

# Trappist Monastery 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 Trappist Monastery 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 Trappist Monastery Provincial Park are acknowledged and respected within the context of this management plan.

## 2. Park History

The Trappist monks developed and inhabited an agricultural settlement along the La Salle River from 1892 until 1975 when they move to Holland, Manitoba to escape the urban encroachment from Winnipeg. The province acquired a portion of the Trappists' property and under the Agreements for Recreation and Conservation (ARC) program the site was developed as a picnic area and point of interest. The church and monastic wing were heavily damaged by a fire in 1983, leaving the structures in a fragile state. The structures were later stabilized and Trappist Monastery Provincial Park was established in 2002.

### 3. Park Attributes

The Trappist Monastery Provincial Park is located 500 metres west of Highway 75 off of Rue des Trappistes. The 2.02 hectare site is situated on the north shore of the La Salle River.

#### 3.1 Natural

The park is a highly modified site, with the monastery ruins surrounded by manicured lawn and planting beds. The park fronts on the La Salle River.

#### 3.2 Recreational

The park offers non-modern washrooms and access to the river. Visitors are able to walk the grounds and get a close look at the remaining cathedral walls and grotto near the La Salle River. Future upgrades to the park will include modern washrooms and facilities to make more portions of the site wheelchair accessible.

The site is used for a variety of day-use activities. It has served as the backdrop for Shakespearean plays produced by a local theatre company through a venue agreement. The riverside setting and monastery ruins make the park an attractive location for many special events such as photographs and weddings. A permitting process is used to manage special events and ensure the park's natural setting and historical significance is respected.

#### 3.3 Cultural

The Trappist monks of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, originating in mid-17th century France, established a Monastery on the north shore of the La Salle River in 1892 as part of the Red River Settlement. The agricultural and deep religious practices of the French speaking monks were a

significant cultural influence on the developing St. Norbert community. Initially, the monastery consisted only of residences and farm buildings. A brick and stone church and monastic wing were added to the monastery between 1903 and 1905 and a guesthouse was constructed in 1912 (Manitoba Natural Resources, n.d.).

In the following decades, the growing city of Winnipeg encroached on the once secluded monastery site, which ultimately prompted the Trappists to relocate to Holland, Manitoba. Between 1975 and 1978 buildings were moved or taken down leaving only the guesthouse, church and monastic wing on the site. The guesthouse became the St. Norbert Arts Centre (SNAC). The church and monastic wing, which were to become the center piece of the park, were gutted by fire in 1983. Following the establishment of the site as a provincial park, the ruins were re-stabilized, site drainage was upgraded and lighting was added. Additional site upgrades are scheduled to continue until 2015.

The park's manicured lawns and shade trees reflect the site's historic landscape during the period of its occupation by the Trappist monks.

The Peace Pagoda was constructed prior to the site becoming a provincial park, and is maintained by members of the Manitoba Buddhist community.

#### 3.4 Additional Features

Rue des Ruines du Monastère provides access to the park, the St. Norbert Arts Centre (SNAC), and the Southwood Golf and Country Club. This road and most of the parking area is owned by the City of Winnipeg. Ongoing maintenance of the road is the joint responsibility of the City of Winnipeg and the three adjoining property owners.

## 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.

Trappist Monastery 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 Trappist Monastery Provincial Park is to protect the ruins of the Trappist Monastery and to promote public awareness and appreciation of the historical significance of the area. The park will:

- preserve the structural remains of the Trappist Monastery, an example of a small monastic complex in Canada, exemplifying a distinctly French form of architecture imported to the Canadian Prairies;
- promote public awareness and interpret the historical significance of the site and the Trappist monks ; and
- host cultural and recreational activities that are respectful of the natural setting and historical environment.

### 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.

Trappist Monastery 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. Trappist Monastery Provincial Park:

- Provides facilities including a washroom, river access and day-use.
- Provides recreational opportunities such as walking, picnicking and heritage appreciation.

### Trappist Monastery Provincial Park Map



Map shown for illustration purposes only

## 5. Park Management Guidelines

### 5.1 Recreation

The park is a significant historical site and a popular attraction. Recreational opportunities and special events focus on the site's cultural and historical significance.

#### *Guideline*

1. The park will offer highly developed recreational day-use facilities.

### 5.2 Cultural and Heritage Resources

Visually and historically unique, the monastery ruins are a special feature and the central attraction of the park. Significant resources have been invested to ensure their structural integrity.

#### *Guideline*

1. In co-operation with Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, bi-annual inspections of the monastery ruins will be made to monitor their structural stability and identify repairs required to preserve the ruins in their current condition.

### 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*. Interpretive information celebrates the history and culture of the Trappist Monks and their contribution to the St. Norbert community. Limited personal interpretation occurs occasionally in conjunction with St. Norbert Provincial Park.

#### *Guidelines*

1. Interpretive information will continue to be provided through signage and publications such as maps, brochures and the Parks and Protected Spaces website.
2. Limited personal interpretation will continue in conjunction with the interpretive program at St. Norbert Provincial Park.

### 5.4 Additional Features

The City of Winnipeg owns the access road to the park. Part of the parking area is shared with SNAC and the Southwood Golf and Country Club. An agreement on the maintenance of the road exists between Southwood, SNAC, the province and the City of Winnipeg.

#### *Guideline*

1. Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship will continue to work with the City of Winnipeg, SNAC and the Southwood Golf and Country Club to maintain the shared road and parking lot.

## 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.