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Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park Management & Development Plan

Prepared by:
Park Management Services
September 2014



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Approval Form

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park

The *Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park Management & Development Plan (2014)* is hereby approved for use by the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport in the management and development of Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park.

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Foreword

Park management strategies are established to enable the continuing evolution of a park's management and development in response to the public's needs and in ensuring the park is fulfilling its legislated mandate. The planning process engages the public and the park's stakeholders to ensure that the plan captures the current and future needs in a balanced and responsible approach. A management plan ensures consistent and accountable leadership, management and operations toward achieving the park's ongoing goals and direction.

The Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, is responsible for the management of Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park (SLPP). This park management & development plan is an integrated planning strategy which will direct the operation, management and development of this park.

The primary objectives of this strategy are:

- to identify and enact the resource management priorities that will preserve the unique flora, fauna, natural heritage and landscapes of this river valley ecosystem for future generations;
- to encourage learning of the natural and cultural heritage of the park;
- to identify opportunities to promote and increase recreation activities that sustainably utilize the natural features of this park;
- to improve the quality of existing services and facilities while offering a range of experiences; and
- to establish management and development direction, identifying appropriate development areas and guidelines.

Acknowledgements

Several individuals contributed time and knowledge to the development of the park management & development plan. Of special note are the following:

Erin Saunders
Bob Wilson
Chris Potter
Jim Nick
Rob Wright
Joe Milligan
Saskatchewan Parks Division
SLPP Park Advisory Group

We would also like to extend special thanks to O2 Planning + Design for their work on the sub-zoning and development priorities.

Dominique Clincke, Park Planner
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Executive Summary

The *Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park Management and Development Plan* establishes the appropriate levels of use and development using a long-term vision with management objectives – providing a balanced plan that meets today's needs while preserving the natural environment for the enjoyment of future generations. The planning process researches the current state of the park and related concerns or issues, reviews the success of the previous management plan, and establishes the scope for the new plan. A planning and design firm was engaged to provide background support for the zoning and development opportunities. Workshops with the Park Advisory Group clarified issues, long-range goals and development priorities. An upcoming formal review period will allow broad public, First Nations and Métis engagement and feedback on this plan. The *2012 Saskatchewan Provincial Parks Camper Survey* provided an extensive overview of visitor concerns and expectations. Stakeholder, public, First Nations and Métis involvement is an important part of the present and future planning process to ensure this plan is practical, desirable and achievable. The plan will exist as a “living” document, to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park (with an area of 5,534 ha) is significant for its combination of geological, palaeontological, archaeological and ecological features. The park was first designated in 1973 as a result of the Lake Diefenbaker reservoir creation and under the authority of *The Parks Act* as a provincial park and was later listed as a Natural Environment Park. The purpose of the designation was to ensure the long-term sustainability of the park's natural and prehistoric resources while supporting the pursuit of outdoor recreation that is consistent with the protection of natural landscapes. This plan upholds those intentions and follows the themes of protection, recreation and education that are established in the *Saskatchewan Parks System Plan*.

The rich geologic and palaeontologic history of Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park makes it unique among Saskatchewan's parks. As part of the mixed-grass eco-region, it is the largest area of undisturbed native prairie in the provincial parks system. The area was heavily shaped by glacial movement, which left exposed till and bedrock and created rugged valleys. Many of the alluvial fans, or terraces, created at the mouths of the coulees are now inundated by the lake, which plays its own part in the ecological cycle. Fossils date back 70 to 140 million years and are occasionally found along the shorelines. In terms of recent history, the park has a fascinating First Nations and Métis-settlement history; a few of the archaeological sites are interpreted and others are protected or yet to be discovered.

Lake Diefenbaker is a popular recreation lake, known for its water-based activities such as fishing, boating and sailing. At nearly 240 kilometers in length, the lake is one of the largest in Saskatchewan. The lake supports a wide range of recreational and tourism attractions, including 3 provincial parks, 1 provincial recreation site, 5 regional parks, 1 private campground, 6 cottage subdivisions, 4 grass green golf courses, 3 marinas and 5 boat launches. Considered the western gateway to the lake, Saskatchewan Landing hosts a large camping program of approximately 313 camp sites along with numerous private partnerships that enhance the recreational and tourism attractions.

The educational component of the park bridges the recreational needs with the nature and heritage protection. There are several interpretive hiking trails, an interpretive visitor centre and summer programming that bring the history of the park and area to life for the park visitors. Many visitors prefer to create their own form of nature appreciation through individual exploration or study. It is this diverse range of geologic, palaeontologic, archaeological and ecologic features that creates the uniqueness of Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park.

Working through the planning process a vision statement and objectives were developed as a means of creating a cohesive long-range plan to guide the future growth and management of the park toward its desired future state.

The Vision:

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park will provide a safe, secure and relaxing environment for all visitors to rediscover nature and reconnect with family and friends through experiences with the four elements - earth, fire, wind and water.

Identification of the future needs, as well as current issues and concerns, within a framework of key objectives forms the basis of the action items necessary to achieve the vision and future state. The key objectives of this plan fall within five areas: Protection, Education, Recreation, Service and Operations, and Zoning. Planning analysis, camper surveys, advisory group workshops and public feedback all contribute to determining the concerns and desires for the park management and development. Those items are collected and reviewed within the objectives and then prioritized into definable action items or major project initiatives.

Through the initial scoping of this plan, it was recognized that improved park zoning could more accurately define the geographic limitations of the park and the need to manage development or intensification in an environmentally responsible and financially sustainable manner. A planning and design consultant was engaged to assist with the zoning review and preparation as well as provide guidance on the project initiatives. An ecologically-based, quantifiable method, the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum allowed an objective mapping of the park's diversity of recreation and tourism settings. Sub-zoning parameters were then established based on a spectrum of recreation opportunities and constraining features. A new and more detailed zoning plan is proposed as part of this plan. Key changes to the major land use zones include: one area (162 ha) changing from Development Zone to Resource Management; one area (310 ha) changing from Natural Zone to Resource Management; one area (38 ha) changing from Development Zone to Natural; and a fourth area (16 ha) from Natural to Development.

The final section of this plan brings together the action items in a way that is within the vision and objectives, prioritized to keep a logical order based on available or planned servicing/infrastructure and wider issues or evolving trends. Major priorities focus on improving existing services and infrastructure to better meet visitors' expectations; enhancing and making better use of existing, underutilized areas; and expanding upon the number of recreational activities available. Many of the action items will also help to meet Saskatchewan's changing population. Some of the first steps are geared toward gaining a better understanding of the site history, archaeology and palaeontology to help create an interpretation strategy and better define some of the recreation and partnership opportunities.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the key stages of the plan process from Vision to Objectives to Implementation.

Park Vision

Park Roles
 Defining the roles that the park serves within the overall park system and to its visitors.

Park Values
 Defining the culture and identity of the park
 - What value does the park hold for its visitors?

Theme Objectives

Protection	Education	Recreation	Service & Operations	Zoning
To identify and to enact the resource management priorities that will preserve the unique flora, fauna natural heritage and landscapes of this river valley ecosystem for future generations.	To encourage learning of the natural and cultural heritage of the park.	To identify opportunities to promote and increase recreation activities that sustainably utilize the natural features of this park.	To improve the quality of existing services and facilities while offering a range of experiences.	To establish management and direction, identifying appropriate development areas and guidelines.

Implementation Strategies

2 yrs ⇒	5 yrs ⇒	10 yrs ⇒	15 yrs ⇒
A. Immediate Priorities A.1 Addressing Amenity Gaps			
B. Near Term Priorities B.1 Making Better Use of Existing Spaces B.2 Understanding Our Assets and Our Needs			
C. Mid-Term Priorities C.1 Building for New Experiences C.2 Expanding Visitation and Promotion C.3 Updating the Interpretive Strategy			
D. Long Term Priorities D.1 Managing Vegetation Health			
E. Ongoing Priorities E.1 Continual Improvement			

Figure 1: Management and Development Plan Relationship Diagram

In total, there are 8 key strategies identified. These cover capital initiatives, operating improvements, suggestions for outside agencies and opportunities for private partnerships. The implementation period of the plan is phased in sequence and will take 15 years to complete, depending on budget allocation, resources and private partnerships. The major project initiatives include:

- Group Campground Revitalization
- Campground Beach Area Improvements
- Day-Use Area Revitalization
- New Shoreline Trail System
- New Visitor and Administration Building
- Campground Expansion around Nighthawk and Riverside Campgrounds

The *Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park Management and Development Plan* maintains a balance between recreational needs and ecosystem protection. It recognizes there is a shared interest and a balance between the short-term recreational needs of its visitors and the long-term eco-system protection necessary to maintain the health and integrity of the landscape. This plan is a fluid and dynamic document that provides guidance toward a long-term vision. Lastly, it is intended that this plan be reviewed and adjusted to reflect changing needs, trends and priorities.

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1 Background

1.1 Management Plan Purpose

Since its inception, Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park has been a popular destination point. The *1990 Management Plan* guided some major developments, enabling the park to become what it is today. As lifestyles, preferences and conditions change, there is a need for the park to evolve and adapt to those changes to stay attractive and functional.

The purpose of this plan is to guide the management and development of Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park.

This plan:

- Articulates the key features and values of the park;
- Identifies the types and levels of management activities;
- Determines the appropriate levels of use and development;
- Clearly establishes the long-term vision and management objectives; and,
- Responds to current and predicted future threats and opportunities by defining a set of management strategies.

This plan is structured to first provide some history, background and context to the park and the relevant planning framework. An overview of the successes of the previous management plan and the current state of the park help to understand the potential or realities of management plans and establishes a base-line condition for initial planning and future evaluation. A comprehensive review of the current needs, issues and opportunities presented within the framework of the park system objectives provides a long-term view of the park development. Viewed within the context of the park purpose, vision and practical realities priorities can be established and advanced for budget and implementation planning. Finally, a status and reporting structure will ensure the accountability of this plan to the stakeholders and the citizens of Saskatchewan.

This plan is a living document that should be reviewed, as conditions change, to ensure that it is current and relevant, and adjusted to reflect new information, changing trends, budget limitations or new policies or priorities.

1.2 Planning Process

The planning process starts with reviewing the current state of the park, the impacts of previous efforts, customer needs and satisfaction, and having a clear understanding of the park's core function. Preparation of a vision statement helps to guide the goals and direction of the changes that might be needed. Customer involvement throughout the process ensures that the recommendations are practical, desirable, and agreeable.

The Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park Management and Development Plan begins with an overview of the park's infrastructure and operations as well as understanding its natural and cultural heritage. Recent camper surveys and focus groups provided insight into customer satisfaction and expectations. Other stakeholder consultation with Government Ministries, Agencies, the Park Advisory Group and First Nations and Métis groups will help to provide in-depth knowledge of user needs, preferences and limitations.

Knowing that Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park has a diverse mix of land uses and interests, a consulting firm was engaged, through a competitive process, to provide background support, sub-zoning definition and

development priorities. Through their process, O2 Planning and Design consulted with the Park Advisory Group and incorporated the priorities of the group. Their reports are attached in the appendices of this plan.

The breadth of involvement in the planning process provides transparency, thoroughness and public awareness of this plan and its intention.

1.2.1 Public Involvement and Review

Public involvement comes from a range of sources – informally through communications with Parks staff and more formally through camper surveys and responses to this plan.

The *2012 Saskatchewan Provincial Park Camper Survey* (Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport 2013) compiled responses from campers, province-wide, to gain insight into camper expectations and preferences. Responses were, in part, collated and reviewed based on the destination park. Those results were considered in the plan review and objectives.

Verification and refinement of this plan will also be gained through a public feedback process, whereby this plan is made available on the Ministry’s website for review and feedback. Notification of this process will be made by public service announcements and through known park user email distribution.

This section is to be completed following the review process.

1.2.2 Park Advisory Group

The Park Advisory Group is considered to be one of the prime sources of input into the park management and development plan. The group represents all of the major user groups and meets on a regular basis to discuss ongoing park operations and management. Specific management and development plan meetings with the Park Advisory Group allowed for discussion and verification of the vision, objectives and development priorities (September 7, 2012 and October 4, 2012).

The group representation comprised the following groups:

- Cattle Grazers
- Commercial Lessees
- Overnight/Group Campers
- RM of Lacadena
- RM of Saskatchewan Landing
- Saskatchewan Landing Boaters Association
- Saskatchewan Landing Cottage Owners Association
- Seasonal Campers
- Southwest Naturalists
- Topline Trail Riders/Equestrian Camping
- Tourism Swift Current
- Town of Kyle
- Town of Stewart Valley



A Park Advisory Group workshop helped establish action items and priorities.

The Park Advisory Group will also be asked to provide comment on the draft plan, in conjunction with the public feedback process.

This section is to be completed following the review process.

