



Hudson Bay Lowlands Proposed Protected Areas



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The Protected Areas Initiative has identified portions of the Hudson Bay Lowlands region that have significant potential to enhance Manitoba's network of protected areas. A number of Areas of Special Interest (ASI) have been identified for study because they represent the enduring features found within the Hudson Bay Lowlands region that still need to be protected. Enduring features are combinations of soils and landscape features that are used to represent the biodiversity (the complex web of life including all species from microscopic bacteria to plants and animals) within Manitoba's natural regions.

### **What is a Protected Area?**

Protected areas do not allow logging, mining, hydroelectric development, oil and gas development and other activities that could harm the plants, animals, or landscape. Protected areas are needed to conserve the variety of plant and animal life in Manitoba and to provide undisturbed habitat where nature's cycles can continue over time. Areas that are protected from industrial development are important to maintain opportunities for traditional land uses, such as hunting and trapping, for future generations. They also provide places for Manitobans and visitors to experience and appreciate nature.

The province is in the process of assembling a network of protected areas that will include examples of all of the different

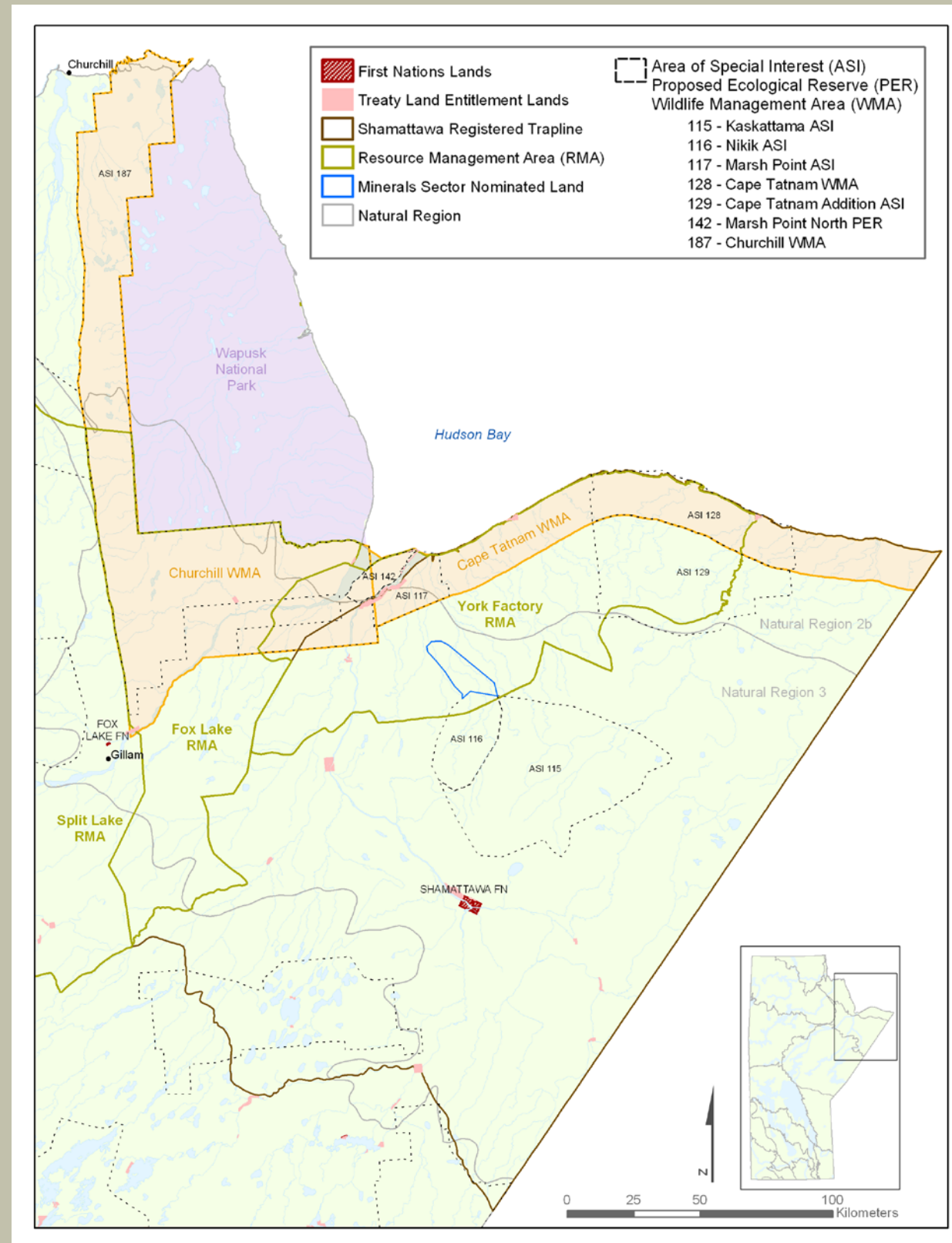
landscapes in Manitoba. Manitoba's network includes national and provincial parks and park reserves, wildlife management areas, provincial forests, ecological reserves, and private lands owned by conservation agencies. Protected areas are designated through a process of government review and public consultation.

The Government of Manitoba is working with First Nations and Aboriginal people to ensure that areas designated as protected areas will not infringe upon any existing Aboriginal or Treaty rights of First Nations and Aboriginal people, or the exercise of those rights.



## Areas of Special Interest (ASI)

The proposed protected areas in the Hudson Bay Lowlands are ASI 115 Kaskattama, ASI 116 Nikik, ASI 117 Marsh Point, ASI 128 Cape Tatnam Wildlife Management Area, ASI 129 Cape Tatnam Addition, ASI 142 Marsh Point North Proposed Ecological Reserve, and ASI 187 Churchill Wildlife Management Area (see map).



