WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
The planning team of local park managers, resource officers and park planners are reviewing the draft management plan. Throughout this final phase, we will continue to meet with individuals, groups and organizations as needed and as requested in order to complete the plan.

Management Planning Process
Step 1 - Collect background information and select public participation methods.
Step 2 - Public review of issues (Phase 1).
Step 3 - "Report on Public Comments".
Step 4 - Prepare draft management plan.
Step 5 - Public review of draft (Phase 2).
Step 6 - "Report on Public Comments".
Step 7 - Revise and finalize management plan.

The planning team wishes to thank everyone who participated in the drop-ins, as well as those who provided written comments and suggestions.

INFORMATION
Further information on the Management Plan for Duck Mountain Provincial Park can be found on-line by following the Parks Planning link at http://www.manitobaparks.com, or contact:

Duck Mountain Provincial Park Management Plan
Parks and Natural Areas Branch
Box 53 - 200 Saulteaux Crescent
Winnipeg MB - R3J 3W3
Telephone: (204) 945-3697
or 1-800-214-6497 toll free
Fax: (204) 945-0012
email: mgmtplan@gov.mb.ca

Duck Mountain Provincial Park.

Meeting Dates and Locations
Public drop-in sessions were held at Childs, Blue and Wellman lakes on August 23rd and 24th, 2003, in Grandview and Swan River on September 23rd and 24th, and in Winnipeg on September 17th. Meetings were also held with local First Nation community leaders and a variety of stakeholders in 2004. Approximately 350 people attended the drop-in sessions and over 100 comment sheets and letters were recorded.

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Duck Mountain Provincial Park.
1.3 Classification

While no comments were directed specifically at the park's Natural Park classification, there were a number of comments that the plan does not describe how the park will meet its obligation "to conserve ecosystems and maintain biodiversity". Some felt that the plan valued biodiversity behind other park uses, and that commercial extraction took priority over recreation.

1.4 Land Use Categories

There were a number of comments regarding the park boundary change that led to the designation of a protected backcountry area in 1997. Two respondents felt that the change was made to accommodate forestry interests rather than to improve the park. One suggested that the park boundary be revised to include forested areas to the south.

A land use category review was urged by one organization, with the intent of increasing protected land in the park. A number of people asked about the "donut hole" in the park (the area excluded from the park near the Sarah Lake road).

INTRODUCTION Pages 1-3

This section includes a brief description of the park, and summarizes the park's overall purpose, classification and land use categories.

1.1 Park Description

Duck Mountain Provincial Park is an important area for many Manitobans. The park was described as a "hidden gem", undisturbed by humans, with natural beauty, wildlife diversity and recreational opportunities. Two respondents commented that society has taken much from this park, and that it is time to "give back" or protect the area.

The phrase "keep the park the way it is" was frequently heard. A number of participants reminded us that the park belongs to all Manitobans, and is worthy of a high standard of care. It was also noted that the park needs to be protected for future generations.

1.2 Park Purpose

There were a number of opinions about the Park Purpose on page 3 of the draft management plan. Several respondents suggested that the park's main purposes should be to provide natural habitat for plants and animals, and/or to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, nature appreciation and conservation.

One participant suggested that the park purpose should focus more on activities that have occurred throughout the park's history (e.g. tourism, logging, trapping, fishing, hunting, camping, cottaging, hiking, horses, all-terrain vehicle use etc.).

The park purpose statement dealing with resource extraction attracted the greatest number of comments, with many opposing commercial harvest activities or stating there is too much resource extraction in the park. A number of submissions were received in opposition to commercial resource harvest, particularly clear-cut logging and other intensive industrial activities.

There were suggestions that the terms "trail-based recreation" and "associated facilities and services" be defined, and a request that all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and snowmobiles be specifically identified as a permitted use. One person indicated that user groups should be prioritized based on their economic and recreation values, and impact on park resources.

One respondent questioned the ecological impact of additional cottages on the landscape, and another the philosophical issue of allocating parkland to private leaseholders.

It was recommended by one participant that any new cottage lots on Singush and Childs lakes be offered on a cost recovery basis and not subsidized by tax dollars or existing cottagers' investments. Others requested that guidelines be enforced to ensure that new cottages and renovations were appropriate for the park, that lake carrying capacities not be exceeded, and that large, permanent residences not be permitted.

3.2.7 Historic Sites

The most frequent comment was that more attention should be given to local history and historic sites. Some examples of sites were the 1930s workcamp site at Singush Lake, and an archaeological dig near PR 567. There was general support for the concept of walking trail or ATV trail access to historic sites.

Several respondents expressed a need to actively identify and protect historic sites in the park. Some felt that extensive archaeological assessment was warranted to identify key areas. One person said that fencing to protect the Tunstell cabin/chimney site was needed. The relocation of the Manitoba Forestry Association's Interpretive Center was described as a great loss to the park. One respondent felt that historic sites should be protected, but not at the expense of other budget concerns such as enforcement.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The plan was described by a number of participants as too vague, too restrictive or too loosely written. Suggestions for improvement included the inclusion of a glossary of terms, ecotourism component, financial commitment, and related plans and strategies (e.g. wildspan vegetation management plans). A number of people felt that too much discretion was given in the plan to the park manager.

It was generally felt that the public should work with government to ensure the health and viability of the park and surrounding area. The establishment of an advisory or stakeholder group to assist with park planning activities was suggested. One person suggested that telephone surveys could be used to find out what people want.

There were concerns that provincial Natural Resource Officers (NROs) spend too much time on forestry issues, causing them to neglect wildlife and parks issues such as open liquor, garbage, etc. More officers to enforce fishing, hunting, and boating regulations were also requested.