1.2.3 First Nations and Métis

First Nations and Métis consultation will occur in conjunction with the public feedback process. The site's rich First Nations and Métis history presents opportunities to further refine and improve the park's educational program and partnerships.

This section is to be completed following the review process.

1.3 Park Values and Roles

1.3.1 Significance and Roles

Park Land Designation

The Parks Act provides the over-riding legislation for the establishment, maintenance and use of provincial parks. The dedication of park land is defined as follows:

3(1) Park land is dedicated to the people of Saskatchewan and visitors to Saskatchewan for their enjoyment and education.

(2) The natural, prehistoric and historic resources of park land are to be maintained for the benefit of future generations.

Park land may be dedicated in one of five ways: provincial parks, protected areas, recreation sites, historic sites and provincial markers. *The Parks Act* further delineates four types of provincial parks: historic parks, recreation parks, natural environment parks and wilderness parks. As a natural environment park, the primary use of Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is legislated by *The Parks Act*, described as:

4(4) The provincial parks described in Part C of Schedule I are designated as natural environment parks and are to be used primarily for the pursuit of outdoor recreational activities that are consistent with the protection of natural landscapes.

The *Provincial Parks System Plan* forms the basis of the park's three main themes that form the park program: protection, recreation and education. (Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources 1986, 1990). As a fourth theme, service and operations is that area covering customer service and maintenance or renewal of the existing park assets and infrastructure. An overarching theme that is embedded in all aspects is that of tourism.

The *Provincial Parks System Plan* describes the balance of protection, recreation and education as an evolving role, being both for social and economic benefit:

While the Parks System must address physiographic representation as one fundamental requirement, it should also give major recognition to the recreation use requirements of Saskatchewan residents and visitors to the province. Such demand changes with time. In response, Provincial Parks must also be capable of evolving appropriately to meet changing public wants and needs. Such reaction, however, should ensure that the heritage resources of the park are properly managed and protected (Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources 1986, 1990).

Significance Statement

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is significant to Saskatchewan because of the geological, palaeontological, archaeological and ecological features demonstrated at the park, the combination of which for interpretation is unparalleled at any provincial park in Saskatchewan. It has large areas of

undisturbed grasslands and lies between the Missouri Coteau Escarpment and the Great Sandhills. This river valley complex reflects the features of several periods of glaciation. Because of its location, Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park has an abundance of archaeological and palaeontological finds that reflect its cultural and natural history. As the western gateway to Lake Diefenbaker, Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park forms an integral part of the lake's overall water-based focus. The value of Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is its combination of natural features with the water-based recreational opportunities.

Location

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is 50 kilometers north of Swift Current on Highway 4 (see Figure 2). The park has an area of 5,534 hectares, divided into four quadrants by Highway 4 and Lake Diefenbaker (see Figure 3).

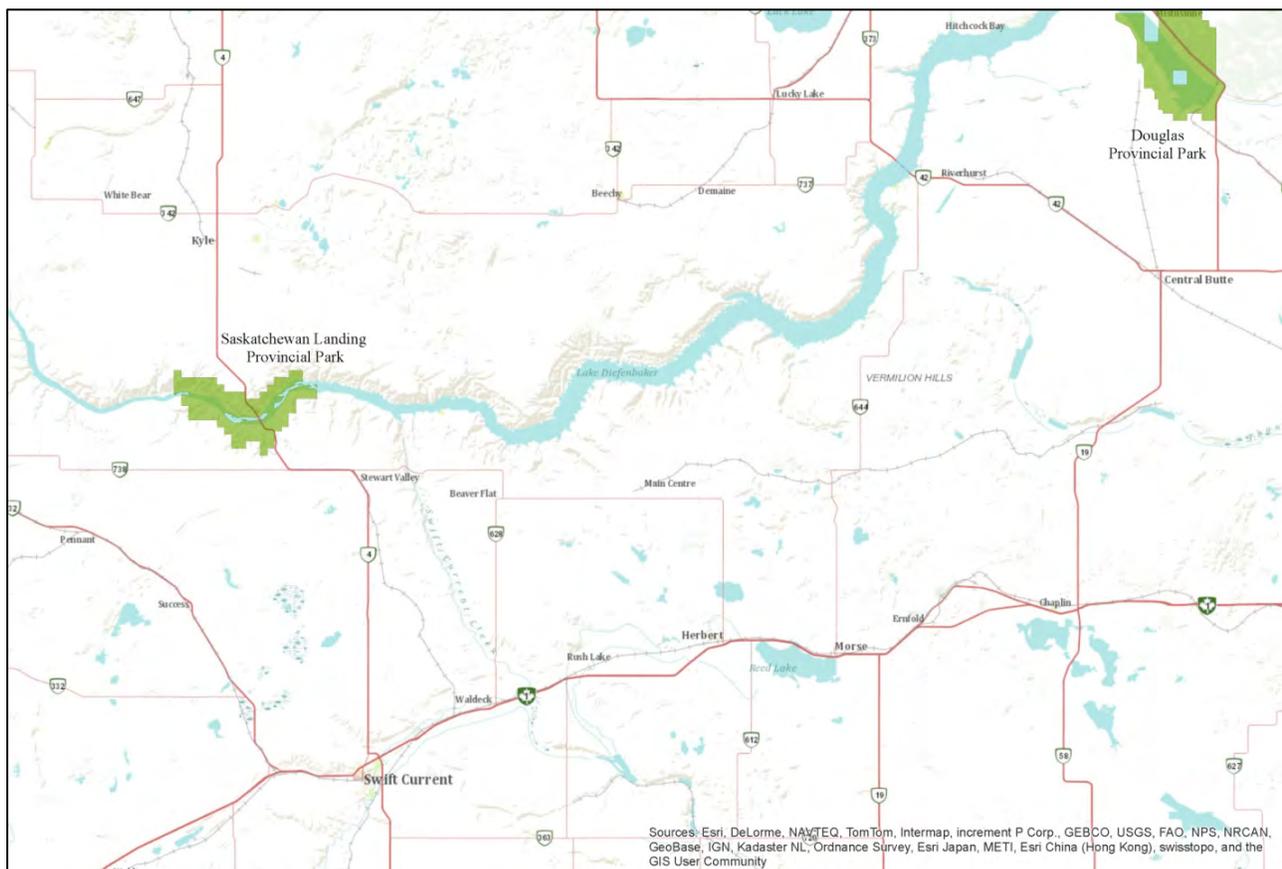


Figure 2: Regional Context Map - Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park

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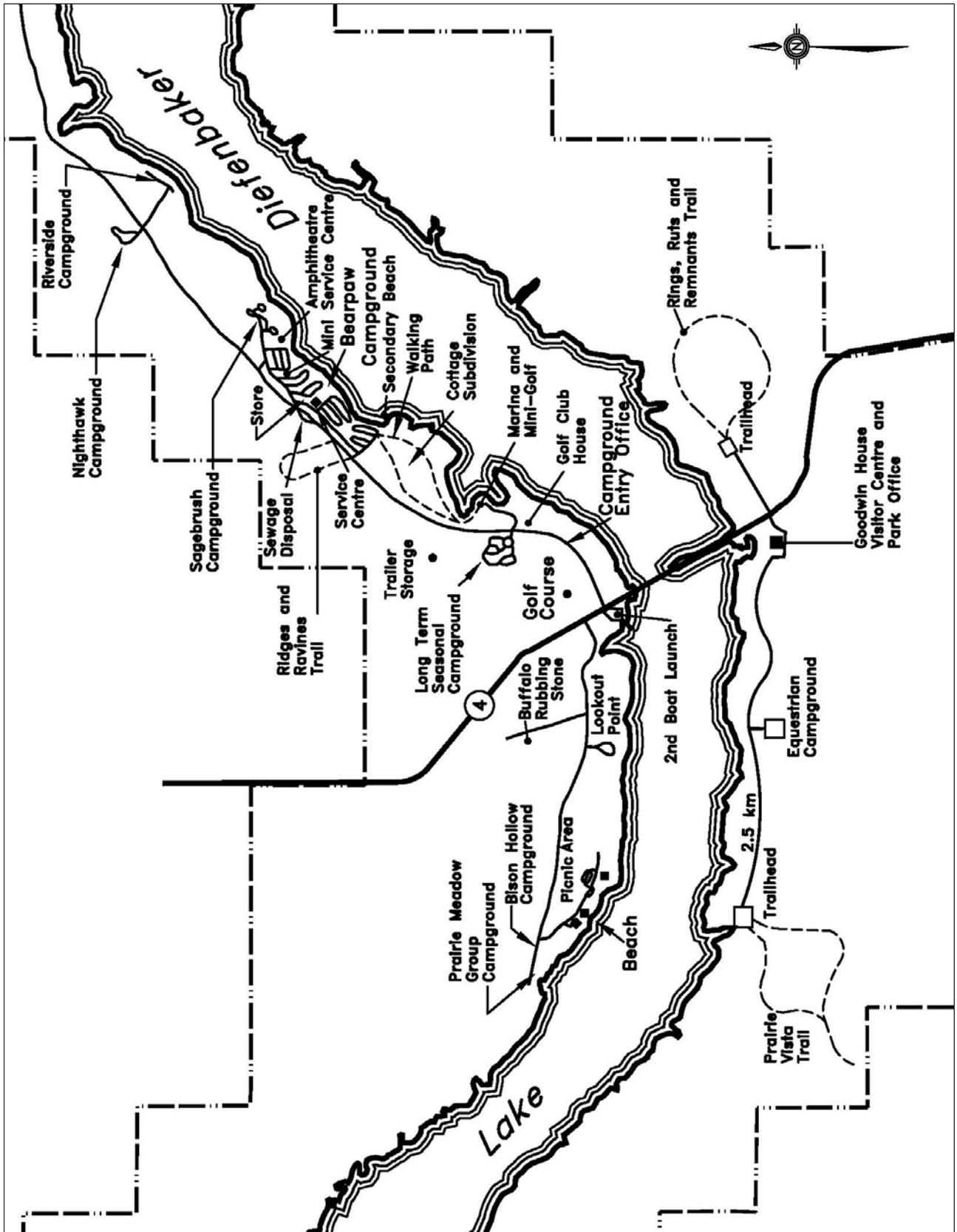


Figure 3: Core Area Map

Park Establishment and History
Establishment

The park was proposed in 1960 when W. Baker completed recreation planning for Lake Diefenbaker, a reservoir which was created in 1967 after completion of the Gardiner and Qu'Appelle dams on the South Saskatchewan River. The park area was, at that time, primarily grassland owned or leased by ranchers for cattle grazing.

The reservoir was created to provide water for irrigation, power generation and potable water for much of Southern Saskatchewan. However, the high water levels required to support these purposes has also created shoreline erosion and campground flooding problems within the park.

This area was selected for park designation due to the mostly rugged native landscape, representation of the mixed grassland ecoregion and Eston Plain landscape area, easy access and wealth of human, geologic and palaeontological history. Lake Diefenbaker is one of the largest lakes in Saskatchewan with nearly 800 kilometers of shoreline and is nearly 240 kilometers in length.

History

Between 1963 and 1967, a series of tree plantations were developed in order to supplement the existing tree cover located in the river valley coulees. These plantations, developed for recreational purposes and to enhance wildlife habitat, were comprised of poplar, green ash, Manchurian elm, caragana and chokecherry.

Recreational development of the park began in 1969, with beach improvement and campground construction. That same year, this site was designated as a Recreation Site, and in 1973, Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park was formally designated as a Provincial Park with a natural environment classification.

Campground irrigation was developed between 1986 and 1990. It was required to ensure the survival of the plantations. In 1990, the Goodwin House underwent major renovations and conversion by the New Careers Corporation. This historic stone building became the park administration office and visitor centre.

In 1989, the Department designed a 110-slip marina in the Northeast quadrant. Construction concluded and the facility opened in 1995. In 1990, a private development cooperative began the development of a 50-lot cottage subdivision immediately east of the marina. In 2001, an 18-hole grass green golf course was constructed also by a development cooperative.

The park has a dynamic First Nations and Métis-settlement history and the rugged terrain has prevented much of the park from being cultivated during settlement. Prior to the reservoir creation the park area was primarily grassland, owned or leased by cattle ranchers for grazing. Much of the native prairie area in the park continues to offer some grazing for vegetation and fire management purposes.



Trail interpretation is a recent improvement to the park activities

Regional and Local Context

Regional

Several key tourism destinations are found on Lake Diefenbaker that cater to water-based users. Palliser Regional Park has an excellent marina as well as extensive campgrounds, a cottage subdivision, golf course and a hotel resort. Riverhurst is home to Sask River Tours, and the 'Betty Lou' tour boat. Farther down river, Elbow Harbour Recreation Site also has a marina as well as a golf course. Camping can be found at both Douglas and Danielson Provincial Parks. These tourism services found throughout the lake area create a network of destinations encouraging a wide range of recreational opportunities to entice visitors for extended visits.

