

Public Review - Boundary Adjustments to Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Park Reserve Land Use Categories

With the support of Poplar River First Nation, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation has applied for an Environment Act License to create a new winter road connection between the communities of Norway House and Poplar River as an alternative to address concerns with access via the existing winter road connection from the south such as shorter periods they can be used. Most remote Manitoba First Nation communities have two winter roads providing access in order to have an alternative in the event one route is not serviceable.

Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Park Reserve was established in 1999 and includes most of the Poplar River First Nation traditional territory. The land base of the Park Reserve was placed in a Backcountry Land Use Category (LUC) to provide interim protection from logging, mining and hydro-electric development, while government and the First Nation discussed final boundaries, designation and management prior to public review of a final proposal. The Park Reserve was renewed on October 1, 2004, for a further five years to enable the First Nation to complete its land management plan. In October 2007, after public consultations, the Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Park Reserve boundaries were adjusted to withdraw a wharf development from the park reserve and to establish two Resource Management LUCs to permit gravel extraction only.

Part of the new route will be along a historic former winter road corridor, but part would require creation of a new corridor. This would require a change in LUC and it is proposed to use the provision in section 7(3)(g) of *The Provincial Parks Act* to create a new Winter Road Access LUC that would only allow a winter road to be built and operated annually each winter. The applied-for corridor is 2 km wide to allow for selection of the optimum 9-12 m wide route within it depending on engineering, physical, vegetation and landscape aspects. In forested parts of the corridor, a 30-60 m wide right-of-way is cleared to allow for proper sight lines. To ensure that the 2-km wide corridor could not be used for other activities that are currently prohibited in the park reserve, a regulation will also be passed to continue prohibitions on logging, mining, or the development of oil, petroleum, natural gas or hydro-electric power in this new Winter Road Access LUC in the park reserve. This would also allow the land that is currently protected to continue to be recognized as part of Manitoba's network of protected areas. Since two winter road corridors already exist within the park reserve it is also proposed to incorporate their corridors within this new Winter Road Access LUC.

This winter road proposal and the corridor location were developed with the participation of Poplar River First Nation, and they are supported by Parks and Natural Areas Branch. LUC boundary changes, however, require public review. The public review is meant to enable everyone with an interest in the area to review/provide current information respecting implications of changing existing boundaries or land use practices, or comments respecting highest and best use for the Park Reserve land base.

Your comments respecting the above proposals are requested by December 14, 2007. Please do not hesitate to forward additional information on specific uses and values along with your point of view respecting the future of these areas. If you would prefer to respond electronically or to speak directly to someone respecting any aspect of this process, please call Helios Hernandez at (204) 945-4148 or email parksystem@gov.mb.ca.

Thank you for your interest in Manitoba's provincial park system.