Skepticism about whether the information gathered at drop-in sessions would go beyond the meetings was recorded, as were concerns that some of the public meetings were conducted as presentations rather than drop-ins. A number of people expressed appreciation for the planning efforts and the opportunity to participate in management plan discussions.
The issue of backcountry camping (camping in remote areas of the park) also generated some interest. Several individuals requested clarification of the current park policy regarding backcountry camping. Some respondents believed that backcountry camping should be encouraged and not restricted to designated sites; other supported backcountry camping at designated backcountry camping sites only.

Most other campground comments involved non-management plan issues such as phone lines, campground reservation system, recycling bins, speed limits, playgrounds, offices hours etc. Concerns about flapping tape and refuse left in backcountry areas were also raised.

At Blue Lake, a phone line to provide campground reservation system and 911 emergency access was cited as necessary improvements. At Childs Lake, requests for running water (showers and modern toilets), and electricity at new campsites were recorded. Other campground requests included locking of gates at 11:00 p.m., longer campground office hours and more park patrols in peak periods.

The campground reservation system was identified as both an asset and a hindrance to campers in the Duck Mountain area. There were requests to add Blue Lake campground to the reservation system, and requests to discontinue the system in other areas.

Several commendations for well maintained campgrounds and facilities, and for friendly and supportive park attendants were received.

3.2.6 Cottaging
There was general support for new cottage development on Singush and Childs Lakes and many people were anxious to learn how they could apply for a lot. There was general concurrence by most participants that there be no new development on Blue Lakes, and on currently undeveloped lakes including Laurie Lake. Two respondents identified the need for policies or controls on new cottage development. Another affirmed that the public should have input on what level of development is appropriate.

Comments about the General Land Use Framework on page 6 of the draft management plan included views that:
- the Backcountry and Resource Management Land Use Categories (LUCs) do not provide equal opportunities for solitude and tranquility (due to noise from logging) and
- the Backcountry LUC is not an "unmodified natural environment" if fire is absent.

A number of respondents requested more detail to describe how the Special Management Areas will be managed (see map on page 12). They recommended that motorized activity be prohibited or restricted in these areas to ensure an "undisturbed environment".

A number of respondents asked how concepts such as "ecosystem-based forest harvest strategies" would be implemented. One respondent suggested Singush Lake would be a suitable alternative for those who prefer a quiet, unserviced campground.

At Blue Lake, a researcher expressed concern over potential damage to research sample plots and rare plants in the vicinity of the proposed campground expansion.

At Wellman Lake, several respondents said they supported the proposed campground expansion, and a number of others expressed concern. One person feared that new campground sites would increase boat traffic and create safety issues. Another stated that the shoreline is too important to justify expansion at the current occupancy rates.

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3.1 Natural Values

In this introductory section, it was suggested that the term ‘existing resource commitments’ be defined.

One respondent felt that trapping was not adequately covered in the plan. Another recommended that the public be reminded that it is illegal to remove natural objects from a park.

3.1.1 Wildlife Habitat and Special Areas

There was general agreement that the preservation of significant and unique natural features is important, and that habitat and sensitive areas in the park should be inventoried and catalogued.

The need to manage the park as part of a larger ecosystem was identified, and details on how this would be accomplished were requested. Some felt that the park’s protected areas do not encompass all of the park’s important natural features.

One participant recommended that hunting not be permitted within one kilometre of an ungulate mineral lick; another that vehicles not be permitted within 300 metres of a lick. One group recommended that the entire park be designated as a Wildlife Refuge, and several individuals suggested that Jumper Plains be designated as an area where hunting and ATV use would be prohibited. Concern was also raised about the impact of hunting and the need to monitor wildlife populations.

There were a number of comments about the impact of human activities on wildlife, such as forestry, all-terrain vehicles and excessive access. Definitions of the terms “excessive” and “excessive disturbance” were recommended by one individual for inclusion in the plan. The need to monitor the ecological status of the park was also raised, as was the need to protect habitat for small birds.

With respect to permit review, it was suggested that review standards, procedures and guidelines be quoted in the plan, and that The Environment Act requirements be referenced. The need to consult with professional biologists, ecologists and other government branches on overlapping resource issues was also noted.

3.1.2 Vegetation

Most responses to this topic supported the existing protected areas in the park, and urged the Parks and Natural Areas Branch to manage them properly. There was general support for the guideline respecting controlled burns. It was suggested that the plan be more specific about fire management and the long-term maintenance of forest age structures.

Regarding forest management in protected backcountry areas, some recommended that commercial harvest be permitted to control insects and disease, and to simulate natural disturbances. It was also suggested that forest harvest be used instead of fire for age class/ecosystem management purposes.

The use of pesticides to maintain or enhance natural areas attracted comments that pesticides should be used sparingly and with extreme caution. One person suggested using biological controls in critical situations only. Another stated that pesticide use be subject to intense review of long-term ecological and watershed impacts.

One organization asked that the objective in this section of the plan be clarified and that there be public involvement in preparing vegetation management plans. They felt that natural values should take priority over the forest industry when dealing with natural required and why trails were not groomed in the same manner as other parks. There was a recommendation that snowmobile trails be kept narrow so as to restrict access by trucks.

3.2 Outfitting

This section applies primarily to commercial outfitters. Some of the guidelines in the draft park management plan reflected wider-ranging provincial policies that have since been adopted by Manitoba Conservation.

Several respondents opposed hunting in the park for a number of reasons. One person was concerned about personal safety when hiking during the hunting season. Another felt that the spring bear hunt resulted in wounded bears and orphaned cubs.