While the current customer profile defines the majority of our visitors as residing within 200 kilometers of the park, there is a growing interest from Alberta residents seeking a water-based destination. This lends well to future park use as the current competitors to the park such as Cypress Hills, Grasslands National Park and the T-Rex Discovery Centre all offer different types of attractions. In fact, this may be considered a beneficial partnership opportunity rather than a draw-back.

Other area attractions include the Great Sandhills, The Sand Castles site, Sunken Hill, Swift Current Creek and La Reata Ranch. Again, these can be viewed as potential partnership opportunities that will help retain visitors in the area longer.

Provincially, Saskatchewan is experiencing a shift in its demographics, partly due to increased immigration and an aging population. Changes to the province's demographics will affect park visitation patterns and user needs. Noticeable trends throughout the park system are already occurring such as: increased day use by larger groups, popularity of fixed roof accommodations, larger camper units and use of technology.

Local

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is the main recreational area for the western end of Lake Diefenbaker. Visitation continues to increase; for 2013 it was 198,486 – an average annual increase of 3.5% over the past five years. The park operates at capacity during July and part of August. High demand for seasonal camping has led to the private development of an 80-site long-term seasonal campground adjacent to the golf course, which opened in 2013.

One of the main attractions to Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is the water-based activity. Anchor Marine offers a 110 slip full service, deep-bay marina, a 4-lane boat launch, marine fuel, store and marine vessel rental. The park also offers two swimming beaches. The main beach, situated in the Northwest quadrant, features extensive reaches of manicured lawn, majestic plains cottonwoods and long sandy shorelines, while a second site, situated adjacent to Bearpaw campground, in the Northeast quadrant, has a sheltered sandy beach, ideal for quieter enjoyment.

Other major attractions of this park are the excellent camping and recreational facilities. Four main campgrounds provide a total of 313 campsites. The park also offers a 10 site equestrian campground as well as group campground with 69 sites. Recreation opportunities offered within the park include an 18-hole golf course, a beach volleyball court, 4 self-guided nature trails, mini-golf, amphitheatre, visitor centre and interpretive programming.

1.3.2 Biodiversity and Natural Heritage Values

Ecoregion

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is the only provincial park fully within the mixed grass ecoregion of the province (this ecoregion accounts for 13% of Saskatchewan's land base).

The Saskatchewan Representative Areas Network (RAN) Action Plan points out that “some of the largest remaining parcels of Saskatchewan’s native prairie occur here [within the Mixed Grassland Ecoregion] and should be protected from further cultivation, especially given their unsuitability for annual crop production. Livestock grazing, under good range management practises, is harmonious with the conservation of biological diversity.” (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management 1997). The RAN further acknowledges the importance of community pastures to the long-term maintenance of native prairie.

Vegetation

Native Prairie

The extensive native mixed grass prairie found at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is one of the most valued resources of this natural environment park.

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park has the largest area of undisturbed native prairie in the provincial parks system. It also contains the only extensive area of uncultivated native prairie on well-drained lacustrine soils in the provincial parks system. Nearby Matador Grasslands Protected Area has a similar composition but a size of only 240 hectares. Matador Grassland is currently utilized for research purposes and has not been managed to simulate natural disturbances.

“Health studies have shown that contact with nature, plants, animals, landscapes and wilderness, offers a range of medical benefits.”
(Canadian Parks Council n.d.)

See Note.

Another area within the Mixed Grassland Ecoregion that protects the native prairie ecosystem is Grasslands National Park. However, the park is located in the Wood Mountain Plateau landscape area which has a different species composition than that of Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park.

The majority of agricultural Crown land surrounding SLPP is native prairie and leased for grazing purposes to local ranchers and the Matador Community Pasture. Where private land is within the valley it has remained in native cover due to the steep valley slopes. Much of the flat arable land has been cultivated for crop production.

Many of the previously cultivated areas within the park have been invaded by non-native species such as Kentucky bluegrass, crested wheatgrass, smooth brome grass, common buckthorn, Canada thistle, Russian knapweed, and leafy spurge. A multi-year reclamation plan is currently underway.

Plains Cottonwood

This park is also home to superb examples of globally-threatened stands of plains cottonwood trees, which provide shade and shelter to both wildlife and humans. The natural reproduction of the cottonwoods is dependent on the natural stream cycles and stream bank erosion and deposition that occur with naturally occurring spring flood cycles (Bradley 1985).

Godwin and Thorpe identify the need to expand the park to the southwest to capture and protect a rare native cottonwood tree stand and to protect the related drainage system that impacts that stand. (Godwin 2002) This should be considered as part of other identified needs, the Ecosystem-based Management Plan or the Interpretive Strategy.

Note: Customer feedback quotes from the *2012 Provincial Parks Camper Survey*, and related research quotes, are inserted as sidebars throughout this document to provide a variety of complimentary or contrasting perspectives. These quotes are inserted to provide context only and should be considered subjective.

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Plantations

Several plantations were created in the 1960s in order to provide much needed shelter for recreation facilities such as campgrounds, picnic areas and commercial outlets. These plantations are in poor condition and are nearing the end of their life cycle. Also, many species, such as Manchurian Elm, are introduced hybrids, and not hardy in this harsh climate.

Wildlife

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park has always been noted for the excellent wildlife viewing opportunities, particularly for ungulates such as white-tailed deer, mule deer and pronghorn antelope. The park also has possible Lek locations, which are areas used by Sharp-tailed Grouse for their mating ritual dance. This and other native wildlife species could be significant attractions for park visitors, particularly families, photographers and nature enthusiasts.

Fish and Aquatic Values

Environmental protection of the lake is extremely important, as the water flowing through the South Saskatchewan River provides the majority of the drinking water for the province and the Coteau Creek Power Station produces a significant share of the province's hydro-electricity.

The lake is a popular fishing destination known for rainbow trout, walleye and pike. Half a million rainbow trout escaped a fish farm around 1995 and this has led to some record sized northern fish.

Natural Heritage

Glaciation

This area was heavily shaped by glaciers. The small amount of relatively flat upland within the park is covered by a thin layer (<10m) of glacio-lacustrine clay which was deposited in the bed of a glacial lake as the last continental glacier was retreating.

Following de-glaciation the lake drained and the South Saskatchewan River developed. This river has cut through the glacial drift approximately 100 meters deep, forming a rugged valley in which the underlying layers of glacial till and bedrock are exposed.

Glacial till is the mixture of materials, including clay, silt, sand and rocks, which was deposited directly from the glacial ice before the formation of the glacial lake. Beneath the till is Cretaceous bedrock of the Bearpaw Formation, which consists of clay with intermittent layers of sand. (Caldwell 1968) By contrast with the glacial materials which were deposited about 10,000 years ago, this bedrock was deposited in a sea which covered the Great Plains about 70 million years ago. In the park, bedrock clays outcrop in places along lower valley-slopes. In the lower parts of the valley there are also a variety of alluvial materials deposited by water action since the formation of the valley and continuing to present. These include river terraces deposited by flooding of the South Saskatchewan River; alluvial fans, formed at the mouth of coulees and slopes, were deposited from erosion of the valley-slopes. Much of the former area of alluvial deposits has been inundated by Lake Diefenbaker since the completion of the Gardiner and Qu'Appelle dams (see Figure 4). (Godwin 2002)

Buffalo Rubbing Stone

A buffalo rubbing stone is located within the park. Buffalo Rubbing Stone Historic Site, which is located 30 km west of Kindersley, also exemplifies this unique type of stone feature; however, the



The buffalo rubbing stone sits unmarked in the landscape

audience is limited by its remote location and lack of other draws.

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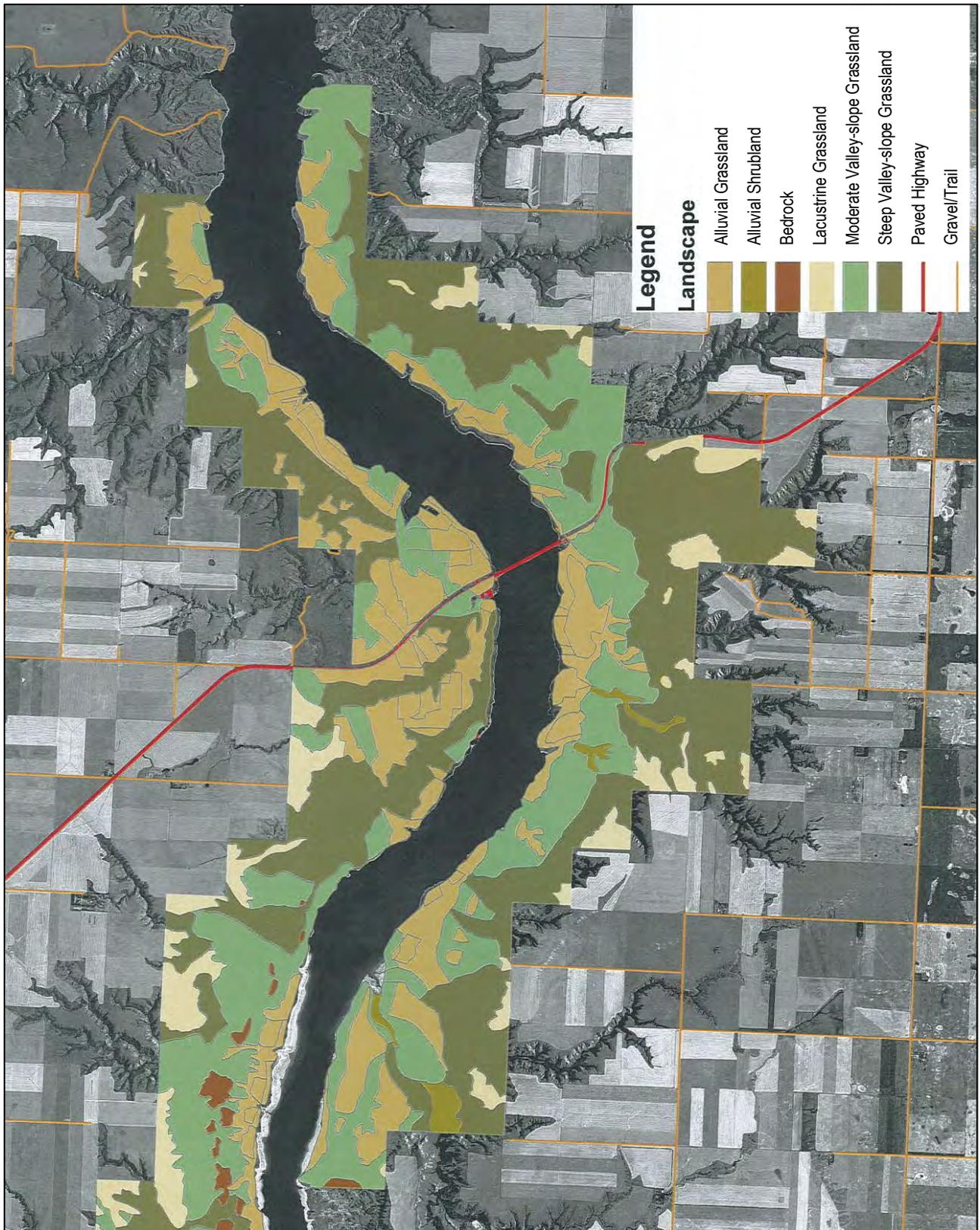


Figure 4: Landscape Types

1.3.3 Cultural and Heritage Values

Heritage Features

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park has a wealth of heritage resources - some dating back thousands of years.

Palaeontology – The area is rich in paleontological resources. First Nations historically practised bison kills in this area. The erosion that occurs both naturally and as a result of the reservoir influence also lend the area to exposed fossils, including dinosaur fossils. As recent as August 2012, major fossil beds were discovered in the Northwest quadrant.

The Wellsch Valley, adjacent to the park, has fossil finds that include diverse large and small mammals, at least 17 species, horses, mammoth, peccary, ox, gopher, vole and sloths. Mosasaurus fossils, from the late Cretaceous period, have been found between Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park and Riverhurst. (U.S. and Canadian Fossil Sites, Creative Commons)

In general, paleo sites within the park are not well documented, as indicated in the data analysis undertaken by the O2 Planning and Design, *Literature and Gap Analysis*. (O2 Planning and Design 2012a) Further study should be a priority before a detailed interpretive strategy is prepared.

First Nations and Métis History – The use of this area by First Nations peoples goes back thousands of years. Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park was a historical river crossing site for Aboriginals who followed the buffalo herds through the seasons. During winters, First Nations utilized the sheltered coulees of this river valley as protection from the elements and for a source of food and water.

