

6. Priority Issues & Recommendations

6.1 Working Groups: Constructing the Observations & Recommendations

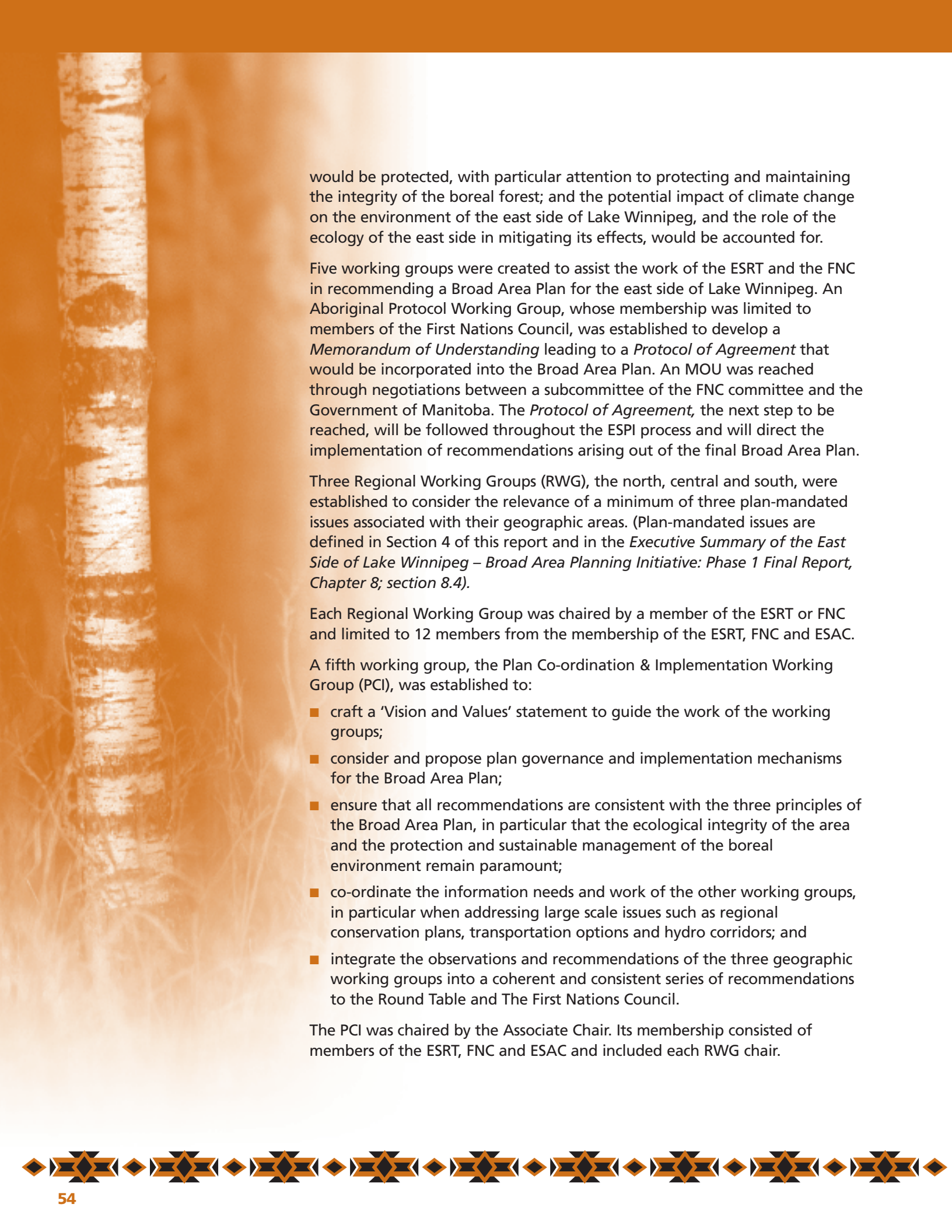
At the Round Table meeting in December, 2003, a sub-committee was asked to consider the feasibility of establishing working groups to develop recommendations towards the Broad Area Plan. The concept was considered and approved by the ESRT and FNC in January 2004.

The purposes of the working groups were to:

- receive and analyze information on issues that the government had asked the ESRT and the FNC to include in the Broad Area Plan for the east side of Lake Winnipeg;
- consider all manner of public input on these issues, with particular attention paid to observations, suggestions and recommendations received from individuals and communities residing on the east side of Lake Winnipeg;
- consider the adequacy of existing data and information on current and potential planning initiatives and identify data and information gaps that could prevent initiatives from proceeding;
- undertake an in-depth consideration of the major issues and components of the Broad Area Plan; and
- prepare recommendations to the ESRT and the FNC on the issues of consideration before the working group so that they may be included in the Broad Area Plan.

