



# TOWARDS A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR DUCK MOUNTAIN PROVINCIAL PARK

Manitoba Conservation is preparing a management plan for Duck Mountain Provincial Park. This information leaflet contains background on the natural, cultural and recreational history of the park, and identifies some of the major issues being considered in the planning process. You are invited to comment on what you feel are the important aspects of the park and what issues you feel need to be considered when preparing the plan.

## Park Features

Duck Mountain Provincial Park is an island of forested hills and interspersed lakes, encompassing an area of 1423 km<sup>2</sup>. River valleys, wetlands and streams are characteristic of the area's glacial origins. Initially part of the Duck Mountain Forest Reserve, Duck Mountain was one of four original provincial parks established in Manitoba in 1961. The park has long been a favorite destination for hunters, sport fishers and outdoor enthusiasts.

Duck Mountain is part of a long series of highlands in western Manitoba, known collectively as the Manitoba Escarpment. This terraced ridge separates the rolling western plateau from the lowlands of the Red River valley. The park's many lakes and ponds are remnant of glacial times, when meltwater filled depressions in the land forming many pothole lakes. Some of these have since filled in with vegetation to become black spruce bogs. Other lakes, fed by springs and spring run-off, have remained clear.

Due to the varying altitudes and soil conditions, there are three distinct plant communities in the park: **boreal forests**, **deciduous forests** and **upland meadows**. These landscapes provide a diversity of habitats for large and small mammals, fish, insects and birds. Large mammals include elk, moose, white-tailed deer,

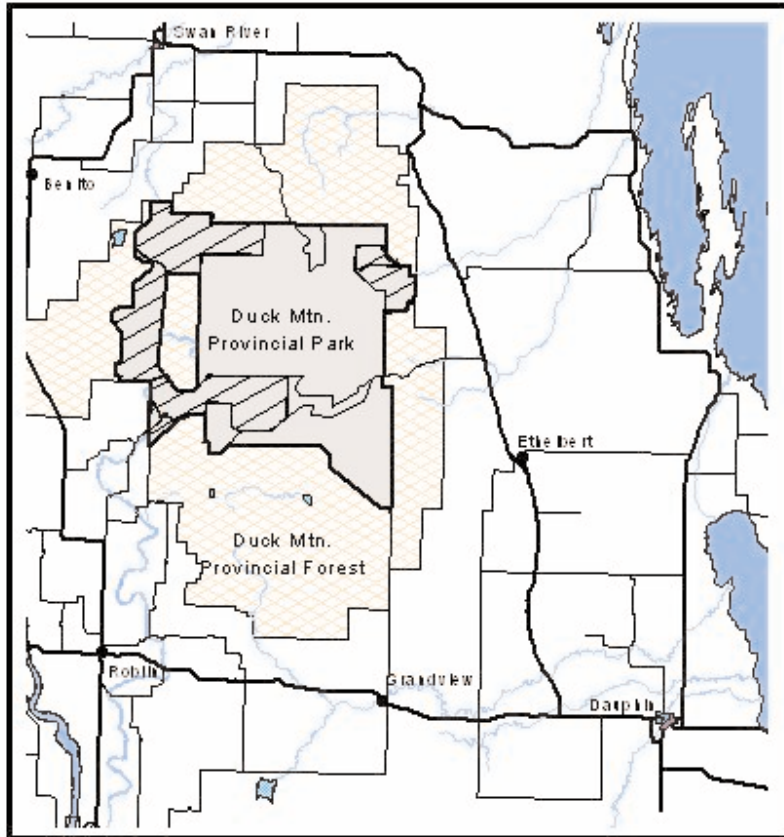


"The outline of the Duck Mountain rose clear and blue in the north-east, and from our point of view the Riding and Duck Mountains appeared continuous, and preserved a uniform, bold, precipitous outline, rising abruptly from a level country lying from 800 to 1,000 feet below them."

Henry Y. Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857; and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858*. 2 vols. (London; m.p., 1860) Vol II, p. 55



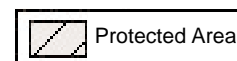
black bear, fox, lynx, coyote and timber wolf. A variety of raptors, waterfowl and songbirds nest in the marshes and forests, while the meadows are important habitat for elk and deer populations. Duck Mountain supports a wide range of native and stocked fish species, including walleye, northern pike, yellow perch, bass, lake whitefish, lake trout, brown, brook and rainbow trout, splake, smallmouth bass, muskellunge and Arctic char.