While Lemsford Ferry Tipi Rings Protected Area, upstream from Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, has the highest concentration of tipi rings found in the province, it is a remote site with no opportunity for interpretation. However, many tipi rings are found within Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park. They are easily accessible and offer a unique opportunity for interpretation.

Métis also utilized this area in a manner similar to First Nations during the later 1800s. The Battleford Trail was well-used by Red River carts. The descendants of many Métis families continue to reside in the area.

Settlement History - The park was also the site of a significant river crossing used by generations of First Nations and Métis hunters as they followed the buffalo and sought shelter in the river valleys during the winter months. Remnants of early settlement history are also found within the park such as homestead sites and signs of Métis habitation (e.g. lodging/cellar foundations and a water control structure). Prairie ruts remain on the historic Battleford Trail. This was a major overland travel route and was used as a key steamboat landing and ferry crossing. The first ferry boat service at this site was operated by a local merchant named Fraser Tims. The stone house located southwest of the bridge, known as the Goodwin House, was built by a retired Northwest Mounted Policeman, Frank Goodwin in 1897. (Strom 1990)

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park and the Saskatchewan River Valley are rich in the early settlement era of the Northwest Territories (later to become Saskatchewan). Ranching was the predominant vocation of these settlers. The fierce winter of 1906/07 was disastrous for these large ranches and thousands of cattle were lost to the winter storms. Following that catastrophic year, many settlers turned to farming for a living.



Shoreline plateau areas are rich with First Nations heritage, marked by numerous tipi rings.

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS)

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers have been nominated, and accepted, to the CHRS based on their cultural heritage. The rivers will now undergo preparation of a heritage strategy/management plan. Ongoing coordination with this process will be required and will ensure the goals and directions of the park are coordinated with the strategy and plan for the river system.

Art

The use of art, both as display and as an activity, can add to experiencing the uniqueness of place and in the presentation of that space. Art can be a significant contributor in understanding and promoting the sense of place and the regional culture. Opportunities through different learning activities or partnerships (e.g. Creative Partnerships, formerly artist in residence) should be explored as a way of enhancing the artistic experience within the park.



Artwork can help create a sense of place.

1.3.4 Education Values

Interpretation

Visitor Centre

At present, the Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park Visitor Centre occupies the former Goodwin House, and provides interpretation of the geology of the area as well as the natural history. These displays were created over 20 years ago and are showing their age. As a welcome centre and main contact point, the Visitor Centre is poorly situated, being separated from the core development area. A new, redefined building would help to improve access to staff and overall contact with visitors, as well as improved campground security.

Interpretive Program

This is an essential component of park services to ensure that visitors have an understanding of the value of our natural environment and the need for the protection provided by the park system. The program is also a key attraction, providing visitors with an increased choice of activities.

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park has a significant opportunity to expand the public education and interpretive program. As a natural environment park with a wide range of natural and cultural features, educating park visitors about environmental appreciation and protection should continue to be a priority for future development. However, one opportunity for expanded interpretive programming lies with the human history of the area including both the Aboriginal and settlement eras.

Other interpretive and educational attractions in the area include the Heritage Village in Swift Current, the Great Sandhills Museum at Sceptre, birding at Chaplin, the Prairie Learning Centre at Val Marie, the Coteau Creek Power Station Centre near Danielson Park, the sand dunes in Douglas Park as well as a number of museums in smaller centres throughout the region.

There are also educational opportunities related to the role of the South Saskatchewan River, water use and diversions, hydro-electric operations, and sustainability in general.

1.3.5 Recreation Values

Recreational Use

Overview

The recreation program at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is under increasing pressure to provide facilities and programs in response to public demand and increased visitation. The ability to expand the recreation program is limited by the lack of park infrastructure, activities and program offerings (things to do), and staff resources.

“Parks provide inexpensive, accessible opportunities for physical activity.” (Canadian Parks Council n.d.)

Visitation Trends

Visitation at Saskatchewan Landing and Saskatchewan Parks, in general, has experienced an upward trend. However, there are many factors affecting visitation, which make it difficult to measure a park’s success based solely on visitation. Internal and external factors that may influence the visitation trends include site reallocation, new reservation system, policy/program changes and weather. Recent annual visitation is determined through the entry permits issued as follows:

Table 1: Estimated Total Visits: April to September.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% Change 2012 to 2013	Previous 5-Year Avg 2008-2012	% Change 2013 from 5-Year Avg
SLPP	160,117	168,282	187,186	183,832	175,917	186,299	198,486	6.5%	180,303	10.1%
Sask Parks System	3,025,938	3,260,235	3,344,249	3,252,529	3,369,953	3,562,694	3,679,189	3.3%	3,357,932	9.6%

While there is no indication that visitation trends would reverse, it is important to be cognizant of national trends which are declining.

Cottage Subdivision

Fifty cottage lots exist within the park boundaries. Current policy does not permit new cottage subdivision within provincial parks, on the basis that the service is offered or may be available outside of park boundaries and that the service is not part of the core parks system services. Cottage occupancy varies with some being quite infrequent to about 50% being permanent residences. A Cottagers Association provides liaison to the park administration and is currently reviewing their mandate and bylaws.

Golf Course

Sask Landing Golf Resort is one of the key recreational draws of this park. It offers grass greens, a pro-shop, power carts, a driving range and a licensed dining room. The resort recently added 80 fully serviced long-term campsites.

Marina

Anchor Marina provides 110 slips, offers rentals (fishing boats, pedal boats and kayaks) and has a store for boat and camping supplies. It also offers a mini-golf course with a wildlife and marina theme.

“Compliments to staff enforcement of vehicle and boat trailer parking rules.” (Camper Survey 2012)

DRAFT

Accommodations - Camping & Seasonal

Camping at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is a very popular program, with 313 regular campsites as well as an additional 79 group and equestrian sites. Public demand for campsites is exceeding the supply at peak periods in July and August. Recent changes to the campgrounds includes an increased number of electrified sites, a new real-time reservation system (system-wide in 2012) and an expansion of the 14-night maximum stay program.



Fixed-roof accommodation, such as this yurt, can provide a unique camping alternative.

At present, the only overnight accommodation offered at this park is through camping. Seasonal fixed roof accommodation would expand the visitor overnight stay opportunities and the range of visitors. Private sector investment in Yurts, rental cabins or teepees might meet that need. However, previous requests for proposals have not been successful.

Another option for increased camping opportunities is back-country or tent-only areas that would offer an expanded service to those wishing for an experience that is closer to nature. Back-country and tent-only camping often appeals to younger individuals (late teens to mid-thirties) and families that enjoy hiking, biking and canoeing/kayaking. Consideration of back-country or tent-only campsites should be made to coincide with the development of compatible activities.

Equestrian Camping

A horse-equestrian camping area was relocated in 2010 and has been under-utilized although the facilities are limited. There is opportunity to increase awareness of the program and to pursue equestrian related events or partnerships. The program could also be enhanced by offering better watering facilities and improved wayfinding (suggested route maps). Guided equestrian tours would provide an added visitor experience.



Enhanced equestrian services could provide a distinctive way to explore the park.

The opportunity for park visitors to explore the beauty and natural wilderness of the Saskatchewan River valley on horseback could be a very special experience. The private sector provision of guided trail rides into the back-country would add one more recreational and educational activity for a wide range of visitors.

Note: TAMS (Travel Activities and Motivation Survey) research indicates that horseback riding, as an activity group, is extremely high in Alberta, and that group is second most likely (out of 21 groups) to travel to an adjacent province for their vacation. (Lang Research Inc. 2008)

Group Camping

This is a very popular public service, particularly for weddings and family gatherings. However, the group use area is in need of updated services and some reconfiguration to better accommodate a range of group sizes. The current group camping area is a former overflow area and does not meet the needs of a group camping area. Shower facilities are not provided, there is poor separation between areas and there is a lack of site designation. Some campsite improvements are being planned for 2014.

Beaches

The beaches are a popular offering to families and day users to the park. The west beach is underutilized and susceptible to erosion. The east beach, although in closer proximity to the campground, is difficult to access and lacks aesthetic appeal and functionality.

Trails

Three nature trails are situated in the park and two provide self-guided interpretation. A birding trail has also been considered and could feature the wealth of bird species found in the area.

As a general recreational experience in the parks system, trail use is extremely popular and in high demand. However, trail use in SLPP is low in comparison. Trail use offers good exercise, an unstructured or shared experience, and has a low capital investment. Wilderness hiking, in particular, can already occur since there is easy navigation; additional education/guidelines and promotion could cost-effectively increase usage of existing trails. There are opportunities for trail expansion including, better connections and signage, birding trails and mountain biking trails.

Playgrounds

There are five existing playgrounds within the park; two of which are new and three are older. The older playgrounds are wood structures and being replaced in 2014.

As future playground areas are considered, attention should be given to natural playground features that would offer an experience that suits a natural setting and fosters awareness of the natural environment.

Day Use Area

This is a large, manicured area within a plains cottonwood tree stand. However, through years of minor changes to the park layout and shifting demographics (i.e. more dual income families among other factors) there has been a declining use of the day-use area. This is an under-utilized park asset and could be a draw to visitors, including new Canadians, if properly redeveloped and marketed.

Viewscape

The pristine, undeveloped slopes of the south side make for majestic views across the lake from the north side. Those views should be protected, where possible, through zoning and regional planning coordination.

“There is a huge untapped potential for creating a vast trail network in many of the Sask Parks.” (Camper Survey 2012)



Grade-separated crossings can enable safe bicycle and pedestrian movement below a high-speed highway.

Photo: DuPage County bike path courtesy of Brent Cohrs.



Bike bumps would enhance the cycling and playground experience.



A natural playground uses natural features in creative ways to challenge and teach children about the natural world.

1.3.6 Other Park Values

Sustainability

Through a public engagement process in 2005, Saskatchewan Parks established the commitment to undertake green and sustainable building technologies for new capital development. Saskatchewan people expressed a high level of interest in seeing “green” technology in parks; a key principle was that Provincial Parks model green, environmentally sustainable practices and collaborative management. (Saskatchewan Environment circa 2005) All new development within Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park should consider the sustainability principles established through that process, where appropriate and practical.

1.3.7 Operations

Staff Retention

Staff housing was once provided in the Northwest quadrant. The former farmhouse which served as staff accommodation eventually became run down and was removed. The park now experiences difficulty in attracting and retaining qualified staff because of the temporary nature of employment and the distance from a labour pool (i.e. summer students). In some other parks staff campgrounds have been successfully used to address this issue (i.e. Cypress Hills). On-site accommodations, such as a staff campground, are a preferred option for improving the staffing situation.

Goodwin House/Visitor Centre

The Goodwin House was upgraded around 1990 to house a visitor centre on the main floor and the administration offices on the second floor. Some minor changes have been made since then (e.g. interpretive plaques). However, due to the physical separation of the quadrants, client visitation to the centre is low and staff accessibility to the core area is a challenge. In addition, the administration offices are not accessible to those with mobility challenges. Consideration should be given to relocating the functions to a new centre in the Northeast quadrant along with re-purposing the Goodwin House.

Maintenance Shop

The current, winterized maintenance building does not provide for the increasing maintenance needs: the lunchroom is not large enough to accommodate the staff complement; there is no training room/space; and storage space is insufficient. Consideration should be given to upgrading or replacing the facility, following a more detailed, structural evaluation.

Irrigation System

The irrigation systems were installed between 1986 and 1990 to ensure the health of the plantations and campground vegetation. The systems are aged and deteriorating and will be needing renewal in the near future. Irrigation within a campground environment is also challenging because of the overlap of use and scheduling of system operations. An irrigation overhaul should include consideration of alternate systems that would not interfere with camping (e.g. drip irrigation or micro-sprays) as well as lake water usage. An evaluation of the entire irrigation system should be undertaken and a renewal plan developed in conjunction with a vegetation renewal plan (Ecosystem-based Management Plan).

Road Network

In 2012, improvements were made to highway 4 to address line-ups and turning movement conflicts. Many of the entrance roads and roads in the core area were re-paved and a second lane was added at the entry area. While this work has addressed the

“Walking paths need to be shown on your campground map on the site.”
(Camper Survey 2012)

current road conditions, many older road surfaces exist throughout the park and they will need to be monitored and repaired or upgraded as they continue to wear.

It should be noted that many of the roads are narrow and do not include any shoulders. While this is useful in encouraging slower traffic speeds, it does not provide any margin for people to walk or cycle along the road edge. Since the roads are the only access to many parts of the park, traversing some difficult terrain, any major reconstruction should review the need for added shoulders if no other walking/cycling options exist.

Sewage

The sewage lagoon was rebuilt in 1994 and relined in 2005/06. It is designed and operated as a 'summer operation' under the Ministry of Environment's guideline. It is meeting the current demand and has capacity to accept additional increases. However, any significant load-increases on the lagoon will require a review of its capacity and any long-term plans.

