

Forestry and Peat Harvesting in the Roseau River Watershed

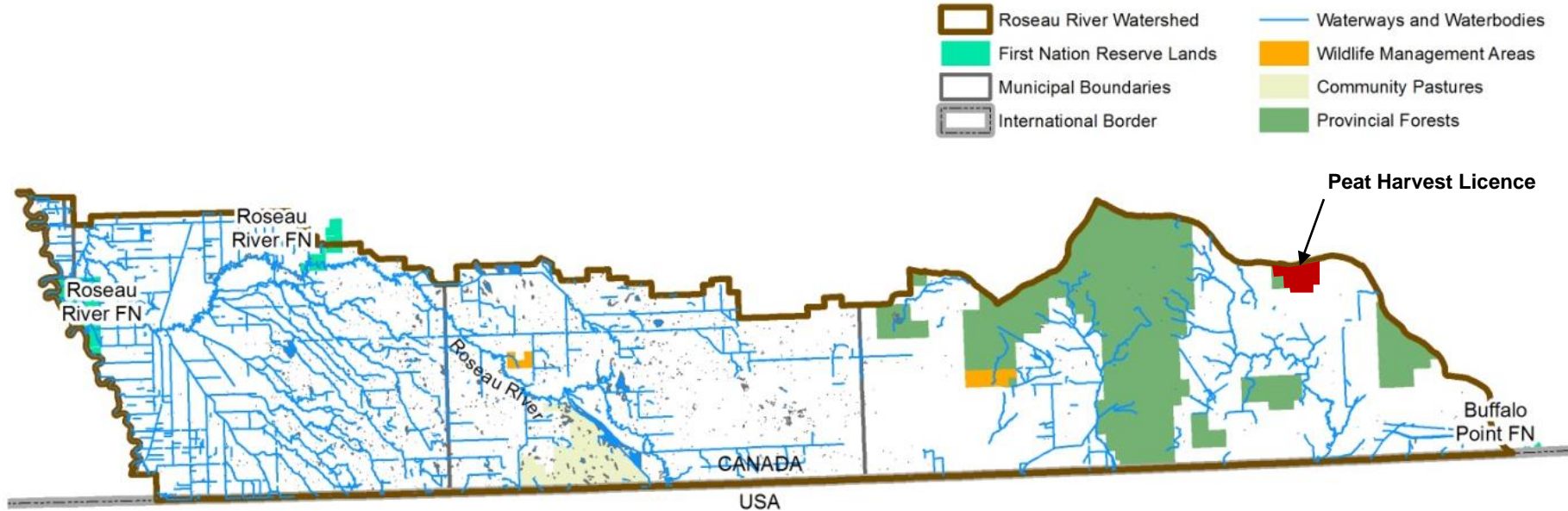
Roseau River IWMP – Watershed Team Meeting

Update from Forestry and Peatlands Management Branch
Sarah Scarlett (Peat Specialist)

September 22, 2016



Watershed Overview



Most forestry and peat harvesting activity in Management Area 1

- Noted data gap in this area
- Most comments/concerns about forest and peatland management from the RM of Piney

Primary concerns:

