

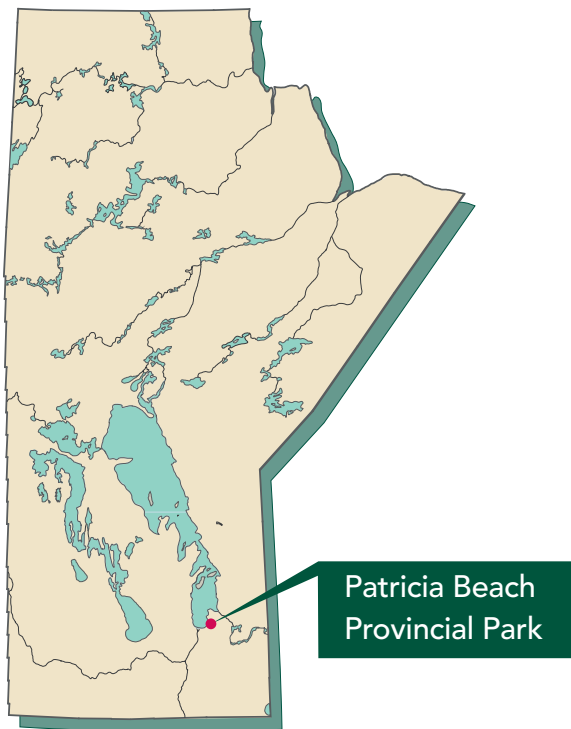
Patricia Beach Provincial Park

Management Plan



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1. Introduction

The *Provincial Parks Act* (1993) requires that a management plan be prepared for each of Manitoba's provincial parks. Management plans establish long-term direction for parks and address issues pertaining to resource protection, land use and development. The management plan for Patricia Beach Provincial Park is based on its role in Manitoba's system of parks and the participation of those who use and care about the park. The plan is to be used in conjunction with park regulations, directives, and other departmental and government policies and legislation.

The process of preparing the management plan and co-ordinating the public involvement process was the responsibility of a team involving staff from Parks and Protected Spaces branch, regional staff of Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship, and a consultant contracted to work on the project.

Preparation of the management plan involved a number of steps. The first step was to review the current operation of the park, its attributes, and history of use. Information collected was then used to prepare a draft plan. Public input on the draft plan was collected primarily through the Manitoba Parks website. Once the public consultation process was completed in August of 2013, the plan was finalized based on planning objectives and any new information received through the consultation process.

This management plan will guide the work of Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship for a minimum of 10 to 15 years. 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, a process for publicly reviewing and updating the plan will be undertaken.

The treaty and Aboriginal rights of Aboriginal peoples to pursue traditional uses and activities within Patricia Beach Provincial Park are acknowledged and respected within the context of this management plan.

2. Park History

Following a recommendation by the Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba Flood Investigating Board in the 1950s, the province began acquiring private lands around Lake Winnipeg that were periodically affected by flooding. Included in this process of land procurement was a parcel owned by George Allen, which was to become the site of a provincial park. Reportedly, George Allen stipulated that the park be named after his daughter, Patricia Joan Allen, as part of the transaction. Patricia Beach Provincial Park was designated in 1961.

Although various commercial developments have been proposed for this area in the past, including a privately run campground and a brick and tile manufacturing plant, Patricia Beach and the surrounding area have remained largely undeveloped.

3. Park Attributes

Patricia Beach is 54.42 hectares in size, stretched along 2.5 kilometres of the south-east shore of Balsam Bay in Lake Winnipeg. The park is accessed from Provincial Road 319, 70 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg.

3.1 Natural

Patricia Beach Provincial Park is a barrier beach in the Interlake Plain portion of the Manitoba Lowlands Natural Region. Terrestrial features in the park include the natural sand beach with active sand dunes and part of the marsh surrounding Beaconia Lake. A channel flows through the barrier beach from Lake Winnipeg to Beaconia Lake. Scattered stands of deciduous forest in the park contain trembling aspen, white birch and Manitoba maple. The sand dunes are sparsely covered with grasses and shrubs, and the marsh area contains wetland vegetation such as reeds and sedges.