"Full service (Water and Sewage hook up) at The Landing would have been desirable." (Camper Survey 2012)

Solid Waste Disposal

The former landfill operations have been discontinued but the landfill area continues to be used for tree disposal. The current waste disposal practise is to collect and haul to a regional landfill. Operational changes may result from the new Saskatchewan Environmental Code and may prompt a review of the waste management practises. Consideration of an overall waste management strategy, including recycling, may be necessary to ensure all waste operations are being effectively managed.

"Campers need more of these facilities (showers/washrooms) not less as they have less amenities available to them." (Camper Survey 2012)

Potable Water

There are a number of issues related to the current water system. The current wells are close to eroding banks and will need to be decommissioned in the near future. A number of other issues include over-pumping and challenges meeting the potable water guidelines also exist. Combined with pressures for increased water usage and future development considerations, a need to consider expansion alternatives was identified and is currently being addressed. Plans are in place for a regional water supply, through the Sask. Landing Regional Water Utility. Connection to the park is expected between 2015 and 2017.

1.3.8 Existing Conditions

State of the Park in 2012

Full implementation of the *SLPP Management and Development Plan* relies on a corresponding level of maintenance to ensure proper provision of services and care of facilities. Ideally, a thorough understanding of the current state of the park would enable more accurate planning and determination of both the capacity for new facilities and the priorities to address current infrastructure issues. Since such detail of analysis is not in place at this time, some modification to the priorities may be needed as this plan is implemented and specific action items are considered. It is also recommended that a "state of" report be undertaken on

"The bathrooms at Sask Landing were terribly dirty." (Camper Survey 2012)

"I am very grateful for the care and upkeep of the facilities, which has made our camping experiences positive." (Camper Survey 2012)

a 5-year cycle to ensure that the park is continuing to meet the objectives set forth in this plan and in preparation for revisions. A “state of” report may include evaluation of the ecological integrity

Ongoing Evaluation and Alterations

The Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport undertakes a variety of customer satisfaction surveys and focus groups as one method of gaining customer feedback. In particular, such surveys provide feedback on initiatives such as the recent online reservation system and the maximum 14-day stay policy. These surveys also provide insight and give direction to the individual park management plans.

The most recent research undertaken was the *2012 Saskatchewan Parks Camper Survey* (Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport 2013). Survey questions were aligned with those from 2009 in order to give cross-comparison and an evaluation of progress. Approximately 16,000 surveys were sent by email to campers who registered during the 2012 season. Of those, 8,085 responded. The focus was on 24 of the Provincial Parks, with Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park being one of them. 415 responses were received from Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park campers. Results are valuable to assess system-wide and park-specific services.

Compared to Saskatchewan’s provincial parks system-wide, Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park has a higher first-time visitor rate (61% SLPP vs. 41% system-wide) possibly attributed to the proximity along the Trans-Canada Highway.

In terms of land-based activities, Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park visitors partake in less day-hiking (26% vs. 30%), less off-road/un-paved cycling (6% vs. 11%) and less horse-back riding (1% vs. 4%) than system-wide. Overall participation in land-based activities is equal (94%).

With respect to participation in land-based recreation during the most recent visit:

- 41% participated in playing on playground;
- 33% in biking on road/paved trail;
- 27% in picnicking;
- 26% in day-hiking; and
- 17% bird watching/viewing wildlife.

In terms of water-based activities, Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park visitors have a slightly higher participation rate than system-wide (89% vs. 86%).

Open ended questions, though not as valuable for statistical comparison, do provide some insight as to camper concerns. The examples below demonstrate a sampling of the more common opinions of those who most recently visited Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park (Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport 2013).

Question: *In your opinion, what are the top three things that the Parks Service should do to improve the camper experience at the park where you most recently camped at in 2012?* (Responses are a sampling only and are in no order of prevalence.)

Education

“Improve the visitor services/ interpretive program.”

Recreation

- “more kids activities”
- “playground with activity centers”
- “A place to leave your boat tied off overnight”
- “Improve the maps – with distances marked.”
- “More hiking, mountain biking trails”
- “pathway to walk to lakes”
- “better beach area”

- “better more accessible beach area for boaters and swimmers”
- “have a safe off-leash area for dogs to be able to run free”
- “Increase the number of campsites”
- “more shower / bathroom facilities”
- “More dumping stations”
- “pet-free campgrounds”
- “Wi-fi”

Service & Operations

- “Staff presence for opportunities to ask information”
- “more staff”
- “Like to see more of park wardens”
- “Strictly enforce the speed limits in all parks, unsafe for small children on roads.”
- “After a certain time someone does not show up – the spot should be able to be rented to someone else.”
- “availability of sites, very hard to find a site on short notice.”
- “Change length of stay to 3 weeks”
- “Limit number of dogs/ pets per site.”
- “Bathrooms need to be cleaner.”
- “Dry firewood”
- “wagons for hauling firewood”

For the purpose of this plan, the results offer insight primarily into the camper experiences. And it is important to keep in mind that camping is only one of the many park services provided. This feedback does not necessarily capture the opinions of cottagers, golfers, day-users or other interest groups.

Camper feedback, combined with Park Advisory Group discussions, staff input and the park purpose together help to shape the long-range vision and objectives outlined in the following section.

2 Plan Direction

2.1 Park Purpose and Vision

Through the planning process the desired future state of the park is clarified and fine-tuned. By having a vision, purpose and objectives all those involved in the park management and development will have a clearer understanding on the long-term future of the park and how that end might be achieved. The vision also provides direction for day-to-day management and operations decisions, helping to keep the bigger picture in mind.

In keeping with *The Parks Act* and the park dedication, Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is a natural environment park whose purpose is to be used primarily for the pursuit of outdoor recreational activities that are consistent with the protection of its natural landscape.

The Vision:

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park will provide a safe, secure and relaxing environment for all visitors to rediscover nature and reconnect with family and friends through experiences with the four elements - earth, fire, wind and water.

2.2 Theme Objectives, Goals and Tasks

Through the planning process of understanding the park's purpose and vision with the consultation of staff, stakeholders and public, activities and actions can be prioritized to meet the general objectives within the four overall themes. The four overall themes are protection, education, recreation, and service and operations. A secondary theme of zoning encompasses the four overall themes into an enabling regulatory tool. The specific objectives are:

1. *to identify and enact the resource management priorities that will preserve the unique flora, fauna, natural heritage and landscapes of this river valley ecosystem for future generations;*
2. *to encourage learning of the natural and cultural heritage of the park;*
3. *to identify opportunities to promote and increase recreation activities that sustainably utilize the natural features of this park;*
4. *to improve the quality of existing services and facilities while offering a range of experiences; and*
5. *to establish management and development direction, identifying appropriate development areas and guidelines.*

The following sections outline the specific goals and tasks that will be undertaken to meet the objectives.

2.2.1 Protection

The *natural capital* (or ecological infrastructure) is the principal asset of the park and requires maintenance and protection. Protecting natural capital from degradation is almost always less costly than restoring or renovating that same asset, once it is degraded.

Protection of the natural environment forms the foundation of the park purpose. All activities in the park must be consistent with the protection of the park environment, whether they be recreational, educational, research related or specifically for conservation and protection. The activities and action items are geared toward filling some current gaps in the protection, understanding the long-term management needs and

building a greater understanding of the natural heritage. The following table describes the protection objective, and the key goals and tasks of this plan.

Table 2: Protection Objective - Objective, Goals and Tasks

<p>Theme Objective</p> <p>Protection</p> <p>1. <i>Objective: to identify and enact the resource management priorities that will preserve the unique flora, fauna, natural heritage and landscapes of this river valley ecosystem for future generations.</i></p>
<p>Goals</p> <p>Task No. & Description</p> <p><i>Explanation of Intent/Support</i></p>
<p>Protect and rejuvenate native cottonwoods</p> <p>1.1. Prepare an updated <i>Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) Plan</i>. Ensure the plan encompasses the cottonwood trees and the campground vegetation. Collaborate with adjoining landowners for a more comprehensive strategy.</p> <p><i>This will update the current Vegetation Management Plan and provide a clear understanding of the impact of development and other park use on the specific ecology within SLPP and give direction to proper methods of protection. With the modified natural cycles of Lake Diefenbaker, the cottonwood trees will no longer naturally reproduce and the existence of the species will become more threatened. Specific management techniques would be required to rejuvenate the cottonwood trees and ensure continued tree health.</i></p> <p>1.2. Consider expansion to the south west to encompass stands of existing native cottonwood trees.</p> <p><i>Per the existing Vegetation Management Plan. (Godwin 2002)</i> <i>This would enhance archaeological/paleontological protection and equestrian tourism opportunities. Alternately, remaining as private land, a Conservation Easement would provide some protection but would not benefit the park recreation.</i> <i>Upstream expansion is supported in the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan (The Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Planning Committee 2008).</i></p>
<p>Protect landscape views</p> <p>1.3. Monitor neighbouring land use and development for opportunities and impacts.</p> <p><i>Where possible, coordinate with regional planning to maintain viewscape.</i> <i>Currently, the Restricted Building Areas imposed by Water Security Agency help to ensure the landscape views are also protected.</i></p>
<p>Protect native prairie / range management</p> <p>1.4. Establish park zoning guidelines that ensure protection of existing native prairie.</p> <p><i>This is addressed as part of the Sub-Zoning Report, Phase 2 (see appendices).</i></p> <p>1.5. Prepare an updated Ecosystem-based Management Plan.</p> <p><i>Critical habitat locations are sensitive to disturbance and would need to be buffered from disturbance. (e.g. Possible Lek - Sharp-tailed Grouse dancing - locations).</i></p>

Control invasive species
<p>1.6. Monitor the land restoration plan to ensure invasive species are eradicated.</p> <p><i>Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.</i> <i>Native prairie is being threatening by invasion of exotic weeds including Leafy Spurge, Russian Knapweed, Crested Wheatgrass and Smooth Brome.</i> <i>Some weed control and prairie restoration is currently underway.</i></p>
Study/protect archaeological and paleontological features
<p>1.7. Undertake an updated Heritage Resource Inventory (HRI) to include both archaeological and paleontological resources.</p> <p><i>The HRI should be used to direct the Interpretive Strategy.</i> <i>Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.</i></p> <p>1.8. Review archaeological protection methods and corresponding interpretive opportunities.</p> <p><i>Interpretation of the tipi rings, while a unique opportunity, presents challenges with potential disturbance and removal.</i></p> <p>1.9. Depending on the HRI, determine and pursue appropriate dedication of land areas.</p>

2.2.2 Education

Providing visitors with an education of the unique natural environment of Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park is both an extension of the protection role and a function of the recreation role; and for many, it is an integral part of their nature-enjoyment. For some, public access to the natural environment is an important part of formal education and university research. In general though, education and interpretation are key components to enhancing the awareness and stewardship of the park system. Since the park system is relied upon so heavily for relaxation and enjoyment, education and interpretation must be tailored to be part of that relaxation for it to be successful. The following table describes the education objective, and the key goals and tasks of this plan.

Table 3: Education – Objective, Goals and Tasks

Theme Objective
Education
<i>2. Objective: to encourage learning of the natural and cultural heritage of the park.</i>
Goals
Task No. & Description
<i>Explanation of Intent/Support</i>
Expand interpretive programming
<p>2.1. Explore opportunities for increased First Nations or Métis involvement in park operations or specific facilities/services.</p> <p><i>Increased First Nations or Métis involvement may present an opportunity for a more authentic experience. May include tour guides, business partnerships, etc.</i> <i>Relates to 2.4.</i></p> <p>2.2. Expand the interpretive programming themes.</p> <p><i>E.g. Métis and early settlement human history, climate change, water management and lake control structures.</i> <i>The location of SLPP presents expanded interpretive and educational opportunities focussed on land/water relationship.</i> <i>Relates to 2.4.</i></p> <p>2.3. Expand hiking/interpretive trails to include the tipi rings (and potentially cottonwood tree stands) in the</p>

- Southwest quadrant. Ensure proper archaeological recording and ongoing monitoring of the sites.
- 2.4. The development of an Interpretive Strategy should be carried out in order to set the guidelines for interpretive programming and to provide some generic programming for park staff.
This should include findings of the Heritage Resource Inventory and should address Saskatchewan's changing demographics and park visitation.
 - 2.5. Develop interpretive signage at several points throughout the park including Look-Out Point, Goodwin House, the paved walking path, the Buffalo Rub Stone and the plains cottonwood tree stand.
 - 2.6. All trails should include interpretive signage/brochures encouraging users to explore the back country.
 - 2.7. Pursue low-cost amphitheatre presentations on the natural environment.
 - 2.8. Pursue partnerships for provision of special programs and activities.
Examples might include Métis Strawberry Teas, guided birding programs, mountain biking trails, guided back-country hikes and water-based skills training sessions.
 - 2.9. Pursue volunteer programming/stewardship for the park.
Volunteer support is needed to accomplish Visitor Services program; and it establishes a sense of pride and ownership.
 - 2.10. Use art within the park to complement new facilities and pursue partnerships to include art as an interpretive program (including palaeontology interpretation).

