

## Manitoba Wildlands

### 2011 Provincial Election Questionnaire #5 – Protected Areas, Parks & World Heritage Site

Thank you for providing us with an opportunity to update you on the status of protected areas, parks and the World Heritage Site. The NDP is committed to protecting Manitoba's natural habitats for all Manitobans to enjoy for generations to come.

During the 1990s, the province would routinely act unilaterally in setting aside interim park reserves – but few areas were permanently protected and First Nations concerns were often ignored. The NDP priority has been to permanently protect our most beautiful natural areas while working with Aboriginal and First Nation communities to ensure that their concerns are addressed during this process.

Since 1999, Manitoba has protected more than 2.76 million hectares of the province, bringing the amount of protected area in Manitoba to over 10% of our territory.

We've established ten provincial parks since 1999, covering almost 1.5 million hectares of land. The new parks include Nueltin Lake, Colvin Lake, Little Limestone Lake, and Fisher Bay. We have also waived entry fees to provincial parks since 2009, all the while significantly increasing capital investments into park facilities such as yurts and campgrounds.

We've increased the number of ecological reserves to 22, by creating the Brokenhead Wetland, the Jennifer and Tom Shay, Armit Meadows, Birch River, Little George Island, and Whitemouth Bog Ecological Reserves.

We have added over 10,000 hectares of private lands to Manitoba's protected areas network by signing Memorandums of Agreement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ducks Unlimited. The province has also invested \$7 million in support of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, to help purchase and preserve lands in southern Manitoba.

We have designated five new protected Wildlife Management Areas - Delta Marsh, Whitemouth Bog, Observation Point, Wakop and Wellington. These areas include significant wetlands that help store carbon, improve water quality, and reduce nutrient loading and flooding.

We've supported the work of the Friends of Upper Fort Garry by introducing the Upper Fort Garry Heritage Provincial Park Act. We are also investing \$2.5 million towards land acquisition, site preparation, and other expenses to help secure the area as a provincial heritage park.

We have made a historic decision to ban commercial logging in all but one of our provincial parks. As you likely know, the PCs ignored a 1992 Clean Environment Commission recommendation by allowing logging in Nopiming park. No wonder they criticized our decision to end logging in parks.

As part of our recent *Save Lake Winnipeg Act* we have also put in place a two-year moratorium on new quarry licences and quarry permits for peat and peat moss. Manitoba's boreal peatlands are among the

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most carbon-rich wetlands in the world, which is why Manitoba is currently working towards a peatland strategy.

With regards to the World Heritage Site, we are proud to support Pimachiowin Aki in their bid to have the east side of Lake Winnipeg declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We have pledged \$10 million to kick start a Trust Fund.

Proceeding with Hugh McFadyen's plan to put a major transmission line along the East Side without First Nations support would jeopardize the UNESCO bid. We know from our 80 community consultation meetings in 2003/04 that there is no grassroots consensus.