

The Redboine Watershed District (RBWD) held its Annual General Meeting on Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup> in Carman. At this meeting the Board was pleased to present Lucien Lesage with the 2022 RBWD Watershed Award. This award recognizes the outstanding contributions and impact that Lucien has had on our landscape.

Lucien was born one of 20 children on a farm close to Notre Dame. At the tender age of 17, he purchased the grocery store in Notre Dame, and then with his brothers they jointly purchased the restaurant, lounge and motel. He is married to Mirielle, who is a nurse, and they have six sons and six granddaughters. His decision to sell the local businesses and move back out to the farm was aided partly in his desire to show his children where their food came from.

Lucien and Mirielle have been on their acreage for 25 years now. His operation consists of sheep, hogs, poultry, honey bees and harvesting maple syrup in the spring. He also enjoys his large garden and all the fresh produce. Lucien is the past Chairman of the Manitoba Sheep Association, and is involved with the Canadian Sheep Federation. The Lesage family is always looking at ways to improve their operation and benefit both the farm as well as the environment. His interest lied with becoming self sufficient, and then being able to provide sustainable and healthy products to consumers.

A 5 acre portion of Lucien's farmland is adjacent to a deep ravine that is eroding. He was concerned about the loss and approached the district wanting to establish a shelterbelt that would assist in preventing further erosion. Through the GROW program, he was able to plant approximately 1500 trees of a variety of native tree and shrub species. Through his hard work and care, the success rate of his planting was nearly 90% even though we were in the middle of an extreme drought summer.

According to Justin Reid, RBWD Manager, "Lucien had a long history of involvement as a sub-district member with the Pembina Valley Conservation District and was a leader in increasing the awareness of erosion and other watershed issues in the Roseisle Creek Sub-Watershed. He has now brought that enthusiasm and desire to make a difference with him to the Redboine Watershed District. He's been a great sub-district member, has volunteered to represent his sub-district on our GROW Committee, and he was willing to practice what he preaches taking 5 acres of pastureland out of production to establish a woodland area to help stop major erosion in a gully on the north edge of his property. His application for this project was one of our first applications to the GROW Program. His conservation minded history and his willingness to show people you can make a difference makes him the perfect choice for our 2022 Watershed Award."

The Redboine Watershed District would like to congratulate Lucien Lesage on his commitment to the Boyne Watershed. He will be recognized at the Manitoba Association of Watersheds Annual Conference in December of 2022.