Introduce recycling

- 2.11. Work with the commercial operators and cottage association to seek opportunities for recycling or other green technologies and sustainable tourism.
The public would like sustainable practises to be modelled in provincial parks (Provincial Legacy Plan).

2.2.3 Recreation

Recreation that is consistent with the protection of natural landscapes is an overarching mandate of *The Parks Act*. Recreation and the enjoyment of nature go hand in hand, yet the enjoyment of nature does not necessarily mean the protection of nature. The following table describes the recreation objective, and the key goals and tasks of this plan.

Table 4: Recreation - Objective, Goals and Tasks

<p>Theme Objective</p> <p>Recreation</p> <p><i>3. Objective: to identify opportunities to promote and increase recreation activities that sustainably utilize the natural features of this park.</i></p>
<p>Goals</p> <p>Task No. & Description</p> <p><i>Explanation of Intent/Support</i></p>
<p>Expand boat trailer parking</p> <p>3.1. Develop boat & trailer parking compound & additional campground parking. <i>A high number of campers park their boats at their campsites and along roadways. Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.</i></p>
<p>Expand marina</p> <p>3.2. Encourage private development of additional marina slips and vehicle parking at the marina. <i>A high number of campers park their boats at their campsites and along roadways. There is a waiting list for slips. Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.</i></p>

Expand sewage dump stations
<p>3.3. Expand the sewage dump station and/or provide additional stations.</p> <p><i>There are line-ups and congestion at the current dump station. Current group camping area does not have a dump station.</i></p> <p><i>Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.</i></p> <p><i>Relates to 3.8 & 3.11.</i></p>
Additional power
<p>3.4. Expand the power service to accommodate newer, larger camper units and additional or future sites.</p> <p><i>Relates to 3.8 & 3.11.</i></p>
Additional non-electric camping
<p>3.5. Provide additional non-electric campsites.</p> <p><i>Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.</i></p> <p><i>Relates to 3.8.</i></p>
Provide additional electric camping
<p>3.6. Develop additional electrified campsites complete with service centre.</p> <p><i>There is a lack of campsites to meet the demand during peak periods in July and early August.</i></p> <p><i>Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.</i></p> <p><i>Relates to 3.8.</i></p>
Provide tent-only camping
<p>3.7. Develop select tent-only camping sites.</p> <p><i>This would expand camping/recreation choices and should be a consideration in conjunction with hiking, biking and canoeing. Implement incrementally with a few sites.</i></p> <p><i>Relates to 3.8.</i></p>
Expand Camping
<p>3.8. Explore need for expanded & increased variety of camping around Nighthawk and Riverside campgrounds.</p> <p><i>Addresses items 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7.</i></p>
Back-country camping
<p>3.9. Explore need for select back-country camping sites.</p> <p><i>This would expand camping/recreation choices.</i></p> <p><i>Considered a medium priority by the Park Advisory Group.</i></p> <p><i>Should be a consideration in conjunction with hiking, biking and canoeing. Implement incrementally with a few sites.</i></p>
Seasonal Camping
<p>3.10. Encourage additional seasonal campsites by private sector support.</p> <p><i>This has been addressed with the provision of new seasonal sites adjacent to the golf course.</i></p> <p><i>Supported in the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan (The Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Planning Committee 2008).</i></p>
Redesign group camping

- 3.11. Redevelop group camping area, including defined sites and access roads.

*This would expand camping/recreation choices.
 Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.*

Fully serviced campsites (nightly)

- 3.12. Provide a small number of fully serviced nightly campsites.

There is public demand and it would provide expanded services.

Fixed-roof accommodations (camping cabins, yurts, walled tents, etc.)

- 3.13. Seek partnership opportunities to introduce fixed roof accommodation.

*E.g. camping cabins, Yurts or Tipis.
 Considered a medium priority by the Park Advisory Group.
 Location & design relate to 3.11.
 Supported in the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan (The Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Planning Committee 2008).*

Hiking trails

- 3.14. Develop additional hiking trails or routes.

Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.

Cycling trails

- 3.15. Develop cycling trails.

Considered a medium priority by the Park Advisory Group.

Birding trails

- 3.16. Develop new birding trails.

There is an opportunity to expand trail usage and connectivity by developing cycling trails.

Revitalize day-use

- 3.17. Explore ways of increasing visitation to the day-use area.

*This area is underutilized and requires a high level of maintenance.
 Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group and could help to address changing demographics.*

- 3.18. Ensure that any new development in the day-use area does not negatively impact the cottonwood tree stands.

Relates to 3.17.

- 3.19. Pursue intermittent concession services for day-use area (for peak periods).

*This may involve concrete pad/patio and servicing accommodations for a stationary mobile vendor or similar.
 Also relates to 3.17.*

- 3.20. Address shore-line armouring of the day use area.

*Erosion of the beachside bank and loss of beach sand, due to fluctuating water levels, is a significant concern and safety issue. The current retaining wall is starting to fail.
 Design and construction planning is underway with construction expected in 2014/15.
 Relates to 3.17.*

Mini service centres

- 3.21. Consider creating additional mini-service centres.

*Considered a medium priority by the Park Advisory Group.
Relates to 3.8 & 3.11.*

Water sports rental/education

- 3.22. Explore partnership opportunities for a lake excursion boat tour, based out of SLPP.

An excursion boat tour operation is seen as a recreational opportunity related to the marina operations. Sask River Tours provides tours and rentals based out of Riverhurst and visits to SLPP are infrequent.

- 3.23. Encourage SaskPower to raise the high intensity power line on the east side to improve sailing opportunities.

Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Plan (The Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Planning Committee 2008).

- 3.24. Expand the marketing of SLPP to target audiences, focusing on the water-based recreational opportunities.

The development of additional campsites may be a prerequisite to this marketing initiative.

Equestrian

- 3.25. Explore role and fit of equestrian program within the overall park vision.

Determine what type or scale of equestrian services would be appropriate within the park vision and what would be feasible within the context of the Saskatchewan Parks system.

- 3.26. Explore needed improvements to equestrian camping services (watering system) and develop equestrian route system.

*Considered a medium priority by the Park Advisory Group.
Explore routes that extend outside park boundaries.*

- 3.27. Explore promotion of the equestrian camping (to target audiences and within Alberta).

There is only limited uptake on the equestrian camping.

- 3.28. Explore partnership opportunities for an increased equestrian usage.

*E.g. riding academy and guided trail rides.
This would provide expanded recreational opportunities and a chance to access the farther reaches of the park.
This is not a priority park service.*

Walking/biking within core area

- 3.29. Create a shoreline trail system that connects the main core-area facilities, including the Northeast and Northwest quadrants.

*This is an incomplete priority from the previous Park Management Plan.
Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.
Also addresses 3.15.*

- 3.30. Create improved park maps or brochures.

Improved maps are needed to show walking trails within the core area as well as better illustrating the landscape features.

Children's cycling area

- 3.31. Provide a children's cycling area.

*Considered a medium priority by the Park Advisory Group.
Relates to 4.6.*

Points of interest/lookouts
3.32. Provide additional lookout points.
Accessible shore fishing
3.33. Make shore fishing locations more accessible. <i>Considered a medium priority by the Park Advisory Group.</i>
Marina picnic area
3.34. Provide a marina picnic area.
Campground parking
3.35. Provide additional campground parking.
Use of technology
3.36. Upgrade internet capacity in the park. <i>The park receives poor internet connectivity, which would need to be upgraded before other related services can be addressed.</i>
3.37. Consider wi-fi services. <i>Benefit for interpreter mustering and activities. Can form part of an emergency response system (e.g. weather/fire warning). Becoming high demand in other park systems (2012 American Camper Report 2012).</i>
3.38. Utilize technology in educational engagement. <i>E.g. interpreter's website, interactive trails. Relates to 2.4.</i>
3.39. Encourage unstructured interaction. <i>E.g. geo-caching, user networks, blogging, mapping of unique sightings, exceptional fishing. Relates to 2.4.</i>
Recreation research
3.40. Undertake recreation and leisure needs research. <i>A better understanding of Saskatchewan's population and outdoor recreation trends of is needed to help identify impacts and opportunities and guide the redesign and marketing of park policies, programs and facilities, within Saskatchewan Landing but also provincially. Current research provides good information about park campers but there is a shortage of information about non-visitors.</i>

2.2.4 Service & Operations

Service and operations are those day-to day realities of operating the park and supporting the basic visitor needs. These realities are limited by annual budget constraints that are the balance between customer fees and operational costs. The table below describes those tasks necessary to meet the current and future needs.

Table 5: Service & Operations - Objective, Goals and Tasks

<p>Theme Objective</p> <p>Service & Operations</p> <p>4. <i>Objective: to improve the quality of existing services and facilities while offering a range of experiences.</i></p>
<p>Goals</p> <p>Task No. & Description</p> <p><i>Explanation of Intent/Support</i></p>
<p>Revitalize vegetation in campgrounds (& irrigation)</p> <p>4.1. Undertake an irrigation system evaluation and renewal plan. <i>This will ensure the longevity of the vegetation.</i></p> <p>4.2. Increase capacity of tree nursery or seek local suppliers. <i>Increased use of tree nursery could help propagate native cottonwood tree stock. Alternately, local sources of native plant material should be considered.</i></p>
<p>Visitor centre/offices</p> <p>4.3. Provide a new Visitor Centre and Administration Building. <i>Displays at Visitor Centre are outdated; the centre is too far from the core area; and it is not accessible for anyone with mobility issues. Appeal to changing demographics should be explored in redesign.</i></p> <p>4.4. Broaden the focus of the interpretive program to expand on more human history of the area including the First Nations, Métis and early settlement eras. <i>Relates to 2.4 & 4.3</i></p>
<p>Upgrade playgrounds</p> <p>4.5. Assess condition of the three oldest playgrounds. Consider future options to install a natural playground. <i>Considered a medium priority by the Park Advisory Group. New, standard playground installations are being planned for 2014.</i></p>
<p>Campground beach improvements</p> <p>4.6. Provide campground beach improvements (Northeast quadrant). <i>E.g. increased beach area, play structure. Relates to 3.31.</i></p>
<p>Campsite improvements – retaining walls, modern sizing</p> <p>4.7. Improve campsites to prevent vegetation damage. <i>E.g. retaining walls, modern sizing.</i></p>
<p>Sanitation – showers and washrooms</p> <p>4.8. Improve shower and washroom maintenance. <i>Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.</i></p>
<p>General maintenance</p> <p>4.9. Improve general maintenance of the park.</p> <p>4.10. Construct new maintenance building or expand existing. <i>Insufficient size to accommodate staff & training, needs sanitation area, needs PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) storage.</i></p>

Garbage
<p>4.11. Improve garbage collection. <i>Review opportunity for increased frequency of pick-up. Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group. Review need for overall waste management strategy.</i></p>
Staff presence/visibility
<p>4.12. Improve staff presence and visibility through training and business practises. <i>Also relates to 4.10.</i></p> <p>4.13. Create/upgrade staff camping area. <i>This will enhance staff attraction and retention.</i></p>
Campground office hours
<p>4.14. Evaluate campground office hours.</p>
Enforcement/security
<p>4.15. Increase education and enforcement of campground regulations. <i>There are various complaints of dissatisfaction with the campground program, vertical tarps and over-parking. Considered a high priority by the Park Advisory Group.</i></p> <p>4.16. Undertake an Emergency Response Plan (including Fire Protection Plan).</p>
Potable water & sewage lagoon
<p>4.17. Undertake a water servicing analysis to better understand water supply for future needs.</p> <p>4.18. Continue to monitor effective use of potable water. <i>Regional water supply connection is underway; expected completion is 2015 to 2017. Ensure effective and appropriate use of water for various needs (i.e. potable use versus irrigation).</i></p>
Management and Development Plan implementation
<p>4.19. Undertake a “State of” report to better understand condition of park ecology, infrastructure and assets. <i>This will enable the ongoing planning and prioritization.</i></p> <p>4.20. Undertake an annual review of the Management and Development Plan. <i>This is to ensure proper follow-up and assignment of the action items.</i></p> <p>4.21. Create digitized (GIS) base mapping of park facilities and infrastructure. <i>This will help manage park assets, prevent underground infrastructure damage during construction and help make future design work more effective.</i></p>

2.3 Zoning

2.3.1 Overall Park Zoning

Park zoning defines land areas according to intrinsic characteristics and the various kinds of uses and levels of development that the land can support to fulfill the purpose of the park relative to the park classification.

Within a park, different ecological systems exhibit environmental characteristics which require varying degrees of protection, which in turn, establish the type and level of recreational use each ecological system can sustain. The system’s sensitivity will also determine the kinds of resource management practices that could occur.

