

Manitoba Model Forest Inc

Board of Directors Recommendations to East Side Lake Winnipeg Round Table



Natural Resources
Canada
Canadian Forest
Service

Ressources naturelles
Canada
Service canadien
des forêts

March 29, 2004

Chairman and Members
East Side Lake Winnipeg Round Table
Room 405
326 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB
R3C 0S5

Subject : Recommendations to the Round Table

Dear Round Table Members;

Enclosed are a number of recommendations developed by the Board of Directors of the Manitoba Model Forest for your consideration in the development of a broad area plan for the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

These recommendations were developed over the past winter. The MBMF Board initially went through an issue identification process that resulted in the broad category headings that preceed the recommendations. Once developed a full day facilitated workshop was held in December 2003 to develop draft recommendations under each issue heading. On March 24th, 2004 the Board of Directors unanimously approved the enclosed recommendations. You may share these recommendations among your advisory committees or others as you best determine.

As you will see an overriding theme to the recommendations is process and procedures with respect to consultation.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Manitoba Model Forest we sincerely hope that these recommendations will prove helpful in your task to develop a broad area plan for the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

Yours truly

J.M. Waldram R.P.F.
General Manager

cc. Blair McTavish

East Side Broad Area Planning Initiative MBMF Board Recommendations

1. Local Economic Benefits

An overriding issue is the increasing population of young people in the area and the lack of economic opportunities. This is particularly evident in the First Nation and Northern Affairs communities. Some of the reasons for this lack of opportunity include ; a perception of policy and regulatory road blocks preventing access to financing, inability to acquire licences for various activities, allowing non-local ownership and the resulting cash outflows. While there is support for economic developments on the East Side there is a frustration at the lack of involvement and participation in decision making related to the granting of licences, permits etc and ensuring economic benefits are realized locally.

While there appears to be many training opportunities for local people to acquire the skills necessary to participate in economic development activities the training is not being realized into jobs.

There appears to be new opportunities developing on the East Side for economic development in partnership with industry and government eg. Forestry, Hydro, Parks, Eco-Tourism , however, there is a sense of inaction and lack of support and promotion from all levels of government to potential partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 There are a number of training programs that need to be developed and delivered in the area ie.on site at the community level. Examples include: Emergency Fire Fighting, First Aid, Dangerous Goods, Presentation Skills, Emergency Readiness, Ecotourism, Life Skills, Proposal Preparation.
- 1.2 A formal assessment should be done that would identify current and anticipated economic opportunities and skill sets that will be required to take advantage of these opportunities and create jobs for local people. Training programs such as Entrepreneurial Small Business Skills should then be designed and delivered to meet these needs.
- 1.3 Future development should be contingent on the establishment of processes and policies that ensure community involvement , training and employment and that resource allocation decisions involve local communities.
- 1.4 Local Economic Development Round Tables need to be established and supported through for example a Regional Development Corporation.
- 1.5 Mechanisms for resource sharing need to be researched , piloted and implemented to ensure more benefits from resource extraction and use flow to local communities.

2. Roads and Access

Roads , highways, primary, secondary and tertiary can have both positive and negative implications relative to economic, social and environmental considerations. These implications will also impact communities already accessed both inside and outside the planning area through increased traffic both coming from and going to the ESLUP area. While it is recognized that isolated communities should be given priority for road access if they so wish it , previous examples should be studied to ensure the implications are known and addressed/ mitigated. Also at issue is the development of roads into areas in which there is a lack of knowledge about the values being accessed and the impact access and the influx of people can have on these values. Eg. Wildlife, fisheries, water quality, traditional gathering sites, spiritual sites There appears to be conflicting policies within government departments over issues such as access planning, access management, use, control, and decommissioning , community consultation, and standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Decisions to provide access to isolated communities should be based on the isolated communities desires not on others and the MBMF will support community wishes.

2.2 Road management plans need to be developed for all roads prior to construction regardless of road standard . These plans would include standard options, location options, environmental impact mitigation plans, decommissioning plans and access restriction plans. The process of road management planning needs to have a thorough public consultation process built in.

