



William Lake Provincial Park

Management Plan



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This management plan for William Lake Provincial Park was prepared under the authority of The Provincial Parks Act.

Manitoba Sustainable Development
Parks and Protected Spaces Branch
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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 use, development of park land, environmental protection, and the preservation of culturally significant areas. They are used in conjunction with park regulations, procedures and other departmental and government policies and legislation.

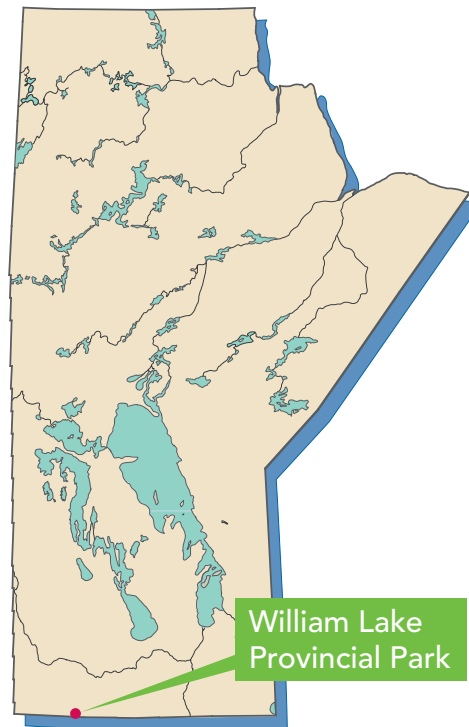
This management plan is based on the role of William Lake Provincial Park in Manitoba's system of parks and the participation of those who use and care about the park.

The process of preparing the management plan and coordinating the public involvement process was the responsibility of a team involving staff from Parks and Protected Spaces Branch, and regional staff of Manitoba Sustainable Development. 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 its history of use. Information collected through that process was used to prepare a draft management plan.

The public was then invited to comment on the draft plan. Involving park users and those with an interest in the park was an important part of preparing the management plan. Public input was collected through the Manitoba Parks website and correspondence with departmental staff. The public consultation process was completed in March 2017. The information received during this process was used to revise and finalize the management plan.

This management plan will guide the management of William Lake Provincial Park over the next 10 to 15 years. 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 should be undertaken.

The rights of Indigenous Peoples to pursue traditional uses and activities within William Lake Provincial Park are acknowledged and respected within the context of this draft management plan.



2. Park History

William Lake Provincial Park was established in 1961. The area was once part of the Turtle Mountain Forest Reserve, which was established in 1895 by the federal government and utilized as a resource for forestry, grazing pastures, and hay production.

3. Park Attributes

William Lake Provincial Park is approximately 200 hectares (two square kilometers) in size, and is situated to the east of Turtle Mountain Provincial Park. The park includes all of William Lake, as well as portions of the surrounding shoreline on the north and east sides of the lake. William Lake Provincial Park is located roughly 102 kilometers (km) south of Brandon, 28 km southeast of Boissevain, and 40 km southwest of Killarney. The park is accessed from

Provincial Road 341, east of Highway 10 and south of Highway 3. The access road into the park is maintained by the Municipality of Boissevain-Morton.

3.1 Natural

William Lake Provincial Park is located within the Southwest Manitoba Uplands Ecoregion. Within this region, the uplands rise some 200 metres above the surrounding plains and were formed by a mantle of glacial till that was deposited around 14,000 years ago by melting glaciers. The area contains many lakes and ponds. The native vegetation in this region is largely intact and consists primarily of deciduous forest dominated by trembling aspen, with white birch, bur oak, green ash, Manitoba maple, and balsam poplar also found throughout. Shrubs include chokecherry, hazel, pin cherry, dogwood, raspberry, and high brush cranberry.

Within the Turtle Mountain area, William Lake is one of the deepest and largest lakes, and is well known for its stocked waters. This has contributed to successful fishing of brown trout throughout the years. William Lake also supports smallmouth bass and yellow perch. Wildlife such as white-tailed deer, small mammals, songbirds, birds of prey, and waterfowl are common in the area.

3.2 Recreation and Interpretation

The William Lake campground provides nightly camping, as well as two small group use areas. Facilities in the campground include picnic shelters, a fish cleaning area, modern and non-modern washrooms, and showers. The park also includes a playground, horseshoe pitch, volleyball court, and beach area.

There is a boat launch and dock within the park. This provides lake access and opportunities for fishing and other water-based recreation activities. The use of gas motors is prohibited on the lake; only electric motors are allowed. This prohibition has been in place for a number of years and is related to the lake's status as a stocked trout water.

The Turtle's Back Trail takes hikers around the lake. It leads from the park, through the Turtle Mountain Community Pasture, to the Turtle's Back Summit. The trail provides viewing opportunities of the Turtle Mountains and surrounding landscape. The viewing tower adds to the scenic view. Interpretive signs at the viewing tower highlight the area's pre-history, Indigenous Peoples, and the history of the Northwest Boundary Commission. Steep elevations near the summit make the hike challenging yet rewarding.

