

Manitoba Government Support:

Atikaki/Woodland Caribou/Accord First Nations – Manitoba and Ontario Proposed World Heritage Site (WHS)

Version 18, January 6, 2008

A Critical Shield against Global Warming – Conservation organizations are investing millions of dollars to protect Canada’s boreal, one of the last great intact forests on Earth, January 4, 2008

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20080104.BOREAL04/TPStory/Environment>

“In Manitoba, a fierce debate is raging over whether to run a power line through the pristine boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. Premier Gary Doer hopes to have the area designated a United Nations World Heritage Site..... He has ensured that more than 800,000 hectares around Poplar River First Nation on Lake Winnipeg's east side are protected by a land-use agreement....”

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba - The Standing Committee on Crown Corporations, December 19, 2007

http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/2nd-39th/cc_04/cc_04.html

Mr. Selinger: “... we have an historic opportunity to have a UNESCO World Heritage designation that will protect an important tract of boreal forest in Manitoba...”

Mr. Selinger: “It has not only unique environmental features that require protection, but it also has unique cultural communities over there that are part of the designation process for UNESCO. It's extremely rare in an UNESCO-designation process that you have outstanding universal value of both on the ecological as well as the cultural side.”

Mr. Selinger: “It's also incumbent upon us to do it in such a way that we don't take away opportunities to protect unique and intact, and some would call pristine boreal forest areas, and the opportunity to get a world class designation under UNESCO for what they call a landscape that has universal value.”

Mr. Selinger: “We know that many scientists have weighed in on this (climate change) and many groups have asked that there be consideration to the east side being a UNESCO World Heritage Site.”

Mr. Selinger: “...there has been more support to protect the east side than there has been to protect other areas of boreal forest across the country. There is demonstrable support for greater protection on the east side.”

Mr. Selinger: “...the east-side address (WHS site) has a high degree of saliency in terms of protection of the boreal forest because of its universal outstanding characteristics.”

Mr. Selinger: "...[a risk] that needs to be managed is that relating to the environment and the potential of having the boreal forest protected on the east side where it has some unique universal outstanding characteristics."

Mr. Selinger: "We also know that on the east side there are some unique and universal outstanding environmental values that need to be protected ...and I think that's another fundamental difference. We do think that those values are at risk."

Manitoba NDP 2007 Election Press Release – Moving forward in partnership with Aboriginal Manitobans, May 15, 2007

<http://www.mb.ndp.ca/index.php?q=newsArticle&articlePageID=128>

"Today's NDP will . . . introduce legislation to create a new protected-areas designation, which would allow East Side First Nations like Poplar River to create and implement their land-use plans and ensure the area is protected in a way that is consistent with the establishment of a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg."

Manitoba NDP 2007 Election Press Release – Today's NDP Moves Forward with East Side Protection, May 11, 2007

<http://www.mb.ndp.ca/index.php?q=newsArticle&articlePageID=105>

NDP Leader Gary Doer announced that "Today's NDP will move forward to protect the East Side of Lake Winnipeg by introducing a new legislative tool for protecting designated areas and implementing land use plans . . . The proposed legislation will create a new protected areas designation, which would allow East Side First Nations to create and implement their land-use plans and ensure the area is protected in a way that is consistent with the establishment of a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg . . . The new legislation will be drafted in consultation with First Nations and will encourage communities [to] continue working toward the creation of a UNESCO world heritage site"

Manitoba NDP 2007 Election Press Release – New opportunities for young people to work, live and play in Manitoba, May 7, 2007

<http://www.mb.ndp.ca/index.php?q=newsArticle&articlePageID=96>

"A re-elected NDP will invest just over \$12 million to lead the way on three key priorities: ...new protection for sensitive ecological treasures such as the proposed UNESCO heritage site on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg"

Government of Manitoba 2007 Budget Address – Protecting Our Environment, April 4, 2007

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/budget07/speech/speech16.html>

"Budget 2007 supports First Nations-led efforts to . . . secure a UNESCO World Heritage designation, putting this spectacular region on the world map"

Government of Manitoba press release, June 2, 2006

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2006/06/2006-06-02-03.html>

Premier Doer stated that “World-class climate-change and wetlands research, environmental education and best practices planning will continue under a five-year, \$5.9-million renewal agreement signed with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).”

Over the next year, projects will focus on climate change, education for sustainable development, best practices in government planning and reporting systems, Netley-Libau wetlands research, world heritage site recognition for the area east of Lake Winnipeg and a number of others.