2.3 Road location planning should occur in conjunction with Hydro Bi-Pole planning.

2.4 New business opportunities related to road construction, maintenance and increased traffic will result. Local communities and people should be helped and given priority for these jobs and business opportunities.

2.5 New roads will increase hunting pressure on wildlife. Co-management wildlife systems need to be researched, piloted and implemented prior to road construction.

2.6 New roads particularly a primary access road will require increased policing, signage and safety features.

2.7 Case studies of the impact road access has had on other remote communities should be conducted or the information gathered to help understand both positive and negative environmental and social impacts access would have and to prepare mitigation measures where needed. * Note this recommendation also applies under the Research and Development Section

3. Planning Process

Issues related to Planning Process include both the ESLUP itself and subsequent development plans and environmental assessments or impact statements. eg. New or expanded Forest Management Licences and forest management plans, Highway development plans, Hydro transmission lines, cottage developments , parks. With respect to the ESLUP there is a lack of confidence in government to accept and implement or implement in a timely fashion the recommendations ultimately developed by the Round Table and accepted by the Government. There is an issue related to the integrity of the planning process itself and subsequent planning processes in ensuring “ meaningful” consultation and communication. There is an issue about ultimate accountability for the plan and how the plan will be implemented and by whom. There is an issue about the need for community planning prior to large scale development planning.

It is evident that the Round Table cannot fully complete its task as outlined in their Terms of Reference by the June 2004 deadline. At issue then is how or if future development plans can or will proceed with an incomplete ESLUP.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Manitoba Gov't should formally and publicly respond to the recommendations of the East Side Round Table indicating which recommendations they will accept, reject or modify and how. This response should also include an implementation plan and schedule with responsibility clearly indicated eg. Who is responsible for implementation of what, how is it to be done, when is it to be done and what if any are the financial implications and costs.

3.2 The East Side Land Use Plan should be considered a “ living document “ and as such should include defined review and revision periods and processes. The Round Table should be maintained and be given the responsibility to conduct these reviews and make recommendations on revisions. Reviews and recommended revisions by the Round Table should be made public and be guided by a communications strategy. Recommendation 3.1 should be followed as well for plan review and revisions.

3.3 Prior to future plans eg. Revised LUP, forest management plans, hydro plans , highway plans etc local communities should complete land use plans for surrounding areas of their interest so that areas of traditional and current use or importance are well documented and used in future consultation processes. Adequate resources to complete these plans in a timely fashion should be provided presumably by the Federal and Manitoba Gov'ts with assistance of appropriate NGO's and developers.

3.4 The Manitoba Gov't working with First Nations and Northern Affairs communities or their representative organizations should develop clear consultation protocols, guidelines, policies and responsibilities for use not only for Gov't agencies but for developers as well. It is recognized that these protocols etc will recognize differences between treaty

rights, First Nations and others. Already established consultation processes should be considered and reviewed.

3.5 The East Side Plan has to provide clear and broad objectives within which other plans can fit and contribute. The objectives must be measurable so that proper reviews and reporting can be done.

4. Treaty and Aboriginal Rights

All of the area covered by the ESLUP is also covered by Treaties with First Nations. Recognition and definition of Metis peoples rights is developing from current court cases. The majority of people that live in the area covered by the ESLUP are either Treaty Indian or Metis under the Indian Act. The existing rights of these people can be impacted by industrial developments, parks policies, and the increased presence of non-treaty people in the area once and if road access is developed either by negative impacts on the environment eg water quality, wildlife habitat , overharvesting of fish and game or policies that prevent , infringe or inhibit the undertaking of these rights.

Past experience is that aboriginal people have not participated broadly in the benefits of economic development activities in their traditional territories and Treaty Lands nor have they been actively involved in the planning and decision making around such developments to ensure that these benefits accrue and that their concerns for their rights and the environment around them are protected.

There is concern among Treaty people that non-treaty people are uninformed about the Treaties, the areas covered by them and the rights guaranteed under them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 General public and treaty people themselves have poor knowledge of history and the treaties and aboriginal rights. Education system and curriculum in Manitoba should be reviewed to ensure the history, treaties and aboriginal rights are taught from an early age.

