



Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park

Management Plan



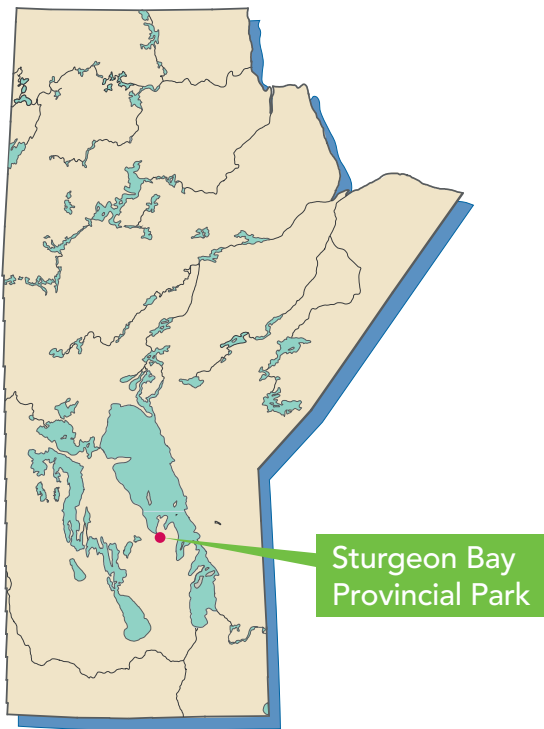
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This management plan for Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park was prepared under the authority of The Provincial Parks Act.

Manitoba Sustainable Development
Parks and Protected Spaces Branch
2017

Available in alternate formats, upon request



1.0 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. This management plan is based on the role of Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park 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, procedures and other departmental and governmental policies and legislation.

The process of preparing this 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 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 November of 2016. The information received during this process was used to revise and finalize the management plan.

This management plan will guide the management of Sturgeon Bay 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 Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park are acknowledged and respected within the context of this management plan.

2.0 Background

Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park was established in 2015 on the western shore of Lake Winnipeg. The park is 14,490 hectares in size, encompassing an area beginning at the shores of Sturgeon Bay in the north and extending inland to the south. Sturgeon Bay itself has an approximate width of 17.7 kilometres and length of 25.7 kilometres, and is marked by a cluster of islands at its mouth.

The Mantagao River flows through the park before draining into Sturgeon Bay at the park's northern boundary. Vegetation varies markedly along the length of the river. The higher land in the south end of the park hosts forests dominated by trembling aspen, white spruce and jack pine. As the Mantagao River flows north, these forests are gradually replaced by stands of willow, dwarf birch, marshlands and wet meadows. The remainder of the park outside of the riparian zone is dominated by black spruce muskeg, interspersed with young forest stands and low-lying areas of string bogs.

The Mantagao River is an important spawning ground for fish, including whitefish, freshwater drum, and trophy size northern pike and walleye. The head of the river is an excellent fall stopover for waterfowl due to the protection offered by a gravel bar and rushes. The park provides habitat for wildlife such as moose, white-tailed deer, wolves, various ducks and geese, pelicans and numerous songbirds. Zebra mussels, an aquatic invasive species, have been found in Lake Winnipeg but are not currently known to be present in the waters bordering the park.

There is no road access to Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park and no facilities located on park land, nor are there any plans for development. The park receives a limited number of visitors who use the area for hunting, fishing, trapping and canoeing. The park is designated as a wilderness camping area; there are no designated campsites and visitors are asked to camp at locations that show signs of previous use. A fishing camp is located within the park to facilitate commercial fishing on Lake Winnipeg.

3.0 Management Framework

3.1 Park 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.

Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park is classified as a wilderness park. The main purpose of a wilderness park, as defined in The Provincial Parks Act, is to preserve representative areas of a natural region.

3.2 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 Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park is to preserve physical features and biological communities representative of the Mid-Boreal Lowland Ecoregion. In doing so, the park will:

- provide for the conservation of biodiversity including ecosystems, species and genetic diversity
- provide opportunities for a range of outdoor recreational experiences that depend on a pristine environment
- promote public appreciation and understanding of the park's natural features and cultural heritage

This park is part of Manitoba's network of protected areas, which was designed to represent the biodiversity found in each of Manitoba's 16 ecoregions. It helps maintain the overall ecological integrity of the Mid-Boreal Lowland Ecoregion by capturing a representative sample of the biodiversity found within that ecoregion. Nearby Kinwow Bay and Fisher Bay provincial parks provide additional protection for this ecoregion.



3.3 Land Use Categories

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

All of the land comprising Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park has been categorized using the wilderness LUC. The purpose of this LUC is to protect representative or unique natural landscapes in an undisturbed state and provide recreational opportunities that depend on a pristine environment.

Lands included in a wilderness LUC contribute to Manitoba's network of protected areas and legally prohibit commercial logging, mining, hydroelectric development, oil and gas development, peat exploration or harvesting and any other activities that may significantly or adversely affect habitat.

4.0 Management Guidelines

The following guidelines will direct park management actions in Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park.

1. Monitoring of natural and cultural values of the park will be accomplished through observations during patrols by department staff and through investigations in response to specific reports.
2. Negative impacts on known species of conservation concern will be minimized or avoided.
3. Parks and Protected Spaces branch will work collaboratively within the department to protect the water quality, riparian habitat, and estuary of the Mantagao River.
4. Parks and Protected Spaces branch will participate in departmental efforts to prevent aquatic invasive species such as zebra mussels and spiny water fleas from spreading out of and into Lake Winnipeg as appropriate, including the promotion of proper decontamination procedures for watercraft and water-related equipment.
5. Facilities for recreational use will not be provided or developed by the Manitoba government. The development of outfitting lodges may be permitted, provided such development does not adversely impact the ecological, geological or cultural values of the park, and that an appropriate review and consultation process is undertaken to consider concerns from Indigenous communities, stakeholders, interest groups and the general public.
6. Trails within the park will not be maintained or improved, but may continue to be used by park visitors travelling on foot. Unused trails will be allowed to regenerate naturally.
7. The existing commercial fishing camp within the park will continue to be permitted, subject to standard permitting processes. The camp will be monitored to ensure its operation does not adversely impact the ecological values of the park. Users will be encouraged to share information or data relevant to the park with department staff when possible. No new camps will be permitted.
8. If an archaeologically significant site is discovered in the park, appropriate management steps will be determined in co-operation with Historic Resources branch and local communities.
9. Information about the park will be provided primarily through the Manitoba Parks website.



Bibliography

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