



4. The East Side of Lake Winnipeg Broad Area Plan

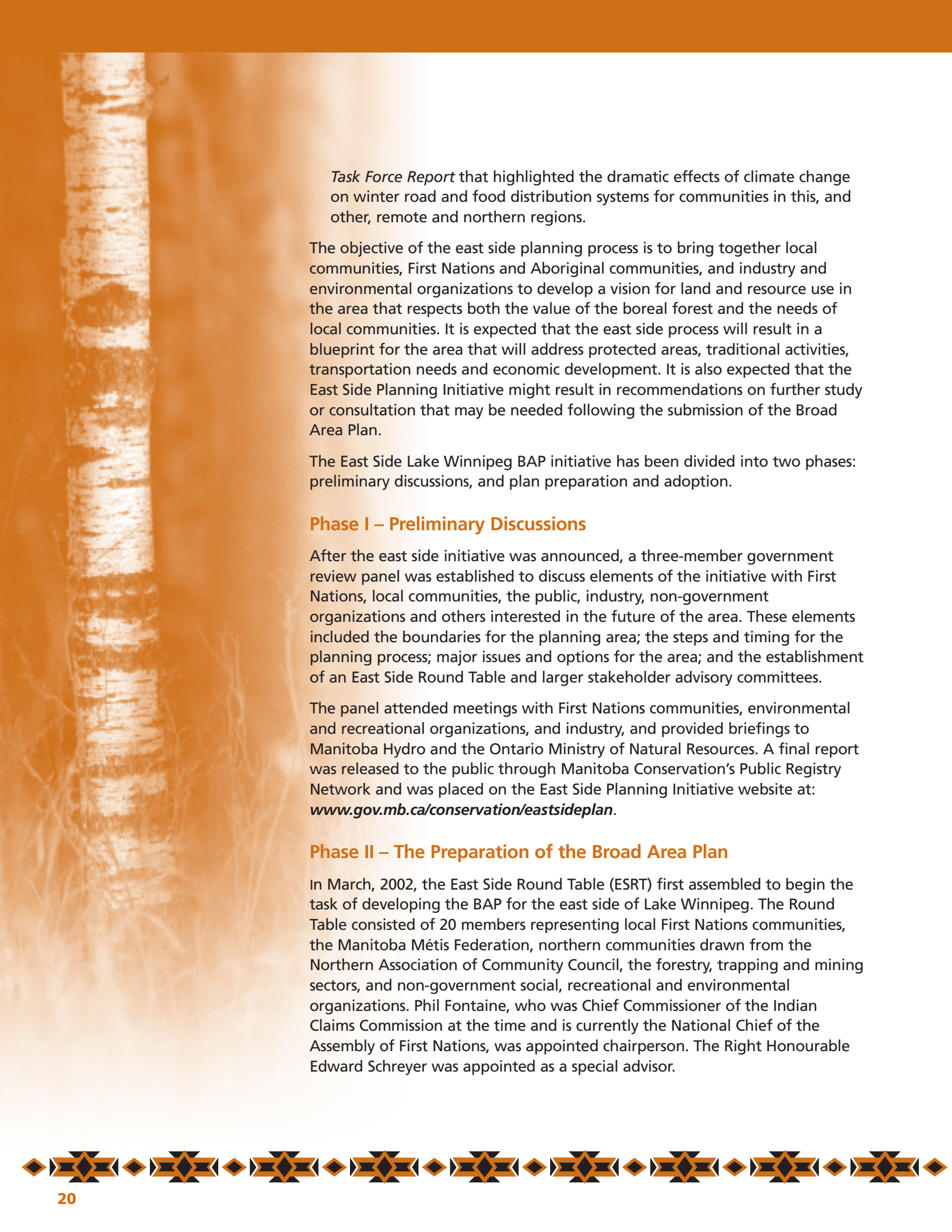
4.1 Genesis and History

In July 2000, the Government of Manitoba announced its acceptance of the *Consultation On Sustainable Development Implementation (COSDI) Report*. The report recommended that the implementation of sustainable development include the creation of Broad Area Plans (BAP) across the province. Broad Area Planning is defined as integrated and co-coordinated planning that is based on the sustainability of the ecosystem. BAPs ensure future land, resource and development decisions address the environmental, social, health, cultural and economic needs of the public, local communities, First Nations and various stakeholders and interest groups. The *COSDI Report* also recommended an inclusive public process and guidelines for meaningful consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal communities towards the development of a province-wide protocol on land and resource decision-making.

On August 9, 2000, Conservation Minister, Oscar Lathlin, announced the government would initiate Broad Area Planning on the east side of Lake Winnipeg as a pilot for Broad Area Planning across the province. This region was chosen for two primary reasons.

