

# Birch Point Provincial Park

## Management Plan

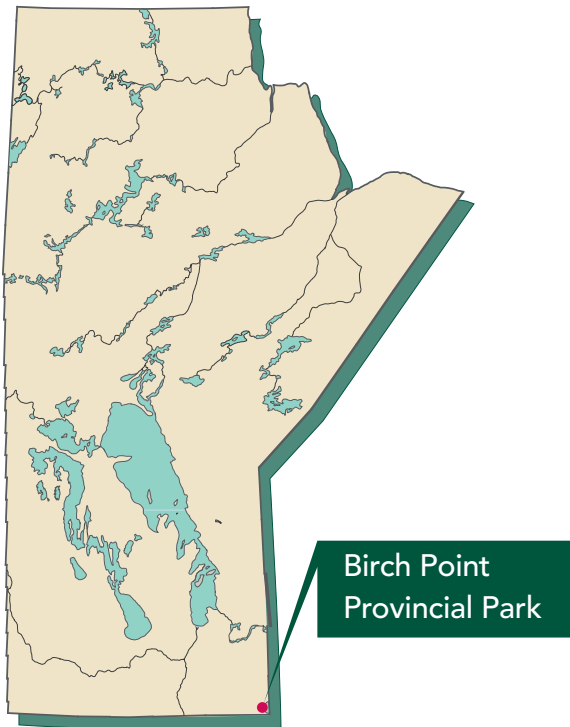


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This management plan for Birch Point Provincial Park was prepared under the authority of *The Provincial Parks Act*.

Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship  
Parks and Natural Areas Branch  
January 2013



## 1. Introduction

*The Provincial Parks Act (1993)* 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 protection as well as use and development of park land. The process of preparing this management plan was the responsibility of a team involving staff from Parks and Natural Areas Branch, regional staff of Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship and a consultant contracted to work on the project.

This management plan is to guide the work of Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship over the next 10 to 15 years. It will be used in conjunction with park regulations, directives and other departmental and government policies. In this context, the plan will be utilized and examined on an ongoing basis. Where an update or new direction on any matters described in this management plan may be needed, an appropriate process for publicly reviewing and updating the plan should be undertaken.

The Treaty and Aboriginal rights of Aboriginal peoples to pursue traditional uses and activities within Birch Point Provincial Park are acknowledged and respected within the context of this management plan.

## 2. Park History

Birch Point Provincial Park is located in the southeast corner of Manitoba on Lake of the Woods, only seven kilometres southeast of Moose Lake Provincial Park. The park is situated on the north shore of Buffalo Bay. Historically, the bay and surrounding area were travelled by Aboriginal people as well as fur traders and explorers. Buffalo Point, located at the south end of Buffalo Bay, served as an important gathering place for the Anishinabe people and is the present day home of Buffalo Point First Nation (Buffalo Point First Nation, n.d.).

A picnic site was developed at Birch Point in 1960 and the area was designated a provincial park the following year, in 1961 (Penziwol & Blahut, 2011). Birch Point is significant in that it offers the only public access point and boat launch to the portion of Lake of the Woods that is located in Manitoba.

### 3. Park Attributes

Birch Point is a relatively small park, comprising only 13.1 hectares (0.13 square kilometres). The park is located on Lake of the Woods within the Northwest Angle Provincial Forest. It is approximately 160 kilometres southeast of Winnipeg and the nearest community by road is Sprague.

#### 3.1 Natural

Birch Point Provincial Park is within the Lake of the Woods portion of the Manitoba Lowlands Natural Region. Much of the area surrounding the park consists of fens and bogs.

Examples of the range of vegetation found in and around Birch Point include black spruce, willow, cedar and wild cucumber. River otters and water birds such as loons, mergansers, grebes and pelicans are often present on Lake of the Woods near the park. Wooded areas around the park also provide suitable habitat for a variety of wildlife, including white-tailed deer, black bear, ruffed grouse and other small mammals and birds (Smith et al., 1998). In August it is possible to see monarch butterflies in the park as they travel by on their way to Mexico.

