Proposal to Amend the Land Use Categories in the Turtle Mountain Provincial Park

Introduction

Turtle Mountain Provincial Park has a rich history of sustainable resource use. Originally established as a federal forest reserve at the turn of the 20th century, the Turtle Mountains was an area originally set aside for resource use including logging, cattle grazing, coal and oil production. Recognized for its natural features and recreational potential, Turtle Mountain was designated in 1961 as one of Manitoba’s first provincial parks.

The park encompasses the Lulu Lake oil field, discovered in 1952, which is situated below in limestone of the Mississippian formation. The first oil wells were established after the 1952 discovery of Lulu Lake field, and prior to the designation of the provincial park.

In 2015, Tundra Oil and Gas, the sole operator in Turtle Mountain Provincial Park, announced their intent to cancel their lease and remove all operations from the park. Tundra Oil and Gas has nearly completed their reclamation work for the well sites, with all infrastructure removed, and seeding of native vegetation completed. Long term monitoring and maintenance will continue.

As there are no other resource interests in this area of the park, Manitoba Parks is proposing to protect approximately 17,000 hectares (ha) by changing some existing land use categories (LUC) to backcountry. Leaving only the areas where cottages and campgrounds are located as unprotected lands.

Turtle Mountain Provincial Park is entirely located within the Turtle Mountain Ecodistrict of the Southwest Manitoba Uplands ecoregion. The area is characterized by prominent wooded upland consisting of deciduous trees and shrubs with an undergrowth of herbs and grasses. Trembling aspen is the most widespread tree, mixed with white birch and bur oak. Also found throughout are green ash, Manitoba maple and balsam poplar. Turtle Mountain Provincial Park contains one of the best examples of pure old growth deciduous forests in Manitoba.
A number of wildlife species are found in the area including a diversity of aquatic mammals, waterfowl, colonial waterbirds and songbirds. Elk, moose and white-tailed deer are also found within the park. Due to a decline in local populations, moose hunting closure was implemented in Game Hunting Area 29A (Turtle Mountain) in 2016. Changing the land use category of the inner core of Turtle Mountain Provincial Park will provide permanent protection for habitat required for the recovery of the local moose population.

Proposal

To change the land use category (LUC) for 17,000 hectares of Turtle Mountain Provincial Park from resource management and recreational development to backcountry as illustrated on Map 1.

Areas classified under the backcountry LUC contribute to Manitoba’s network of protected areas by legally prohibiting commercial logging, mining, hydroelectric development, oil and gas development, peat exploration and harvest, and any other activity that may significantly and adversely affect habitat. The backcountry LUC does not affect licensed hunting and trapping.

This protected area would be categorized as an IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) protected area management category II - a protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation.

The rights of Indigenous Peoples to access this area for hunting, trapping, fishing and other traditional pursuits is respected and would continue. As per section 3.03 (6) of the Framework Agreement Treaty Land Entitlement, an Entitlement First Nation may not generally select land in Turtle Mountain Provincial Park because the park was created in 1960 before the Agreement’s Date of Execution (1997).
Share Your Views

We want to hear from you. Your input will help shape the future of Turtle Mountain Provincial Park.
To obtain a comment sheet, please visit www.manitobaparks.com or call Manitoba Parks and Protected Spaces at 204-945-6784 or (toll free) 1-800-214-6497.

Comments can be mailed, faxed or emailed to:

**Turtle Mountain Provincial Park Land Use Category Change**

Parks and Protected Spaces  
Box 53, 200 Saulteaux Crescent  
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3W3

Email: parksystem@gov.mb.ca  
Fax: 204-945-0012

Your comments must be received no later than May 25, 2018.