

MANITOBA'S

Heart of the Boreal



Will Canada's Largest Intact Forest
Save Lake Winnipeg?

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF SWIMMING IN VAST WATER

and making sand castles on long breezy beaches of Lake Winnipeg warm my heart. I remember exuberantly jumping into waves during the day and sitting motionless in tranquil evening shallows with the sun floating gently down into the horizon. Now my daughter and I venture to the Lake every summer. I share my stories and embrace her discovering it. It's a pleasure to see so many Manitobans enamored with our province's great lake and its natural surroundings. There's no doubt that we love our spectacular wilderness backyard.

In a tug-of-war with our appreciation are the countless news stories and reports about the imperiled state of Manitoba's grandest water body. The fact that she is so sick makes my heart hurt. In 2006, algae blooms covered almost the entire surface of the Lake because of excess nutrients. This green-blue cover now occurs every summer largely due to fertilizers combined with human and animal waste entering from the south and west.

In the late 70s, while I was sporting my new snorkel and imagining my swim goggles as fish eyes, I recall no talk about Lake Winnipeg being in trouble. Very few people knew her health was declining so rapidly. How many of us could have guessed that thirty-some years later our treasured lake would be in danger of becoming unusable for our children, our grandchildren, and future generations?

The great news is that we can fix this.

Big Wilderness Lifeblood

A little known fact is that the huge and healthy Boreal wilderness on Lake Winnipeg's east side is a significant part of the cure. It's imperative that we protect the wildlands and numerous clean rivers of the region that nourish her. These precious lifelines greatly help to offset the crippling intake of pollutants that are largely responsible for her distressed state. Preserving the east side's wilderness, the largest intact Boreal forest region in North America, along with strong measures to reduce Lake Winnipeg's intake of nutrients and contaminants, is required to restore our beloved inland ocean.

Large-scale industrial developments and their multiple access routes would irreparably damage the landscape and its ability to serve Lake Winnipeg. That is a major reason CPAWS is working with all involved to ensure that the majority of the east side is set aside in large interconnected protected areas.

Thankfully there is a lot being done right now to protect these vast wild lands and waters and we can all be a part of it. It's our moment to make this Manitoba story one that leads to future generations creating new memories such as long beach walks on the shores of a clean and healthy Lake Winnipeg.

Please see the bottom of the back page to discover how to help save Lake Winnipeg and its east side wilderness.

– Ron Thiessen, Executive Director of CPAWS Manitoba chapter



Our Elders told us a long time ago that we need to work together to take care of this land for people who live on the land and for people who want to visit it and breath it's fresh air and drink from it's clean lakes and rivers.

We also know that when we work together to take care of the land we are doing it for our children here and children half way across the world who will benefit from things that are often unseen like clean air carried by the wind.

– Sophia Rabliauskas, Community Coordinator, Pimachiowin Aki



In terms of protection, management is the key word from a First Nations perspective. We want to establish economic opportunities, eco-tourism opportunities, sustainable opportunities for the membership here at the community level.

– William Young, owner/operator, Bloodvein River Lodge

LAW OF THE LAND

THERE IS LEGISLATION IN MANITOBA that provides communities in the east side planning area (see map on back page) with the option to establish legal protection of their traditional lands. More than 10,000 square km – an area more than 25 times the size of Winnipeg - of intact boreal forest, lakes, and rivers have already been permanently protected from industrial developments since the *East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act* was introduced.

It's all part of the Wabanong Nakaygum Okimawin (WNO), which means "East Side of the Lake Governance" in Cree and Ojibwe. The purpose of the planning initiative for the 82,000 square km area is "to bring together local communities, First Nations, industry, and environmental organizations to develop a vision for land and resource use in the area that respects both the value of the boreal forest and the needs of local communities." CPAWS is pleased to support this "communities and conservation first" approach.

ABOUT THE BOREAL . . .

- The Boreal has an estimated 1.5 million lakes. **The rivers on the east side of Manitoba provide clean and healthy water to Lake Winnipeg**, one of Canada's largest Boreal lakes.
- A mosaic of **interconnected wild lands and waters blooming with wildlife** such as songbirds, eagles, owls, moose, and woodland caribou. Dominant tree species are birch, poplar, pine and spruce.
- The **world's largest source of fresh water** and the northern lungs of the planet.
- A land sprinkled with modern day **communities in which many still honour ancient and traditional practices and teachings**.
- The ecological services such as **clean water and oxygen production** have an estimated \$700 billion annual value.
- Its trees and soils are estimated to **store 26 years of global carbon emissions from fossil fuel burning** and stores the largest amount of soil carbon on the planet. **This helps greatly in the fight against climate change.**
- Home to more than **600 First Nation Communities**.
- Up to **5 billion birds breed** in Canada's Boreal Region.
- Only **10% is protected while 30% is designated for development**. Scientists from all over the globe are saying that **we need to protect 50% or more of the Boreal** from industrial developments for it to remain a fully-functioning ecosystem.



 **CPAWS**
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY
MANITOBA CHAPTER

Through a citizen outreach campaign, the Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society (CPAWS) has educated and inspired tens of thousands of Manitobans to voice their support to government for community-led large-scale Boreal protection and a World Heritage Site on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.



