



Zed Lake Provincial Park

Draft Management Plan



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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 Zed 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 Zed Lake Provincial Park are acknowledged and respected within the context of this draft management plan.



2. Background and Park Attributes

2.1 Park History

Zed Lake was developed as a recreation area in the mid-1950s and then designated a provincial park in 1961. The park is accessed via PR 394 from the Town of Lynn Lake, located 20 kilometres (km) away, and is only about 16 km from the very similar Burge Lake Provincial Park. Zed Lake contains the most northerly provincial park campground in Manitoba.

In recent years, it has been discovered that much of the campground has unintentionally been developed on Crown land located outside of the 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. A relatively small area of undeveloped land is also being considered for addition to the park and protection 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

Zed Lake Provincial Park is (currently) 12.07 hectares (0.12 km²) and is located on the east shore of Zed Lake. It is situated within the Churchill River Upland Ecoregion, which is typically composed of sandy soils, coniferous forests and boggy wetlands. Tree cover in the park consists of jack pine and black spruce with very little understory and a rich covering of caribou moss, which provides a striking visual effect for park visitors. This species, *Cladonia rangiferina*, is actually a lichen and is very light-coloured, causing it to look almost like snow from a distance. Caribou moss is very slow growing, commonly taking years to grow back after it has been disturbed. Wildlife common to the ecoregion includes black bear, moose, woodland



caribou, wolf, lynx and many smaller mammals and birds. A notable bird species which has been recorded in the park is the olive-sided flycatcher, which is listed as Threatened under Canada's Species at Risk Act. 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

Zed Lake Provincial Park contains a small campground with basic sites, non-modern washrooms and a group use picnic shelter. Other facilities include a beach, playground, dock, boat launch and fish-cleaning shed. The park is small and remote but popular with residents of the Lynn Lake area for swimming, boating and fishing for species such as lake trout, walleye and northern pike. The park also includes approximately 25 cottage lots, with a few currently unoccupied. Manitoba Infrastructure maintains the roads inside the park.

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.

Zed 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 recognizing and incorporating local considerations.

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

- provide camping, beach and day use opportunities
- provide access to Zed Lake for fishing and other water-based recreational activities
- accommodate an existing cottage subdivision

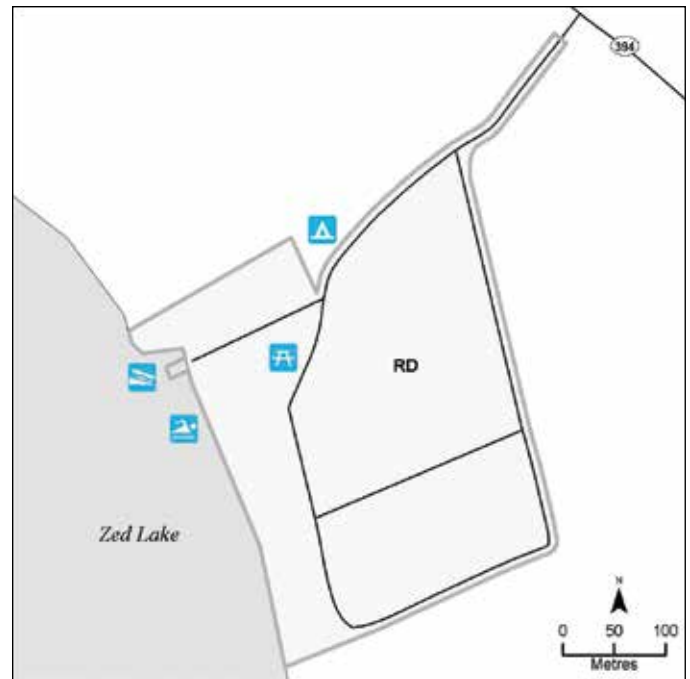
Should the park be expanded to include a protected area, as described above, the park purpose will be updated to incorporate the preservation of physical features and biological communities representative of the Churchill River Upland Ecoregion.

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.

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

- providing facilities including a campground, beach and boat launch
- accommodating a cottage subdivision consisting of approximately 25 road accessible lots



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As stated above, Manitoba Sustainable Development is considering adding a small, undeveloped 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 Zed Lake Provincial Park over the life of the management plan.

4.1 Natural Features

The landscape in Zed Lake Provincial Park is mostly intact and undisturbed by 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. Parks and Protected Spaces Branch will participate in departmental efforts to prevent aquatic and terrestrial invasive species from spreading within the park or into Zed 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.

4. Park users will be encouraged to stay on existing trails and developed areas to avoid damaging the fragile landscape. This may be accomplished through the installation of “stay on the trail” signs that explain the fragility of the caribou moss.
5. Manitoba Sustainable Development will seek to add an undeveloped area of Crown land to the park boundary and protect it under the backcountry LUC.

4.2 Recreation

Zed 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 cottaging lots will be added to the park beyond those already identified on 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 which are currently located outside of the existing boundary.

Bibliography

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