Near Childs/Laurie Lake area, several people commented that hunting 300 meters from the road was too close. One person suggested that a Sunday hunting ban for all hunters would improve opportunities for hikers and birdwatchers. Another said that cooperation with local hunting and fishing groups was needed to ensure sustainable use of resources.

Other hunting-related comments included views that residents should have priority over non-residents for wildlife resources, that hunting regulations are too complex, and that the harvest of immature animals should be discouraged. Two participants expressed support for designated routes as a means of preserving a high quality hunt, one requested more routes to improve access. Two participants requested more non-motorized lakes in the park.

3.2.2 Hunting and Fishing

This topic addresses camping by licenced big game hunters and the caching of private boats in remote areas of the park. Most of those who commented on the camping issue believed that hunters should be allowed to camp wherever they want in the park and not be restricted to designated sites. One respondent thought that hunters should be required to stay in campgrounds or lodges.

There were a few comments on boat caching. One participant stated that private boat caches should not be permitted, and referenced the problems they have created in other Manitoba parks. There was also a suggestion that limiting private boat caches would increase the use of outfitters’ boats, thus preserving the wilderness experience. One person cautioned that the identification of equipment and boat caches, as directed by the plan, would lead to increased vandalism and user conflict.

With respect to permit review, it was suggested that review standards, procedures and guidelines be quoted in the plan, and that The Environment Act requirements be referenced. The need to consult with professional biologists, ecologists and other government branches on overlapping resource issues was also noted.
There were several questions about the impact of prescribed ATV trails on hunting and fishing. Some were concerned that a trail system would limit hunting and fishing opportunities. Others feared that it would increase access for hunters and ATVs, which they viewed as problematic.

There were concerns about recreational riders being restricted to trails while traditional users (hunters) were not. Some noted that there are non-motorized areas at Riding Mountain, and are therefore not needed at Duck Mountain.

Several participants wanted a greater enforcement presence and public education on responsible ATV use. The "Tread Lightly" campaign was often mentioned. Increased enforcement budgets and heavy fines for abuse of ATV privileges were suggested. One respondent felt that ATV regulations should be changed to match the current pattern of ATV use.

In contrast, a number of other participants felt that ATVs should not be permitted in the park at all. These individuals were concerned about the impact of ATVs on other park users, such as hikers, and on damage to plant and animal habitats. Some felt that there were too many trails in the park, or that the plan put too much emphasis on accommodating recreational ATV use. There were suggestions that the impact of ATVs on the ecosystem be studied and identified.

Another general realm of opinion regarding ATV use was that ATV use should be managed but not unduly curtailed. There were many ideas on how this could best be accomplished. Some respondents advocated a park-wide trail system or management strategy, others supported restrictions in specific areas.

Several respondents stated that they supported the establishment of non-motorized areas within the park, and there was a suggestion that ATV trails be intentionally routed to prevent habitat fragmentation. Protected backcountry areas, sensitive sites, habitat areas, stream crossings, wet areas and hiking trails were noted as places where ATV use should be avoided or prohibited. Jumper Plains was often mentioned as an example of an area where ATV use should be controlled.

Some participants felt that the current trail system is adequate and simply needs to be organized or managed. Other ideas included restricting ATVs to existing trails in the Backcountry LUC, keeping trails narrow, implementing a permit system and promoting the Moonsherry Trails to steer pressure from other areas.

It was recommended that local trail users be involved in ATV trail planning, although one person noted that ATV groups should not be charged with managing the trails entirely. A number of people commented that they did not want to see wide, graveled trails "like in Ontario" and that trails must be challenging, and "not just A to B". In most cases, the use of ATVs for work purposes (hunting, trapping, forestry, scientific research etc.) was considered an acceptable use.

Other ATV issues included concerns about noise, particularly dirt bikes, and about the use of ATVs in campgrounds, hiking trails and near built up areas. Childs Lake was noted as an area of particular concern.

The challenge of defining an ATV drew a number of comments. Questions about homemade vehicles, large soft-wheeled vehicles, Argos and 2-wheeled motor bikes were raised. Suggestions for definitions and criteria were presented (e.g. maximum tire pressure, torque, maximum number of vehicles per square kilometre etc.) One person recommended putting berms at ATV trailheads to prevent use by full-sized trucks.

With regard to snowmobiles, a number of people emphasized that snowmobile trails need to be included in future trail-planning initiatives. Several respondents wanted to know why a SnoPass was not used. Discussions about snowmobiles were often raised in the context of ATVs. Some suggested that they be allowed in some areas (i.e. Two-Mile Lake). Some respondents felt that prohibiting snowmobiles was counterproductive to stacking efforts.

One respondent recommended that fisheries management plans be prepared to ensure that use is sustainable. There were also suggestions that the use of biodegradable fishing line be required and that netting of fish be prohibited by all park users.

The importance of continued access by ATVs and snowmobiles to remote fishing lakes was identified by a number of participants. The Pine River Road was often referenced and there were requests and offers of help to keep the road open. One person reminded us that ATV access to "pike" lakes was also important as "not everyone likes trout". There was a suggestion that a no-ATV policy in some areas would provide opportunity for a unique "walk-in with canoe" fishing experience.

3.1.3 Water

Water quality protection was very important to those who responded to this topic. There were several recommendations that the plan should go further (i.e. water quality standards, in-depth water quality testing, a water quality management plan for the park). A number of people requested that water quality testing results be more readily available to the public.

The effect of nutrient loading from park-based sources on downstream water bodies was also noted as an important issue, and a commitment to minimize or eliminate nutrient loading in all water bodies within the park was requested. One respondent recommended that pesticide and fertilizer use be prohibited near lakes.

There was support for guidelines regarding the maintenance of natural water levels. One person suggested that a study be conducted to determine the cause of surface water fluctuations in recent years.

