

St. Norbert 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 St. Norbert 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.

Preparing this management plan required co-ordination and public involvement. Staff from Parks and Protected Spaces branch, regional staff of Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship and a consultant worked on the project.

As part of the planning process, the current operation of the park, its attributes and history of use were reviewed. This information was used to prepare a draft plan. Public input was received primarily through

the Manitoba Parks website and consultation was completed in November 2013. The plan was finalized based on future objectives and information received through the consultations.

This management plan will guide the work of Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship for the next 10 to 15 years. It will be used and reviewed regularly. If updates or new direction is needed, public review and updating will occur.

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

2. Park History

Creation of St. Norbert Provincial Park began in 1971 when the Fort Garry Historical Society Inc. (FGHS) prevented the demolition of two houses that were built in the area: the Turenne House (1871) and Bohémier House (1888). The society donated the houses to the province, which acquired land at the junction of the La Salle and Red Rivers and established the provincial park in 1976. Both houses were restored in the early 1980s and opened to the public.

3. Park Attributes

St. Norbert Provincial Park is approximately 5.5 hectares in size, and is located at the confluence of the La Salle and Red Rivers. It is accessed from Turnbull Drive (Provincial Road 200) just east of Highway 75 in the community of St. Norbert.

The St. Norbert area was once known as Rivière Sale and was settled in the late 19th century by hunters, traders and their Métis families after they left the fur trading companies (Manitoba Natural Resources, n.d.).

The park reveals how a natural landscape used for hunting, fishing and camping by Aboriginal peoples evolved into a French-speaking Métis settlement, then a French-Canadian agricultural community of the pre-World War I period. The cultural, economic and natural history of the site is revealed through interpretation of the restored Bohémier and Turenne Houses and artifacts. The artifacts in these houses are owned by FGHS and curated under contract. The Delorme House was donated to the province and moved into the park from St. Adolphe in the early 1980s. Pierre Delorme was an important political figure in the area and supported Louis Riel during the 1869 Red River Rebellion. Although it is fenced off from the public due to its fragile state the Delorme house contributes to the presentation of the story of Métis settlement in the area. Other structures in the park include a stable, outdoor refrigerator, and the Henderson House.

The Henderson House is an example of an early building from the East Kildonan area of the Red River settlement. It was donated to the province and moved to St. Norbert for storage in 1979. Its historical value is associated with the early East Kildonan community rather than the story of the French-speaking Métis settlement and agricultural community at St. Norbert.

Recreational use of St. Norbert revolves around the presentation of the history of Métis settlement in the area. Interpretive tours are offered during the summer months and visitors can tour the two restored houses, which contain furnishings and artifacts dating back to the time of their occupation. Tourisme Riel, a regional tourism organization, provides tourism information services in addition to the personal interpretive programming provided by the province. A one kilometre long self-guiding trail begins near the reception building, continues along the La Salle riverbank and comes up to a grassed area of the park that overlooks the Red River.

The park also offers picnicking opportunities with a picnic area and shelter on the grounds. Fishing is a popular activity at the mouth of the LaSalle River and along the Red River.

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.

St. Norbert Provincial Park is classified as a Heritage Park. The main purpose of a Heritage Park is to protect a unique or representative site containing a resource or resources of cultural or heritage value 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 St. Norbert Provincial Park is to promote public awareness and appreciation of an area representative of 19th century Métis and French culture.

The park will:

- depict the evolution of a natural habitat used for hunting and camping to a French speaking agricultural community
- provide an opportunity for visitors to learn about the history of the area during the Red River Resistance (1868 – 1870)
- preserve/reconstruct several early structures from the area