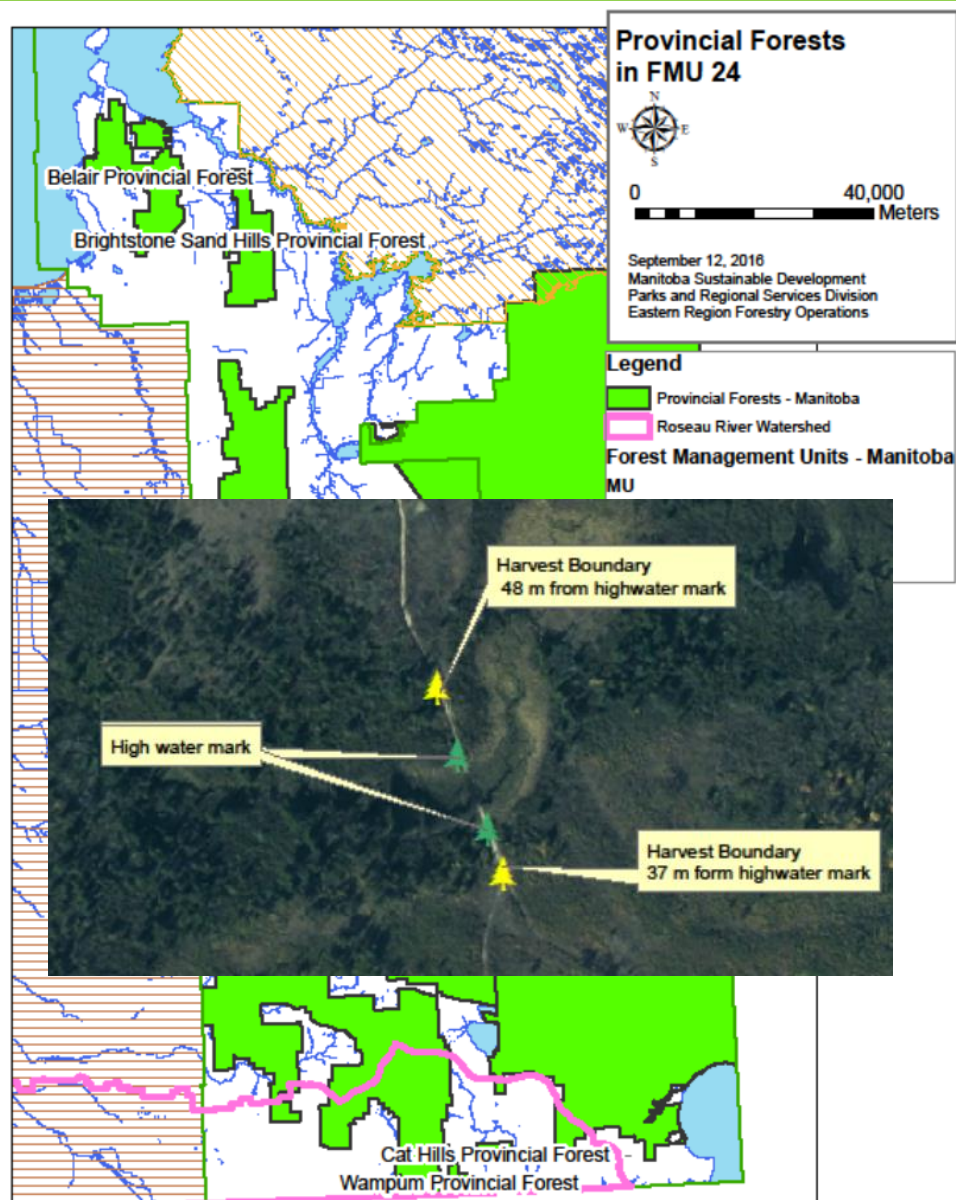
Peat Harvesting

- Water management and retention
- Water quality

Forestry

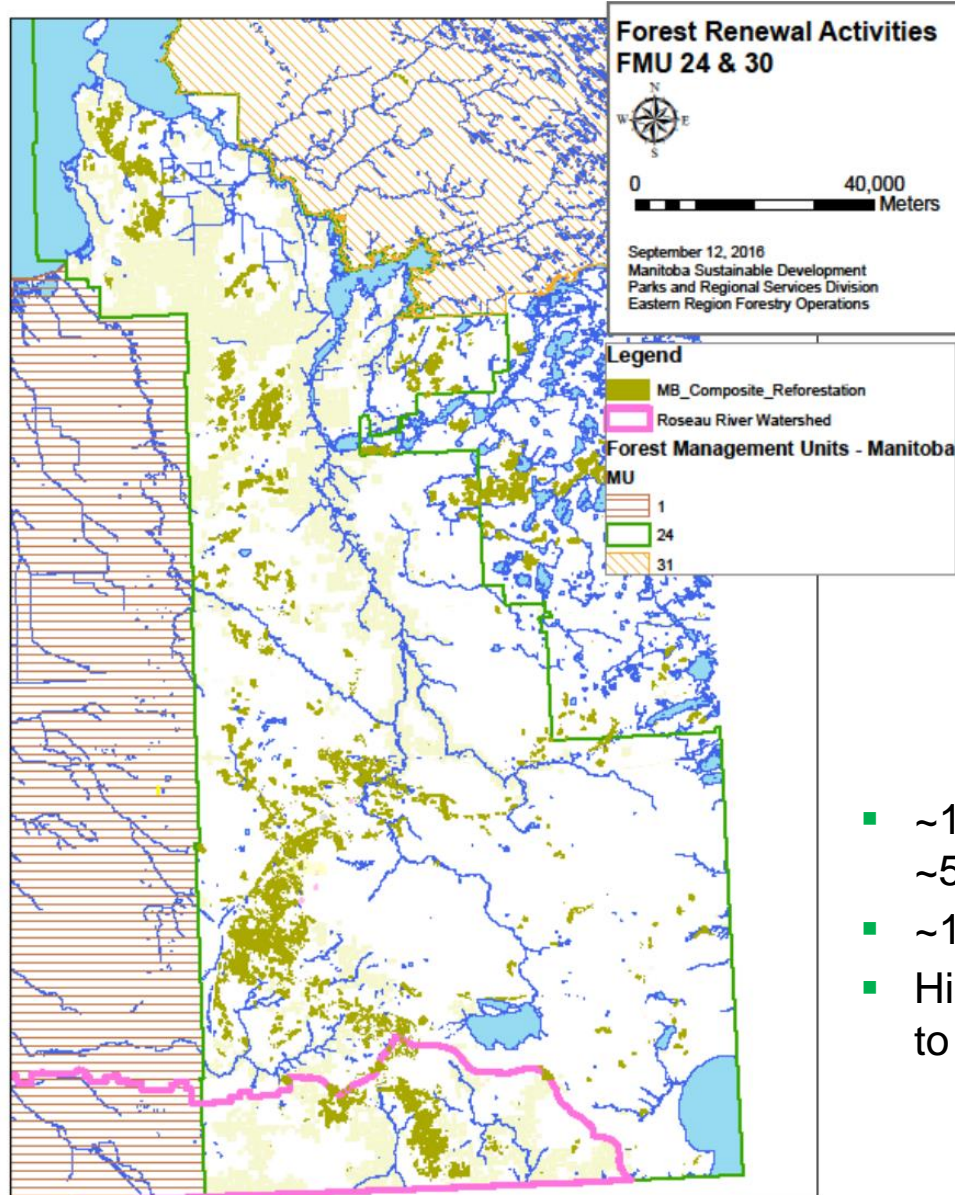
- Fire suppression practices
- Lack of reforestation on private land

Forestry: Management Scale



- 2 FMUs in Roseau River Watershed
 - FMU 1 is in Central Region
 - FMU 24 is in Eastern Region
- FMU 1 main timber removal from mineral quarries, road ways and transmission corridors
- Forestry activities in FMU 24 by timber quota holders
- Timber supply and forest management activities are planned on a FMU scale
- Models used to determine sustainable wood supply for the FMU
 - FMU 24 wood supply last published in 2009
- Provincial Forests created ~80 yrs ago for protection of long-term wood supply
 - Increased forest management in these areas
- 8 Provincial Forests in FMU 24
- 4 Provincial Forests in Roseau River Watershed
 - Sandilands
 - Northwest Angle
 - Cat Hills
 - Wampum

Forestry: Renewal



- ~1.0 to 1.5 million trees planted very year covering ~500 to 1000 ha
- ~1000 ha renewed naturally very year
- Historical records of silviculture activities date back to the early 1930's

Forestry: Challenges and Next Steps

Challenges:

- Significant fires and salvage logging (2007, 2008, 2011, 2012)
- Wind damage and salvage logging (2005, 2007, 2012)
- Pests in Jack Pine stands → salvage logging starting in 2014 and continuing today
- Recession in forest industry from 2007-2014 → many mill closures
- Agricultural flood management having negative impacts on forestry in other watersheds

Current Initiatives:

- Remaining forest industry in the region is resilient and growing
- Investments in sawmills in Southeastern Manitoba

Responses to Regional Concerns:

- **Fire suppression could result in larger fires → need for controlled burns?**

Response: Prescribed burns are usually used as a form of silvicultural renewal (burn after harvesting as a natural renewal strategy), not as fire management.