3.1.4 Fisheries

Most fishery comments concerned stocking, sport fishing and access. The importance of local fish enhancement groups in promoting sport fishing and tourism economic opportunity was also highlighted.

Many respondents felt that stocking programs in the park should be maintained and/or upgraded. There were a number of specific stocking requests (i.e. more walleye in Childs Lake, rainbow trout in East Blue Lake, walleye in West Blue Lake). Several individuals felt that stocking of streams in western areas of the park (proposed Special Management Area/Shell River area) should be permitted to provide opportunities for fly-fishing. Others supported the proposed no-stocking guidelines for these areas, as well as guidelines for new stocking initiatives.

One respondent expressed concern about the impact of stocking on native species, and another recommended that there be no new stocking of non-native species. There was also a suggestion that several "no-fishing" lakes be established to use as benchmarks for biodiversity.

The use of fish toxicants elicited a range of comments. Some supported a prohibition on fish toxicants, while others suggested that they be allowed in some areas (i.e. Two-Mile Lake). Some respondents felt that prohibiting toxicants was counterproductive to stacking efforts.

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3.1.5 Forestry

Forestry issues attracted many comments. The most frequently heard comment was that logging should be phased out or prohibited in the park. Some participants said they supported local, selective or small-scale logging, but not large-scale, clear-cut or foreign-owned operations. In particular, concerns were raised over harvesting near Hwy 85 and areas south of Singush Lake.

There were a number of questions about whether logging is adequately managed and/or monitored in the park. Some respondents suggested that ecosystem-based management strategies are either not used or fully understood by resource managers, and that forest management in non-protected areas needs to be integrated with that in logged areas.
Examples of impacts attributed by participants to forestry operations included:

- damage to roads and trails
- debris left behind
- impacts on water bodies and lake levels
- wildlife forced into remote areas (negatively affecting sport hunting)
- restricted access for traditional users such as native hunters, fishers and trappers
- loss of large spruce trees

There were questions about forest management plans, and suggestions that the park management plan should include more direction on cutting plans, pesticide use, planting of hybrid poplar, incidental harvest, forest renewal and rehabilitation, and roads.

One individual stated that logging impacts areas far beyond the actual cuts, and that access roads and adjacent areas should be factored into cutting plans. Another recommended that surveys for rare plants should be conducted and provided to the forest industry to ensure plant protection.

There were comments in support of habitat enhancement strategies that utilize forest management and renewal, and a few people suggested that logging should be used to simulate natural processes to prevent major uncontrolled fires. One person expressed the concern that poor water quality issues were being unjustly attributed to forestry activities.

The gating and decommissioning of forest access roads produced two general points of view. The first is that the decommissioning of forestry roads has a negative impact on recreational use (i.e. roads should be left open for ATVs after logging has been completed.) The second view supported forest road decommissioning as a way to protect habitat and preserve the "wildness" of the park. One respondent supported the decommissioning of roads by working from the back to front, to keep them open for a shorter time. Some respondents supported the use of berms and slash to close access roads; others preferred metal gates.

Many respondents suggested that forest buffers should be wider, and one person stated that forest access roads should be narrower. It was pointed out that the wording of this section in the plan suggests that existing roads will be decommissioned if used for forestry.

Some respondents feel that there is public confusion over the roles of Manitoba Forestry, quota holders, and Louisiana Pacific (LP) in managing forests. Others stated that industry research information and data should be made available to the public. One individual offered to share personal information collected on the fire history of the park.

There were several suggestions that the objective of this section be revised to clarify its intent in terms of ecosystems, recreation, forestry and other resource uses. It was also suggested that ecotourism be addressed in this section.

More information on how permits would be issued (i.e. one-time annual, commercial use, private use etc.) was requested. There were comments that the permit requirement for the removal of shed antlers was "wishy-washy" or unnecessary.

It was recommended that the plan include a reference to any new provincial policy on non-timber forest products that may be prepared in the future. Complaints about gravel trucks and their impact on the Pine River Road were also raised.

The Mossberry Trail was noted by several respondents as a good example of a multiple-use trail, but too rough for most cyclists. It was suggested that the Windy Lake road be designated for cyclists. Other trail suggestions included:

- an overnight hiking trail
- outhouse at end of Chain Lakes
- new firepits on Chain Lakes
- outhouse at end of Childs Lake ski trail

The use of ATVs in the park attracted a great deal of public interest, and there was a wide range of opinions on this subject. Some participants felt that ATV use should be unlimited and unrestricted, others felt it should be managed, and others supported general prohibitions on ATV use.

Many of those who favored unrestricted ATV use said that they liked the park as it is, with freedom and opportunities to go off trail and explore. Some reasoned that, contrary to the management plan's stated intent, prescribed trails in backcountry areas would decrease opportunities for solitude and tranquility, and would concentrate damage and overuse in those areas. It was frequently suggested that logging does more environmental damage than do ATVs.

It was emphasized that ATVs are important economic generators for the area, and enable people to visit areas they could not otherwise access. Some people were concerned that a trail system and/or trail maps would promote greater use of the park by non-local people, and they did not want this to occur.

Many participants were concerned that there is not enough money or manpower to look after an ATV trail system. However, one participant responded that ATV riders want mud and that non-maintained trails are more enjoyable. Some people were concerned that a trail system and/or trail maps would promote greater use of the park by non-local people, and they did not want this to occur.

A number of people voiced concern that the draft plan implied that bicycles and horses would not be permitted in the park. One group suggested that the plan include information on how non-motorized trails will be maintained.