The park contains habitat for various birds including a wetland used by water birds and the beach which has been utilized by the endangered piping plover (Species at Risk Public Registry, 2011). Repeated flooding, however, has diminished the value of the beach as piping plover habitat over the last few decades.

3.2 Recreational

The main attraction in the park is the beach, which makes for pleasant walks and provides access for swimming in the lake. The only facilities in the park are the picnic areas and non-modern washrooms. The marsh presents opportunities for viewing a variety of wetland birds.

The park's limited development contrasts with the highly developed Grand Beach Provincial Park, 20 km to the north. Visitors are able to experience a moderate degree of solitude and low interaction with other users in this mostly natural environment.

3.3 Additional Features

A food concession operates in the park under a lease agreement.

4. Park Management Framework

4.1 Park Classification

Manitoba's provincial park system is made up of almost 100 different parks and park reserves. The role of an individual park within this system is identified by its classification. Classification descriptions can be found in Appendix A.

Patricia Beach Provincial Park is classified as a Recreation Park. The main purpose of a Recreation Park is to provide recreational opportunities in accordance with *The Provincial Parks Act (1993)*.

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) states that the purpose of Patricia Beach Provincial Park is to provide outdoor recreational opportunities and experiences in a natural setting in southern Manitoba. The park will:

- Provide beach and swimming opportunities on the shores of Lake Winnipeg
- Preserve lagoons and wetland habitats to provide nesting habitat for water birds
- Protect piping plover nesting habitat
- Promote public awareness and appreciation of the sand dunes and lagoon habitats, particularly piping plover nesting sites

