

May 24, 2007

Editor, Winnipeg Free Press

The Winnipeg Free Press listing of election promises from Manitoba political parties (*Promises, promises - Here they are, now it's time for you to decide*, May 19) was a good idea. We were disappointed, however, because the Free Press omitted election commitments related to our natural environment despite many election announcements. Although environmental issues were central to the 2007 Manitoba election campaign (a welcome change) and high on voters' lists of concerns, Free Press coverage especially in the last days of the election, failed to follow through. We would suggest that you could have easily filled a page with the environment promises alone.

For instance, the May 19th Free Press article omitted key NDP promises related to the east side, Aboriginal communities and boreal forest protected areas:

- Permanent protection for the Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Park Reserve (May 11)
- A legislative tool designed to protect Aboriginal traditional territories (May 11)
- Protection for east side First Nations traditional lands, in keeping with UNESCO World Heritage Site criteria (May 11)
- Keeping hydro development out of the east side of the province (May 17)
- Endorsement of letter from 1500 scientists world-wide calling for protection of at least half of Canada's boreal forest lands (May 17)

The Progressive Conservatives also made some welcome commitments, notably to complete Manitoba's network of protected areas, and to make Manitoba Hydro Canada's leading clean energy company (PC 2007 Platform).

The Free Press article referred to several of the Liberals' promised measures to address the poor ecological health of Lake Winnipeg, but failed to note the overall plan for Canada's Sixth Great Lake that is part of the overall Liberal environment platform.

I encourage Manitobans to read and review important environmental election commitments on all parties' websites. From Manitoba Wildlands' perspective, the 2007 Manitoba provincial election environment promises are key to our province's ecological, economic and social future. These promises will be listed and posted/linked on our website – ManitobaWildlands.org – and audited regularly.

Gaile Whelan Enns
Director, Manitoba Wildlands