1. The east side of Lake Winnipeg is a unique region of the province because it contains a vast expanse of undeveloped, contiguous, boreal forest. The need for sustainable planning in this area has been reinforced by the recent *Manitoba Climate Change Task Force Report*. This report stated that Manitoba is at risk of losing both the southern and northern edges of the boreal forest to climate change.
2. The east side of Lake Winnipeg is a unique region with communities that do not have access to the transportation networks and economic opportunities that most Manitobans take for granted. The need for planning in this regard has also been reinforced by the *Climate Change*





Task Force Report that highlighted the dramatic effects of climate change on winter road and food distribution systems for communities in this, and other, remote and northern regions.

The objective of the east side planning process is to bring together local communities, First Nations and Aboriginal communities, and industry and environmental organizations to develop a vision for land and resource use in the area that respects both the value of the boreal forest and the needs of local communities. It is expected that the east side process will result in a blueprint for the area that will address protected areas, traditional activities, transportation needs and economic development. It is also expected that the East Side Planning Initiative might result in recommendations on further study or consultation that may be needed following the submission of the Broad Area Plan.

The East Side Lake Winnipeg BAP initiative has been divided into two phases: preliminary discussions, and plan preparation and adoption.

Phase I – Preliminary Discussions

After the east side initiative was announced, a three-member government review panel was established to discuss elements of the initiative with First Nations, local communities, the public, industry, non-government organizations and others interested in the future of the area. These elements included the boundaries for the planning area; the steps and timing for the planning process; major issues and options for the area; and the establishment of an East Side Round Table and larger stakeholder advisory committees.

The panel attended meetings with First Nations communities, environmental and recreational organizations, and industry, and provided briefings to Manitoba Hydro and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. A final report was released to the public through Manitoba Conservation's Public Registry Network and was placed on the East Side Planning Initiative website at: www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/eastsideplan.

Phase II – The Preparation of the Broad Area Plan

In March, 2002, the East Side Round Table (ESRT) first assembled to begin the task of developing the BAP for the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The Round Table consisted of 20 members representing local First Nations communities, the Manitoba Métis Federation, northern communities drawn from the Northern Association of Community Council, the forestry, trapping and mining sectors, and non-government social, recreational and environmental organizations. Phil Fontaine, who was Chief Commissioner of the Indian Claims Commission at the time and is currently the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, was appointed chairperson. The Right Honourable Edward Schreyer was appointed as a special advisor.

To assist the Round Table in preparing the BAP, an East Side Advisory Committee (ESAC) and First Nations Council (FNC) were also assembled. The ESAC was made up of one representative from each of the several organizations with interests in the area, including local government, industry and environmental groups. The FNC was made up of one representative from each of the 16 First Nations communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The chairperson for the Round Table also chaired the FNC and ESAC. While initially seen as being in an advisory capacity role, the FNC quickly asserted its place alongside the ESRT.

An Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG) was also formed to act as in-house consultants to the ESRT. The IWG is comprised of provincial and federal government staff representing their respective departments and branches. Manitoba Conservation chaired the IWG. An East Side Planning Secretariat of eight people was established to support the policy, administrative and logistical requirements of the ESRT, FNC and the ESAC.

Early meetings of the ESRT in 2002 focused on matters such as meeting rules-of-order, administrative items like budgets and expenses, and information distribution. One meeting was devoted to discussing and finalizing the *Round Table Terms of Reference*, which was published in November 2002. Following these initial meetings, the ESRT shifted its focus to developing an understanding of what a BAP might entail and familiarizing itself with the variety of information and numerous initiatives, planned and underway, in the study area. Several meetings involved presentations only. Presentations heard included: the COSDI Report, Treaty and Aboriginal Rights, British Columbia and Ontario's experience in Broad Area Planning, Manitoba's Protected Areas Initiative including Enduring Features and GAP analysis, transportation development, the proposed Tembec/FNLP forestry initiative partnership, the Manitoba Hydro Bi-pole III initiative and public consultation strategy, mineral potential and amendments to the Mines and Minerals Act, boreal forest ecology, tourism potential, the Northern Development Strategy, the Pikangikum Accord, the current GIS database, co-management initiatives, Manitoba government natural resources information including updates on the Manigotagan Park Reserve, Forestry Branch activities, wild rice, wildlife, trapping and the Manitoba Water Strategy.