Duck Mountain Provincial Park is classified as a Natural Park. Its overall purpose is to preserve representative areas of the Western Upland Natural Region and to accommodate a diversity of recreational opportunities and resource uses.

In 1997, significant boundary adjustments occurred when 469 km<sup>2</sup> of the park was designated as a protected area. To enable this change, 325 km<sup>2</sup> of land was added to the park, and 200 km<sup>2</sup> of former park land was de-designated to offset the impact of protected areas on forestry activities.

In the protected portion of the park (which is designated as a Backcountry Land Use Category), logging, mining and other activities that cause significant natural disturbances are prohibited.



## What are the Issues?

Manitoba Conservation wants to make a great park even better. To get started, we have identified a number of concerns regarding the development, operation and management of Duck Mountain Provincial Park. Additional issues will be identified through this consultation.

Please read through these pages and offer your suggestions. Feel free to add your own ideas and concerns. Resolution of these issues may come in the form of zoning, or as objectives outlining actions that must be taken to resolve these situations. Your comments can be recorded on the enclosed comment sheet. If necessary, use the map on the reverse to identify areas that relate to your comments.

The conservation of ecosystems and the maintenance of biodiversity are important priorities in Manitoba's provincial parks. Management strategies are needed to safeguard the Duck Mountain environment and to ensure that human use and activities do not inadvertently damage sensitive areas. The management plan will develop guidelines for the protection of natural landscapes, and identify sites that may require additional protection or consideration. In addition, a number of specific environmental issues will be addressed:

### Issue 1 Wildlife Habitat and Special Area Protection

The need to minimize disturbances in areas of sensitive wildlife habitat has also been identified as an issue, particularly in the Shell and Roaring River valleys. As well, a number of significant or unique natural areas are located in Duck Mountain Provincial Park. Some examples include fescue prairies, mineral licks, travertine deposits, springs, canyons and valleys. The areas will be identified and guidelines prepared to protect these sites. This may involve managing or restricting vehicle use in certain areas of the park, or the application of special conditions to forest operating plans.



Moose

### Issue 2 Vegetation Management

Both natural processes and human activities within and around the park can influence the natural vegetation of Duck Mountain. For example, under natural conditions, wildfires would prevent aspen forests from encroaching into the small prairie areas in the Duck Mountain backcountry. Under managed conditions, techniques such as prescribed burning could be used to mimic natural processes, if deemed appropriate for the park. Vegetation management tools such as prescribed burning, disease control, pest control and fire suppression will be addressed, and guidelines prepared to assist resource managers in making decisions.

### Issue 3 Fisheries Management

Many of the lakes in the park are regularly stocked with non-native and native fish and are managed to provide a high-quality angling experience. Some of these lakes have been designated as "non-motorized". In an effort to protect the park environment and to maintain and enhance fishing opportunities, current management practices regarding stocking and motor restrictions will be reviewed.

### Issue 4 Water Resources

Duck Mountain is known for its crystal clear lakes, many of which are fed by springs and spring run-off. Concerns about the potential impact of septic fields on surface and ground water, and unexplained high water levels in the Blue Lakes area have been raised as issues that require investigation. These concerns will be reviewed and, if necessary, measures will be identified to ensure continued high quality lakes in the park.

## Interpretation and Historic Resources

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Archaeological excavations have uncovered evidence of human presence in the Duck Mountains since about 8,000-6,000 B.C. Projectile points found near Singush Lake suggest that the site was occupied at various times by at least four different cultural groups: Agate Basin Agnostura, McKean-Duncan, Besant and Prairie Side-notched cultures. Evidence of a more recent Aboriginal presence are the teepee rings found on the ground surface of this site.

For early traders and explorers, Duck Mountain was a source of furs and a barrier to be bypassed via the Swan and Assiniboine rivers. Several forts were built in sight of the mountain, the first being Fort Dauphin, established prior to 1750 by the La Verendyre expedition. Later, at the turn of the century, Duck Mountain became an important source of timber and employment, as farmers from surrounding agricultural areas went up into the mountain in the winter to work in timber operations.