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Zoning plans determine the type and extent of acceptable use, development and means of access and management for each zone so that conservation and public use requirements of *The Parks Act* (Province of Saskatchewan 1986) can be met.

Park Zones

The park is divided into five major zones. These five zones are:

- Protection Zone
- Natural Zone
- Resource Management Zone
- Development Zone
- Access Zone

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park protects the largest extent of river valley native prairie within the provincial park system. All development or activity planning within each zone must consider the impact that such action will have upon native grassland prairie, with protection of the native grasslands taking precedence. The following zones will all contain some native grassland to varying degrees. Approving any actions deemed appropriate within a given zone must first consider the location of native grassland and its degree of integrity (i.e. level of disturbance, amount of invasive species, cost of restoration). If the integrity of native grassland is high, then its protection must be prioritized; if there is already a high level of disturbance, then the area may be considered for development.

The five zones are summarized below and shown on the proposed zoning map (see appendices).

Protection Zone

Purpose:

- to protect rare, significant, endangered, special and unique species and features
- to enrich and expand public awareness of natural and human heritage by preserving lands and artifacts in an undisturbed state
- to provide areas where gene pools for flora and fauna are able to perpetuate
- to primarily provide social benefits.

Natural Zone

Purpose:

- to designate representative examples of typical landscapes for low-density, nature-oriented recreational activities, for interpretive purposes or for buffer areas between protection and more intensive use zones and between the various developed areas of the park
- focus of this zone is on large representative landscape features or vegetation associations for natural/cultural appreciation and extensive recreational activities
- these lands are generally large, scenic areas which offer true representation of the natural environment qualities of a particular park
- to provide a mix of social and economic benefits with an emphasis on social benefits.

Resource Management Zone

Purpose:

- the primary purpose is to accommodate consumptive resource uses which are compatible with moderate outdoor recreation use and the resource capability to recover or be rehabilitated after such use. Some examples of compatible resource uses are hunting, trapping, commercial fishing, forest harvesting, grazing

- it is recognized that due to the natural values of these lands, they should be part of the park; however, in the short term other non-recreational resource uses may be accommodated where impact can be mitigated or recreational use is not adversely affected
- in general, the intent of this zone is similar to a Natural Zone except that resource/extraction use is allowed where it does not prevent or interfere with recreational enjoyment of the zone, impact upon unique or significant resource features, permanently alter the resource base of the zone or prevent the zone's rehabilitation for future or more intense recreational use
- this zone provides mainly economic contributions; however, in the long term, social and economic benefits will balance out.

Development Zone

Purpose:

- to provide lands capable of supporting a wide range of recreational opportunities for moderate to high use in a natural setting
- visitor services, intensive recreation facilities, accommodation and administrative and maintenance facilities would be located in this zone
- this zone provides economic contributions primarily, although social benefits are also important.

While the Park Land Zoning Policy defines four possible Sub-Zones within the Development Zone, through work with O2 Planning and Design, four new Sub-Zones are developed as being specifically tuned for Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park and are presented in Section 2.3.2 Sub-Zoning.

Access Zone

Purpose:

- the major purpose of this zone is to provide corridors for facility access and associated services within a park and to accommodate major corridor routes through a park or through a specific zone, focusing on the different management required to maintain the access or service
- this zone provides for scenic parkways through major parks and, depending on the access route, it may provide social and/or economic benefits
- this zone may provide a parking area or trail head at the end of an access road.

2.3.2 Sub-Zoning

The Park Land Zoning Policy (Saskatchewan Parks, Recreation and Culture 1988) establishes the principles for sub-zoning within the park zones and provides four general categories. While legislation did permit sub-zoning within the Development Zone, previous zoning of Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park did not utilize that option.

O2 Planning and Design was engaged to review the zoning as it applies to future public and private recreation and development within Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park. Using the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective, quantifiable recreation measures were applied in order to classify specific conditions such as accessibility, degrees of development and the presence of management. The methodology also applies a cartographic approach – mapping the physiographic, biological and archaeological values along with existing infrastructure – to identify areas suitable for different types of development.

Sub-Zoning Guidelines

The proposed sub-zoning guidelines provides a locally tuned set of development guidelines which align with and further complement the park zoning, while focusing specifically on the nature and intent of recreation and tourism development in Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, and the spatial constraints to

development. Sub-Zones are purposeful descriptions of desired future states and may differ from the current status of the area to which a sub zone has been applied. For the full sub-zoning guidelines and examples, refer to Saskatchewan Landing Sub-Zoning Report – Phase 1 in the Appendices. (O2 Planning and Design 2012a)

Sub-Zoning Map (refer to Phase 2 report)

Saskatchewan Landing Sub-Zoning Report – Phase 2 provides for a more thorough application of the park zoning, identifying and re-aligning the major zones and then applying the layers of sub-zones within each. In all, approximately 26 sub-zones are created, each with a unique set of criteria to guide the ongoing management practises and to direct future development (see Figure 5). Refer to Appendix D for the full report. (O2 Planning and Design 2012b)

Table 6: Zoning - Objective, Goals and Tasks

Theme Objective	
Zoning	
5. <i>Objective: to establish management and development direction, identifying appropriate development areas and guidelines.</i>	
Goals	
Task No. & Description	<i>Explanation of Intent/Support</i>
Zoning Boundaries	
5.1. Apply zoning and sub-zoning boundaries to align to protect native prairie areas.	<i>Addressed as part of Saskatchewan Landing Sub-Zoning Report, Phase 2.</i>
5.2. Amend zoning and sub-zoning boundaries.	<i>Addressed as part of this plan approval.</i>
Gap Analysis	
5.3. Utilize Sub-Zoning Report, Phase 1 to undertake work recommended in gap analysis.	<i>E.g. Species at Risk, Soils Survey, Sensitive Habitats.</i>

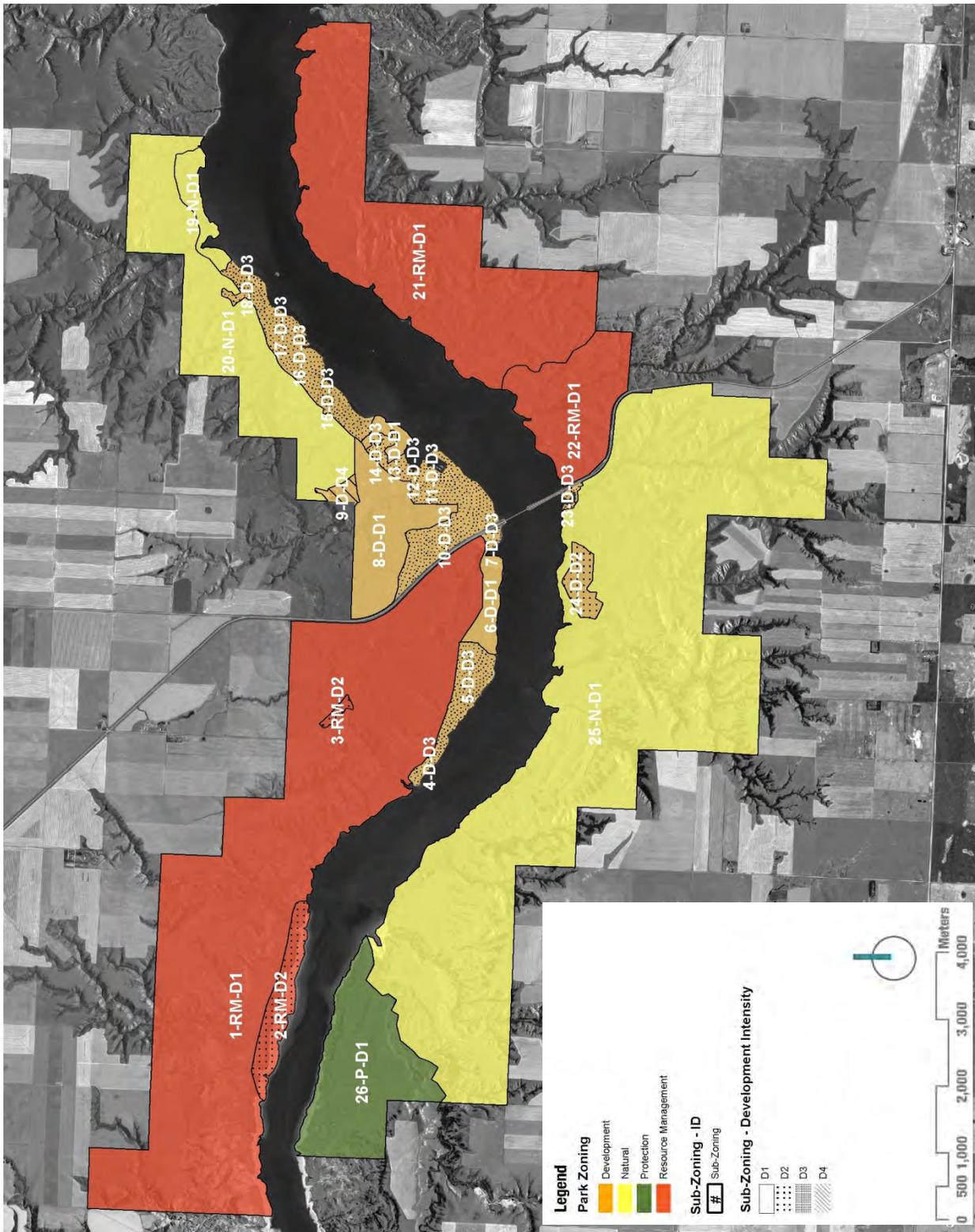


Figure 5: Park Zones and Sub-Zones

(Refer to appendices for specific sub-zoning development guidelines.)

3 Implementation

3.1 Key Strategies and Task Priorities

This section provides a compilation of all the goals from Section 2, Plan Direction. Goals are grouped into strategies, based on logics of timing and activity type, and prioritized to allow for annual work and budget planning.

Considerations of the prioritizations include:

- planning for project inter-dependency where further analysis on a subject may be required prior to project planning and completion (e.g. Heritage Inventory and Interpretive Strategy prior to additional interpretive trails);
- providing for a balance of improved essential services and easy wins (e.g. clean washrooms; additional campground parking);
- focusing on better service to existing campers and a better use of existing facilities/assets (e.g. improve day-use area); and
- keeping within the limitations of operational capacity and budget restrictions.

Priority categories range from Immediate to Long-Term and Ongoing. Strategy areas are grouped by completion time frames, however, start times may be determined based on the amount of lead time necessary allow for further project clarification, scoping or pre-design. Tasks/projects may be advanced if budgeting and related plan items support moving the project forward. Timing may also be dependent on variables outside the scope of this plan. Task priority is not ordered within each major strategy area. Any detailed project costing would be undertaken closer to the individual task/project preparation and planning. The Ongoing Priorities are least restricted by an implementation sequence, rather they are primarily dependent on external factors such as private investment or work by outside agencies.

Figure 6 illustrates the overlap between the timing of Strategy Areas and tasks:

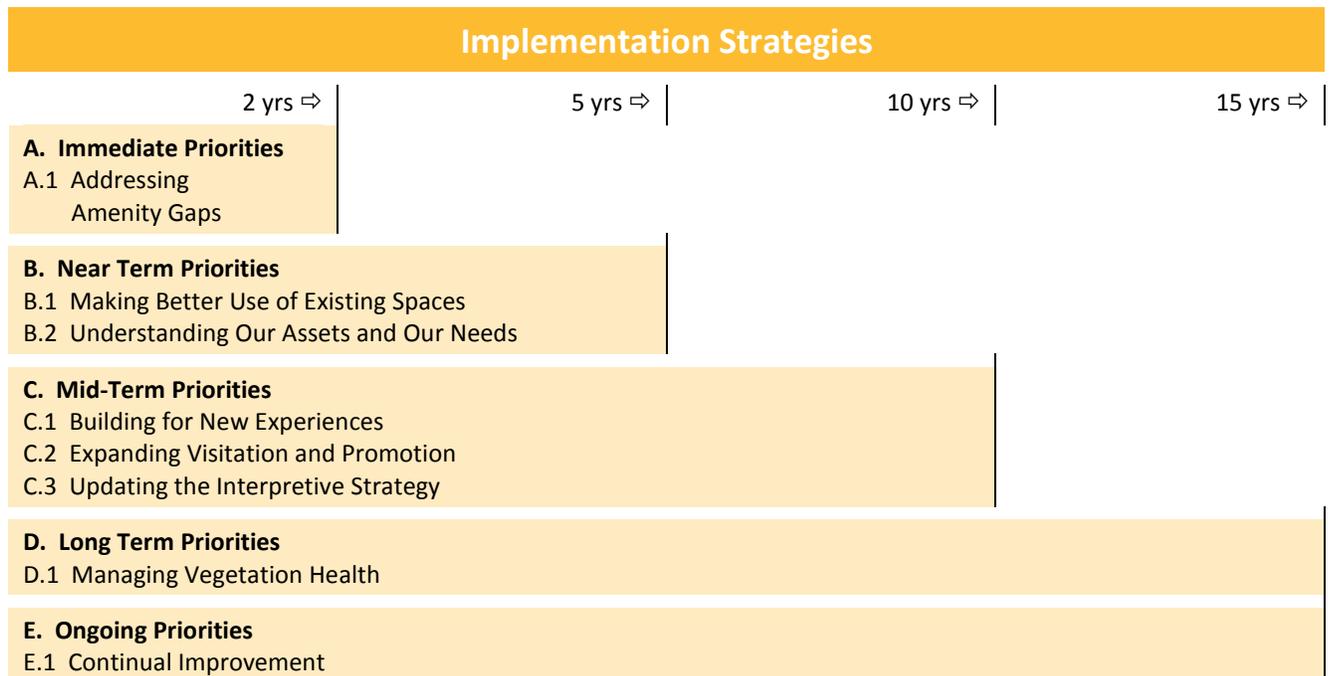


Figure 6: Overview of Implementation Strategy Timing

The *Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park Management and Development Plan*, like most management plans, does not specifically consider staffing or operational costs, though they are considered in the general sense of the planning principles and guidelines. Some of the action items may require additional resources and staffing as a consideration when the project approaches its detailed planning and budgeting stages.

