

DAWSON BAY & PINE DOCK: NACC Fish Composting Stations



The idea started in 2014, and in 2015 the NACC started to provide support to develop two fish composting stations between three communities: Matheson Island, Pine Dock and Dawson Bay. Matheson Island and Pine Dock had planned to co-manage a fish station as they are only 15 kilometers apart. Dawson Bay was also very interested. Matheson Island has since decided not to participate in the project. Currently Dawson Bay is the furthest along with testing and implementing the Fish Composting Station.

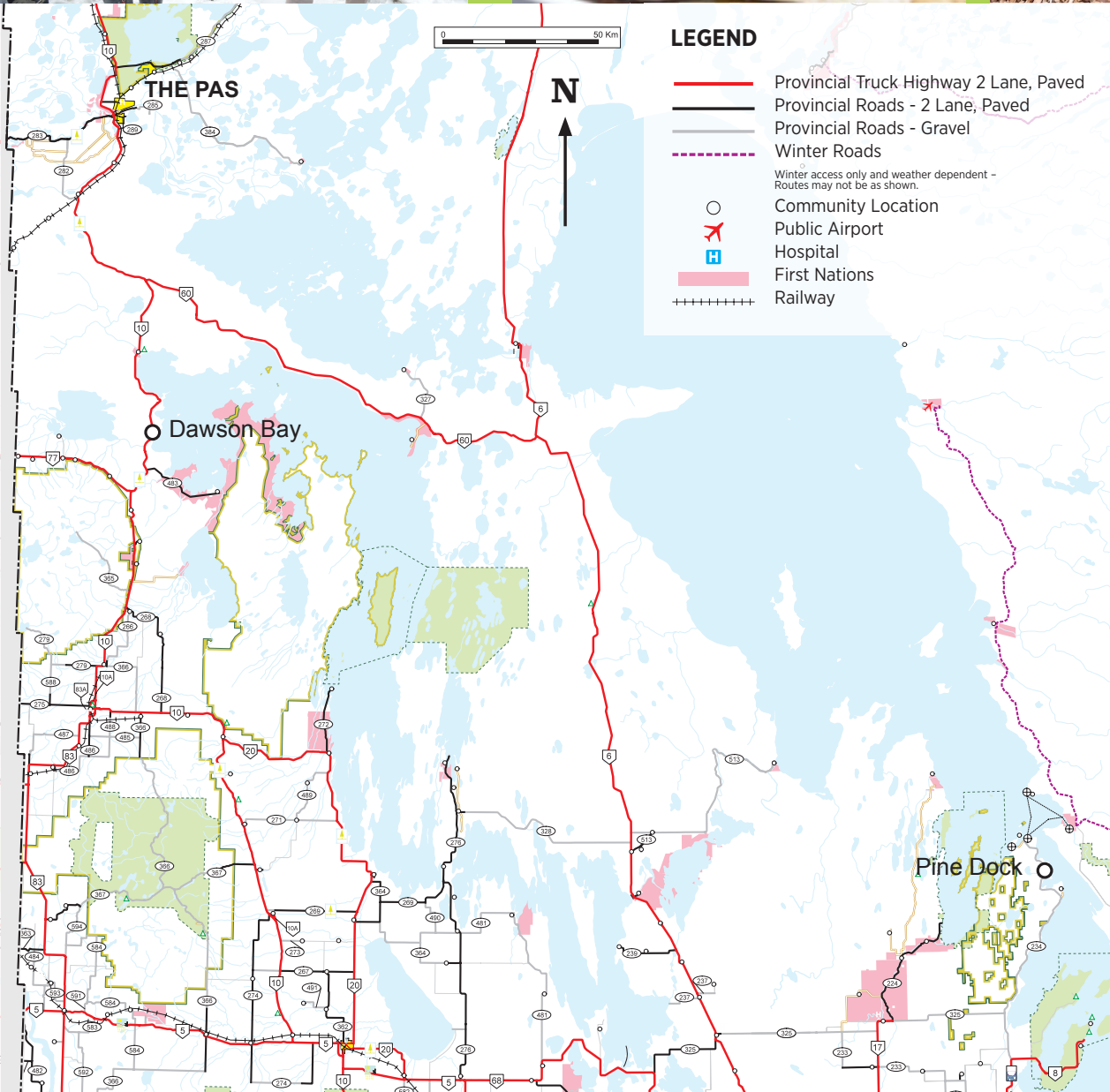
The Community Council of Dawson Bay made the following statement about their reasons for wanting the Fish Composting Station. “Our council would like to see this project start by creating a reliable compost material supply for our community residents, increase the local fishermen's income, and create jobs for individuals in our community. We will utilize the local fishermen's raw fish waste that is generally dumped out on the lake or hauled to our local waste disposal site, and hopefully create some jobs to stimulate the economy in our community. Fishing is currently the only job opportunity in Dawson Bay. This Fish Composting Project is important to our community; fertilizer and compost materials are expensive to bring in.”

Each Fish Station is a designated area in the community that has a solid pad and secure fencing. A Manitoba company called Innovat designed and manufactured the compost drums, where the first stage of composting takes place. The waste fish is placed into the drum along with ‘browns’, a mulched wood base. The drum is turned each day. After a sufficient period of time the compost is taken out of the drums and laid out in wind rows that are 10-15 feet long and 6-8 feet wide. During this stage the final composting takes place. Technical support for this project has come from NACC, Manitoba Composting Association, and Manitoba Agriculture. Many government departments needed to be consulted including Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, and Manitoba Agriculture.

There have been challenges in getting the fish stations up and running. “Everything was going well until we started having issues with the composter drum itself,” said Dawson Bay Mayor, Darlene Parker. Adjustments had to be made to the drums because the frames were not adequately supporting the weight, causing the turning mechanism to be too difficult for the Public Works staff to use. One solution may be

to motorize the turning mechanism. There has also been the recognition of need for a more powerful wood chipper to service the station. One Dawson Bay Community Councillor shared, “It is a pilot project so we needed to learn. There are lots of little things to consider!” The communities had initially worried about bears being attracted to the area, but so far this has not happened. There is very little smell associated with the Fish Composting Stations.

Optimism is high as the fishing stations should start producing large amounts of compost in 2017. “When we [the council] get talking about it, we get very excited about. I just think there are endless possibilities for this! We need some money to get going on the marketing end of things down the road,” said Mayor, Darlene Parker. Some greenhouses in the region have started to inquire about the product and one of the next steps for the community is to prepare samples for distribution this coming season. Another important action for 2017 is to repeat and strengthen the training for local people who are running the fish composting stations. “This is a learning experience for all of us who are involved,” believes Alana Parker, Dawson Bay resident.



NFMCCC funding

- ☑ 2015
- ☑ 2016
- ☑ 2017

> OBJECTIVES

To create community infrastructure that turns waste product into valuable fertilizer for the purpose of community benefits which include: improved access to fertilizer, increased infrastructure, increased self-reliance and potential for social enterprise and economic development.

> LOCATION

Dawson Bay is a small community with population of about 40 people, located at the north end of Lake Winnipegosis with year-round road access. Pine Dock has a population of approximately 80 people and is located on Lake Winnipeg with year-round road access. Both communities rely heavily on fishing for their local economy.

> PHOTO DETAILS

[1] Fish composters in the Fall of 2015. [2] Fish composting training in Pine Dock. [3] Fish waste. [4] Fish compost in Dawson Bay.

“For economic development this project could be a great thing. I have been here for many year and I never thought to use fish in any form except food.”

- Darlene Parker, Dawson Bay