Cultural and historic resources provide an important link to the past. In preparing a management plan for Duck Mountain, it is important to remember these resources and to find ways to celebrate the culture and history of the park.



**Baldy Mountain Viewing Tower**

### Issue 5

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#### Historic Sites

Duck Mountain's role in the history of western Canada is evident in the remains of historic buildings, logging and work camp sites, fire towers, historic trails, tent rings, arrowheads, poles and Aboriginal campsites. Significant historic sites will be identified and, if necessary, guidelines prepared to manage or protect these areas.

### Issue 6

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#### Interpretation

Interpretation in the park is limited primarily to self-guiding trails and signage. The management plan will investigate alternative, cost-effective ways to promote the natural and cultural history of the park including the introduction of a personally delivered program in the park as well as other interpretive publications and exhibits.

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## Commercial Resource Use

Duck Mountain has a long history of resource use. Commercial logging began in the Duck Mountains in the late 1800s, when homesteaders began to settle the land around the base of the mountain. In 1906, it was realized that conservation of the forests would be needed to ensure a supply of timber for the future, and Duck Mountain was designated a Forest Reserve. Gravel deposits in the Ducks became another important economic resource as roads were constructed in and around the park. Today, gravel from the park is used for the maintenance of park roads, and logging in Duck Mountain continues to be a primary economic activity for the region.

Duck Mountain Provincial Park was established to both preserve natural areas and accommodate recreational and resource uses. Forests in the Backcountry Land Use Category are protected from resource use, and provide a representative example of the region's forests. The management plan will ensure that, where permitted, commercial resource use occurs in a sustainable and responsible manner. Specific issues respecting resource use are identified below:

### Issue 7 \_\_\_\_\_ Forest Management

Commercial logging occurs in the Resource Management Land Use Category (LUC) of Duck Mountain Provincial Park. About 61% of the park lies within this LUC, but only a small percentage of the area is harvested each year. All commercial timber harvest in the park is conducted by quota holders. Forest harvest activities are directed by "operating and renewal plans", which are subject to an extensive licensing and approval process. The management plan will include guidelines for reviewing these plans to ensure that forestry activities are compatible with the recreational and ecological role of the park.



**Cut-over in Resource Management LUC**

### Issue 8 \_\_\_\_\_ Commercial Harvest

Manitoba Conservation gets numerous inquiries about the harvesting of marketable resources such as live bait for angling, medicinal plants and seeding of wild rice for commercial sale. These, and other yet-to-be-identified products, have been and will continue to be an issue for resource managers at Duck Mountain. While these activities can provide a source of income for the harvester, they can also have a negative effect on the park environment. The issuance of commercial use permits will be reviewed and guidelines developed to assist in future decision-making.

### Issue 9 \_\_\_\_\_ Commercial Facilities

There are currently three commercial facilities in the park, located at Wellman, East Blue and Childs Lakes. These facilities offer accommodations, food, merchandise, equipment rentals and other services. The management plan will review the current level of commercial activities in the park and develop guidelines for evaluating future requests for new or expanded commercial opportunities.

## Recreation and Development

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Duck Mountain is a popular destination for outdoor recreation. Native and stocked fish are plentiful in many of the lakes and some of the streams, and have made the park a favorite place for anglers, both in summer and winter. The park is also popular for hunting, snowmobiling, camping and hiking. There are four campgrounds and four cottage subdivisions in the park.

Recreational use in Manitoba's provincial parks is managed to provide a high-quality recreational experience and to ensure the future well being of the parks' forests, fish and wildlife populations. Recreational use and development at Duck Mountain will be reviewed, to determine the extent to which new development or activities will be permitted in various areas of the park. Designation of an area that is free of roads, vehicle routes and built structures may be considered, to protect the natural environment and to provide park visitors a remote and self-reliant recreational experience. Specific issues regarding recreation and development are identified below:

### Issue 10 Recreational Vehicles

Historically, ATVs and snowmobiles have been used at Duck Mountain to get into remote areas of the park for fishing and hunting. The growing popularity of "off-roading" as a recreational sport, however, has led to concerns about damage caused by ATVs to park trails and habitat. The use of off-road vehicles will be reviewed to determine appropriate types of use and areas of operation. Restricting or limiting vehicle access in sensitive areas such as the Shell and Roaring River valleys may be considered.