Principles identified to guide the work and progress of the working groups were: Aboriginal, Treaty Rights and Traditional Ecological Knowledge would be respected and fully integrated; the current and future needs of people living on the east side would be respected and integrated; the environment





would be protected, with particular attention to protecting and maintaining the integrity of the boreal forest; and the potential impact of climate change on the environment of the east side of Lake Winnipeg, and the role of the ecology of the east side in mitigating its effects, would be accounted for.

Five working groups were created to assist the work of the ESRT and the FNC in recommending a Broad Area Plan for the east side of Lake Winnipeg. An Aboriginal Protocol Working Group, whose membership was limited to members of the First Nations Council, was established to develop a *Memorandum of Understanding* leading to a *Protocol of Agreement* that would be incorporated into the Broad Area Plan. An MOU was reached through negotiations between a subcommittee of the FNC committee and the Government of Manitoba. The *Protocol of Agreement*, the next step to be reached, will be followed throughout the ESPI process and will direct the implementation of recommendations arising out of the final Broad Area Plan.

Three Regional Working Groups (RWG), the north, central and south, were established to consider the relevance of a minimum of three plan-mandated issues associated with their geographic areas. (Plan-mandated issues are defined in Section 4 of this report and in the *Executive Summary of the East Side of Lake Winnipeg – Broad Area Planning Initiative: Phase 1 Final Report, Chapter 8; section 8.4*).

Each Regional Working Group was chaired by a member of the ESRT or FNC and limited to 12 members from the membership of the ESRT, FNC and ESAC.

A fifth working group, the Plan Co-ordination & Implementation Working Group (PCI), was established to:

- craft a 'Vision and Values' statement to guide the work of the working groups;
- consider and propose plan governance and implementation mechanisms for the Broad Area Plan;
- ensure that all recommendations are consistent with the three principles of the Broad Area Plan, in particular that the ecological integrity of the area and the protection and sustainable management of the boreal environment remain paramount;
- co-ordinate the information needs and work of the other working groups, in particular when addressing large scale issues such as regional conservation plans, transportation options and hydro corridors; and
- integrate the observations and recommendations of the three geographic working groups into a coherent and consistent series of recommendations to the Round Table and The First Nations Council.

The PCI was chaired by the Associate Chair. Its membership consisted of members of the ESRT, FNC and ESAC and included each RWG chair.

Nominations for the positions of chairs of the three Regional Working Groups were received by the ESPI Chair. Volunteers for membership in the RWG and PCI were also received (Aboriginal Protocol Working Group membership was predetermined). Once the ESRT and FNC were canvassed for volunteers and those volunteers placed, remaining memberships were made available to members of the ESAC. It was not considered essential that each member of the ESRT or the FNC be on a Working Group.

The Secretariat supported the Chairs of the Working Groups in carrying out their responsibilities. The Secretariat also ensured that progress reports were shared among the various working groups. All Working Groups completed their tasks. The Secretariat assembled Working Group submissions by issue and, following numerous review meetings, forwarded a draft of the status report to the ESRT and FNC for consideration and approval.

6.2 Aboriginal and Community Development

Mandate

“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 they may be integrated into the large area plan for the east side of Lake Winnipeg.”

Poplar River, Black River and Hollow Water First Nations are in the process of developing land use plans for their traditional areas. Berens River First Nation and the Island Lake Tribal Council have indicated their intentions of doing the same. The communities of Manigotagan and Wasagamack are in the process of developing community plans. In spite of these initiatives, the majority of communities in the study area have not undertaken any form of planning, community or otherwise, even though they desire to do so.

There are, however, much broader community development issues than are captured by the mandate. For example, an overriding issue is the increasing population in the area and the lack of economic opportunities. Reasons for the lack of opportunity include a perception of policy and regulatory roadblocks preventing access to financing and an inability to acquire licenses for various activities, resulting in non-local ownership and cash outflows. The ESRT heard comments that there are too many regulations. Trapline regulations, for example, are too costly and restrictive.

While there is support for economic development on the east side, there is a frustration by residents at the lack of involvement and participation in decision-making with regard to: the granting of licenses and permits, the

“Must plan right with traditional knowledge. Must carefully consider how development takes place. Have to consider how we are part of the land.”

(East Side Resident)