## ASI 117, 128, & 129

ASI 117 Marsh Point and ASI 128 Cape Tatnam Wildlife Management Area are proposed protected areas within the Cape Tatnam Wildlife Management Area (WMA). ASI 129 Cape Tatnam Addition is a proposed add-on to the WMA. The Cape Tatnam WMA traces the shoreline of Hudson Bay from the mouth of the Nelson River to the Manitoba-Ontario border. Comprising just over 530,000 hectares, this coastal habitat lies along the clear waters of Hudson Bay with endless sand beaches and relief provided by high ridges and broad river valleys. One of the unique features of the area is the transition from spruce forest to tundra along the edge of Hudson Bay.

This WMA is home to polar bears, black bears, moose, martens, wolverine, wolves, beluga whales, bearded seals and ringed seals. It is also a birders' paradise: willow ptarmigan, snowy owls, bald eagles, osprey, parasitic jaegers, the northern shrike, Bonaparte's gulls, and Arctic terns are all found here. Hundreds of thousands of snow, Ross's, and Canada geese stage here, resting and feeding before traveling further south.

*The Wildlife Act* provides for the designation of Crown lands as WMAs for the management, conservation and enhancement of wildlife resources. WMAs or portions of them can be protected through the *Use of Wildlife Lands Regulation* which prohibits logging, mining, or hydroelectric development, and other activities that could harm the habitat in the areas specified.

## ASI 142

ASI 142 Marsh Point North Proposed Ecological Reserve includes portions of the Cape Tatnam and Churchill WMAs. Marsh Point North is proposed as an ecological reserve to recognize this ecologically and culturally significant area. It is a peninsula between the estuaries of the Hayes and Nelson rivers, jutting out into Hudson Bay. Terrestrial freshwater, riverine, estuary, tidal flat, and marine ecosystems and their plants and animals all occur in close proximity.

Ecological reserves preserve unique and rare natural features of the province or examples of natural and modified landscapes. They are the most highly protected sites within the network of protected areas in Manitoba. Ecological reserves may be used for research, education, and nature study, but they are not set

aside as recreational, resource harvest, or multiple use areas. These latter areas can still become protected areas, but better fit a provincial park or wildlife management area designation.

Treaty rights and agreements with First Nations and Aboriginal people are respected in the creation and management of ecological reserves. Hunting and the removal of plants or other materials are prohibited in ecological reserves, but traditional land use by First Nations and Aboriginal people is permitted.

## ASI 187

ASI 187 Churchill WMA is a proposed protected area within the Churchill WMA. The Churchill WMA conserves a significant tract of exceptional wildlife habitat. It includes about 40% of the maternity denning area for the Western Hudson Bay population of polar bears and a critical portion of the Cape Churchill caribou herd's winter range. The wetlands associated with the Hudson Bay coast provide a rich habitat for a great variety of shorebirds, waterfowl, and other wildlife. The WMA is an internationally significant site for scientific research into climate, Arctic and sub-Arctic biota and geology. The Churchill Northern Studies Center, located within the WMA, provides a base of operations for many researchers, educators and students.

The portion of the WMA closest to the Town of Churchill is of special significance to its residents. Some use the WMA as a source of traditional foods, medicine and livelihood, while others use it for recreational activities that enrich their quality of life. The polar bears of the Churchill WMA have become one of Canada's best-known attractions for eco-tourism, attracting visitors from throughout the world. Wildlife viewing in the Churchill area generates over \$10.0 million annually in economic activity.

## ASI 115 & 116

ASI 115 Kaskattama and ASI 116 Nikik proposed protected areas seek to capture the somewhat higher till deposits and the wetland dominated lowland areas in the Hudson Bay Lowlands region. Numerous small, largely unconnected lakes and ponds are characteristic of these areas. Tributaries of the Gods and Kaskattama rivers drain the area northward toward Hudson Bay. An area to the north of the Nikik ASI has also been nominated for protection by the Minerals Sector (see map) because they have determined that the area has no mineral potential.



### Why Should these Areas be Protected?

The Hudson Bay Lowlands support the continent's (and world's) southernmost populations of polar bear. Cape Tatnam and Churchill Wildlife Management Areas provide polar bear denning areas, where females give birth to their cubs in winter, and a place for other polar bears to spend the summer. The region also provides important habitat for caribou.

Evidence of isostatic rebound is readily apparent in this landscape. Relieved of the weight of ice built up during the last Ice Age, the landmass began rising at a geologically fast pace of up to one meter per century. As the land rose, more shoreline appeared around the bodies of water of this region. This region contains some of the most extensive wetlands in North America. They support huge breeding and staging populations of Canada and lesser snow geese.

It is estimated that 99 percent of this region remains as intact habitat. Establishing protected areas in the Hudson Bay Lowlands will help to ensure that future generations will have the opportunity to experience this wilderness.

### Reviewing the Proposed Protected Areas

The purpose of this review is to gather information and insight into the Hudson Bay Lowlands from those who know the area to help guide the establishment of protected areas in this region. Please review this information and provide comments. Examples of the type of feedback requested include:

1. Do you have any concerns with protecting the areas illustrated? Please explain.
2. Should there be any changes to the boundaries proposed for the protected areas and why?
3. Do you have any concerns with protecting Marsh Point as an ecological reserve? Please explain.
4. For what activities/experiences (hunting, trapping, medicine collecting) do you use these areas? During what seasons?



*Thank You for Participating!*  
*Please share your comments with:*

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