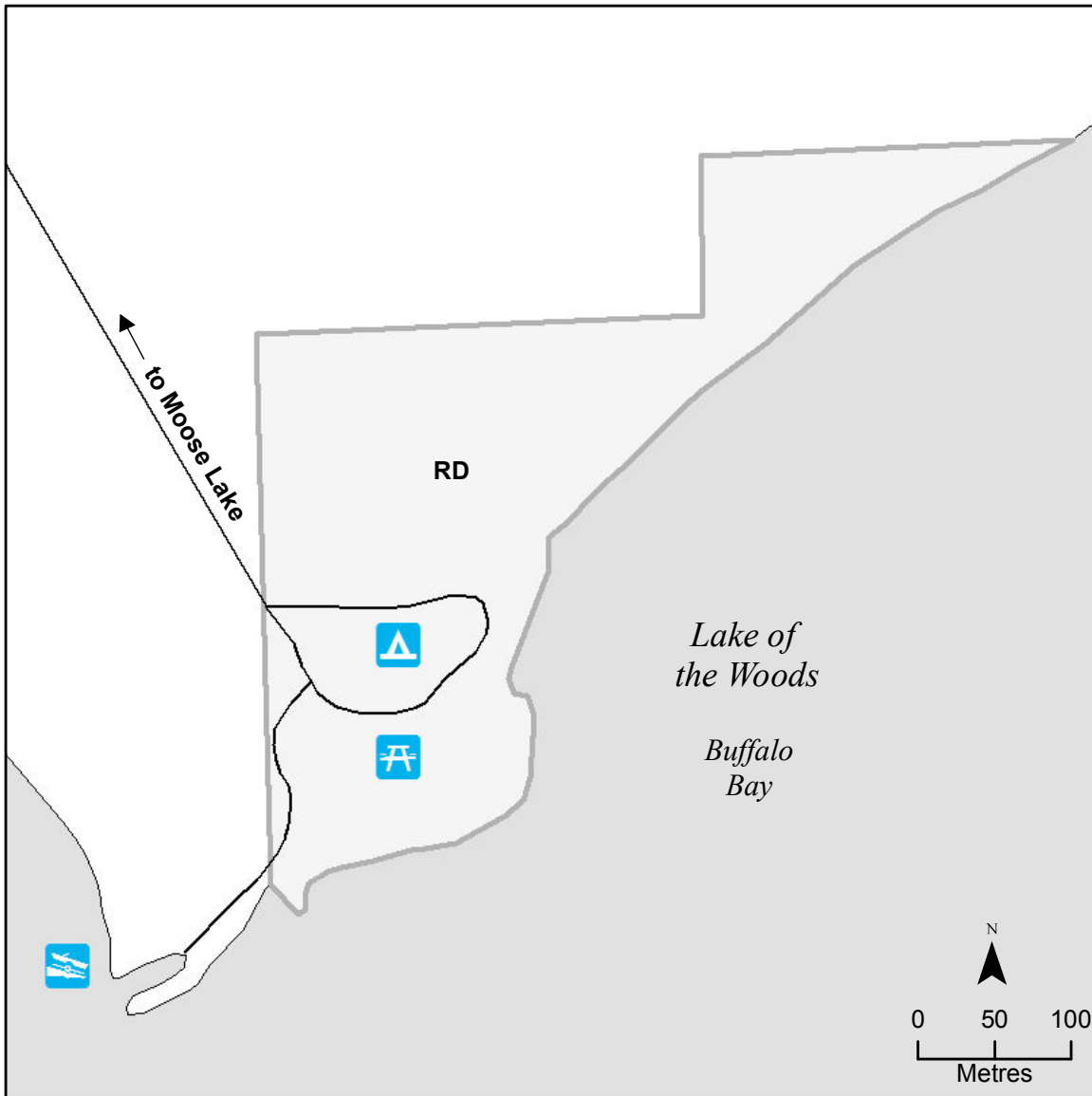
Birch Point Provincial Park's location in the most southeastern corner of Manitoba, surrounded by a mix of ecosystems, causes it to have the potential to contain occurrences of several plant species that are not commonly found elsewhere in the province. In addition, Birch Point is part of the area marking the most northwestern extent of the range of several eastern Canadian tree species, such as eastern white pine. Swamp saxifrage, a plant that is very rare in Manitoba, has also been found in the park (Manitoba Conservation Data Centre, 2012).

