

**SHELLMOUTH DAM COMPENSATION PROGRAM (SDCP)
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY
For the Department of Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure
Emergency Management Organization
April 2024**

Key Facts:

- The Shellmouth Dam and Reservoir are provincial water infrastructure operated for multiple objectives, most notably to reduce flood damage for communities downstream and to provide a reliable water supply.
- Operation of the Shellmouth Dam and Reservoir often eliminates or reduces flooding, but in some cases, it can extend the period of flooding on land downstream, known as artificial flooding.
- Depending on when during the growing season artificial flooding occurs, and the nature of agricultural activity taking place on the land, the artificial flooding portion of the flooding often contributes minimally to overall flood damages.
- Artificial flooding occurs when the regulated water levels along the river exceed the natural water levels, resulting in land being flooded for a longer duration.
- Flooding that occurs in the Assiniboine River Valley downstream of the Shellmouth Dam and Reservoir is not always artificial. Artificial flooding is determined through a technical calculation comparing the unregulated hydrograph and regulated hydrograph.
- The Shellmouth Dam Compensation Program (SDCP) provides financial compensation for losses caused in whole or part by artificial flooding resulting from the operation of Shellmouth Dam.

Goal:

- To educate and engage with affected downstream stakeholders, potential SDCP claimants, and the public about Shellmouth Dam and Reservoir operations and the SDCP.
- Those potentially at risk of flooding by the Assiniboine River downstream of Shellmouth Dam and Reservoir understand the process of artificial flooding and the steps involved in accessing the SDCP.
- The public and other stakeholders of the Shellmouth Dam and Reservoir gain an awareness of artificial flooding and the SDCP.

Objectives:

- Create an understanding of artificial flooding and the operations of the Shellmouth Dam and Reservoir.
- Create awareness for when the SDCP launches.
- Attract participation in the SDCP through building relationships with and confidence in Manitoba EMO.
- Increase efficiencies through program administration supporting claimants and processing program documentation.

Challenges:

- The Manitoba EMO recognizes that past compensation programs were unsatisfactory and delivered inconsistently.
- Past programs experienced delays due to factors such as new legislation, lack of established program processes, and lack of communication between program administration and claimants.
- These previous challenges have in some circumstances damaged the Government of Manitoba's relationships with impacted claimants. Manitoba EMO will need to work with impacted claimants to rebuild relationships and confidence in the compensation program.
- Recent improvements and efficiencies made to the SDCP do not address stakeholder expectations for additional compensation for all flood damages (both natural and artificial) or their long-standing complaints about Shellmouth Dam and Reservoir operations.

Key Messages:

- The Manitoba Emergency Management Organization remains open to discussing long-term strategies and engaging with all stakeholders on how best to balance the many interests in this area.
- The Manitoba Emergency Management Organization is committed to developing an efficient and fair Shellmouth Dam Compensation Program.

Target Audience(s):

- Potential SDCP claimants
- Shellmouth Reservoir Regulation Liaison Committee
- Local Authorities in the Upper Assiniboine River Valley
 - Riding Mountain West
 - Russell-Binscarth
 - Prairie View
 - Ellice Archie
 - Wallace-Woodworth
 - Sifton
 - Whitehead
 - Riverdale
 - Cornwallis
 - Brandon
- Indigenous Communities in the Upper Assiniboine River Valley
 - Gambler First Nation
 - Birdtail Sioux First Nation
 - Sioux Valley Dakota Nation

Strategy/Approach:

1. Launching the SDCP

Manitoba EMO will ensure key communication timelines are adhered to, ensuring stakeholder awareness of when artificial flooding starts, when a SDCP has opened, and when artificial flooding ends.

A public notice will be issued at the start of a SDCP. This notice will include:

- a) The date the artificial flooding began.
- b) Information about how to file a claim for compensation.
- c) A statement that another public notice will be issued advising when the artificial flooding has ended and fixing a date by which claims for compensation in relation to the artificial flooding must be filed with the Emergency Management Organization
- d) A statement about how to access inundation maps published for the SDCP.

Another public notice will be issued at the end of artificial flooding. This notice will include:

- a) The date the artificial flooding ended.
- b) A date, at least 20 days after the end of artificial flooding, before which, all claims for compensation related to the artificial flooding must be filed with EMO.

Public notices will be posted on the Manitoba governments website, EMO's webpage, and published in local media in the Upper Assiniboine River region.

2. Information available during program delivery

When a SDCP is open additional information on the program will be published on Manitoba EMOs webpage.

- Compensation applications and links to required documentation to proceed with a claim.
- FAQs and fact sheets on the program process and eligibility.
- Artificial flood reports, inundation mapping, *What We Heard Report(s)*, and other relevant publications.
- Information on how to contact the Compensation Program Manager.

In-person and online engagements will be hosted, if required, during the start of a SDCP.

Manitoba EMO will develop a mailing list of organizations, individuals, and other stakeholders which will receive public notices and other updated information on the SDCP as it becomes available. Interested members of the public will be able to sign up for the mailing list on Manitoba EMO's webpage.

3. General Education

Educational material for Manitoba EMOs website will be developed or identified to help educate relevant audiences and stakeholders.

- An animation is being developed to convey general information on artificial flooding and Shellmouth Dam and Reservoir operations.
- EMOs webpage will direct viewers to Hydrologic Forecasting & Water Management's webpage for historical information on the Shellmouth Dam and Reservoir and the Shellmouth Reservoir Regulation Liaison Committee.
- EMO will maintain information on artificial flooding and the SDCP.

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