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A number of respondents felt that concern over ATV use has been exaggerated, and suggested that responsible ATV riders would suffer because of a few unruly ones. They noted that some ATV riders carry chainsaws and keep the trails open, and would resent having restrictions on these trails.
Examples of impacts attributed by participants to forestry operations included:

- damage to roads and trails
- debris left behind
- impacts on water bodies and lake levels
- wildlife forced into remote areas
- (negatively affecting sport hunting)
- restricted access for traditional users such as native hunters, fishers and trappers
- loss of large spruce trees

There were questions about forest management plans, and suggestions that the park management plan should include more direction on cutting plans, pesticide use, planting of hybrid poplar, incidental harvest, forest renewal and rehabilitation, and roads.

One individual stated that logging impacts areas far beyond the actual cuts, and that access roads and adjacent areas should be factored into cutting plans. Another recommended that surveys for rare plants should be conducted and provided to the forest industry to ensure plant protection.

There were comments in support of habitat enhancement strategies that utilize forest management and renewal, and a few people suggested that logging should be used to simulate natural processes to prevent major uncontrolled fires. One person expressed the concern that poor water quality issues were being unjustly attributed to forestry activities.

The gating and decommissioning of forest access roads produced two general points of view. The first is that the decommissioning of forestry roads has a negative impact on recreational use (i.e. roads should be left open for ATVs after logging has been completed). The second view supported forest road decommissioning as a way to protect habitat and preserve the "wildness" of the park. One respondent supported the decommissioning of roads by working from the back to front, to keep them open for a shorter time. Some respondents supported the use of berms and slash to close access roads, others preferred metal gates.

Many respondents suggested that forest buffers should be wider, and one person stated that forest access roads should be narrower. It was pointed out that the wording of this section in the plan suggests that existing roads will be decommissioned if used for forestry.

Some respondents feel that there is public confusion over the roles of Manitoba Forestry, quota holders, and Louisiana Pacific (LP) in managing forests. Others stated that industry research information and data should be made available to the public. One individual offered to share personal information collected on the fire history of the park.

3.2.1 Trails

There were several suggestions that the objective of this section be revised to clarify its intent in terms of ecosystems, recreation, forestry and other resource uses. It was also suggested that ecotourism be addressed in this section.

More information on how permits would be issued (i.e. one-time annual, commercial use, private use etc.) was requested. There were comments that the permit requirement for the removal of shed antlers was "wishy-washy" or unnecessary.

It was recommended that the plan include a reference to any new provincial policy on non-timber forest products that may be prepared in the future. Complaints about gravel trucks and their impact on the Pine River Road were also raised.

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A number of respondents felt that concern over ATV use has been exaggerated, and suggested that responsible ATV riders would suffer because of a few unruly ones. They noted that some ATV riders carry chainsaws and keep the trails open, and would resent having restrictions on these trails.
There were several questions about the impact of prescribed ATV trails on hunting and fishing. Some were concerned that a trail system would limit hunting and fishing opportunities. Others feared that it would increase access for hunters and ATVs, which they viewed as problematic.

There were concerns about recreational riders being restricted to trails while traditional users (hunters) were not. Some noted that there are non-motorized areas at Riding Mountain, and are therefore not needed at Duck Mountain.

Several participants wanted a greater enforcement presence and public education on responsible ATV use. The "Tread Lightly" campaign was often mentioned. Increased enforcement budgets and heavy fines for abuse of ATV privileges were suggested. One respondent felt that ATV regulations should be changed to match the current pattern of ATV use.

In contrast, a number of other participants felt that ATVs should not be permitted in the park at all. These individuals were concerned about the impact of ATVs on other park users, such as hikers, and on damage to plant and animal habitats. Some felt that there were too many trails in the park, or that the plan put too much emphasis on accommodating recreational ATV use. There were suggestions that the impact of ATVs on the ecosystem be studied and identified.

Another general realm of opinion regarding ATV use was that ATV use should be managed but not unduly curtailed. There were many ideas on how this could best be accomplished. Some respondents advocated a park-wide trail system or management strategy, others supported restrictions in specific areas.

Several respondents stated that they supported the establishment of non-motorized areas within the park, and there was a suggestion that ATV trails be intentionally routed to prevent habitat fragmentation. Protected backcountry areas, sensitive sites, habitat areas, stream crossings, wet areas and hiking trails were noted as places where ATV use should be avoided or prohibited. Jumper Plains was often mentioned as an example of an area where ATV use should be controlled.

Some participants felt that the current trail system is adequate and simply needs to be organized or managed. Other ideas included restricting ATVs to existing trails in the Backcountry LUC, keeping trails narrow, implementing a permit system and promoting the Mooseberry Trails to steer pressure from other areas.

It was recommended that local trail users be involved in ATV trail planning, although one person noted that ATV groups should not be charged with managing the trails entirely. A number of people commented that they did not want to see wide, graveled trails "like in Ontario" and that trails must be challenging, and "not just A to B." In most cases, the use of ATVs for work purposes (hunting, trapping, forestry, scientific research etc.) was considered an acceptable use.

Other ATV issues included concerns about noise, particularly dirt bikes, and about the use of ATVs in campgrounds, hiking trails and near built up areas. Childs Lake was noted as an area of particular concern.

The challenge of defining an ATV drew a number of comments. Questions about homemade vehicles, large soft-wheeled vehicles, Argos and 2-wheeled motor bikes were raised. Suggestions for definitions and criteria were presented (e.g. maximum tire pressure, torque, maximum number of vehicles per square kilometre etc.) One person recommended putting berms at ATV trailheads to prevent use by full-sized trucks.

With regard to snowmobiles, a number of people emphasized that snowmobile trails need to be included in future trail-planning initiatives. Several respondents wanted to know why a SnoPass was disturbances. A more detailed approval process for natural disturbance plans was recommended.

