SOURIS RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER

September 2026

Water Festival – Fall Edition 2026

On September 23, the Souris River Watershed District welcomed approximately **100 Grade 5 and 6 students** to Cherry Point for our Fall 2026 Water Festival!

Students joined us from **Melita School, Hartney School, Reston School, and Oak Lake Community School** for a day of hands-on learning about water and our environment.

Throughout the day, students rotated through interactive stations covering **water safety, enviroscape, the water cycle, runoff, water filtration, watersheds, groundwater, and critter dipping**.

A big thank you to the **Nature Conservancy of Canada, Brandon Search and Rescue, Oak Lake Fire Department, Agriculture Canada, and Turtle Mountain Métis Local Centre** for joining us and sharing their knowledge with the students.

Thank you to the schools, teachers, presenters, volunteers, and students who helped make another SRWD Water



Animal of the month

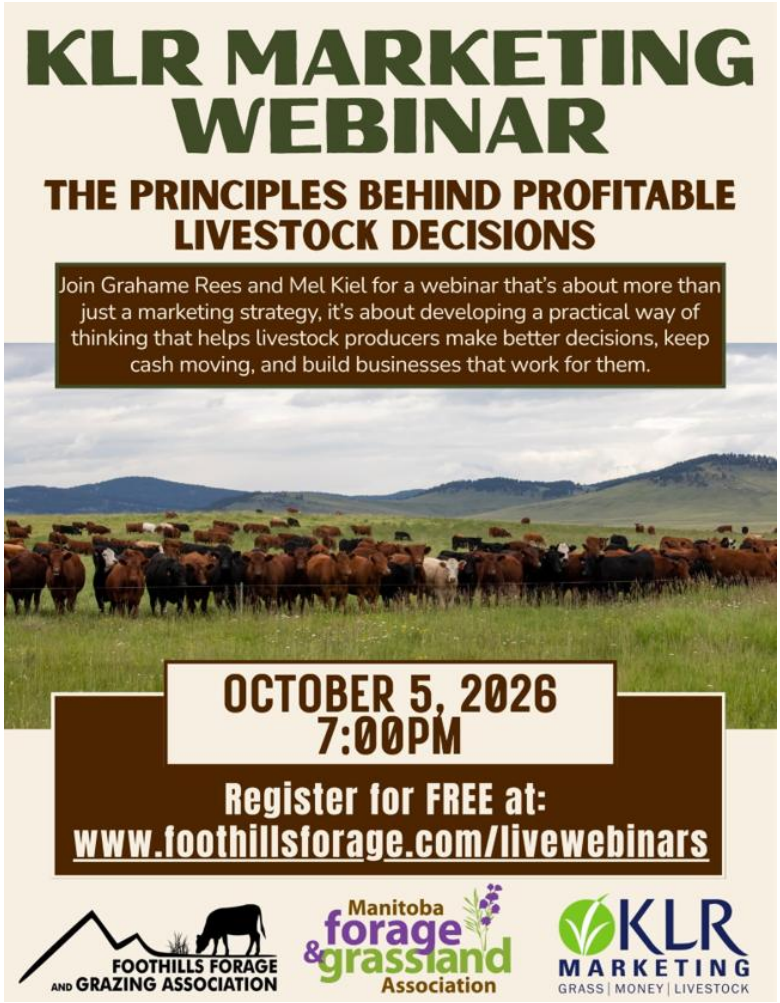
Loggerhead Shrike

The Loggerhead Shrike is one of Manitoba's rarest songbirds, with southwestern Manitoba providing important habitat for the species. Despite its small size, this skilled hunter catches insects, mice, and other small prey, sometimes storing its catch on thorns or barbed wire—earning it the nickname "butcher bird." Loggerhead Shrikes depend on open grasslands with scattered shrubs for hunting and nesting. Protecting native pasture, shelterbelts, and shrubby fence lines helps preserve their habitat while also reducing erosion, slowing runoff, supporting pollinators and other wildlife, and improving watershed health. Watch for these distinctive grey-and-black birds perched along rural fence lines.



The Moon's Shadow Show Over the Souris River Watershed

On August 27–28, skywatchers across Manitoba had the chance to witness a partial lunar eclipse. A lunar eclipse occurs when Earth moves between the Sun and full Moon, casting its shadow across the lunar surface. The Moon can appear reddish because sunlight passes through Earth's atmosphere, scattering blue light while allowing more red and orange light through. Unlike a solar eclipse, lunar eclipses are safe to watch without special glasses. Here in the Souris River Watershed, we often look to our rivers, wetlands, grasslands, and wildlife for natural wonders—but sometimes, experiencing nature is as simple as looking up!



Did You Know? – Snow Turns the Watershed into a Wildlife Map

After a fresh snowfall, the Souris River Watershed may look quiet, but the snow can reveal a surprising amount of wildlife activity. Animal tracks act like signatures, showing us not only which species have passed through, but also where they were going and what they were doing.

Deer leave distinctive split hoofprints, rabbits often leave their larger hind-foot prints ahead of their front feet, while coyotes tend to travel in relatively straight paths. Tracks can reveal where animals search for food, cross roads, follow waterways, or move between wetlands, grasslands, shelterbelts, and other habitats.

Footprints aren't the only clues. Chewed branches, feathers, tunnels, scat, and resting areas can also tell a story.

After the next snowfall, take a closer look around. By observing from a respectful distance, anyone can become a wildlife detective and discover how active our watershed remains throughout the winter.



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