On July 24, 2002, the Round Table was formally established by an Order in Council and the FNC and ESAC were introduced to the planning process, as well as their roles in the development of the BAP. On that same date, a presentation was heard from the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), an inter-tribal, co-management agency committed to the implementation of off-reservation treaty rights on behalf of its eleven Ojibway member tribes from Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. This presentation was very well received and seen by many as a model worth striving for by First Nations communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

“There are communities like ourselves all over the country who have long looked after lands not as owners, but as caretakers of this great land. This is how we were taught as Native people; land is not something you own, land is a gift that you use, to live on it, to protect it and look after it. That principle was used by our people and continues to be used today.”

(Poplar River community member
Poplar River – Website)



Early in 2003, the focus of the ESRT shifted towards receiving community input into the development of the BAP, and on February 6, the secretariat met with the FNC to present a proposed process and timelines. The First Nations Council was asked to develop and present their positions/strategies on community consultation to the East Side Round Table, after which the ESAC was asked the same. In April, the first information meeting on the East Side Planning Initiative was held in the First Nations community of Hollow Water.

In July 2003, the *First Nations Council Terms of Reference* was published. Also during that month, Phil Fontaine was elected as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. At an August meeting, the ESRT unanimously resolved to retain Mr. Fontaine in his capacity as chair of the ESRT, FNC and attendant committees, so that he might continue to guide ESPI.

Community contacts from First Nations and Northern Affairs communities, and from the Manitoba Métis Federation, were identified to undertake logistics of community meetings (e.g., advertising, booking facilities, providing refreshments, etc.) and in mid-September 2003, the first round of community visits began.

The objectives of the community visits were to present information on ESPI; to elicit community feedback representative of community sectors that included women, youth and Elders regarding conservation, environmental issues, etc.; and to exchange information to create greater awareness regarding the east side plan. The purpose and objectives of ESPI were produced on video in English, Cree, Ojibway and Oji-Cree to assist in communicating consistent information to communities and organizations. The *Phase I Executive Summary Report* was also produced in these languages for distribution at community meetings.

In November 2003, members of the Round Table and the First Nations Council, with the assistance of members of the Secretariat began a process that would engage all east side First Nations, Northern Affairs and Métis communities in over 80 meetings. Comments from the community visits were presented in two documents: "What We Heard By Community" and "What We Heard By Issue" (see Appendices). Both documents were deposited in the public registry and are available on the ESPI website at:
www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/eastsideplan

At a joint meeting of Elders, the FNC and ESRT in December 2003, Ed Wood, an Elder from St. Theresa Point First Nation, was appointed as the associate chair. The ESRT then focused attention on preparing draft recommendations for the BAP. With the knowledge that a final plan was not possible to achieve within the time frame specified by government, the ESRT decided to compile a status report based on the observations, submissions and recommendations gathered to date. As a result of this, the need for an on-going mechanism was seen as critical (see 5.1 – Solidifying an On-Going Process: Continuing the Creation of a Broad Area Plan & Possible Options – An Interim Planning Authority).



The majority of recommendations in this report are drawn from the issues identified during the community visits and summarized in the “What We Heard” documents. For a complete description of the methodology used in the preparation of recommendations, see 6.1 Working Groups: Constructing the Observations & Recommendations.

Parallel to this process, the First Nations Council initiated negotiations with the Government of Manitoba to strike a *Memorandum of Understanding* committing First Nations governments on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and the Government of Manitoba to negotiate *Protocols of Agreement* that would become a central component of the Broad Area Plan. The Government of Manitoba committed to a similar process for the Métis Nation resident on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

4.2 Mandate Summary

The *East Side Lake Winnipeg Broad Area Planning Initiative – Phase I Final Report* makes recommendations towards the development of a Broad Area Plan under the following headings: The Planning Area; Advisory Bodies – Roles and Responsibilities; Research Needs; The Planning Process; and Issues and Opportunities. While many of the recommendations contained in the Phase I Report are addressed in this status report, much work remains to finalize the Broad Area Plan, including completion of the public participation process.

The mandate provided by the Minister of Conservation to the East Side Round Table (ESRT) and the First Nations Council (FNC) is as follows:

Treaty and Aboriginal Rights:

The east side plan recognize, affirm and be in compliance with treaty obligations and Aboriginal rights and be consistent with the consultation/protocol guideline recommendations of the COSDI Report respecting First Nations and Aboriginal peoples.

Treaty and Aboriginal Rights are addressed in Chapter 5.2 – Building Positive Relationships with Aboriginal Peoples: *Protocols of Agreement*. While a memorandum of understanding has been completed, the development of the protocol is an ongoing process.

Aboriginal and Community Development:

The east side Round Table review the status of community planning in the planning area and provide advice on ways and means to meet the needs for community plans.

The east side Round Table provide advice on the relationship that should be established between the Broad Area Plan and local community plans and how

“People are in favour of development but we also care about the environment. We live here and do not want to see the environment destroyed.”

(East Side Resident)