During the drop-ins, a number of people pointed out sites that they felt should be included in a database of natural areas.

3.1.3 Water
Water quality protection was very important to those who responded to this topic. There were several recommendations that the plan should go further (i.e. water quality standards, in-depth water quality testing, a water quality management plan for the park). A number of people requested that water quality testing results be more readily available to the public.

There continues to be concern about nutrients seeping from privies, septic fields and pump-out tanks into park water bodies, either intentionally or accidentally. There was general support for mandatory use of septic holding tanks, albeit a concern raised about the possibility of people punching holes in tanks to avoid pumping them out. There was general consensus that sewage handling systems should be monitored.

The effect of nutrient loading from park-based sources on downstream water bodies was also noted as an important issue, and a commitment to minimize or eliminate nutrient loading in all water bodies within the park was requested. One respondent recommended that pesticide and fertilizer use be prohibited near lakes.

There was support for guidelines regarding the maintenance of natural water levels. One person suggested that a study be conducted to determine the cause of surface water fluctuations in recent years.

3.1.4 Fisheries
Most fishery comments concerned stocking, sport fishing and access. The importance of local fish enhancement groups in promoting sport fishing and tourism economic opportunity was also highlighted.

Many respondents felt that stocking programs in the park should be maintained and/or upgraded. There were a number of specific stocking requests (i.e. more walleye in Childs Lake, rainbow trout in East Blue Lake, walleye in West Blue Lake). Several individuals felt that stocking of streams in western areas of the park (proposed Special Management Area/Shell River area) should be permitted to provide opportunities for fly-fishing. Others supported the proposed no-stocking guidelines for these areas, as well as guidelines for new stocking initiatives.

One respondent expressed concern about the impact of stocking on native species, and another recommended that there be no new stocking of non-native species. There was also a suggestion that several "no-fishing" lakes be established to use as benchmarks for biodiversity.

The importance of continued access by ATVs and snowmobiles to remote fishing lakes was identified by a number of participants. The Pine River Road was often referenced and there were requests and offers of help to keep the road open. One person reminded us that ATV access to "pike" lakes was also important as "not everyone likes trout." There was a suggestion that a no-ATV policy in some areas would provide opportunity for a unique "walk-in with canoe" fishing experience.

The use of fish toxicants elicited a range of comments. Some supported a prohibition on fish toxicants, while others suggested that they be allowed in some areas (i.e. Two-Mile Lake). Some respondents felt that prohibiting toxicants was counterproductive to stocking efforts.

One respondent recommended that fisheries management plans be prepared to ensure that use is sustainable. There were also suggestions that the use of biodegradable fishing line be required and that netting of fish be prohibited by all park users.

3.1.5 Forestry
Forestry issues attracted many comments. The most frequently heard comment was that logging should be phased out or prohibited in the park. Some participants said they supported local, selective or small-scale logging, but not large-scale, clear-cut or foreign-owned operations. In particular, concerns were raised over harvesting near Hwy 83 and areas south of Singush Lake.

There were a number of questions about whether logging is adequately managed and/or monitored in the park. Some respondents suggested that logging should be phased out or prohibited in the park. Some participants said they supported local, selective or small-scale logging, but not large-scale, clear-cut or foreign-owned operations. In particular, concerns were raised over harvesting near Hwy 83 and areas south of Singush Lake.

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3.1 Natural Values

In this introductory section, it was suggested that the term ‘existing resource commitments’ be defined.

3.1.1 Wildlife Habitat and Special Areas

There was general agreement that the preservation of significant and unique natural features is important, and that habitat and sensitive areas in the park should be inventoried and catalogued.

The need to manage the park as part of a larger ecosystem was identified, and details on how this would be accomplished were requested. Some felt that the park’s protected areas do not encompass all of the park’s important natural features.

One participant recommended that hunting not be permitted within one kilometre of an ungulate mineral lick; another that vehicles not be permitted within 300 metres of a lick. One group recommended that the entire park be designated as a Wildlife Refuge, and several individuals suggested that Jumper Plains be designated as an area where hunting and ATV use would be prohibited. Concern was also raised about the impact of hunting and the need to monitor wildlife populations.

There were a number of comments about the impact of human activities on wildlife, such as forestry, all-terrain vehicles and excessive access. Definitions of the terms “excessive” and “excessive disturbance” were recommended by one individual for inclusion in the plan. The need to monitor the ecological status of the park was also raised, as was the need to protect habitat for small birds.

With respect to permit review, it was suggested that review standards, procedures and guidelines be quoted in the plan, and that The Environment Act requirements be referenced. The need to consult with professional biologists, ecologists and other government branches on overlapping resource issues was also noted.

3.1.2 Vegetation

Most responses to this topic supported the existing protected areas in the park, and urged the Parks and Natural Areas Branch to manage them properly. There was general support for the guideline respecting controlled burns. It was suggested that the plan be more specific about fire management and the long-term maintenance of forest age structures.

Regarding forest management in protected backcountry areas, some recommended that commercial harvest be permitted to control insects and disease, and to simulate natural disturbances. It was also suggested that forest harvest be used instead of fire for age class/forest management purposes.

The use of pesticides to maintain or enhance natural areas attracted comments that pesticides should be used sparingly and with extreme caution. One person suggested using biological controls in critical situations only. Another stated that pesticide use be subject to intense review of long-term ecological and watershed impacts.

One organization asked that the objective in this section of the plan be clarified and that there be public involvement in preparing vegetation management plans. They felt that natural values should take priority over the forest industry when dealing with natural values required and why trails were not groomed in the same manner as other parks. There was a recommendation that snowmobile trails be kept narrow so as to restrict access by trucks.