### Issue 11 New Trail Development

In the past, Manitoba Conservation has received proposals from private groups and individuals wishing to develop new trails in the park (e.g. snowmobile trails). While these trails could be a positive addition to the park, trail development has the potential to fragment habitat, damage sensitive areas and disturb wildlife or other park users. To assist in responding to such requests, the current system of trails in the park will be reviewed and guidelines prepared for assessing proposals for new trail development.



**Snowmobiling at Duck Mountain**

### Issue 12 Access Roads

Duck Mountain has an extensive network of secondary roads and trails, largely due to the construction of forestry roads and firebreaks in recent decades. Many of these trails are no longer used for forestry purposes and have evolved to become part of the recreational trail network. Over time, the number of these roads has continued to increase. These trails can be difficult to maintain and their use has contributed to habitat fragmentation in the park, which can stress wildlife populations. The network of roads and trails in the park will be reviewed and a process identified to guide the decommissioning of unnecessary routes of access.

## Issue 13 —————

### Recreation in Remote Areas

Activities such as hunting, fishing and trail-based recreation are popular activities in some of the park's remote and less-accessible areas. These include the Shell and Roaring River Valleys, Mossberry Lake area, the Pine River Escarpment, and other remote locations. Participants in the management planning process will have an opportunity to help determine the future character of recreational use in these areas of the park. Vehicle use, trail development and private camping in remote (non-designated) areas are some of the topics that will be addressed. This issue will be of interest to individual park users, as well as outfitters and businesses owners who may wish to promote sections of the Duck Mountain as a destination for a non-motorized "wilderness" experience, a motorized "outdoor recreation" experience, or something in between.

## Issue 14 ———

### Campgrounds

In recent years, campground occupancy rates at Childs, Wellman and Blue Lakes have been high, particularly in the early summer and on long weekends. Through these consultations the demand for campground facilities will be reviewed to determine whether expansion of one or more campgrounds is warranted.



**Beach at Childs Lake**

## Issue 15 —

### Cottaging

Manitoba Conservation gets regular inquiries about the availability of cottage lots in Duck Mountain Provincial Park. While back tier lots are currently available on Wellman Lake, lakefront lots are in greatest demand. In response, the feasibility of developing new lake front lots at Childs and Singush Lake will be explored. Current cottage development guidelines will also be reviewed to determine whether any modification of these guidelines is warranted for specific lakes in the park.



**Fishing in the Duck Mountains**

## Issue 16 ———

### Boat Caches

On lakes that are inaccessible by road (e.g. Line, Island and Mossberry Lakes), boats have been carried in and left on the shore by persons wishing to have a boat available for use when they return the following year. Experience has shown that the number of boats cached on a lake can grow to twenty or more, many of which get deteriorated and are never retrieved. Boat caches can have a detrimental effect on the aesthetic value of a lake. Guidelines governing boat caches in the park are required.

# Public Drop–Ins

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Public drop-in sessions to discuss issues related to Duck Mountain Provincial Park will be held in the summer and fall of 2001. The drop-in sessions are open to park visitors, campers, cottagers and all others interested in the future of Duck Mountain Provincial Park. You are encouraged to share your thoughts and ideas at one of the following locations:

<b>Childs Lake Picnic Shelter</b>	<b>Saturday, August 18, 2001</b>	<b>10:00 am to 2:00 pm</b>
<b>Blue Lake Picnic Shelter</b>	<b>Saturday, August 18, 2001</b>	<b>4:00 pm to 8:00 pm</b>
<b>Wellman Lake Picnic Shelter</b>	<b>Sunday, August 19, 2001</b>	<b>12:00 pm to 4:00 pm</b>
<b>Grandview Legion</b>	<b>Monday, September 10, 2001</b>	<b>12:00 pm to 8:00 pm</b>
<b>Swan River Legion-Kinsmen Room</b>	<b>Tuesday, September 11, 2001</b>	<b>12:00 pm to 8:00 pm</b>
<b>Winnipeg - 200 Saulteaux Cres</b>	<b>Tuesday, September 18, 2001</b>	<b>12:00 pm to 8:00 pm</b>

## What's Next?

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The preparation of a management plan is a multi-step process:

- Step 1 Collect background information and select public participation methods.
- Step 2 Public review of issues.
- Step 3 Distribute **Report on Public Comments** document.
- Step 4 Prepare draft management plan.
- Step 5 Public review of draft plan.
- Step 6 Revise plan and submit final plan for approval.
- Step 7 Distribute approved plan.

