

February, 2007

Public Review - Walter Cook Uplands Caves Provincial Park Reserve

In August, 2001, with the support of Grand Rapids First Nation and the Town of Grand Rapids, the Walter Cook Uplands Caves Park Reserve was created. It is located about 35 kilometres north-west of Grand Rapids, about 425 kilometres north of Winnipeg. The Park Reserve is over 3,200 hectares in size, all of which is in protected status.

The purpose of the Walter Cook Uplands Caves Park Reserve designation is to conserve the area's Karst features such as caves, sinkholes and hibernacula considered to be among the most northerly over-wintering sites for the Little Brown Bat in North America, while options for the future of the site, including a final designation, are considered.

The intent of this public review is to enable everyone with an interest in the area to provide current information respecting present area use and allocations, compatibility of uses, user expectations, implications of changing existing boundaries or land use practices, or comments respecting highest and best use for the Park Reserve land base, and contribute to the process of developing a framework for long-term management of the area.

Review of the site to date has identified the potential for designation as a provincial Ecological Reserve. Factors involved in this suggestion include the sensitivity to disturbance of some area features, such as the bat hibernacula, as well as the significance and rarity in North America of several of the included Karst features. Renewal of the existing Park Reserve status to enable further review of the permanent designation of this site with adjacent communities is also an option if this is desired. Another idea under review is shortening the name of the area to Walter Cook Caves.

Your comments respecting these or other options you may suggest for the Walter Cook Uplands Caves Park Reserve are requested. Please do not hesitate to forward additional information on area values and present uses along with your point of view respecting the future of this area. If you would prefer to respond electronically, wish any further information, or would like to speak to someone respecting any aspect of this process, please call Rick Wilson at (204) 945-4365 or email parksystem@gov.mb.ca. Your response before March 5, 2007, would be appreciated.

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