3.2 Hunting and Fishing

This topic addresses, camping by licenced big game hunters and the caching of private boats in remote areas of the park. Most of those who commented on the camping issue believed that hunters should be allowed to camp wherever they want in the park and not be restricted to designated sites. One respondent thought that hunters should be required to stay in campgrounds or lodges.

There were a few comments on boat caching. One participant stated that private boat caches should not be permitted, and referenced the problems they have created in other Manitoba parks. There was also a suggestion that limiting private boat caches would increase the use of outfitters’ boats, thus preserving the wilderness experience. One person cautioned that the identification of equipment and boat caches, as directed by the plan, would lead to increased vandalism and user conflict.

Comments on snowmobile and ATV derbies included one opinion that derbies were okay provided an officer checked the suitability of the route first, and another that both ATV and snowmobile derbies should be banned in the park.

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Several respondents opposed hunting in the park for a number of reasons. One person was concerned about personal safety when hiking during the hunting season. Another felt that the spring bear hunt resulted in wounded bears and orphaned cubs.

Near Childs/Laurie Lake area, several people commented that hunting 300 meters from the road was too close. One person suggested that a Sunday hunting ban for all hunters would improve opportunities for hikers and birdwatchers. Another said that cooperation with local hunting and fishing groups was needed to ensure sustainable use of resources.

Other hunting-related comments included views that residents should have priority over non-residents for wildlife resources, that hunting regulations are too complex, and that the harvest of immature animals should be discouraged. Two participants expressed support for designated routes as a means of preserving a high quality hunt, one requested more routes to improve access. Two participants requested more non-motorized lakes in the park.

3.2.3 Outfitting

This section applies primarily to commercial outfitters. Some of the guidelines in the draft park management plan reflected wider-ranging provincial policies that have since been adopted by Manitoba Conservation.

A number of outfitters in the Duck Mountain area expressed dissatisfaction with provincial policies, stating that a two-week time frame for erecting and removing tent camps and tree stands is unrealistic, and their ability to operate is therefore compromised. Clarification on the erection and removal of tent camps was requested.

Two outfitters suggested that a maximum size for tree stands be employed as an alternative to removing tree stands, to discourage large tree houses. One maintained that the removal of tree stands causes more environmental damage than leaving them up. One participant suggested that outfitters should be compensated for removing tree stands, and maintained that tree stand restrictions will tax enforcement officers’ time. Some eco-tourism operators indicated that tree stands are needed year-round.
The issue of backcountry camping (camping in remote areas of the park) also generated some interest. Several individuals requested clarification of the current park policy regarding backcountry camping. Some respondents believed that backcountry camping should be encouraged and not restricted to designated sites, other supported backcountry camping at designated backcountry camping sites only.

Most other campground comments involved non-management plan issues such as phone lines, campground reservation system, recycling bins, speed limits, playgrounds, offices hours etc. Concerns about flagging tape and refuse left in backcountry areas were also raised.

At Blue Lake, a phone line to provide campground reservation system and 911 emergency access was cited as necessary improvements. At Childs Lake, requests for running water (showers and modern toilets), and electricity at new campsites were recorded. Other campground requests included locking of gates at 11:00 p.m., longer campground office hours and more park patrols in peak periods.

The campground reservation system was identified as both an asset and a hindrance to campers in the Duck Mountain area. There were requests to add Blue Lake campground to the reservation system, and requests to discontinue the system in other areas.

Several commendations for well maintained campgrounds and facilities, and for friendly and supportive park attendants were received.

At Blue Lake, a researcher expressed concern over potential damage to research sample plots and rare plants in the vicinity of the proposed campground expansion.

A lesser number of Blue Lake campers said they prefer a quiet undeveloped campground and did not want electricity. One respondent suggested Singush Lake would be a suitable alternative for those who prefer a quiet, unserviced campground.

At Blue Lake, a researcher expressed concern over potential damage to research sample plots and rare plants in the vicinity of the proposed campground expansion.

At Wellman Lake, several respondents said they supported the proposed campground expansion, and a number of others expressed concern. One person feared that new campground sites would increase boat traffic and create safety issues. Another stated that the shoreline is too important to justify expansion at the current occupancy rates.

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3.2.6 Cottaging

There was general support for new cottage development on Singush and Childs Lakes and many people were anxious to learn how they could apply for a lot. There was general concurrence by most participants that there be no new development on Blue Lakes, and on currently undeveloped lakes including Laurie Lake. Two respondents identified the need for policies or controls on new cottage development. Another affirmed that the public should have input on what level of development is appropriate.

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1.3 Classification
While no comments were directed specifically at the park's Natural Park classification, there were a number of comments that the plan does not describe how the park will meet its obligation "to conserve ecosystems and maintain biodiversity". Some felt that the plan valued biodiversity behind other park uses, and that commercial extraction took priority over recreation.

1.4 Land Use Categories
There were a number of comments regarding the park boundary change that led to the designation of a protected backcountry area in 1997. Two respondents felt that the change was made to accommodate forestry interests rather than to improve the park. One suggested that the park boundary be revised to include forested areas to the south.

A land use category review was urged by one organization, with the intent of increasing protected land in the park. A number of people asked about the "donut hole" in the park (the area excluded from the park near the Sarah Lake road).

INTRODUCTION

This section includes a brief description of the park, and summarizes the park's overall purpose, classification and land use categories.

1.1 Park Description
Duck Mountain Provincial Park is an important area for many Manitobans. The park was described as a "hidden gem", undisturbed by humans, with natural beauty, wildlife diversity and recreational opportunities. Two respondents commented that society has taken much from this park, and that it is time to "give back" or protect the area.

