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## Wetland Conservation, Enhancement, or Restoration

A wetland is a permanently or temporarily water-saturated area characterized by distinct plant and soil types. The benefits derived from wetlands are extensive: wetlands help to prevent flooding, filter and purify water, recharge groundwater, maintain baseflow to waterways (especially important during dry periods), reduce erosion and provide extensive habitat to support biodiversity.

The Water Rights Act, regulation, and policies govern drainage practices in Manitoba. Under this regime, Class 4 and 5 wetlands are protected outright from drainage. Class 3 wetland loss requires compensation if licensed for drainage. Drainage of Class 1 and 2 wetlands can proceed through a new registration approach. As a result, valuable Class 1 and 2 wetlands across Agro-Manitoba are vulnerable to drainage.

The purpose of the Wetland Activity is to conserve, enhance and/or restore wetlands to provide ecological goods and services that include:

- Enhanced water storage;
- Reduced peak flows, which can moderate the timing and volume of runoff and reduce negative impacts downstream;
- Improved water quality by capturing sediments, nutrients, and contaminants;
- Protection to aquifers and enhancement of recharge;
- Improved wildlife habitat and biodiversity; and
- Increased carbon sequestration.

### Eligible Practices:

- establishing a perennial upland buffer around a wetland
- fencing, off-site watering, and grazing management to limit grazing disturbance
- Restoring a previously drained wetland or enhancing an existing wetland
- Construction of water level controls for wetland restoration

### Ineligible Practices:

- Projects that are part of a compensation requirement under The Water Rights Act.
- Conservation of Class 3, 4 or 5 wetlands.
- Conservation of peatlands