Government of Manitoba 2006 Budget Address – Natural Areas and Environmental Stewardship, March 6, 2005

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/budget06/speech/speech08.html>

“Mr. Speaker, Budget 2006 provides additional resources to advance the First Nations-Manitoba-Ontario UNESCO World Heritage site nomination”

2006 Budget In Brief – Water and Environmental Protection, March 6, 2006

http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/budget06/b_in_b/index.html#05

- “New support will be provided to advance the UNESCO World Heritage site nomination as well as First Nations land planning and sustainable resource management projects on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.”

Green and Growing (Government of Manitoba Green Strategic Framework):

3. Protecting Our Natural Areas, January 2006

http://www.gov.mb.ca/greenandgrowing/natural_areas.html

OR

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/greenandgrowing/green.pdf> (pg.16, 18, 20)

“In addition to a long-standing commitment to our parks, the Manitoba government, along with local First Nations, has announced support for the nomination of a UNESCO World Heritage site on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.”

“Some communities have put forward a proposal to have their traditional territories, along with Atikaki Wilderness Park and land on the Ontario side of the border, nominated for a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Manitoba government supports this effort and has brought together First Nations governments and the governments of Ontario and Canada to further this work.”

“We will build on this by: . . . moving forward with First Nations on the proposed UNESCO world heritage site on the east side of Lake Winnipeg”

Correspondence, Conservation Minister Stan Struthers, December 9, 2005 to Gaile Whelan

Enns, Director, Manitoba Wildlands

“Our government is very committed to the World Heritage Site proposal and supporting First Nations who are so important in leading this initiative.”

Address to Climate Leaders Summit, December 6, 2005, Montreal, Quebec

Premier Gary Doer

“To make sure we are not practicing the elimination of our forests we are setting aside areas of the Boreal forest on the East side of lake Winnipeg and not building transmission lines through that East Side of Lake Winnipeg. We would prefer that to be a UNESCO Heritage Site”

Reporting to Manitobans on Performance: Summary of Trends, Selected Highlights and

Recent Actions – Category IV: Environment (2005)

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/mbperformance/perf21.html>

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/mbperformance/perf25d.html>

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/mbperformance/performance.pdf>

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The performance indicators report reiterates the Government of Manitoba’s 2004 commitment of support:

“Also in 2004, Manitoba announced its support for the nomination of the east side of Lake Winnipeg as a UNESCO World Heritage site.”

Legislative Assembly Proceedings, Monday, May 9, 2005

Conservation Minister Stan Struthers

http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/3rd-38th/vol_43/h43.html#con

Mr. Struthers: I think maybe the last protected area that I want to key in on a little bit is the UNESCO World Heritage site that we have been working on in conjunction with a number of First Nations in the area, in conjunction with Pikangikum from across the Ontario border and also in conjunction with the federal government. It is an example of what governments can do when they get together, take an issue seriously and really be guided by elders in communities, by chiefs and councils in communities that want and need to have a say in many of these issues.

Legislative Assembly Proceedings, Thursday, March 24, 2005

Hydro Minister Chomiak

http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/3rd-38th/vol_26b/h26b.html

* (13:45)

Mr. Chomiak: “Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that came out very prominently in the hearings, the over 80 community hearings that were held with residents of the east side, was broad-based support that that area of the province be declared a UNESCO World Heritage site to preserve the boreal forest, to preserve the natural state, and to preserve the economic way of life of people in those communities.”

Government of Manitoba press release, March 8, 2005

“This past year we:

Committed to a proposal for a Boreal Forest region on the east side of Lake Winnipeg as a UNESCO World Heritage Site”

Government of Manitoba Budget Speech, March 8th 2005, Finance Minister Selinger

In the speech, Finance Minister Greg Selinger stated that Manitoba had "committed to a proposal for a Boreal Forest region on the east side of Lake Winnipeg as a UNESCO World Heritage Site".

Manitoba New Democrat, Interview with Conservation Minister Stan Struthers, Winter 2005

The NDP government recently announced that it would be leading the campaign to have the boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Why did it make this decision?

Stan Struthers;

“...One of the report’s recommendations was that the Manitoba government play an active role in promoting the [World Heritage Site] site in order to protect the integrity of the boreal environment. The site would include the traditional territories...as a protected area in their sacred trust. We’re embracing this recommendation because it’s the right thing to do. It’s the right thing to do not only in terms of promoting eco-tourism and recognizing the hard work of the Aboriginal communities in safeguarding their traditional territories, but most of all in terms of finally, respecting the decisions of the people of the east side concerning their own way of life and respecting the treaties we signed so many years ago.”