East Side World Heritage Site

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR MANITOBA TREASURE WILL BENEFIT US ALL

ANCIENT ABORIGINAL TRADITIONS, rushing rivers, expansive wild forests, and the elusive woodland caribou all braid through the east side of Lake Winnipeg's elaborate cultural and ecological fabric. It's an amazing place to experience! Eco- and cultural tourism are growing industries and the region is well-positioned to develop sustainable economies based on maintaining a healthy, fully-functioning eco-system.

Five First Nations in the region, with the support of the Manitoba government and environmental groups, are unified in an effort to establish linked protected

areas and a 33,000 square kilometer boreal World Heritage Site (that's larger than Vancouver Island!). This prestigious international designation will be a huge launching pad for the development of local businesses, sustainable growth of the Manitoba economy, and environmental protection. This benefits us all.

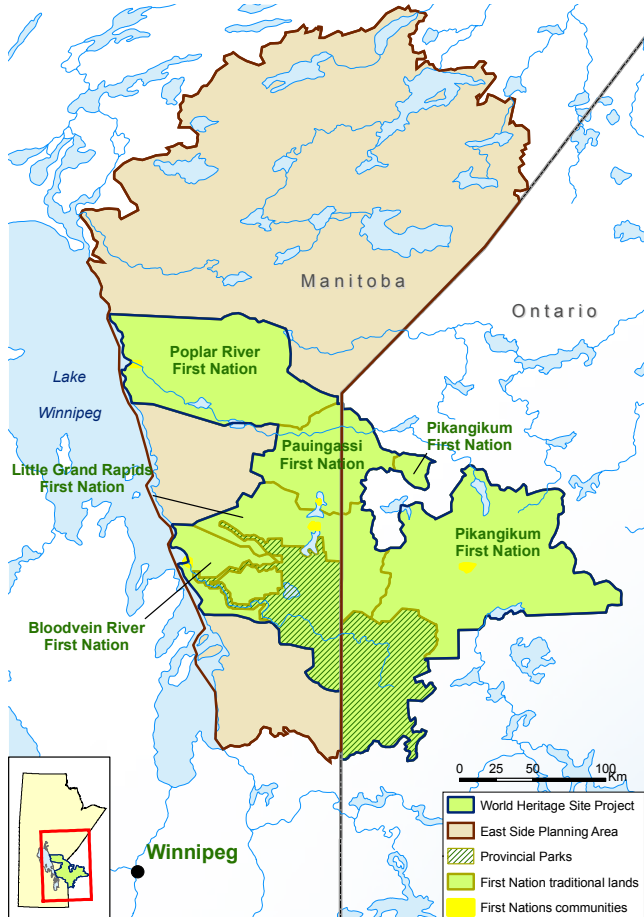
Home to a host of modern day communities that honour traditional practices and teachings, the east side region is ripe to become a desirable destination for people from all over the world. Birdwatching, white-water canoe adventuring, staying in a tipi, and the incredible feeling of being in the largest, most intact wilderness in North America are just a few examples of what the region has to offer.

The value of World Heritage Site status is that it will highlight our province to people from all over the globe – a tremendous international tourism advantage for us. The area will be showcased along with World Heritage Sites such as the Egyptian pyramids and Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

The proposed World Heritage Site area is called Pimachiowin Aki (pronounced 'Pim-MATCH-cho-win Ahh-KEY') which is Ojibwe for "the land that gives life." Considering the Boreal region is the world's largest source of fresh water, the northern lungs of the planet, gives clean water to Lake Winnipeg, and provides sustenance for many local First Nations, this title couldn't be more accurate.

There's more to do to protect the east side's natural environment, cultural integrity, and benefits for humanity and wildlife. Your support for Pimachiowin Aki is greatly needed to ensure the dream is realized.

See the form to the right to find out how you can be part of creating Manitoba history.



LINKS OF INTEREST

Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society (CPAWS) – Manitoba chapter
www.cpawsemb.org

Pimachiowin Aki
www.pimachiowinaki.org/

Wabanong Nakaygum Okimawin (WNO)
www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wno/

Credits:

Written by: Ron Thiessen
Edited by: Kerry Ryan, Chanda Hunnie
Designed by: simplelifedesigns.com
All nature photos: Chanda Hunnie, Ron Thiessen
CPAWS Manitoba, 2012



CPAWS – Manitoba Chapter

3rd floor – 303 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3G 3C2
204-949-0782
www.cpawsemb.org

For free distribution.

Printed in Canada on
Envirographic 100 paper
100 % Post Consumer Waste
100 % Processed Chlorine-Free
and Acid-Free

This publication was supported by grants from:

The McLean Foundation



Special thanks to Sophia Rabliauskas for reviewing before publication.

YOU WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY HELPING TO:

- Safeguard and celebrate the cultural landscape and boreal forest as one living system
- Ensure the well being of its natural environment, including plant life and wildlife
- Preserve the traditions and support the vision of those who live here
- Provide a benefit for the enjoyment of all humanity for generations

DONATE ONLINE
www.landthatgiveslife.com/donate-now/

BY TELEPHONE
204.275.1564

BY CHEQUE
Please make cheques payable to:
Pimachiowin Aki Corporation

BY MAIL
Campaign for the Land that Gives Life
P.O. Box 2818, Winnipeg, MB,
Canada R3C 4B4

- Yes, I want to join CPAWS' email action alert list.
- Yes, Sign me up for Pimachiowin Aki's email list.

YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS:

Charitable Registration No. – 842713125RR0001