Following this review, the planning team will assemble a **Report on Public Comments** document summarizing the comments received during the public review of issues, and a draft management plan will be prepared. By completing the attached questionnaire you will receive a copy of the Report on Public Comments and be notified of the next drop-in session noted above as Step 5.

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**For further information or to be added to the mailing list, please contact:**

**Duck Mountain Provincial Park Management Plan**  
Parks and Natural Areas Branch  
Box 53 - 200 Saulteaux Crescent  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3J 3W3



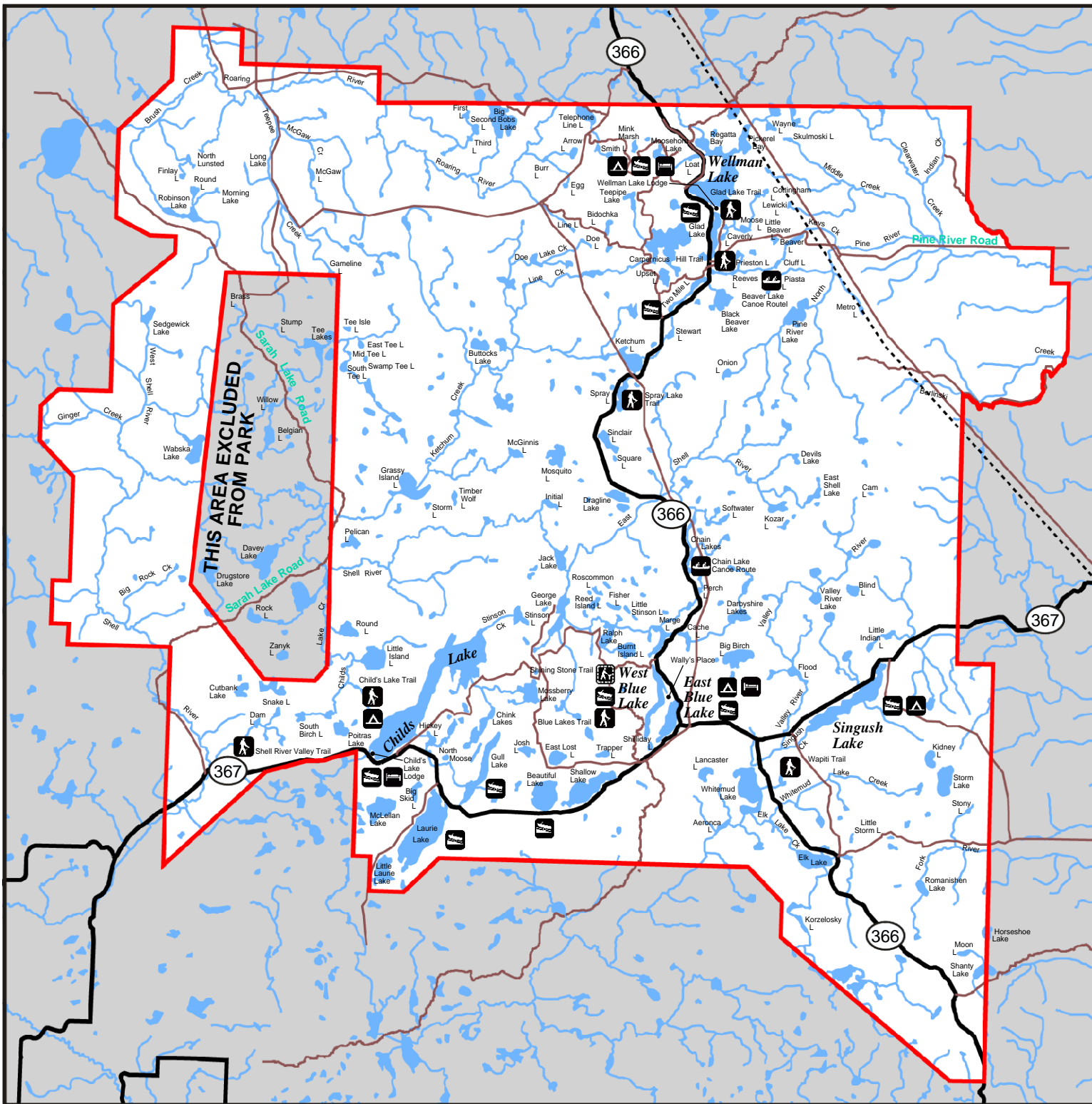
**Telephone:** (204) 945-3697 or 1-800-214-6497 toll free  
**Fax:** (204) 945-0012  
**Email:** [mgmtplan@gov.mb.ca](mailto:mgmtplan@gov.mb.ca)