#### 3.2 Recreational

Birch Point Provincial Park is accessed via a road from Moose Lake Provincial Park, which is located only a few kilometres away. Visitors often camp at Moose Lake and travel to Birch Point for the day to go fishing. Park visitors can expect a natural-looking setting with basic facilities, as well as the potential for interactions with other visitors. Facilities at Birch Point include a campground with 26 basic campsites, a picnic shelter, a boat launch, a fish cleaning shack and non-modern washrooms. The boat launch area lies just outside the park as a result of the boundary being described in general terms rather than by survey when the park was established in 1961.

The campground is open from May through early September. Given its proximity to the United States, the park is commonly used by both locals and Americans. Birch Point provides access to Lake of the Woods and is popular for sport fishing in all seasons. Walleye and northern pike are the most commonly caught species.

### Birch Point Provincial Park Map



## 4. Park Management Framework

### 4.1 Classification

Manitoba's provincial park system is made up of almost 100 different parks and park reserves. Each of these areas plays a role in conserving ecosystems, preserving natural, cultural or heritage resources, and providing outdoor recreation or educational experiences. Classification descriptions can be found in Appendix A.

Birch Point Provincial Park is classified as a Recreation Park. The main purpose of a recreation park, as defined in *The Provincial Parks Act (1993)*, is to provide recreational opportunities.

### 4.2 Park Purpose

Manitoba's provincial park system was established 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. Within this larger framework, individual parks contribute towards the overall objective of the provincial park system.

*A System Plan for Manitoba's Provincial Parks (1997)* identifies the purpose of Birch Point Provincial Park as being to provide opportunities for sport fishing and other water based recreational activities in a natural setting in southeastern Manitoba. According to that plan, the park will:

- provide camping and boating opportunities; and
- provide access to Lake of the Woods.

### 4.3 Land Use Categories

Land Use Categories (LUCs) identify the important attributes of broad areas within a provincial park. Land may be categorized as Wilderness, Backcountry, Resource Management, Recreational Development, Heritage or Access LUCs. LUC descriptions can be found in Appendix A.

All of the land comprising Birch Point Provincial Park has been categorized as a Recreational Development LUC (RD). The main purpose of this categorization is to accommodate recreational development.

## 5. Park Management Guidelines

The following guidelines will direct park management actions in Birch Point Provincial Park.

### 5.1 Natural Values

1. The park will be maintained as a natural-looking area that is characteristic of the surrounding landscape.
2. The shoreline will be maintained using native vegetation and minimal site modifications. Undeveloped areas further back from the shore will remain unmodified.
3. Negative impacts to known species of conservation concern such as swamp saxifrage will be minimized or avoided.

### 5.2 Recreation

1. A small campground with a basic level of service will be provided.
2. Public access to Lake of the Woods will be provided through provision of a basic boat launch.

## Appendix A – Park Classification and Land Use Categories

### Park Classifications

In accordance with section 7(2) of *The Provincial Parks Act* (1993), all provincial parks are classified as one of the following types:

- (a) a wilderness park, if the main purpose of the designation is to preserve representative areas of a natural region;
- (b) a natural park, if the main purpose of the designation is both to preserve areas of a natural region and to accommodate a diversity of recreational opportunities and resource uses;
- (c) a recreation park, if the main purpose of the designation is to provide recreational opportunities;
- (d) a heritage park, if the main purpose of the designation is to preserve an area of land containing a resource or resources of cultural or heritage value;
- (e) any other type of provincial park that may be specified in the regulation.

### Land Use Categories

In accordance with section 7(3) of *The Provincial Parks Act* (1993), all provincial parks are categorized into one or more of the following land use categories:

- (a) a wilderness category, if the main purpose of the categorization is to protect representative or unique natural landscapes in an undisturbed state and provide recreational opportunities that depend on a pristine environment;
- (b) a backcountry category, if the main purpose of the categorization is to protect examples of natural landscapes and provide basic facilities and trails for nature-oriented recreation in a largely undisturbed environment;
- (c) a resource management category, if the main purpose of the categorization is to permit commercial resource development or extraction in a manner that does not compromise the main purpose of the park classification;
- (d) a recreational development category, if the main purpose of the categorization is to accommodate recreational development;
- (e) a heritage category, if the main purpose of the categorization is to protect a unique or representative site containing a resource or resources of cultural or heritage value;
- (f) an access category, if the main purpose of the categorization is to provide a point or route of access in a provincial park or a location for a lodge and associated facilities;
- (g) any other category that may be specified in the regulation.

## Bibliography

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