



**For Immediate Release**

**MFGA has grass roots appeal for Manitoba credit unions**

*Nine Manitoba Credit Unions step up to support community resilience via Manitoba grasslands group*

Winnipeg, MB (May 9, 2018) --- From one grassroots-minded group to another grassroots-minded group, Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association (MFGA) is proud to announce that nine Manitoba credit unions have committed \$38,500 to the MFGA and the MFGA Aquanty Project over the next three years.

“It’s our responsibility to live and promote co-operative values to Manitobans,” said Tim Klassen, CEO of Sunrise Credit Union and one of the driving forces behind the funding. “We believe the MFGA and the MFGA Aquanty Project for the Assiniboine River Basin are in very strong alignment with credit unions’ dedication towards making Manitoba a great place to live for all Manitobans.”

Westoba Credit Union CEO Jim Rediger, who worked with Klassen to promote the sponsorship to their colleagues, agreed.

“As financial cooperatives, credit unions are committed to the communities we serve,” he said, “At Westoba, we look to support projects with long-term and wide reaching benefits. The MFGA Aquanty Project is an excellent investment in a more sustainable future for us all.”

Besides Sunrise and Westoba, the sponsorship is funded by Access, Beautiful Plains, Crosstown Civic, Flin Flon, Noventis, Stride and Swan Valley credit unions.

The MFGA’s highest-profile project underway right now is the MFGA Aquanty Project, a HydroGeoSphere high-resolution model of the Assiniboine River Basin to look at the role of forages and grasslands in times of future flood and drought in the basin. The model-building component of the MFGA Aquanty Project has been recently completed and the group is now finalizing the public access components. MFGA is the project proponent and holder of the licence for stakeholders and land managers to access the model. According to Darren Chapman, MFGA Chair, the credit unions’ support is an exclamation mark of endorsement on MFGA’s recent efforts.

“We are working hard to ensure that the forages and grasslands our MFGA producers grow and steward are valued and showcased in all discussions around natural infrastructure and community resiliency,” said Chapman. “The MFGA Aquanty model will show these values from a water movement perspective, allowing producers, land managers and planners an unprecedented decision-support tool to help communities with flood and drought planning.”

Chapman said he expects the project to be available for public and stakeholder audiences July 2018.

“The credit union support will help MFGA drive the decision-support ability even further ahead and hopefully, help accelerate the model discussion into the next phases of model development,” he said.

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