Correspondence, Conservation Minister Stan Struthers, January 21, 2005 to Gaile Whelan

Enns, Director, Manitoba Wildlands

“As you are aware, on December 3rd (2004), I announced the Province’s support for the nomination of a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the East Side.”

CBC Radio interview, Conservation Minister Stan Struthers, December 17, 2005

CBC Host: The East Side of Lake Winnipeg is proposed to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Struthers: “I think it would be a very high level of distinction for our province to have this type of a site located here in Manitoba, designated in Manitoba and Northern Ontario. I think it’s a wonderful step forwards in terms of land use planning and involving the First Nations people ...The bulk of the credit goes to the chiefs, councilors and elders from places like Paungaussi, and Poplar River, and Little Grand Rapids, and Pikangika over on the Ontario side.... I think the First Nations have shown a lot of foresight on this and I’m just really glad that we’re, as the provincial government cooperating with them in order to make this happen.”

CBC Host: “Right, and what do you think this could do for the Hydro plants in this area?”

Struthers: “Well, one of the things I think is very positive in this is is the approach Manitoba Hydro has taken; they are looking at alternative routes. They are looking at ways that we can carry that power from our North into other jurisdictions that now rely on dirty old coal to provide power. Hydro, I think has taken a very mature approach to this, considered the First Nations along the East Side of Lake Winnipeg and support, actually, through a resolution, the designation of a UNESCO World Heritage Site in this province....They (UNESCO) are very impressed with the work Poplar River has done and they were very impressed that our government, I, met with chiefs of the area to talk about interim protection while the chiefs, councils and elders consider the land use plans that they’re going to put in place in their own traditional areas.”

Government of Manitoba press release, December 13, 2004

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2004/12/2004-12-13-03.html>

The province has already announced its support for the nomination of a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the east side.

Conservation Minister Stan Struthers

World Heritage Site Announcement, December 3, 2004

“We are pleased to support the Accord First Nations, to make the dream of a World Heritage Site come true...(and) ensure the protection of these lands for generations to come...(This will) show that Manitoba is a world conservation leader.”

“We want to be able to ensure the area is protected, with minimal impact from economic activities.”

Government of Manitoba press release, December 3, 2004 – Premier Doer

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2004/12/2004-12-03-04.html>

In addition, the province announced its full support for the nomination of the UNESCO world heritage site encompassing 43,000 square kilometers spanning the Manitoba-Ontario border. "The support was made possible with the foresight used in the creation of Atikaki Wilderness park in the 1980s and the foresight and hard work of local First Nations in putting forward their traditional territories that they have looked after for generations," said Doer. "We are committed to working closely with the accord First Nations governments and the governments of Ontario and Canada to bring the dream of a UNESCO site to reality."

Government of Manitoba press release. November 22, 2004

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2004/11/2004-11-22-01.html>

The speech pledged to pursue:

A UNESCO world heritage site designation for the boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, an area roughly the size of Nova Scotia."

Manitoba NDP Throne Speech Bulletin November 22, 2004

Protecting the Land, Air & Water:

- Participation in a campaign to designate the boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Government of Manitoba Speech From the Throne November 22, 2004

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/throne.html>

"Since 1999, over one million hectares of Manitoba wilderness have received new or renewed protected status. The coming year will see additional designations of protected areas and ecological reserves, including the nomination of a pristine Boreal Forest region on the east side of Lake Winnipeg as a UNESCO World Heritage Site."

"The site that is being nominated is 43,000 square kilometers in total – roughly the size of Nova Scotia – and would join the Atikaki Wilderness Park with Ontario's Woodland Caribou Park and adjacent First Nation Lands. The UNESCO designation is a recommendation of the East Side planning initiative."

East Side Planning Initiative Report - World Heritage Site Recommendations

"Promises to Keep" Towards a Broad Area Plan for the East Side of Lake Winnipeg – A Status Report (November 2004)

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/eastsideplan/status-report/index.html>

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Recommendation 5.3.2

The Government of Manitoba plays an active role with the federal government in establishing a UNESCO (U.N.) World Natural & Cultural Heritage Site on the east side. The site should include the land area encompassed in the application by the five First

Nations signatory to the protected areas Accord, and Atikaki and Woodland Caribou Provincial Parks.