

# Woodridge

## Backgrounder

### Land Designation

Ecological reserves play a key role in Manitoba's Protected Areas Initiative 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

Woodridge Ecological Reserve is located approximately 9 km west of the Town of Woodridge and is an estimated 515 hectares in size. The site is made up of two parcels divided by Highway 203 and is a mature cedar/spruce bog forest surrounding the Sand River.

### Outstanding Features

The geography of Woodridge Ecological Reserve provides a range of habitat types including aquatic, riparian, bog, and upland forest habitats. This diversity in habitat types results in a high biodiversity in a relatively small area. This site provides habitat for many animal species including warblers, shrews, moles, Manitoba's provincial bird the great gray owl, and a high number of Manitoba's 100 species of dragonflies and damselflies and breeding and migration staging habitat for sandhill cranes. This site also provides habitat for many eastern species of wildlife at the western periphery of their range.

Seven uncommon to rare species of orchids, including dragon's mouth, green adder's-mouth, white adder's-mouth, round-leaved/pan-leaved rein-orchid, hooker's rein-orchid, striped coral-root, and large populations of the rare ram's-head lady's slipper are found at this site. In total, 17 species of orchid have been identified onsite, but more species likely exist that have not yet been inventoried.





The ecological reserve is also a beautiful example of a large, intact mature cedar/spruce wetland with typical understory. This type of wetland habitat is increasingly at risk in Manitoba as more development occurs. For example, the site is bordered by quarry withdraws to the east and west.

*The Ecological Reserves Act* specifies that ecological reserves are set aside in the interests of the people of Manitoba to enhance the overall well being of present and future generations of Manitobans. Ecological reserves may be used for research, education, and nature study but they are not set aside as recreational, resource harvest, or multiple use areas.

The rights of Indigenous people to access this area for hunting, trapping, fishing and other traditional pursuits will continue to be respected.

Woodridge Ecological Reserve is categorized as an International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) protected area management category 1a - 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, exploring for or harvesting peat, and any other activities that may significantly or adversely affect habitat.