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CEC Presentation by Lindy Clubb

I represent a 20 person group called Wolfe Creek Conservation – named after a tributary to the Assiniboine River. Our mandate is keep the water clean as it enters our local lakes and rivers and streams from pristine sources within Riding Mountain National Park - the water coming from the Park is clean due to restrictions on harmful development.

We believe that intensive hog operations are incompatible with our environment and could contaminate our water. The process of licensing and operating them transfers the cost to our environment, which is defined in dictionaries as our surroundings, and all the conditions affecting our development. We've lived with the smell of manure in our nostrils and we've raised hogs in barns. We know how powerful their waste is, and the many ways it can run-off and ruin the water by us and under us. Our human sewage isn't as much an issue in the area since we have a low population. We've lived with some environmental degradation from feedlots and smaller barns but haven't yet lived with an intensive hog operation, nor do we want to. We consider our air, water and soil unsuitable for large concentrations of hog manure. We have high water tables and slopes, frequent potholes and abundant wildlife. It's mainly mixed farming operations. Our councilors are small business owners and sausage makers who oversee road maintenance and zoning applications. Hardly the experts needed to collect and review information on license conditions to prevent pollution from huge hog operations.

This is our story. Around 2003, a landowner on the Menzie Road applied for a permit to put a large hog barn on his property. A 2,500 sow, farrow to nursery, 210 grower to finisher operation. The proponents require 22 gallons of fresh water per day per pig for washing, drinking, cooling and domestic use, amounting to millions of gallons per year. That's enough to lower the nearby water tables. There are more than 20 neighboring farm families sharing the same supplies. We had a year of drought in 2006. I can safely assume that million gallons of water did not enter the aquifer for recharge that year. But aquifer recharge was left out of the topics discussed during the hearings process. The proposal proceeded in the absence of information about our local water and in the presence of our policies in Manitoba that don't call for efficiency or conservation. It's all about supply. That is the regulatory environment.

Few studies were in place for the Odanah Shale Aquifer, no consultation had or was to take place on the issues, and we lack a watershed plan. But we knew of an uncapped well on the property, an entry point for underground water contamination. In my first conversation with Bob Betcher, our provincial groundwater expert, I asked about what would happen if toxic waste got into the aquifer. He said the big lake beneath us could move up to 50 miles per hour so contamination is impossible to track. When we attended the Hearings for the proposed hog barn we were assured the proponent would cap the well as a gesture of good will. It hasn't been capped yet.

The spread fields for the waste were another point of entry for pollution. We have predominantly clay soils with some sand and gravel lenses that allow penetration for aquifer recharge. Soil experts in Brandon claimed no-one is testing their soils enough. One to four tests per section is inadequate since soils can change texture and composition (and nutrient content) within inches. But soil tests are expensive, so we test once and hope for the best. Councilors refused to call for soil tests and to release the results to the

public as a condition for the operation. Why? It's an added cost and not the custom. So, we had no assurance that aquifer recharge areas were to be located and protected from contamination. It's nor unreasonable to expect minimum precautions to be taken and some back up plans to be in place. How much would it cost for us to clean up the aquifer? We don't have the population to pay for it, and we don't ask for even 1% of the profits from these barns to go into a fund for clean up or prevention of pollution. Our province has a polluter pay policy that doesn't work in practice, just look at the mining industry. But, after hearing all the ways an accident could happen ( including a leak for every joint , coupling or hose in the operation) council asked for a performance bond. The applicant withdrew. It was acceptable to make a proposal when the community pays for cleanup, but the proponent wouldn't contribute to prevention or insurance for a bad performance.

Our council's motives for determining this operation rested on possible economic gain, not ecological costs. To prove it's political, there was an election with some new councilors coming in and the proponent reapplied with the original permit , bringing a new round of suggestions from us to prevent pollution. The facts we gathered were ignored. Our suggestions were dismissed. For instance, performance indicators were absent although they are in place for many other businesses. Why not this one? Where is the evaluation of or assurances that a manure management plan is followed?

Council claimed the provincial licensing departments were the experts and performance reviewers but we uncovered huge information gaps. The Technical Review Committee in Brandon gave the go-ahead for spread fields for this barn and missed the crucial fact that Wolfe Creek that runs right across them and would carry toxic waste to our rivers. Without on-the-ground truthing and verification , without local people being consulted, the province is not protecting the public's interests, instead it is making gross errors. Run off to surface water is common on our heavy soils on sloping lands. Issues of siting barns are lost in the quest for profiting for them.