3.3 Cultural

William Lake Provincial Park and the surrounding area have a long history of human occupation. A site southwest of William Lake Provincial Park shows signs of use dating back from 11,000 to 18,000 years ago by Paleo Indians hunting prehistoric bison, and perhaps mammoths. In addition, an archeological site within the nearby Turtle Mountain Provincial Park has provided evidence of use within the Turtle Mountain area by Indigenous hunters, likely Cree, over 400 years ago.

4. Park Management Framework

4.1 Classification

Manitoba's provincial park system is made up of almost 100 different parks and park reserves. The role of each park within this system is identified by its classification. Parks may be classified as one of five types: wilderness, natural, recreation, heritage or indigenous traditional use.

William Lake Provincial Park is classified as a recreation park. The purpose of a recreation park, as defined in The Provincial Parks Act, is to provide recreational opportunities.

4.2 Park Purpose

The objectives of Manitoba's provincial park system are 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. The purpose of each park within the system is to contribute to these overarching objectives while fully recognizing and incorporating local considerations.

The purpose of William Lake Provincial Park is to provide outdoor recreational opportunities and experiences in a natural setting in southwestern Manitoba. In doing so, the park will:

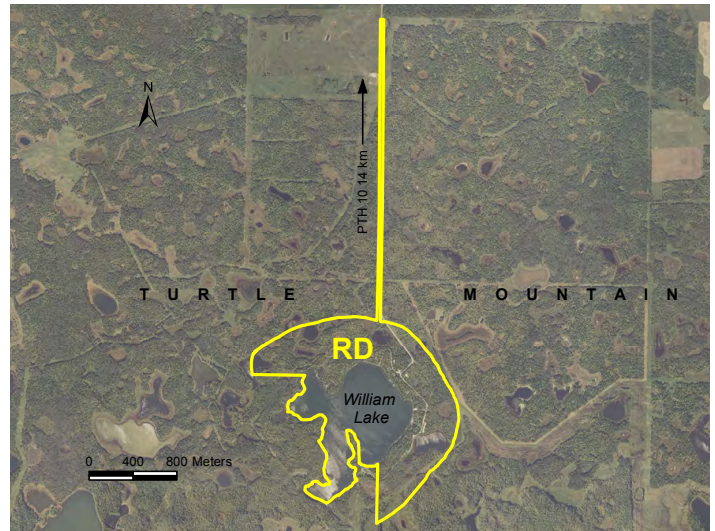
- provide camping, hiking, beach, and day-use opportunities
- provide access to William Lake for sport fishing and other water-based recreational activities
- promote public appreciation of the region's natural history

4.3 Land Use Categories

Land use categories (LUCs) are used to designate lands within provincial parks for various purposes. There are eight LUCs in which land may be categorized: wilderness, backcountry, resource management, recreational development, heritage, access, winter road access or indigenous heritage.

William Lake Provincial Park has a recreational development (RD) LUC. The main purpose of this categorization is to accommodate recreational development. Within William Lake Provincial Park this includes:

- recreational and interpretive facilities including a campground, playground, beach, boat launch, picnic areas and a hiking trail



Map 1: William Lake Provincial Park

5. Park Management Guidelines

5.1 Natural Values

William Lake Provincial Park has a natural looking setting which is an important aspect of the park experience.

Guideline

1. The park will be maintained as a natural-looking area that is characteristic of the surrounding landscape.
2. 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, which may include small-scale expansions to the campground in accordance with Guideline 5.2.2 below.
3. When species of conservation concern are identified in the park, any negative impacts on those species associated with park use will be minimized or avoided.
4. Parks and Protected Spaces Branch will participate in departmental efforts to prevent aquatic and terrestrial invasive species from spreading within the park. This may include but

not be limited to the promotion of proper decontamination procedures for watercraft and water-related equipment, and educating park visitors on how they can stop the spread of invasive species.

5.2 Recreation

William Lake Provincial Park campground offers a basic level of camping service.

Guidelines

1. The park will be managed to maintain the current range of facilities and recreational opportunities.
2. Manitoba Sustainable Development will review demands for improved levels of service in the campground in the context of maintenance and servicing requirements, and program direction.
3. Manitoba Sustainable Development will assess the feasibility of expanding the park boundary to include all portions of the hiking trail around William Lake and leading to the Turtle's Back Summit viewing tower.

5.3 Interpretation

Providing outdoor recreational and 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 lake and its surrounding forest and wetlands can contribute to a more enjoyable and informed visit for park users.

Guideline

1. Interpretive information about the park, its features and history will continue to be provided through self-guided interpretation including trail signage and publications such as maps, brochures, and the Manitoba Parks and Protected Spaces website.
2. Manitoba Sustainable Development will review opportunities to provide live interpretation programs as resources allow.



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