- **Lack of reforestation on private lands**

Response: The Crown does not have authority on private land. Associations, such as Manitoba Forestry Association, provide renewal service to private land owners.

Peat: The Peatlands Stewardship Act

The Peatlands Stewardship Strategy – April 2014

- Over 30% of Manitoba is covered by peatlands
- Balanced approach between conservation and responsible development
- Improved peatland management, specifically for the harvesting industry
- The Peatland Stewardship Act was an outcome of the strategy



The Peatlands Stewardship Act – June 2015

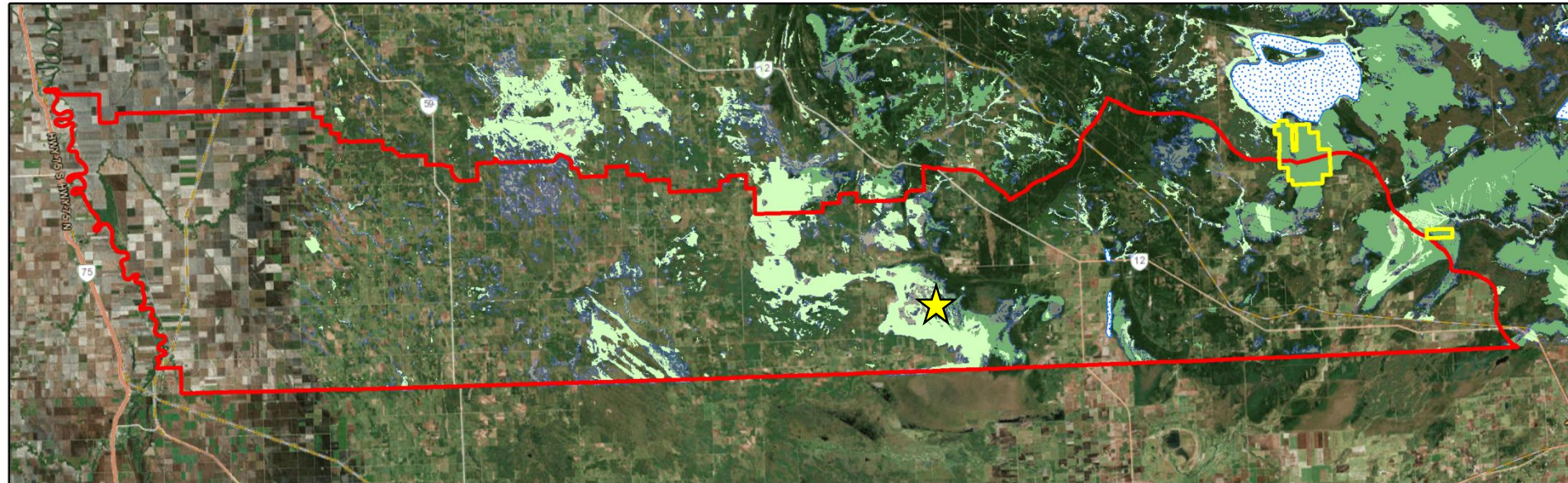
- Canada's first stand-alone peatlands legislation
- Transferred resource management from Mines and Mineral Resources to Forestry and Peatlands Management
- Reduced 190 peat quarry leases to 22 peat harvest licence – pending quarry leases were cancelled
- The Peatland Practices Committee mandate to develop best-management-practices for harvesting
- Act is partially proclaimed – no new licences can be applied for until full proclamation

Peat: What is Peat Harvesting?