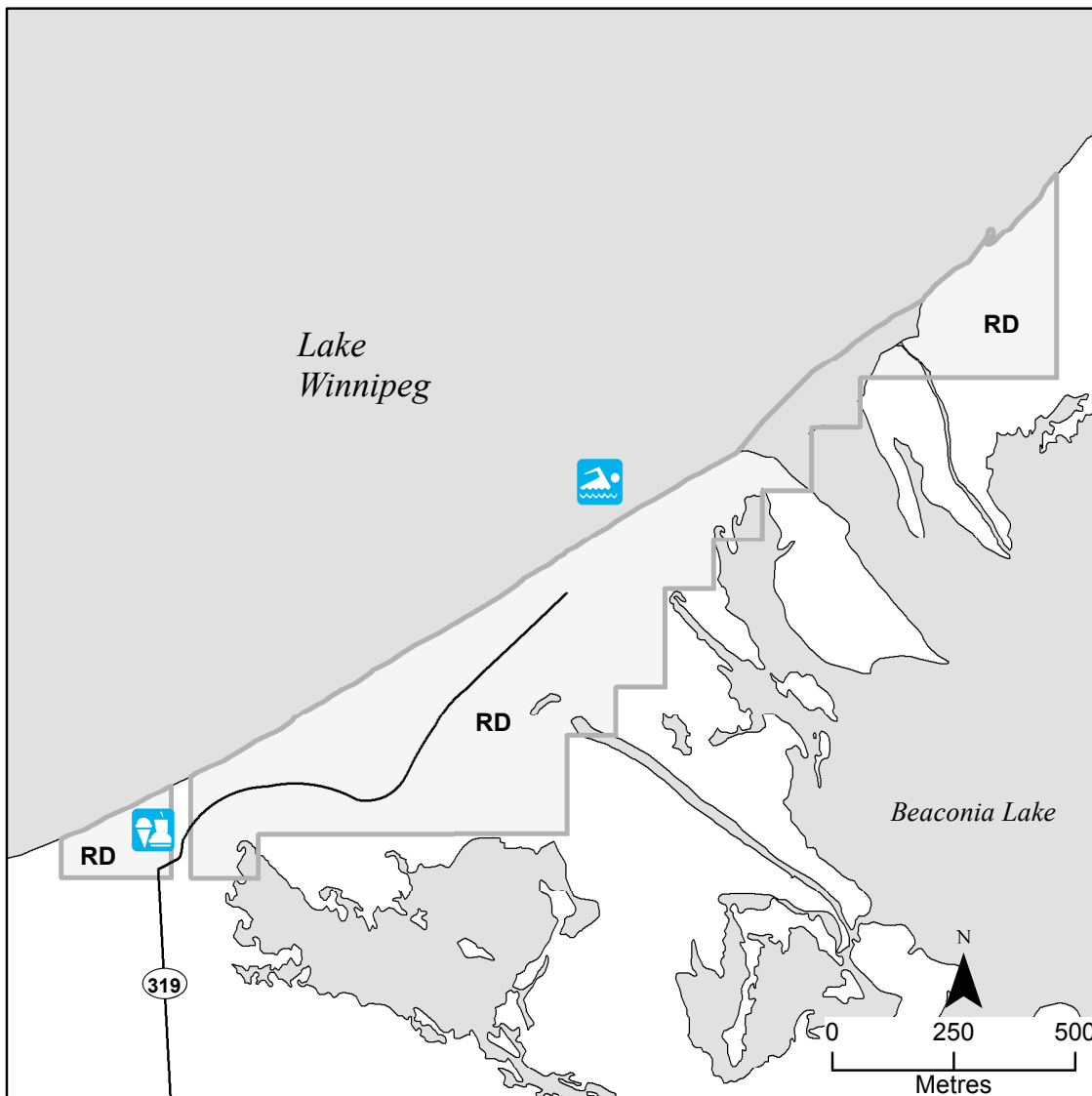
4.3 Land Use Categories

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

Patricia Beach Provincial Park has a Recreational Development (RD) LUC. The main purpose of this category is to accommodate recreational development. Within the park:

- Developments include parking lots, washrooms, picnic areas and concession
- Beach and sand dunes provide recreational opportunities
- Wetlands and piping plover nesting habitat are protected

Patricia Beach Provincial Park Map



Map shown for illustration purposes only

5. Park Management Guidelines

5.1 Natural Values

Patricia Beach hosts some outstanding examples of natural beach, dune and marsh habitats. These are important for the integrity of the park's landscape, the birdlife that inhabits these areas and as the setting for recreational activities that take place in the park.

Guidelines

1. Ecological values in undeveloped areas of the park will be maintained and these areas will remain free of development other than that necessary to meet safety or operational needs.
2. Monitoring of the beach for piping plovers will be done in conjunction with the Manitoba Piping Plover Recovery Action Group. Any nesting occurrences will be documented and appropriate protection measures for nesting birds will be put in place under the direction of the Manitoba Recovery Action Plan.

5.2 Recreation

The park offers basic recreational services and visitors can expect a low level of interaction with other park users.

Patricia Beach is a very low lying area and has always been subject to flooding. It experienced significant flooding in 2010 and 2011, which damaged the washrooms and access roads and degraded much of the sand dune formations at the beach. The damaged infrastructure is to be rebuilt.

Guidelines

1. Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship will maintain basic facilities for swimming, picnicking and wildlife viewing to provide for visitor convenience and safety.
2. Water levels on the beach will be monitored and public access will be restricted during high water events as required.

5.3 Interpretation

Providing outdoor educational opportunities and experiences in a natural setting is one of the purposes of provincial parks as stated in *The Provincial Parks Act*.

An awareness and understanding of the park's beach, sand dunes, marsh and history can contribute to a more enjoyable and informed visit for park users.

Guideline

1. Interpretive information about the park as well as its features and history will continue to be provided through publications such as maps, brochures, and the Parks and Protected Spaces website.

5.4 Commercial Operations

Commercial activity within a park has the ability to enhance or detract from the park experience and must be managed to best suit the park environment and user needs.

Guidelines

1. Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship will continue to provide an opportunity for one commercial facility in the park. Expansion of the operation will be considered only if the proposed service is directly associated with beach-related recreation and is suitable to the park setting and purpose.

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.

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Manitoba Natural Resources. "A System Plan for Manitoba's Provincial Parks." 1997.

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