4.3 Land Use Categories

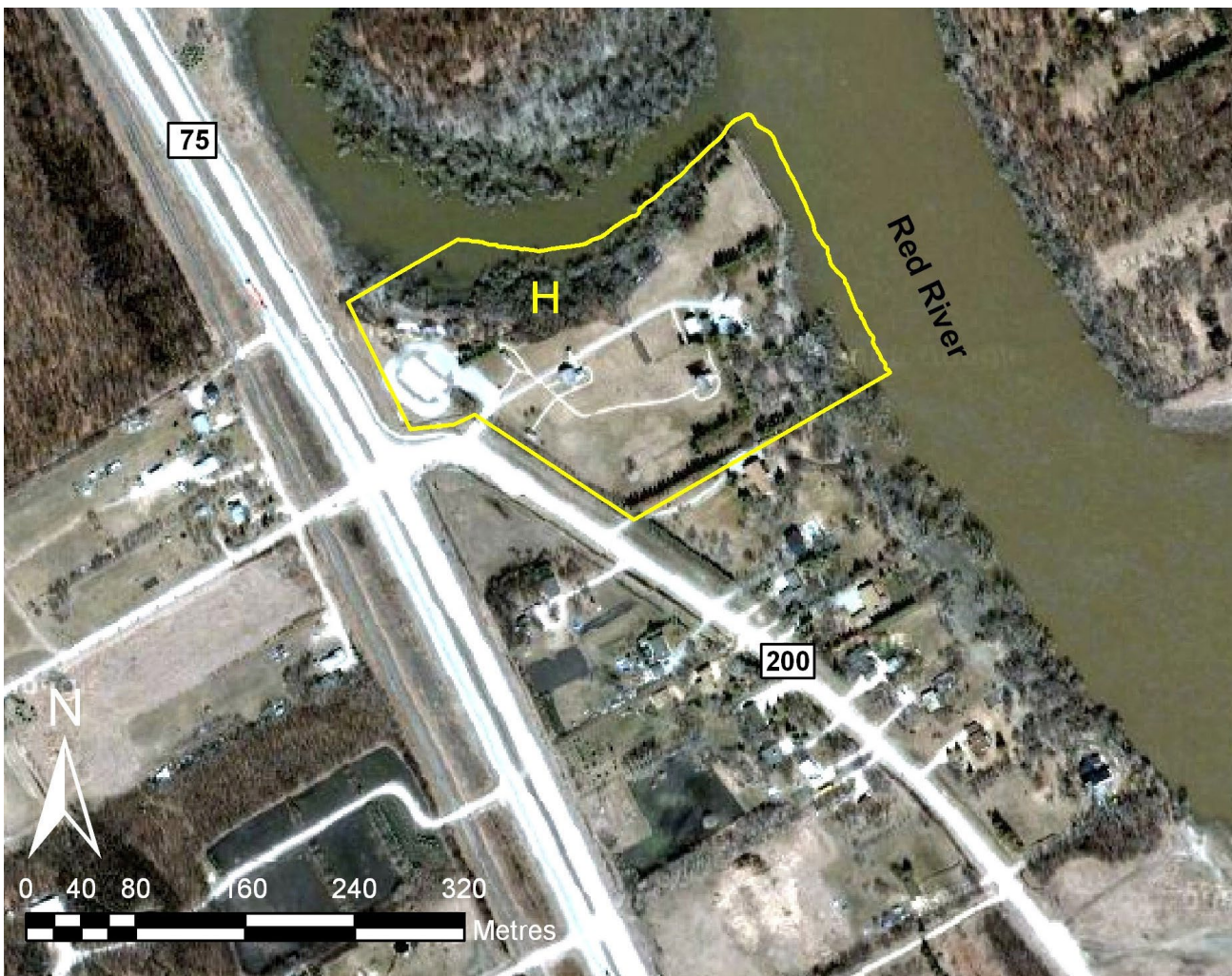
Land Use Categories (LUCs) identify the important attributes of broad areas within a provincial park. Land may be categorized in Wilderness, Backcountry, Resource Management, Recreational Development, Heritage or Access LUCs. LUC descriptions can be found in Appendix A.

St. Norbert Provincial Park has a Heritage (H) LUC. The main purpose of this category is to protect a unique or representative site containing a resource or resources of cultural or heritage value.

