

Ron Thiessen
Executive Director
CPAWS Manitoba

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Dear MLA,

Please accept our warm congratulations on your recent election success and our best wishes as you prepare to take up the responsibilities and challenges of the upcoming legislative term.

Nature provides every Manitoban with priceless services that are crucial to our health and underpin the stability of our economy.

Forests and wetlands clean the air we breathe and the water we drink, while protecting our farms and our homes from floods and droughts.

We urge you to work cooperatively to advance Manitoba's commitment to protect 30% of Manitoba's lands and waters by 2030.

Manitobans are counting on you to make sure we hit that ambitious target.

Conserving 30% of Manitoba's lands and waters will help curb the impacts of climate change, protect wildlife, and advance reconciliation by supporting Indigenous stewardship.

We Can Get to 30% by 2030 if We Act Quickly

We can get to 30% protected by 2030 if we act quickly and decisively. A lot of the work is already well underway.

There are at least **eight Indigenous-led conservation initiatives in Manitoba which collectively aim to protect tens of thousands of square kilometres** (up to 18% of Manitoba.) Securing these lands for nature, culture, and community-driven economic growth is a key piece in advancing reconciliation.

The previous NDP government identified Areas of Special Interest for conservation. There are 120 of these areas which have not yet been protected and which total nearly 74,000 square kilometres (11.4% of Manitoba).

Manitoba currently protects 71,561 square kilometres.. That's 11% of our province. **We will get to 30% by 2030 if the government takes swift and decisive action.**

That's why **CPAWS Manitoba will help the government develop an actionable plan to achieve its conservation targets** so Manitoba can continue to reap the many economic, health and social benefits of nature.

It's going to take a lot of work to meet this ambitious target. So efforts need to begin immediately.

We are asking the government to establish a 30% by 2030 conservation task force that includes Indigenous leaders, conservation groups, and stakeholders by January 2024.

Manitobans Care About Nature

Our supporters have signed over **31,000 postcards** and sent nearly **26,000 emails** since 2019 urging the provincial government **to protect Manitoba's lands and waters for future generations of people and wildlife.**

Some 83% of Manitobans told Probe Research in June that they want to see protected areas in our province increase from the current 11.1% to 30% by 2030. Only 9% of respondents said they oppose the move, while 8% had not yet formed an opinion.

About CPAWS Manitoba

CPAWS Manitoba has helped establish **23 parks and protected areas** in our province: an area larger than Lake Winnipeg at nearly 26,000 square kilometres. We are currently working on four major campaigns that could triple protected areas in Manitoba.

Protect 30% of Manitoba by 2030: We are calling for swift and decisive action to ensure the government is able to achieve its ambitious target of protecting 30% of our province by 2030.

Seal River Watershed: Four First Nations are working together to preserve one of the last great wild spaces on our planet: a whopping 50,000 square kilometres of pristine wilderness in northern Manitoba.

Protect Polar Bear Habitat: First Nations are working to conserve Manitoba's Hudson Bay Lowlands. That would protect key habitats so mother bears have a safe space to raise their young.

Conserve the Interlake: We need a plan to preserve nature while supporting sustainable development in one of Manitoba's top tourist destinations: the southeastern Interlake.

Connecting People to Nature

CPAWS Manitoba is also committed to connecting people to nature. We've developed a wide range of activities and programming to help Manitobans of all ages and abilities enjoy the health and wellness benefits of nature.

More than **18,000 people** have registered for our group hikes, paddle nights, classes and webinars since we launched the Nature Club in 2020.

More than **13,000 children and students** were connected to nature through over 750 CPAWS Manitoba outdoor education workshops and activities from May 2021 to August 2023.

We hope you will join us at one of our upcoming events. It's a great opportunity to connect with your fellow Manitobans and to get a breath of fresh air.

We look forward to working with you to achieve the ambitious and critical goal of protecting 30% of Manitoba by 2030.

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like additional information.

All the best,



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p.s. We hope you will share this caribou stuffie with a child in your life. Or perhaps, like me, you'll keep it in your office as a reminder of why we do the work we do: to make Manitoba a better place for future generations of people and wildlife

p.p.s. Please watch your inbox for an electronic version of this letter that includes relevant links.