

Little Limestone Lake

Park Reserve

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Little Limestone Lake is the largest and most outstanding example of a marl lake in the world. A marl lake changes colour as its water temperature rises and calcite in the water separates, forming tiny crystals. Little Limestone Lake turns from clear to opaque turquoise or even a milky, blue-white in the warm summer weather.

Little Limestone Lake Park Reserve is located approximately 65 kilometres north of Grand Rapids on Provincial Highway 6. The park reserve encompasses the lake, the islands in the lake and a 100-metre wide strip of land

along the shore, except for the Moose Lake Indian Reserve land on the east shore. It is 4,095 hectares in size.

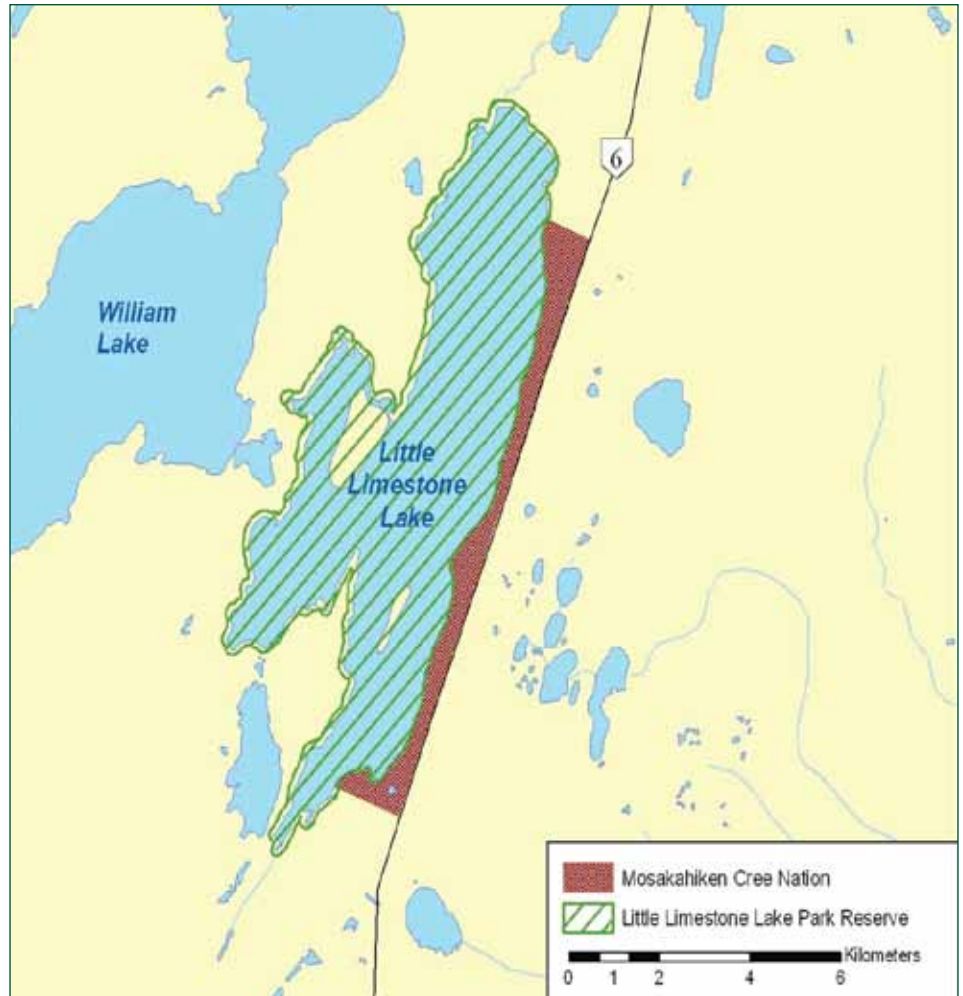
Manitoba's goal in designating Little Limestone Lake Park Reserve as a provincial park is to protect its unique natural, cultural and recreation values. Manitoba Conservation is working with Mosakahiken Cree Nation, through the Moose Lake Resource Management Board to designate the proposed Little Limestone Lake Provincial Park and develop a management plan.

What is a Park Reserve?

To help create new parks and other protected areas, *The Provincial Parks Act* allows for park reserves to be established. Park reserves provide interim protection while the land is being considered for inclusion in the provincial park system.

Park reserves are established for six months but they can be extended for five years. A public review is done during this time to help the province decide on a final designation, set boundaries and identify land use categories.

Little Limestone Lake was first established as a park reserve in July 2007. To continue protecting its important natural and cultural values while the review continues, Little Limestone Lake Park Reserve was renewed in 2008 for five years ending January 2013.



The Proposal

- to designate Little Limestone Lake Park Reserve as a provincial park
- to classify Little Limestone Lake as a natural park
- to classify the entire park as backcountry land use category

The purpose of a natural park is to preserve and protect areas of a natural region, and accommodate a variety of recreation opportunities and resource uses. The purpose of a backcountry land use category is to protect examples of natural landscapes and

provide basic facilities and trails for nature-orientated recreation, in a largely undisturbed environment.

This new provincial park would also contribute to Manitoba's network of protected areas. Lands included in a backcountry land use category (under *The Provincial Parks Act*) legally prohibit commercial logging, mining, hydroelectric development, oil and gas development and any other activities that may significantly or adversely affect habitat.

The rights of First Nations and other Aboriginal people to use this area for hunting, trapping, fishing and other traditional pursuits would continue.



The Management Plan

The management plan will describe how Manitoba Conservation and the Resource Management Board will co-operate to manage the lake. It will also protect the lake's special qualities and resources, and plan for potential developments.

In preparing this plan, Manitoba Conservation and the Resource Management Board want to consider local knowledge of the lake and surrounding area as well as ecological and hydrological research. Protecting the lake from potential threats will involve the participation of Mosakahiken Cree Nation and Manitoba Conservation, local people and industry.

Management Issues

Little Limestone Lake is a globally significant lake that requires careful protection. Some research on marl lakes and karst landscapes suggest that the biggest threats include:

- pollution of surface or ground water (water is the formative agent of the karst landscape, traveling very widely and relatively quickly through the limestone bedrock as groundwater or underground streams)
- collapse of limestone bedrock over and around caves due to activities on the land such as construction of buildings or roads, or the use of heavy equipment

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- soil, bedrock and vegetation disturbances around caves or marl lakes that might affect the biological, geological or hydrological characteristics

Activities in the proposed park would have to be managed in ways that will not limit appropriate activities at, or near, the lake. The management plan will recognize treaty and Aboriginal rights in the area. It will also recognize the economic development needs and aspirations of Mosakahiken Cree Nation. A management plan for Little Limestone Lake could deal with:

- recreational activities
- construction of roads or buildings
- protection of the aesthetic qualities of the lake
- protection of flora, fauna, soils and bedrock
- surface and ground water protection
- solid and liquid waste disposal

Your Input is Welcome

You can help determine the future of Little Limestone Lake. Please provide your comments on whether it should be designated a provincial park and how it should be managed. Forward any comments, questions or concerns by e-mail to parksystem@gov.mb.ca; phone: 1-204-945-6797 in Winnipeg; 1-204-627-8217 in The Pas.