



Natural Areas

Protecting Our Habitat

During the 1990s, while many areas were set aside as interim “park reserves”, few areas received permanent park protection. Since then, the Manitoba government has focused its efforts on permanently protecting our most beautiful natural areas and working with Aboriginal and First Nation communities to ensure that they continue to benefit from living on the land. Manitoba’s wildlife populations have also required special protection.

Parks

- Since 1999, six permanently protected provincial parks have been established, covering nearly 800,000 hectares of land - Caribou River, Pembina Valley, Criddle Vane, Trappist Monastery, Manigotagan River and Duff Roblin. Little Limestone Lake was designated a provincial park reserve.
- In 2003 South Atikaki Provincial Park was established with a prohibition on forestry activities.
- In 2007 we increased the protected backcountry area of Nopiming Provincial Park by 186 hectares. Protected backcountry areas were added to Rivers, Beaudry, and Whitemouth Falls Provincial Parks.
- Also in 2007, the permanent designation of the 13,985 hectare East Paint Lake Park Reserve doubled the size of Paint Lake Provincial Park.
- On July 30/08 we announced Canada’s first Interprovincial Wilderness Area with Ontario, to further cooperation on managing parks in the boreal forest and to assist in the creation of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Wildlife Management Areas

- Whole or parts of 22 Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) have been protected since 1999, and the areas protected by a further seven WMAs have been expanded. Over 4,000 hectares of endangered tall grass prairie and associated ecosystems owned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Manitoba Naturalist Society joined our network, adding private lands to the network for the first time. Wetlands owned by Ducks Unlimited Canada have also been recognized as contributing to Manitoba's network of protected areas.

Ecological Reserves

- We've brought the number of ecological reserves up to 21, with the addition of the Brokenhead Wetland, the Jennifer and Tom Shay, Armit Meadows, Birch River, and the Little George Island Ecological Reserves. Ecological reserves are the most protected of the provincially-designated sites within the network of protected areas.

Forests

- We've also established the Bell and Steeprock Canyons Protected Area in the Porcupine Provincial Forest.
- Boreal forests are of special concern because they are a shield against climate change and are home to many endangered and at-risk species.
- Prior to 1999, proposals for forestry, road and hydro development through the boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg were being contemplated. In 2001 the Manitoba government put a hold on development decisions in order to engage communities in an East Side Planning process.
- Out of these 80 community meetings came recommendations that the government support sustainable economic development, introduce land-use planning, and nominate part of the area for a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation, all of which were accepted. East Side First Nations are developing traditional-area land-use plans with \$2.5 million in provincial assistance.
- On June 5, 2008 we launched Trees for Tomorrow, which will see five million trees planted over the next 5 years. This is in addition to the trees that are replanted from forestry - approximately one million more trees are planted each year than are harvested on crown land.

Wildlife

- Manitoba's polar bears have been given the endangered species designation, and our woodland caribou populations have been listed as threatened under the province's Endangered Species Act. Our government has banned the practice of penned hunting, the first province in Canada to do so. Regulations have been introduced to ban the practice of elk baiting.

Trails

- Since 1999, our government has provided over \$3.7 million to support for new and existing trails across the province, including portions of the Trans Canada trail. The trails include the Bishop Grandin Greenway, the Harte trail, and the Northeast Pioneers Greenway (Marconi Trail). We are quadrupling our investment in trails within Winnipeg with a five-year contribution of \$6 million. The Duff Roblin Trail, which will extend 40 kilometres from the floodway inlet to Bird's Hill Park, is being constructed as part of the floodway expansion.

Canadian Heritage Rivers

- In 2006 the 600km Hayes River historic fur trade route from Norway House to York Factory was designated a Canadian Heritage River. This was done after many years of close cooperation with the four First Nations along the river. It was the culmination of a ten year long effort by the First Nations to protect the river that is so important to their livelihood.
- The June 2007 Canadian River Heritage Conference was the setting for the designation of the Red River as a Canadian Heritage River. The Conference is Canada's premier venue for discussing river conservation. The Red River was recognized in its designation for its outstanding cultural values ranging from early aboriginal history, through the fur trade and early settlement to the expansion of the floodway. Both the conference and the designation of the Red were the result of intense cooperative efforts between Manitoba and Rivers West - Red River Corridor Association Inc./L'Association du Corridor Rivière Rouge.
- In 2008 a revised management plan for the Bloodvein Canadian Heritage River, and Atikaki Provincial Park, was approved. This management plan will continue the over twenty years of work protecting this outstanding whitewater river with its pictographs of national significance.

Figures are current as of October, 2008