



Burge Lake Provincial Park

Draft Management Plan



Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Background and Park Attributes	3
2.1 Park History	3
2.2 Natural Features	4
2.3 Recreational Use	4
2.4 Additional Considerations	4
3. Park Purpose and Role	5
3.1 Park Classification and Purpose	5
3.2 Land Use Categories	5
4. Park Management Guidelines	6
4.1 Natural Features	6
4.2 Recreation	6
Bibliography	7

1. Introduction

The Provincial Parks Act requires that a management plan be prepared for each provincial park. Management plans establish long-term direction for parks and address issues pertaining to resource use, development of park land, environmental protection, and the preservation of culturally significant areas. They are used in conjunction with park regulations, procedures and other departmental and government policies and legislation.

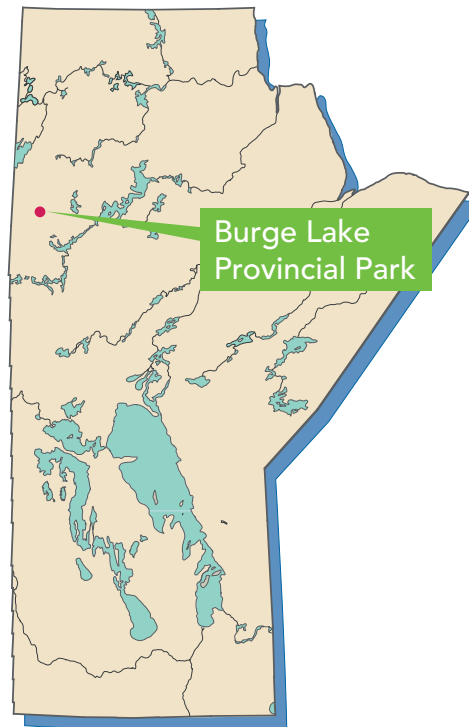
This draft management plan includes proposed guidelines that will inform management of Burge Lake Provincial Park. The final plan will be based on the role of the park in Manitoba's system of parks and will take into account feedback received from the public on the draft management plan. Once finalized, the management plan will guide management of the park over the next 10 to 15 years. Implementation of the plan will occur on a gradual basis, and will be partially dependent on the availability of resources to sustain proposed initiatives.

The rights of Indigenous Peoples to pursue traditional uses and activities within Burge Lake Provincial Park are acknowledged and respected within the context of this draft management plan.

2. Background and Park Attributes

2.1 Park History

Burge Lake Provincial Park was designated in 1961. Prior to the designation the park had been used as a recreation area by residents of the Town of Lynn Lake for about a decade. Burge Lake is a small park accessed via PR 394 from Lynn Lake, which is only about 10 kilometres (km), or 15 minutes, away. It is a very similar park to Zed Lake Provincial Park, which is located about 16 km away.



In recent years, it has been discovered that some park facilities have unintentionally been developed on Crown land located outside of the Burge Lake park boundary. As a result, Manitoba Sustainable Development is undertaking a process in conjunction with the preparation of the park management plan to expand the park boundary to incorporate these facilities, as well as some cottage lots, which are immediately adjacent to the current boundary and across the road from cottages within the park. In addition, the department is exploring the possibility of adding an area of land on the east side of the lake to the park. This area includes an undeveloped cottage subdivision lying parallel to the lake, as well as an undeveloped forested area that could potentially be protected under the backcountry land use category (LUC). Protected lands in provincial parks are areas where logging, mining, oil and gas exploration and development, hydro-electric development, exploring for and harvesting peat, and any other activities which may significantly and adversely affect habitat, are legally prohibited.



2.2 Natural Features

Currently only 6.12 hectares (0.06 km²), the park is located on the west shore of Burge Lake. It is situated within the Churchill River Upland Ecoregion, which is typically composed of sandy soils, coniferous forests and boggy wetlands. The landscape in the campground is largely composed of open, mature forest with caribou moss interspersed between the campsites. Caribou moss (which is actually a lichen) is almost white in colour and is very slow growing, commonly taking years to grow back after it has been disturbed. The forest in the area is dominated by jack pine and black spruce. Wildlife common to the ecoregion includes black bear, moose, woodland caribou, wolf, lynx and many smaller mammals and birds. The lake is listed as a High Quality Management Water, which means that anglers are limited to specific numbers of certain fish species in order to protect and maintain a high quality fishery.

2.3 Recreational Use

Although small and relatively remote, Burge Lake Provincial Park is popular among local residents for camping, cottaging and day use. Park facilities include a small campground with basic sites, playground, beach, non-modern washrooms and a group use picnic shelter, as well as a dock, boat launch and fish-cleaning shed. Recreational activities in the park typically include swimming, boating and fishing for walleye and northern pike. The park also includes over 20 cottages, with some residents living in the park year-round. Approximately 15 cottage lots in the same subdivision are situated immediately outside of the park boundary, across the road from the cottages in the park. Manitoba Sustainable Development will investigate adding these cottage lots, as well as an undeveloped subdivision, a remote cottage and a small summer camp all located on the east side of the lake, to the park as part of the boundary adjustment process noted above in order to make the application of rules and regulations consistent between lots. The summer camp is operated by the Town of Lynn Lake and is accessed via the boat launch in the park. Manitoba Infrastructure maintains the roads inside the park.

