

FISHING LAKE FLOOD CONTROL BACKGROUNDER

Fishing Lake is at the highest level ever recorded in late fall. High water is already causing problems in some areas and there is a significant risk of flood damage in spring 2011.

An urgent response is needed at Fishing Lake to resolve flood issues before homes and cottages are flooded next spring. At the same time, work must be planned to provide long term protection so all the communities around Fishing Lake can grow with confidence.

Following the major flood in 2007 government made a commitment to provide long term flood protection for the communities around Fishing Lake. The works announced today will provide emergency protection in spring 2011 and, with the previously announced commitment to make the berms permanent, will provide the required long term flood protection.

To ensure protection from anticipated spring flooding the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority will:

- construct a channel downstream of Fishing Lake that would assist in moving excess water out of Fishing Lake more rapidly than would naturally occur;
- raise low areas on the berms that were constructed in 2007 to ensure effective flood protection in spring of 2011;
- purchase sandbags and make other preparations and if necessary place sandbags to protect property threatened by the spring runoff;
- assist the Fishing Lake First Nation to resolve flooding issues that occurred due to the heavy rainfall in 2010 and ensuring that facilities are protected if there is higher than normal runoff in 2011.

Estimated cost of all the works is \$8.5 million.

Channel improvements below Fishing Lake will be constructed on an emergency basis with mitigation of any environmental impacts. Channels will be constructed downstream of Hazel Lake, Whitesand Lake and Dog Lake with a rock weir structure below each lake that ensures the channel cannot lower the lake below its natural spill level. The channel will reduce the level of Fishing Lake, creating capacity to absorb more of the spring runoff, but will not lower Fishing Lake beyond 250 mm above the natural spill level, so as to minimize ecological impact.

The channel will not only provide protection in spring 2011. Along with the previously announced decision to make the berms constructed in 2007 into permanent flood protection works, the channel will provide long term protection for the Fishing Lake

communities. The channel will also reduce the flooding of farmland caused by the outflow from Fishing Lake.

The Watershed Authority will continue to consult with the Fishing Lake First Nation on the project and address potential impacts on Treaty Rights. Early discussions have lead to a more environmentally friendly design.

Fishing Lake First Nation also has homes and buildings at risk of flooding due to the large amounts of rainfall and high water levels. The Watershed Authority will assist the First Nation to resolve some of these flood risks and ensure that community is also protected.

This work is dependent on Saskatchewan Watershed Authority receiving environmental approvals and permits from the Ministry of Environment and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The Watershed Authority has applied to Ministry of Environment for an emergency exemption to the Environmental Assessment process which would allow the channel construction to proceed before the full environmental assessment is completed. Watershed Authority will mitigate any environmental impacts

Completing the flood proofing in the Fishing Lake area will restore confidence in the area and help prevent land values from decreasing. The support facilities in the area, including a golf course and store, should again be viable as the concern over future flooding diminishes and further development is again considered.