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July 2001



# Duck Mountain Provincial Park



**Recreation and Development**

-  Campground
-  Accommodation
-  Canoe Route
-  Hiking Trail
-  Self-Guiding Trail
-  Boat Launch
-  Road
-  Trail
-  Transmission Line



# DUCK MOUNTAIN ITS ROLE IN MANITOBA'S SYSTEM OF PROVINCIAL PARKS

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Manitoba's provincial park system is made up of almost 80 different parks. Each of these parks plays a role in conserving ecosystems, preserving natural, cultural or heritage resources, or providing outdoor recreation or educational experiences. Provincial parks are classified as Wilderness, Natural, Recreation or Heritage depending on their main purpose in the provincial park system.

## Classification

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Duck Mountain is classified as a Natural Park. Its purpose is to preserve areas that are representative of The western Upland Natural Region and to accommodate a diversity of recreational opportunities and resource uses. The park will:

- Provide nature-oriented recreational opportunities such as hiking, canoeing and mountain biking in a largely undisturbed environment;
- Provide high-quality cottaging, camping and fishing opportunities, and accommodate associated facilities and services;
- Promote public appreciation and understanding of the park's natural features and cultural heritage; and
- Accommodate commercial resource uses such as forest harvest, where such activities do not compromise other park purposes.

## Land Use Categories

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Duck Mountain Provincial Park contains four different land use categories (LUCs). Over half of the park (89,719 hectares) is categorized as a **Resource Management LUC**, which is a multiple use category providing recreational opportunities such as hunting and fishing, hiking and snowmobiling. Commercial resource use, primarily forestry, is permitted in the Resource Management LUC.

One third of the park (46,851 hectares) is categorized as a **Backcountry LUC**. This is a protected area, where logging, mining and other activities that significantly and adversely affect habitat are prohibited. The Backcountry LUC includes forests, grasslands, glacial spillways and river valley ecosystems, and provides nature-oriented recreational opportunities such as hunting, snowmobiling, hiking and cycling in a largely undisturbed environment. Road access through the Backcountry is provided by **Access LUCs**.

**Recreational Development LUCs** comprise less than 10% of the park (8,750 hectares) and provide a range of intensive recreational activities including camping, swimming, day use, hiking cottaging and fishing. The Wellman, Childs, Laurie, Blue and Singush Lake areas are the focal points for recreational development. Recreational facilities such as commercial lodges and concessions are located within this area.



# DUCK MOUNTAIN PROVINCIAL PARK COMMENTS

**T**hank you for your interest in Duck Mountain Provincial Park. Please use this page to provide your views and ideas or to bring other issues to our attention. Feel free to attach additional pages or use the map on the reverse to illustrate your comments. Responses should be submitted by October 15, 2001 to ensure inclusion in the next phase of the plan.

a) Natural Environment (Issues 1-4)

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b) Interpretation and Historic Resources (Issues 5-6)

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c) Commercial Resource Use (Issues 7-9)

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d) Recreation and Development (Issues 10-16)

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**Your name will be included on our mailing list for future Duck Mountain Management Plan newsletters:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments can be left at a drop-in session or mailed to:**

**email:** mgmtplan@gov.mb.ca

**fax:** 1-204-945-0012

**Duck Mountain Provincial Park Management Plan**

**Parks and Natural Areas Branch**

**Box 53 - 200 Saulteaux Crescent**

**Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3J 3W3**