The phrase "keep the park the way it is" was frequently heard. A number of participants reminded us that the park belongs to all Manitobans, and is worthy of a high standard of care. It was also noted that the park needs to be protected for future generations.

1.2 Park Purpose
There were a number of opinions about the Park Purpose on page 3 of the draft management plan. Several respondents suggested that the park's main purposes should be to provide natural habitat for plants and animals, and/or to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, nature appreciation and conservation.

One participant suggested that the park purpose should focus more on activities that have occurred throughout the park's history (e.g. tourism, logging, trapping, fishing, hunting, camping, cottaging, hiking, horses, all-terrain vehicle use etc.).

The park purpose statement dealing with resource extraction attracted the greatest number of comments, with many opposing commercial harvest activities or stating there is too much resource extraction in the park. A number of submissions were received in opposition to commercial resource harvest, particularly clear-cut logging and other intensive industrial activities.

There were suggestions that the terms "trail-based recreation" and "associated facilities and services" be defined, and a request that all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and snowmobiles be specifically identified as a permitted use. One person indicated that user groups should be prioritized based on their economic and recreation values, and impact on park resources.

One respondent questioned the ecological impact of additional cottages on the landscape, and another the philosophical issue of allocating parkland to private leaseholders.

It was recommended by one participant that any new cottage lots on Singush and Childs lakes be offered on a cost recovery basis and not subsidized by tax dollars or existing cottagers' investments. Others requested that guidelines be enforced to ensure that new cottages and renovations were appropriate for the park, that lake carrying capacities not be exceeded, and that large, permanent residences not be permitted.

3.2.7 Historic Sites
The most frequent comment was that more attention should be given to local history and historic sites. Some examples of sites were the 1930s workcamp site at Singush Lake, and an archaeological dig near PR 567. There was general support for the concept of walking trail or ATV trail access to historic sites.

Several respondents expressed a need to actively identify and protect historic sites in the park. Some felt that extensive archeological assessment was warranted to identify key areas. One person said that fencing to protect the Tunstell cabin/chimney site was needed. The relocation of the Manitoba Forestry Association's Interpretive Center was described as a great loss to the park. One respondent felt that historic sites should be protected, but not at the expense of other budget concerns such as enforcement.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The plan was described by a number of participants as too vague, too restrictive or too loosely written. Suggestions for improvement included the inclusion of a glossary of terms, ecotourism component, financial commitment, and related plans and strategies (e.g. wildlife and vegetation management plans). A number of people felt that too much discretion was given in the plan to the park manager.

It was generally felt that the public should work with government to ensure the health and viability of the park and surrounding area. The establishment of an advisory or stakeholder group to assist with park planning activities was suggested. One person suggested that telephone surveys could be used to find out what people want.

There were concerns that provincial Natural Resource Officers (NROs) spend too much time on forestry issues, causing them to neglect wildlife and parks issues such as open liquor, garbage, etc. More officers to enforce fishing, hunting, and boating regulations were also requested.

Skepticism about whether the information gathered at drop-in sessions would go beyond the meetings was recorded, as were concerns that some of the public meetings were conducted as presentations rather than drop-ins. A number of people expressed appreciation for the planning efforts and the opportunity to participate in management plan discussions.
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
The planning team of local park managers, resource officers and park planners are reviewing the draft management plan. Throughout this final phase, we will continue to meet with individuals, groups and organizations as needed and as requested in order to complete the plan.

Management Planning Process
Step 1 - Collect background information and select public participation methods.
Step 2 - Public review of issues (Phase 1).
Step 3 - “Report on Public Comments”.
Step 4 - Prepare draft management plan.
Step 5 - Public review of draft (Phase 2).
Step 6 - “Report on Public Comments”.
Step 7 - Revise and finalize management plan.

The planning team wishes to thank everyone who participated in the drop-ins, as well as those who provided written comments and suggestions.

INFORMATION
Further information on the Management Plan for Duck Mountain Provincial Park can be found on-line by following the Parks Planning link at http://www.manitobaparks.com, or contact:

Duck Mountain Provincial Park Management Plan
Parks and Natural Areas Branch
Box 53 - 200 Saulteaux Crescent
Winnipeg MB - R3J 3W3
Telephone: (204) 945-3697 or 1-800-214-6497 toll free
Fax: (204) 945-0012
email: mgmtplan@gov.mb.ca

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Duck Mountain Provincial Park.

Overview
The development of a management plan for Duck Mountain Provincial Park began several years ago with a series of public meetings and drop-ins. Participants were invited to comment on what they felt were important issues in the park and what needed to be considered when preparing a park management plan. The first Report on Public Comments was released in 2002.

A draft Management Plan for Duck Mountain Provincial Park was completed in 2003 and a second series of public meetings was held. This newsletter summarizes the comments received by Manitoba Parks and Natural Areas in response to the draft management plan. It includes formal written submissions, as well as notes recorded at public drop-ins and meetings.

Summary of Comments
Park management plans provide a framework for park protection and land use, and serve as a forum for addressing specific park issues. The wide range of public comments gathered for Duck Mountain Provincial Park will be used to develop a management plan that protects the park environment and reflects the values of park users. This summary does not include any recommendations from Manitoba Conservation. Topics are arranged in the order that they appeared in the draft management plan.

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Meeting Dates and Locations
Public drop-in sessions were held at Chidie, Blue and Wellman lakes on August 23rd and 24th, 2003, in Grandview and Swan River on September 23rd and 24th, and in Winnipeg on September 17th. Meetings were also held with local First Nation community leaders and a variety of stakeholders in 2004. Approximately 350 people attended the drop-in sessions and over 100 comment sheets and letters were recorded.