St. Norbert Provincial Park:

- Protects on-site heritage buildings
- Provides a self-guiding trail with interpretive signs that runs through river-bottom forest along the La Salle River, allowing access to heritage buildings
- Provides facilities including a reception centre, picnic site and shelter, and historic buildings
- Preserves a small area of native river-bottom forest

St. Norbert Provincial Park Map



Map shown for illustration purposes only

5. Park Management Guidelines

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*. St. Norbert Provincial Park depicts the early French-Canadian, Métis and Aboriginal cultures of the Red River through restored buildings of the settlement era and other historically significant features. Personal interpretive programming is available during the summer months. Interpretive information is provided through signage and publications such as maps, brochures, and the Parks and Protected Spaces website.

The Henderson and Delorme houses are currently in a fragile state and are not accessible to the public. Due to their fragile state it is uncertain if restoration or preservation of the houses will be possible.

The park is a significant historical site and an attractive day-use area for fishing, picnicking and walking however use is relatively low for a riverfront park adjacent to Winnipeg. This may be in part because it has few facilities such as washrooms and picnic shelters, and some of those are poorly located. The park's potential to accommodate more recreational activities is also compromised by the location of the temporary maintenance yard near the river in an area more suitable for recreational use.

The La Salle and Red Rivers are important natural features of the park but their erosive forces also have the power to reshape the park and put it at risk. The river-bottom forest along the LaSalle is important for controlling erosion and also provides habitat for wildlife.

Guidelines

1. A redevelopment plan for St. Norbert Provincial Park will be prepared to guide:
 - Landscaping that will complement the historic buildings and features on the site and contribute to the interpretive themes presented at the park.
 - Development of interpretive facilities that will help depict the story of Métis settlement in the area and the evolution of the area into a French-Canadian agricultural community, up to the pre-World War I period.
 - Enhancement of the recreational facilities at the park with a focus on providing basic facilities for fishing, picnicking and walking along the park's waterfront. This may include the addition of a modern washroom, if feasible.
 - Buffering along the park boundaries to reduce the noise and visual impacts of the highway and adjacent properties on the historical setting of the park and to maintain natural areas along the La Salle River.
 - Relocation of the maintenance yard to a permanent location and appropriate buffering of the yard from the historical areas of the park.

2. Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship, in cooperation with the Historic Resources branch of Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, will commission a study of the Delorme House to assess its current physical condition and to identify remedial actions required should stabilization of the house be undertaken. This information, along with an assessment of its interpretive and historic value, will be used to determine options for possible re-utilization of the building. A public involvement process to assist in selecting a desired option and exploring possible partnerships to undertake that option will be conducted with known interest groups and individuals.
3. Proposals to add buildings or significant features to the park will be considered only if they are directly related to the historic period being represented and complement the interpretive presentation of how the area used by indigenous peoples evolved into a French-speaking Métis settlement, then a French Canadian agricultural community, up to the pre-World War I period.
4. Personal interpretation and on-site programming will continue to be provided during the summer months. Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship will continue to work with partners to provide interpretation and tourism information in the park. Non-personal interpretation will be provided in the shoulder seasons through the use of signage and publications such as maps and brochures.
5. The bank of the Red River will be monitored for shoreline erosion. Appropriate measures to avoid or mitigate the impacts of erosion will be undertaken where possible. If historic buildings or features are at risk due to riverbank erosion they will be relocated, or if relocation is not possible they will be documented and artifacts salvaged to the extent possible.
6. Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship, in cooperation with the Historic Resources branch, will seek qualified organizations interested in celebrating the heritage value of the Henderson House and will work with them to plan for its removal from St. Norbert to a more appropriate location. Should no organizations be interested, the house will continue to be stored at St. Norbert but no restoration work will be undertaken.
7. Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship will communicate regularly with partners and stakeholders through a designated contact person, and work with them on projects that are consistent with the park's 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.

Bibliography

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

Manitoba Natural Resources. "A Tour Guide: The Red River Corridor." n.d.

The Provincial Parks Act. C.C.S.M., c. P20. 1993.