

Brokenhead River Ecological Reserve

Backgrounder

Land Designation

Ecological reserves play a key role in Manitoba's protected areas network by protecting unique, rare and representative examples of plants, animals, geological features and ecosystems. They are the most protected of the provincially designated sites within Manitoba's network of protected areas.

Landscape Description

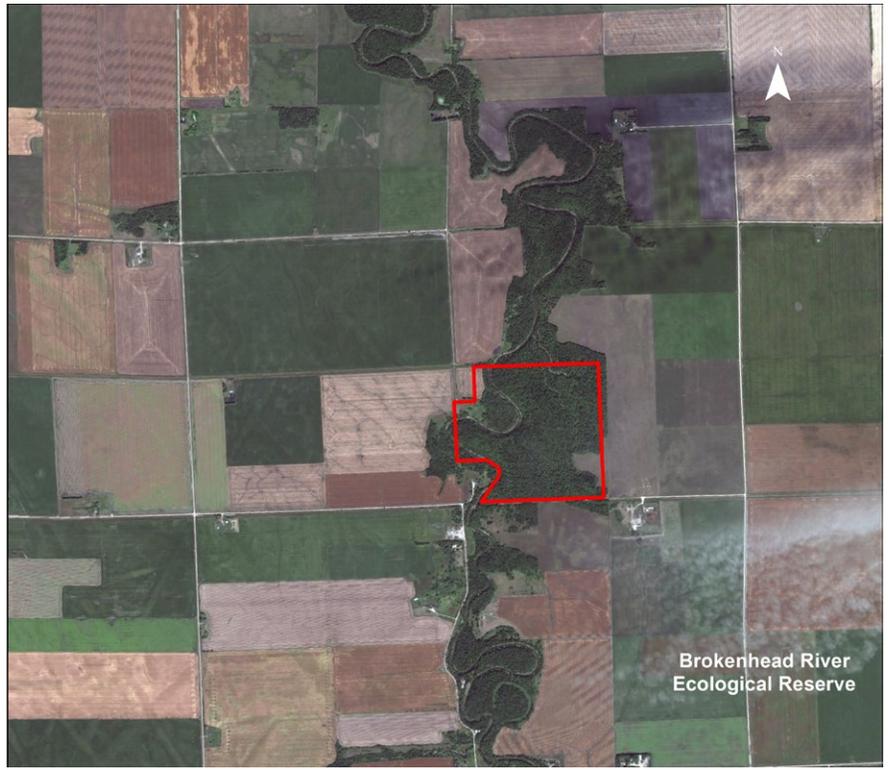
The Brokenhead River Ecological Reserve protects 66 hectares of rare river-bottom forest in Brokenhead Municipality. The forest is a mature, mixedwood forest near its climax condition. The general municipality is flat and dissected by many streams. Approximately 10 per cent of the ecological reserve is made up of old agricultural lands that are reverting back to natural forest cover. The site is located approximately 50 kilometres southeast of Winnipeg on the Brokenhead River.

Outstanding Features

Brokenhead River Ecological Reserve is a mature river-bottom mixed wood forest. Due to agricultural development in southern Manitoba, intact mature river-bottom forest is rare in the province. This ecological reserve is surrounded by agricultural lands and represents the last stand of mature mixed forest along the Brokenhead River.

The forest is dominated by oak, ash, spruce and elm, many of which are over 30 metres tall, and have diameters at breast height of 60 to 70 centimetres. The size of these trees adds to the uniqueness of this site within Manitoba. Few woodlots in Ontario surpass the quality of this site, where this forest type is more common. The factors of large tree size, mixture of river-bottom and upland species, and the relatively large size of the forested area make this a unique site in Manitoba.





The forest has a primeval feel with its lush floor of deep fungi, moss-covered fallen trees and abundant wildflowers. Some of the flowering understory species include beaked hazelnut, Canadian plum, fairy bells, Canadian wood nettle, nodding trillium, wild ginger, naked miterwort, downy yellow violet, wild sarsaparilla, and wild lily-of-the-valley.

Wildlife found in this ecological reserve include: beaver, mink, red fox, red squirrel, ruffed grouse, snapping turtle, and black backed woodpecker.

The Brokenhead River Ecological Reserve will be maintained for the preservation and protection of rare mature river-bottom forest. Passive non-consumptive recreation on foot is permitted. Indigenous peoples are permitted to carry out their treaty and aboriginal rights within the ecological reserve. All other activities require prior ministerial approval.

This protected area is categorized by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as a protected area under the management category Ia – a protected area managed for strict nature protection available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring. These protected lands are free from logging, mining, hydroelectric development, oil and gas development, and any other activities that could harm habitat.