**Bonnie Nay from Turtle Mountain municipality writes: The Southwest Technical Review Committee erred in their analysis of the applicant's proposal for the factory hog barn. The SW Technical Review wrote and I quote "There are no rivers and municipal drains in this area". WRONG. There happens to be a major municipal drain in this bog-like area called the Ninga Channel. The Ninga Channel will drain seepage/runoff of untreated sewage from the mega hog barn site (E1/2 31. 3. 18WPM) into the Pembina River, into the Red River and ultimately into Lake Winnipeg.**

If the province, council or the proponent wouldn't mitigate harm, then we tried to. We recommended above ground storage for manure to avoid possible groundwater contamination. It was turned down on the basis of expense. In ground storage was accepted, with only a clay soil lining, without the deep holes needed to determine the right site. We advocated for triple liners, which work the best, although we had been warned that liners only last for 3 years due to the ammonia content in the waste. Ammonia wears membranes down. Seepage penetrating the particles of clay soils lining the lagoons is a common problem, but the proponents and council were willing to risk it for the sake of cutting costs. We asked for moats to line the lagoon, in case of floods, so the waste didn't get washed downstream in the spring melts, or during the sudden frequent big storms we get up there. Farmers are often in the business of moving earth, but this proponent didn't want to waste the time looking after a waste pit, and our councilors didn't see the value of preventive measures. It becomes to the advantage of producers to pollute and they can since we have so few inspectors. Fines are tiny but eat into profits, and we have few inspectors. Hog farmers monitor themselves for the most

part. Our one inspector for the southwest calls two weeks in advance and checks a percentage of the lagoons once per year. Hardly matching in practice the principle from the Manitoba Pork Council that " Land around hog barns is more closely monitored than any other farm land in the province. " I guess it means that other private land isn't monitored at all in comparison.

Our next environmental concern was odor. We discovered a good made-in - Manitoba product called the Gulla Guard, a few steps above the practice of spreading straw mulch over a lagoon for odor control. Council and the proponent dismissed it as too expensive. Without odor control , the 6 families in range of the barn's smell and spread acres couldn't work their large gardens. If Cassie Leganchuk, who rises at dawn to work like ten men in her 3 gardens, gags when she's out there, her family will go without produce. The gardens produce food for every meal, all year around. If Matt Kowalchuk's lake stocked with rainbow trout gets an algae bloom from contaminated runoff , he goes without cash and food. If Roger Desilet's customers are turned off by the smell then he loses the ability to provide both his family and the community with a lovely organic product, his main source of income. If one industrial development displaces ten other domestic and commercial investments, how much of an advantage can it be to the area and the environment? Hog barns reduce environmental air quality. The techniques touted by the industry - such as manure storage covers, shelterbelts and ventilations systems - may be available and effective, but in our case they were avoided as costly options. Instead, we were faced with losing customers, visitors, and our ability to travel down the only road that led to the beach.

And about roads, surface conditions and truck traffic were an additional environmental concern. Our research led us to a woman who lived next to an operation similar to the one proposed for our area. **In her own words "We had to drive around our road to take our kids to school. The slurry trucks left such bad ruts only a 4x4 could get down them. The school bus couldn't get on the road at all. Hog barns are considered essential services and the feed trucks came from all directions to keep up supplies - we counted a 1000 cement trucks just for the buildings, and 100 trucks per year for loads of gravel - Spring and fall were the worst for smell, our 12 year old daughter brought a friends home from school and took her outside, where she gagged, left, and never came back.** If we raised hogs 200 at a time in different locations, we wouldn't be faced with the same problem. We have invested in and developed Century Farms, raised our families, and not caused a lot of harm to the environment. We have a greater right to clean surroundings that one farm family has to pollute for profit. In an area where residents lives mingle with livestock and wildlife, municipal councilors should be taking in facts and deciding on the basis of information. The onus of proof is on the dissenters right now, not the proponents and industry - it's backwards and unsustainable and the premises are wrong. It's a question of scale. When the applicant withdrew his request for a barn permit the second time it was for economic reasons, in a climate of falling prices for pork. The profits for pork are based on discounting the environmental costs and keeping what monitoring we have a secret. We are a long way from the borders the pigs cross to market so the margin is slim, and our safeguards are sidestepped. If we catalogued the true costs of and to our water, this form of industry would be over. Please recommend an end to the proliferation of hog industries.