

Little Limestone Lake

Park Reserve

Report on Public Comments – January 2011



Little Limestone Lake is one of the world's most impressive lakes. It is a marl lake, which means it has mineral-rich water that changes colour as it warms in the summer. It is the largest known marl lake in the world.

In 2007, Little Limestone Lake was designated a provincial park reserve. This gives it temporary protection while it is being considered for provincial park status. Manitoba Conservation is working with Mosakahiken Cree Nation through the Moose Lake Resource Management Board to achieve permanent protection and to plan for proper management of the lake.

Planning for Little Limestone Lake includes asking all Manitobans, particularly local citizens, for their opinions in deciding the lake's future. The first public review in early 2009 focused on designing a planning process for the lake.

The second public review began in June 2010 at Mosakahiken Cree Nation. The proposal to designate Little Limestone Lake as a provincial park and issues about its management were discussed at a community meeting.

In July 2010, a newsletter and questionnaire about the proposal were mailed to interested people and organizations. This

information was also posted on manitobaparks.com.

The public review concluded in November with a community meeting involving members of Misipawistik Cree Nation at Grand Rapids.

Over 130 people participated in this public review. A total of 111 questionnaires and written submissions were received. These comments are summarized below.

Little Limestone Lake as a Provincial Park

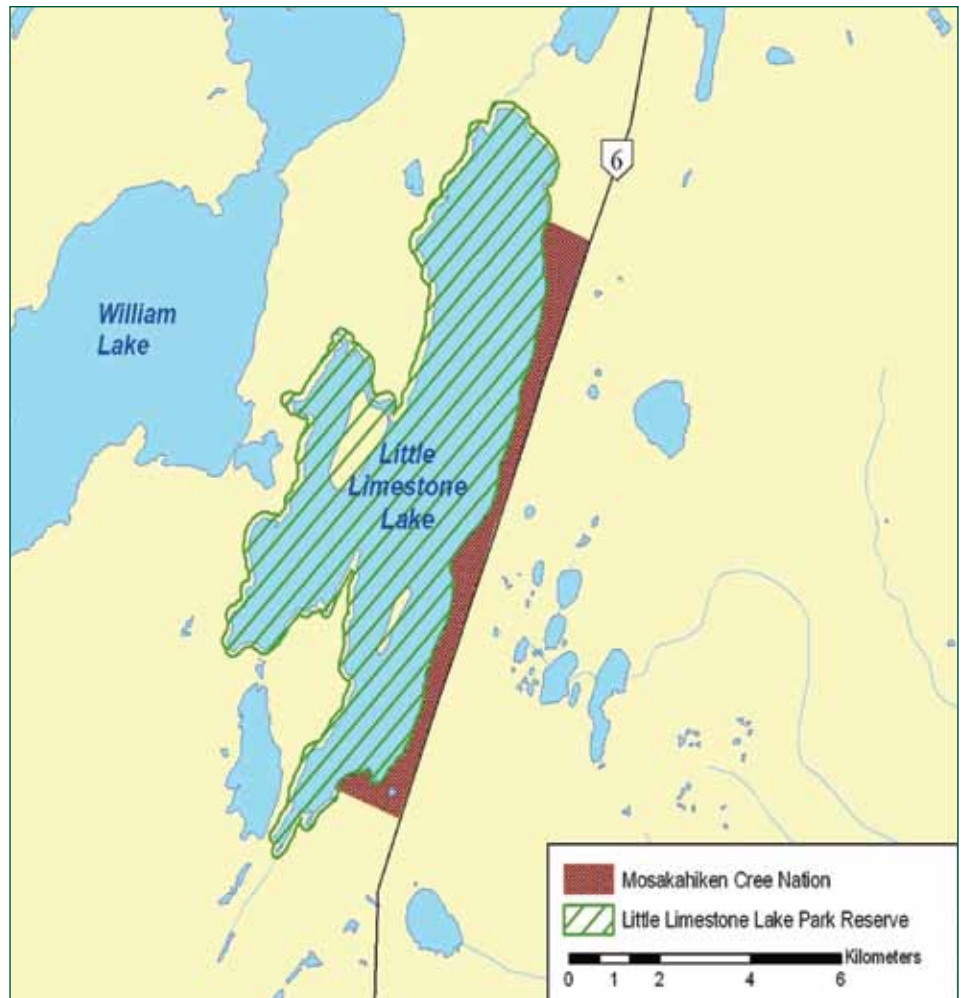
A very large majority of participants support designating Little Limestone Lake as a provincial park. Of those in support, approximately half suggested the park boundaries be larger than those of the current park reserve. A few participants stated that because of mining or First Nations' interests, the lake should not be designated as a park. One person suggested the area be designated as a national park.

Some respondents felt that the protected "backcountry land use category" proposed for the park was unnecessary, as the park is essentially a water body.

There were many concerns about whether commercial fishing would continue at the lake if it becomes a provincial park.

Many people also sought reassurance that Aboriginal and Treaty rights would be maintained under a provincial park designation.

There was also discussion at the meetings about the overall purpose of the park. Some asked whether the



designation should protect only the lake, or the lake and its surrounding land.

Management Plan for the Proposed Park

Comments about managing Little Limestone Lake focused on protection of the lake. Concerns were raised about protecting surface water and ground water quality. Improperly handled sewage and garbage, and future developments were mentioned as being harmful to water quality. It was suggested that management strategies for other marl lakes be investigated.

There was considerable discussion at the meetings about the potential impact of mining in the area,



including blasting activities at the Minago mine. Concerns were also expressed about the impacts of logging, and the potential impact of residential or cottage development adjacent to the lake.

It was noted that the area's bat populations should be protected.

The prospect of tourism developments and activities at the lake received a large number of comments. Most suggested tourism be controlled, and that tourism development be limited or prohibited.

A variety of other comments were recorded including suggestions to prohibit certain activities, such as the use of ATVs and dirt bikes, and to limit or prohibit

motorized boat traffic on the lake as a way to control water and noise pollution.

A number of questions were posed about future development of park facilities (ex: Would there be picnic areas, washrooms, campgrounds, trails and parking areas?), suggesting that these were desired improvements for some respondents. Proper maintenance of the area, should it become a park, was also a concern.

A large number of participants also mentioned that First Nations people need to be involved in decisions about the proposed park, as they know the land best.

Next Steps

The comments received will be given consideration as a decision is made on designation of the proposed park.

Over the next year, Manitoba Conservation will continue working with Mosakahiken Cree Nation through the Moose Lake Resource Management Board to prepare a management plan for the proposed park. A draft plan will be presented for public review after a park is formally designated.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this public review.

For more information about designating Little Limestone Lake as a provincial park, please contact:

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