2.4 Additional Considerations

Burge Lake Provincial Park is located within Marcel Colomb First Nation's Community Interest Zone (CIZ). CIZ's relate to Treaty Land Entitlement claims and are established in areas within 30 km of certain First Nation Reserves.



3. Park Purpose and Role

3.1 Park Classification and Purpose

Manitoba's provincial park system is made up of almost 100 different parks and park reserves. The role of each park within this system is identified by its classification. Parks may be classified as one of five types: wilderness, natural, recreation, heritage or Indigenous traditional use.

Burge Lake Provincial Park is currently classified as a recreation park. The main purpose of a recreation park, as defined in The Provincial Parks Act, is to provide recreational opportunities. However, if additional lands are added to the park and protected under the backcountry LUC, as per the proposal described in Section 2.1 above, then the purpose of the park will change to include the need to preserve this portion of the Churchill River Upland Ecoregion. As this purpose would be more aligned with the definition of a natural park, it is proposed that the classification change from a recreation park to a natural park should the boundary expansion take place. The purpose of a natural park is both to preserve areas of a natural region and to accommodate a diversity of recreational opportunities and resource uses.

The objectives of Manitoba's provincial park system are to conserve ecosystems and maintain biodiversity; to preserve unique and representative natural, cultural and heritage resources; and to provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities in a natural setting. The purpose of each park within the system is to contribute to these overarching objectives while fully recognizing and incorporating local considerations.

The current purpose of Burge Lake Provincial Park is to provide outdoor recreational opportunities and experiences in a natural setting in northern Manitoba. In doing so, the park will:

- provide camping, beach and day use opportunities
- accommodate an existing cottage subdivision

Should the park be expanded to include a protected area, as described above, the park purpose will be updated to incorporate the preservation of physical

features and biological communities representative of the Churchill River Upland Ecoregion.

3.2 Land Use Categories

LUCs are used to designate lands within provincial parks for various purposes. There are eight LUCs in which land may be categorized: wilderness, backcountry, resource management, recreational development, heritage, access, winter road access or Indigenous heritage.

Burge Lake Provincial Park is categorized under the recreational development (RD) LUC. The main purpose of this category is to accommodate recreational development. Within Burge Lake Provincial Park, this includes:

- providing facilities including a camping area, picnic area, beach, playground and boat launch
- accommodating a cottage subdivision with approximately two dozen road accessible lots

As stated above, Manitoba Sustainable Development is considering adding an undeveloped forested area to the park and classifying it under the backcountry LUC. The main purpose of this category is to protect examples of natural landscapes and provide basic facilities and trails for nature-oriented recreation in a largely undisturbed environment.



4. Park Management Guidelines

The following guidelines will direct management decisions in Burge Lake Provincial Park over the life of the management plan.

4.1 Natural Features

The landscape in Burge Lake Provincial Park is mostly intact and undisturbed by significant development. This setting is a significant aspect of what visitors appreciate about the park.

Guidelines

1. Ecological values in undeveloped portions of the park will be maintained and these areas will remain free of development beyond that needed for safety purposes.
2. If species of conservation concern are identified in the park, any negative impacts on those species associated with park use will be minimized or avoided. Any sightings of rare species will be tracked and shared with the Manitoba Conservation Data Centre.
3. Park users will be encouraged to stay on existing trails and developed areas to avoid damaging the fragile landscape.
4. Parks and Protected Spaces Branch will participate in departmental efforts to prevent aquatic and terrestrial invasive species from spreading within the park or into Burge Lake. This may include but not be limited to the promotion of proper decontamination procedures for watercraft and water-related equipment, and educating park visitors on how they can stop the spread of invasive species.

5. Manitoba Sustainable Development will seek to add an undeveloped area of Crown land to the park and protect it under the backcountry LUC.

4.2 Recreation

Burge Lake Provincial Park provides day use, camping and cottaging opportunities in a relatively quiet and relaxed atmosphere. These characteristics are important to the experience offered in the park and should be maintained.

Guidelines

1. Camping will continue to be provided at a basic level of service. The campground will not be expanded in order to maintain the quiet, uncrowded nature of the camping experience in the park.
2. Cottaging in the park will continue to be accommodated. No additional cottages will be added to the park beyond the lots identified in the existing subdivision plans.
3. Basic facilities for day use activities including swimming, boating and fishing will continue to be provided.
4. Manitoba Sustainable Development will expand the park boundary to include areas of the campground that are currently located outside of the existing boundary. The Department will also seek to incorporate cottage lots located adjacent to the park in the amended boundary, as well as an undeveloped subdivision, a remote cottage and a summer camp all located on the east side of the lake.

Bibliography

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