- Peatlands have >40 cm of peat
 - Two types → fens and bogs
 - Some bogs in Manitoba have >5 m of peat
- Peat is formed from partially decomposed plant material
 - Sphagnum moss (peat moss) or sedge plants
- Peatlands take 1000s of years to form (<1 cm of peat a year)
- Two types of peat industries → sphagnum and sedge
- Peatlands used for harvesting typically have >2 m of peat (less for sedge operations)
- Surface vegetation (plants, timber, etc.) are removed and ditches are dug to drain the peatland
- Peat operation lifespan up to 50+ years
 - Vacuum harvesters only remove a few millimeters of dry peat in one pass
- In Canada and the US, peat is primarily used in horticulture as a growing media or soil additive

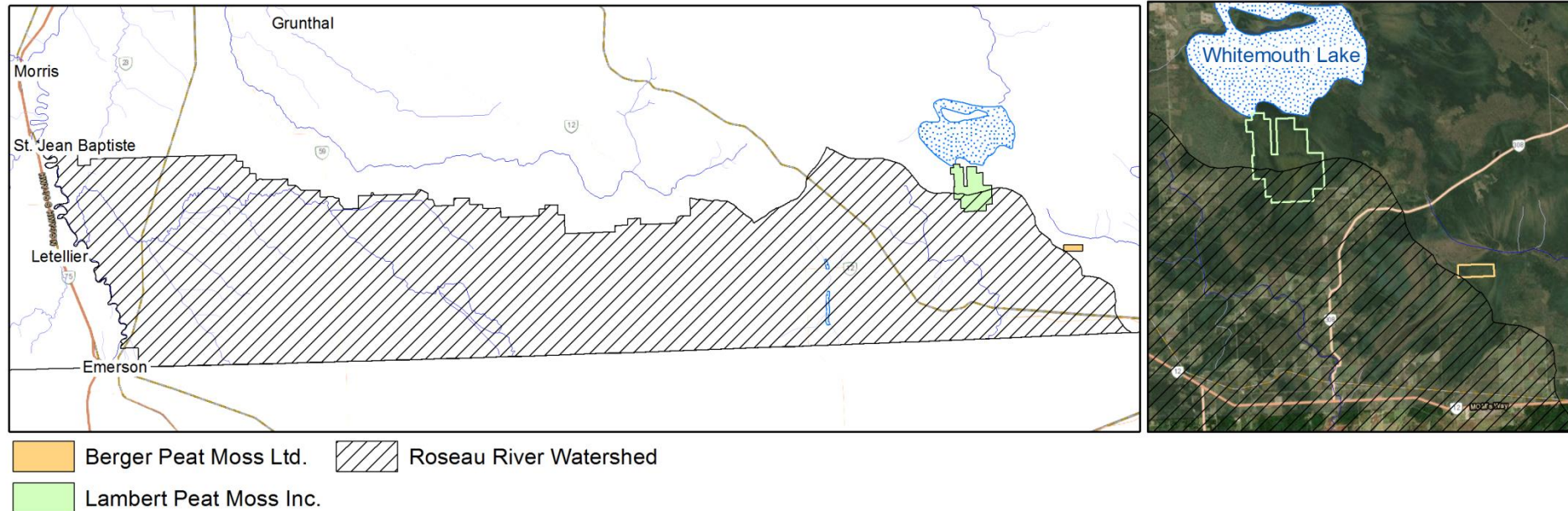


Peat: Peatlands in the Watershed



- Most peatlands (specifically bogs) are in the eastern region of the watershed
 - Management Area 1 (RM of Piney)
 - RRWP noted less data for this area and further research is needed
- Highlighted Sundown Bog (star) → concerns about future harvesting interests
 - Small bog in a marsh/fen complex, likely not an ideal harvesting location

