

# Manitoba Protected Areas Initiative Update 2008

Manitoba's network of protected areas includes all sites where logging, mining, hydroelectric development and, as appropriate, other activities that adversely and significantly affect habitat are prohibited through legal means. Manitoba is managing approximately 42.3 % of its boreal forest in cooperation with First Nations, 10.7 % of which is protected. Manitoba's Green and Growing Strategy (2006) commits to a goal of permanently designating five new, major protected areas by 2010 and increasing the number of ecological reserves.

## Key Results Achieved

Manitoba continues to work with several east side First Nations, Ontario, and Canada to develop a boreal forest World Heritage Site nomination on the east side of Lake Winnipeg for submission to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Background studies for the area are being prepared along with land use plans for each of the protected areas and each of the traditional areas that comprise the study area. The Pimachiowin Aki Corporation is coordinating the work, and undertaking extensive communications about the project and researching other World Heritage Site nominations.

Important work continued this year with the mining and forestry industries, First Nation and Northern Affairs communities, and environmental organizations regarding protected areas. Priority areas included the Manitoba Lowlands in the southeastern corner of the province (Natural Region 5c), the Saskatchewan River Forest Section (Natural Region 5a), southern Manitoba (agro-Manitoba), the Arctic Tundra and the Hudson Bay Lowlands (Natural Regions 2a, 2b, and 3), and a number of smaller sites proposed as ecological reserves. Most of these activities involve sites within the boreal region.

- In January 2008, Little Limestone Lake Park Reserve was renewed until January, 2013 to provide opportunity to develop a protected area plan. It is considered by experts to be the largest and most outstanding example of a marl lake in the world.
- In June 2008, Amisk Park Reserve was renewed until May, 2013.
- In June 2008, the final location and boundary of Duff Roblin Provincial Park was established at the Floodway Inlet Control Structure south of Winnipeg (32 hectares protected). This park commemorates the foresight of the Honourable Duff Roblin, Premier of Manitoba from 1958 to 1967, and the driving force behind both the floodway and the provincial park system.
- In July 2008, Ontario and Manitoba established a new Interprovincial Wilderness Area along the Manitoba-Ontario border, which encompasses over 9,400 square kilometers of Canada's central boreal forest. The area includes Woodland Caribou Provincial Park and the Eagle-Snowshoe Conservation Reserve in Ontario and Atikaki and parts of Nopiming Provincial Parks in Manitoba. The provinces will work together to conserve ecological integrity by coordinating resource management and by encouraging research. It will also be enhancing and developing recreational opportunities in the area and working with nearby First Nations, the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Project and local communities on various partnerships.

- Protected area proposals covering over 165,000 hectares have been developed in Natural Region 5c and are ready for external consultation. Ten proposed ecological reserves and one proposed addition to an existing ecological reserve have also been identified.
- Manitoba Conservation staff are currently reviewing a number of Areas of Special Interest located along Hudson Bay with Shamattawa and York Factory First Nations.
- The Protected Areas Initiative (PAI) is continuing its land use evaluation and planning exercise in the Saskatchewan River Forest Section (SRFS) located in Natural Region 5a on the west side of the province. The Saskatchewan River Delta, located in the SRFS, is being considered for protection. The Saskatchewan River Delta is recognized as a globally significant Important Bird Area, the largest freshwater inland delta in North America and one of only two active deltas in the Boreal Plains Ecozone of the western boreal forest.
- In February 2008, the province purchased land adjacent to Moose Lake Provincial Park in southeastern Manitoba (65 ha) which will be evaluated as a possible ecological reserve.
- In February 2008, the province partnered with The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) to purchase privately owned land (131 ha) adjacent to the Pembina Valley Wildlife Management Area which borders the Pembina Valley Provincial Park.

## Other Related Activities

- In July 2008, the Atikaki Provincial Park and Bloodvein Canadian Heritage River Management Plan was released. As part of Manitoba's protected areas network, Atikaki Provincial Park is an outstanding example of the southern Precambrian forest and the ecological and biological processes that maintain that forest and the species within it. The management plan is a key contribution toward land-use planning required as part of the work underway for the UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination.
- Manitoba Conservation continued to work closely with conservation agencies, such as NCC and Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), to advance protection efforts in southern Manitoba where much of the land is privately-owned. A \$400,000 grant was awarded to NCC in support of their "Campaign for Conservation". Targeted areas for protection in the NCC Campaign include the Tall Grass Prairie in the R.M. of Stuartburn in southern Manitoba and the Riding Mountain Aspen Parkland (aspen parkland lying between the Riding and Duck Mountains) in western Manitoba.
- As of September 14, 2008, the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation (MHHC) held a total of 424 Conservation Agreements (CAs) covering 28,713 ha. Of these, 61 CAs covering 5,084 ha were acquired since October, 2007. All CAs held by MHHC are in perpetuity. They were donated or acquired through the Potholes Plus Program, the Habitat Stewardship Program focusing on species at risk, or the new Riparian Conservation Easement Program whose current focus is the Red River Valley. These conservation lands contain the gamut of native habitat in Manitoba's prairie ecozone including wetlands, habitat of species at risk, riparian areas, mixed grass prairie, and woodland.
- The City of Winnipeg's natural lands are currently being evaluated for addition to the protected area network as a part of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in June, 2007
- In April 2008, the Beaudry Provincial Park Prairie Management Plan was initiated, fulfilling one of the park purpose statements – to "protect and restore tall grass prairie ecosystem and examples of prairie river and riverbottom forest habitat." The plan sets out the management prescriptions for the park's 121 hectare prairie restoration project, the largest of its kind in Canada.
- In February 2008, a "Winter Road Access" land use category (LUC) was created under the Provincial Parks Act. Land in a provincial park with a winter road access land use categorization is intended to have the same protection as land with a backcountry land use categorization with the exception of permitting construction and operation of a winter road.
- In February 2008, 22,210 ha of Poplar/Nanowin Park Reserve was reclassified from LUC Backcountry to LUC Winter Road Access.