

# Synopsis of Devils Lake Crisis

Devils Lake is North Dakota's largest natural lake situated in the western part of the state between Ramsey and Benson counties. Devils Lake is salty and contains no natural outlets or inlets and has been isolated from the Hudson Bay drainage basin for over 1000 years. The lake contains high levels of pollutants such as mercury, phosphorus and arsenic and has been deemed too polluted to irrigate surrounding farmland.

In response to Devils Lake's fluctuating water levels caused by the destruction of nearby wetlands, North Dakota has decided to create an outlet to divert the waters into the Sheyenne River which is located within the state, and then ultimately into the Red River which serves as the state border between North Dakota and Minnesota then flowing upward into Southern Manitoba and then ultimately into Lake Winnipeg, the 10<sup>th</sup> largest fresh water lake in the world. An outlet from Devils Lake would therefore transfer large amounts of saline water, pollutants and invasive species into all of the aforementioned waters

affecting its citizens living along water banks, the users of the water, the groundwater, forests, fisheries and riparian habitat for wildlife.

North Dakota has gone forward with this outlet without an environmental impact study in the face of serious concerns raised by politicians and concerned citizens from both sides of the border. Based on the Boundary Waters Treaty, Devils Lake outlet should be referred to the International Joint Commission in order to accurately assess and consider what sort of harmful pollutants and invasive species could potentially harm Canadian waters thus preventing possible irreversible damage.



## WHAT CAN I DO?

- Please sign our petition urging the provincial and/or federal government to protect our waters and ensure that Manitobans are aware of all of their options including their riparian rights.
- Write letters to your MP and local newspaper about how potential damages to your water will affect you and your family.
- Donate funds to support **Friends of the Earth**, a not for profit organization acting on behalf of Manitoba residents to protect their waters. Funds are required to support research, acquire scientific and legal expertise and continue negotiations at both the provincial and federal government levels.

Can you volunteer your time or donate funds? Please contact us at [www.foecanada.org](http://www.foecanada.org) or by calling 1-888-385-4444 extension 34.

# Friends of the Earth's Mandate on Devils Lake

## Urgent!!

- STOP Devils Lake tap from being turned on.
- Insist on a reference from the US government to launch an independent inquiry by the International Joint Commission.
- Initiate legal action to protect Canadians and our resources should a reference to the IJC not be obtained.

## Short term

- Analyze North Dakota's recently released 50 year water diversion plans along with Manitoba's water planning in order to formulate FOE's recommendations to address water issues where they arise in the Hudson Bay water shed.

## Long term

- To be prepared for and to set standards for addressing future

water diversion conflicts that may arise between the Canada/US border.

- Prepare to intervene with action research and legal tools in the Canada/US trans-boundary water conflicts developing now and in the future.