Peat: Harvesting Operations



- Two sphagnum peat harvest operations in or in proximity to Roseau River watershed
 - Lambert Peat Moss licence partly in the watershed → ~1000 ha of total 2220 ha
 - Berger Peat Moss licence adjacent to watershed → may expand into watershed
 - Neither licence is currently active
- No plans to develop in other regions of the watershed at this time
 - Likely no sphagnum peat interests in other areas of the watershed (not many bogs)
 - Sedge peat is abundant in other areas (fens), but far away from main markets (Winnipeg)

Peat: Challenges and Next Steps

Challenges:

- Peat harvesting is new to the Roseau River watershed
 - Specific impacts to the watershed currently unknown
 - Better understanding when harvesting management and recovery plans are reviewed
- Loss of wetlands impacts landscape water retention and flood/drought management capabilities

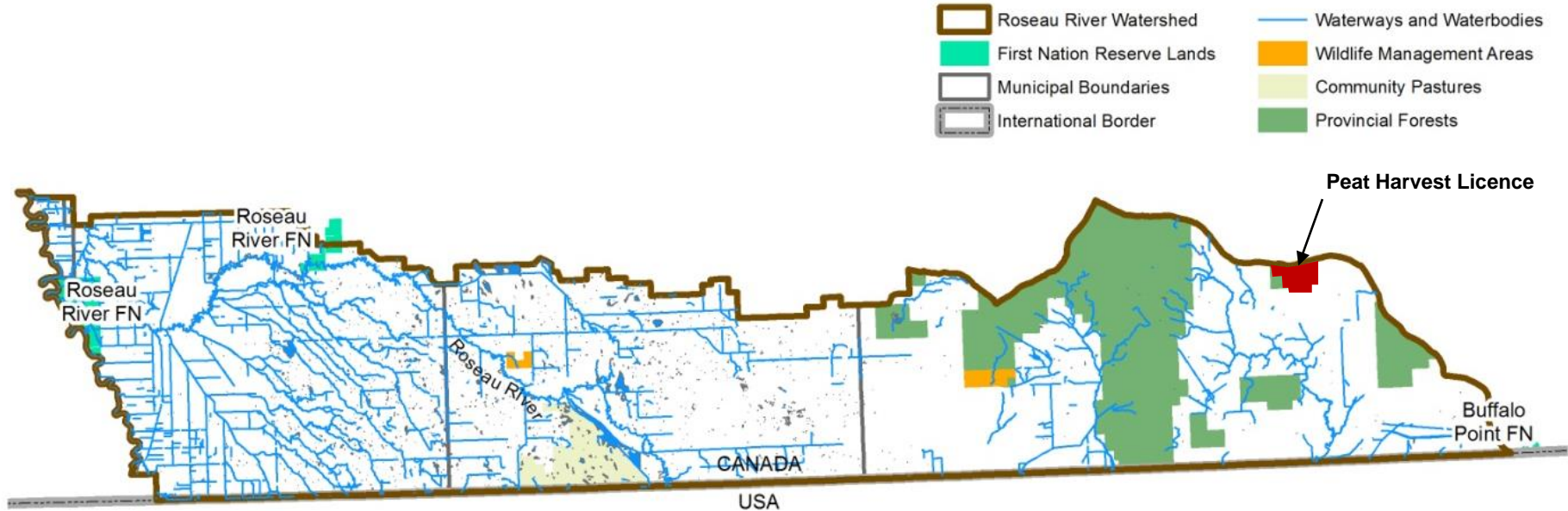
Current Initiatives:

- Writing guidelines for Peatland Management and Recovery Plans
 - Each licensee must submit these plans prior to harvesting
 - Plans will include impacts to the peatland and surrounding area, as well as mitigation and recovery strategies
- Continued research in Manitoba on peatland recovery post-harvesting
- Licensees provide financial security for any disturbed areas → commitment to recovery

Responses to Regional Concerns:

- **Impacts of harvesting on water management and quality**
- **Protection of wetlands for wildlife and biodiversity conservation**
- **Improved wetland inventory (particularly in Management Area 1)**

Any Questions?



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Forestry

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