservation District, RMs of Pembina and Thompson, Manitoba Water Stewardship and the local landowners to work together to find a solution to the problem.

We will have In-Kind support for the project from Ducks Unlimited Canada and Pembina Valley Conservation District staff, use of machinery owned by the local Rural Municipalities and the local landowners land used for the back-flood area.

To promote our submission to Aviva Community Fund we will continue to work with our local newspapers and radio stations, we will post information onto our website and include a video on YouTube promoting the Aviva Community Funds. We will encourage all of our many e-mail friends to vote for us so we may help preserve this wetland.

Aviva, please help us to do the work that is needed to repair the infrastructure at our Lizard Lake Wetland Project, help us all protect the earth so we can live healthy for generations to come.

