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March 15, 2004

## **CABINET MINISTERS VISIT COMMUNITIES ON EAST SIDE OF LAKE WINNIPEG**

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### **Meetings to Focus on Building Partnerships With First Nations and Future of Region: Struthers**

Conservation Minister Stan Struthers and five other ministers will visit 15 First Nations communities on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg over the next two weeks to hear from residents about their views for the future of the region.

"We want to strengthen our partnership with the people in the area and ensure that they have a voice in any decisions regarding the future of the region and in the development of the broad area plan for the East Side," Struthers said.

Manitoba ministers travelling to the communities are: Struthers; Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Oscar Lathlin; Culture, Heritage and Tourism Minister Eric Robinson; Energy, Science and Technology Minister Tim Sale; Transportation and Government Services Minister Ron Lemieux; and Industry, Economic Development and Mines Minister Scott Smith.

In 2002, the province established the East Side Planning Initiative (ESPI). Its mandate is to establish a broad area plan that will look at economic, social, cultural and environmental strengths and needs for the East Side of Lake Winnipeg. The East Side Round Table and the East Side First Nations Council are charged with the responsibility for submitting recommendations to government on the content of the plan and the ongoing role of the communities after meeting with members of the community, business, industry and special interest groups to hear their hopes and concerns.

"This is a good opportunity for us to hear directly from the people in the area," said Lathlin. "We look forward to meeting with the residents, elders and other community leaders on the East Side."

In the past few months, members of ESPI have been meeting with people throughout the region gathering information to be used in developing a broad area plan for the area. The plan will ensure future land, resource and development decisions address the environmental, social, health, cultural and economic needs of First Nations, local communities, various stakeholders and interest groups within the East Side of Lake Winnipeg, Struthers said.

“These meetings will build on the work already undertaken by ESPI and help us to develop a greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the region,” said Robinson. “This is a great opportunity for us to hear from the people on the East Side today to ensure that their views and ideas are incorporated in future plans.”

Travel to communities will begin March 15.

LIST OF DATES AND COMMUNITIES ATTACHED.

**EAST SIDE PLANNING INITIATIVE  
 MANITOBA GOVERNMENT MINISTERS VISITS  
 TO FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES**

**MARCH 15 – MARCH 30, 2004**

<b>DATES</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>		<b>MINISTERS</b>
March 15/04	Red Sucker Lake Garden Hill	A.M. P.M.	Culture, Heritage and Tourism Minister Eric Robinson and Conservation Minister Stan Struthers
March 18/04	God's River God's Lake	A.M. P.M.	Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Oscar Lathlin and Transportation and Government Services Minister Ron Lemieux
March 18/04	Hollow Water Little Black River	A.M. P.M.	Robinson and Industry, Economic Development and Mines Minister Scott Smith
March 19/04	Sagkeeng	A.M.	
March 22/04	Oxford House		Robinson and Struthers
March 24/04	Poplar River	P.M.	Lathlin and Struthers
March 25/04	Bloodvein	P.M.	
March 24/04	Pauingassi Little Grand Rapids	A.M. P.M.	Robinson and Energy, Science and Technology Minister Tim Sale
March 29/04	Norway House		Lathlin and Struthers
March 30/04	Wasagamack St. Theresa Point	A.M. P.M.	Robinson and Struthers