4.2 The Manitoba Government needs to complete, finalize and release its Consultation Policies and regulations with respect to First Nation and Metis people as soon as possible.

4.3 Guidelines need to be researched, developed and implemented on the gathering, use and application of Traditional Knowledge in resource and land use planning.

5. Research and Development

While much is known about the environment in the very southern part of the planning area eg. Woodland caribou from MBMF research, a new and improved forest inventory, land use mapping at Hollow Water and Black River, as one moves further north the information gaps and uncertainty are likely to increase. A good example of this is the outdated forest inventory over most of the ESLUP area (north of FML #1). Forest inventories are used as the basic data base for many existing and developing forecasting models and decision support systems when making predictions about wood supply, habitat supply, biodiversity, . Even with good forest inventories and inventories/ understanding of other values, we still face the potential impacts of climate change on the forest, other values and communities. Our understanding of climate change impacts and adaptation measures is rudimentary at best. Policy making and land use decisions made today need to consider the implications of climate change and as we learn more , policy and land use decisions will need to adjust. While policy and land use decisions change with public values, public values need to be influenced by good information and science. The MBMF recognizes that we will never know all we would like to before land use decisions are made and as such embrace the concepts of adaptive management and a precautionary approach. These concepts require and are based on continued learning, monitoring, research and development , and adjusting while moving forward with land use decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 A structure and process is needed to prioritize research and development needs for the area that would include and involve local communities in helping to set priorities and to provide local knowledge. An east side R &D panel should be established to guide research and ensure continuity and completion of programs and projects. This panel could also ensure that research is being used appropriately in making policy, guidelines and land use decisions and perhaps more importantly conveying to decision makers where uncertainty exists and how to apply the adaptive management and precautionary approach.
- 5.2 Best management practices for access management to address biophysical and socio-economic impacts should be prepared and implemented.

6. Parks, Protected Areas, Parks Planning, Parks Use

Manitoba's Protected Areas Initiative is a government program dedicated to building a network of protected areas that contains the biological diversity found in Manitoba's varied landscapes.

Manitoba's commitment to establish a network of protected areas began in 1990, when the province committed to World Wildlife Fund Canada's Endangered Spaces Campaign. Manitoba's Protected Areas includes provincial and federal parks and ecological

reserves. The following maps show the extent of current protected areas, areas of special interest that may become protected and the degree to which enduring features have already been captured by EcoRegion. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Manitoba Government and AMC, MKO and the Southern Chiefs Organization outlining a consultation process.

At issue is the length of time the process of designating protected areas is taking and the fact that the process will continue after the deadline for submission of the East Side Plan. As well there is likely to be disagreements over the amount, extent and location of lands designated as protected areas and parks where development activities such as logging, mining, and hydro are prohibited. The Province has indicated that First Nations, industry, northern and rural communities and other interest groups are being consulted in the process of designating protected areas. Climate change is predicted to cause an increase in forest fires and insect and disease in this part of Canada.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The current protected areas consultation process is being conducted by the gov't on a stakeholder by stakeholder basis. Attempts must be made to bring all the stakeholders together and strive for consensus while recognizing that communities directly impacted should be given a higher standing in the process.

6.2 There is a good deal of confusion over the terms, types etc of protected areas and implications to eg. Treaty Rights or community desires for road access. More effort is required to clarify the terms, types, permitted uses and implications of protected areas and have this information imparted to the stakeholders and communities.

6.3 Individual protected areas once established should be reviewed periodically eg. every 10 years to assess whether their objectives are being met particularly in light of potential climate change impacts, maintenance of ecological processes, surrounding land uses and life and property in the area. This formal periodic review should be supported by continued monitoring efforts that involve and employ local people.

6.4 The potential impacts of climate change predicted to create drier conditions and therefore increased natural disturbance such as fire, insect and disease do not appear to be considered when designating protected areas or activities that can occur in them. All protected areas should be reviewed against these potential impacts with appropriate strategies developed. eg. Fire Smart Program in Jasper National Park