It should also be understood that priorities or tasks may need to be re-evaluated as conditions or needs change. Major changes may necessitate a more thorough management plan review.

Table 7: Implementation Strategy Prioritization

Implementation Strategy		
A. Immediate Priorities (complete within 2 years)		
Strategy	Task	
• Task Description/Comments	No.	Responsibility
A.1 Addressing Amenity Gaps		
Implementing straightforward, obvious solutions that address immediate needs and have a valued impact on visitor experiences and needs, without affecting future plans.		
• Provide additional campground parking.	3.35	Facilities
• Develop boat & trailer parking compound & additional campground parking.	3.1	Facilities
• Create/upgrade staff camping area.	4.13	Park Staff
• Evaluate campground office hours.	4.14	Park Staff
• Construct new maintenance building or expand existing.	4.10	Facilities
• Increase education and enforcement of campground regulations.	4.15	Park Staff
• Undertake an Emergency Response Plan (including Fire Protection Plan).	4.16	Park Staff

Table 7: Implementation Strategy Prioritization (cont'd)

Implementation Actions		
B. Near Term Priorities (complete within 5 years)		
Strategy	Task	
• Task Description/Comments	No.	Responsibility
B.1 Making Better Use of Existing Spaces		
Retrofitting and making better use of existing spaces is an efficient and sustainable means of accommodating changing needs and expanding the range and quality of services.		
• Redevelop group camping area, including defined sites and access roads. <i>See Appendix: Sub-Zoning Report Phase II for development recommendations. Also relates to items 3.3 & 3.4. Some campsite improvements are being planned for 2014. See Note 2.</i>	3.11	Park Staff / Facilities
• Develop new birding trails.	3.16	Visitor Experiences
• Explore ways of increasing visitation to the day-use area. <i>Addresses day-use items 3.17, 3.18, 3.19 & 3.20. See Appendix: Sub-Zoning Report Phase II for development</i>	3.17	Park Staff / Visitor Experiences / Communications

<p><i>recommendations.</i> <i>Day-use areas are key attractions for new Canadians.</i> <i>Provide target marketing to promote day-use area.</i> <i>See Note 2.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a shoreline trail system that connects the main core-area facilities, including the Northeast and Northwest quadrants. 3.29 Facilities <p><i>See Appendix: Sub-Zoning Report Phase II for development recommendations.</i> <i>Also relates to item 3.15.</i> <i>See Note 2.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make shore fishing locations more accessible. 3.33 Facilities
<p>B.2 Understanding Our Assets and Our Needs</p> <p>Before embarking on significant change, a better understanding of the scope and condition of the park’s cultural and physical assets is needed. Aligning those assets with an understanding of the changing visitor and market needs is key to quality customer service.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an updated Heritage Resource Inventory (HRI) to include both archaeological and paleontological resources. 1.7 Visitor Experiences <p><i>Necessary prior to an interpretive strategy or trail expansion.</i> <i>(Includes both archeological and paleontological resources.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review archaeological protection methods and corresponding interpretive opportunities. 1.8 Visitor Experiences • Undertake a water servicing analysis to better understand water supply for future needs. 4.17 Facilities • Utilize Sub-Zoning Report, Phase 1 to undertake work recommended in gap analysis. 5.3 Park Staff / Park Management Services • Undertake a “State of” report to better understand condition of park ecology, infrastructure and assets. 4.19 Park Staff • Undertake recreation and leisure needs research. 3.40 Park Planning & Business Services <p><i>Will help guide redevelopment and target marketing</i></p>

Table 7: Implementation Strategy Prioritization (cont’d)

Implementation Strategy		
C. Mid-Term Priorities (complete within 10 years)		
Strategy	Task	
• Task Description/Comments	No.	Responsibility
C.1 Building for New Experiences		
In preparation for expanding park services and experiences, facility improvements would be undertaken as a first step before increasing the camping capacity.		
• Depending on the HRI, determine and pursue appropriate dedication of land areas. 1.9		Park Management Services / Park Staff
Consider expansion to the south west to encompass stands of existing native cottonwood trees. 1.2		
• Expand hiking/interpretive trails to include the tipi rings (and potentially cottonwood tree stands) in the Southwest quadrant. Ensure proper archaeological recording and ongoing monitoring of the sites. 2.3		Visitor Experiences

- Develop interpretive signage at several points throughout the park including Look-Out Point, Goodwin House, the paved walking path, the Buffalo Rub Stone and the plains cottonwood tree stand. 2.5 Visitor Experiences
- All trails should include interpretive signage/brochures encouraging users to explore the back country. 2.6 Visitor Experiences
- Develop additional hiking trails or routes. 3.14 Visitor Experiences
- Develop cycling trails. 3.15 Visitor Experiences
Also relates to 3.29.
- Provide additional lookout points. 3.32 Facilities / Visitor Experiences
- Explore needed improvements to equestrian camping services (watering system) and develop equestrian route system. 3.26 Park Staff / Facilities
New brochures are being developed.
- Provide a new Visitor Centre and Administration Building. 4.3 Facilities / Visitor Experiences
Includes new interpretive display. See Appendix for development recommendations.
- Broaden the focus of the interpretive program to expand on more human history of the area including the First Nations, Métis and early settlement eras. 4.4
See Note 2.
- Provide campground beach improvements (Northeast quadrant). 4.6 Park Staff
Provide a children’s cycling area. 3.31 Park Staff
See Appendix: Sub-Zoning Report Phase II for development recommendations.
See Note 2.
- Explore needed improvements to equestrian camping services (watering system) and develop equestrian route system. 3.26 Park Staff / Facilities
New brochures are being developed.

C.2 Expanding Visitation and Promotion

Together with infrastructure and capacity enhancements, the park will expand and promote its camping program, welcoming a broad community of visitors to fully enjoy the park.

- Explore need for expanded & increased variety of camping around Nighthawk and Riverside campgrounds. 3.8 Facilities / Park Staff
Also relates to items 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7.
Develop walk-in and non-electric a few sites at a time.
See Appendix for development recommendations.
See Note 2.
- Provide a small number of fully serviced nightly campsites. 3.12
- Explore need for select back-country camping sites. 3.9 Facilities / Park Staff
See Appendix: Sub-Zoning Report Phase II for development recommendations.
See Note 2.
- Expand the marketing of SLPP to target audiences, focusing on the water-based recreational opportunities. 3.24 Visitor Experiences / Tourism Agencies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore promotion of the equestrian camping (to target audiences and within Alberta). As appropriate. <i>New brochures are being developed.</i> 	3.27	Park Staff / Ministry of Economy / Tourism Agencies
<p>C.3 Updating the Interpretive Strategy</p> <p>A successful interpretive strategy seeks to build upon the unique natural, cultural and heritage features of the site. It uses creative, modern strategies to make experiences appealing and accessible to a wide audience.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of an Interpretive Strategy should be carried out in order to set the guidelines for interpretive programming and to provide some generic programming for park staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand interpretive programming Expand the interpretive programming themes. Explore role and fit of equestrian program within the overall park vision. Create improved park maps or brochures. Upgrade internet capacity in the park. Consider wi-fi services. Utilize technology in educational engagement. Encourage unstructured interaction. Also relates to items 4.3 & 4.4 	2.4	Visitor Experiences
	2.1	
	2.2	
	3.25	
	3.30	
	3.36	
	3.37	
	3.38	
	3.39	

Table 7: Implementation Strategy Prioritization (cont'd)

Implementation Actions		
D. Long Term Priorities (complete within 15 years)		
Strategy	Task	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task Description/Comments 	No.	Responsibility
D.1 Managing Vegetation Health		
There is already a good understanding of the park's natural environment and the challenges to the health of its vegetation. Steps are needed to reduce invasive species, restore the vegetative health and protect the park's natural capital for long term viability.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare an updated Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) Plan. Ensure the plan encompasses the cottonwood trees and the campground vegetation. Collaborate with adjoining landowners for a more comprehensive strategy. Monitor the land restoration plan to ensure invasive species are eradicated. <i>Ensure good public notification and promotion of the project.</i> Undertake an irrigation system evaluation and renewal plan. Create digitized (GIS) base mapping of park facilities and infrastructure. 	1.1	Landscape Protection Unit / Park Staff
	1.6	Landscape Protection Unit / Park Staff
	4.1	Facilities
	4.21	Facilities

Table 7: Implementation Strategy Prioritization (cont'd)

Implementation Actions		
E. Ongoing Priorities (Unspecified time frame - less dependent on other priorities)		
Strategy	Task No.	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task Description/Comments 		
E.1 Continual Improvement		
<p>Priorities that are independent of other strategies or are dependent on the resources or investment of other parties can be achieved when most appropriate.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor neighbouring land use and development for opportunities and impacts. 	1.3	Park Staff / Park Management Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the interpretive programming themes. <i>E.g. Métis and early settlement human history, climate change, water management and lake control structures.</i> 	2.2	Visitor Experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue low-cost amphitheatre presentations on the natural environment. 	2.7	Ministry of Parks, Culture & Sport / Park Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue partnerships for provision of special programs and activities. 	2.8	Ministry of Parks, Culture & Sport / Private Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue volunteer programming/stewardship for the park. 	2.9	Ministry of Parks, Culture & Sport / Park Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use art within the park to complement new facilities and pursue partnerships to include art as an interpretive program (including palaeontology interpretation). 	2.10	Cultural Planning & Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the commercial operators and cottage association to seek opportunities for recycling or other green technologies and sustainable tourism. <i>Private sector initiative.</i> 	2.11	Park Staff / Business Development & Leasing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand marina <i>This would likely be a private sector initiative/partnership.</i> 	3.2	Business Development & Leasing / Private Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek partnership opportunities to introduce fixed roof accommodation. <i>Private sector initiative.</i> <i>Would support increased seniors and new Canadians.</i> <i>Location & design relate to 3.11.</i> 	3.13	Business Development & Leasing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that any new development in the day-use area does not negatively impact the cottonwood tree stands. 	3.18	Ministry of Parks, Culture & Sport / Park Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue intermittent concession services for day-use area (for peak periods). <i>Private sector initiative.</i> <i>Location and design relate to 3.17.</i> 	3.19	Park Planning & Business Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water sports rental/education <i>Private sector initiative.</i> 	3.22	Park Planning & Business Services

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage SaskPower to raise the high intensity power line on the east side to improve sailing opportunities. 	3.23	SaskPower
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marina picnic area <i>This would likely be a private sector initiative/partnership.</i> 	3.34	Park Planning & Business Services / Private Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase capacity of tree nursery or seek local suppliers. 	4.2	Park Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade playgrounds 	4.5	Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve campsites to prevent vegetation damage. 	4.7	Park Staff / Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanitation – showers and washrooms 	4.8	Park Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve general maintenance of the park. 	4.9	Park Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve garbage collection. <i>Consider undertaking a waste management strategy to plan for all waste management practises.</i> 	4.11	Park Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff presence/visibility 	4.12	Park Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an annual review of the Management and Development Plan. 	4.20	Park Staff

Notes to implementation prioritization, Table 7:

1. The timelines for implementing any specific action items will be influenced by the overall priorities of the provincial park system and the annual funding available for the provincial park system. The recommendations may be implemented as financial or human resources become available. As previously noted resource availability needs to be a significant consideration while reviewing the timing or budgeting of the above action items. The action items cannot be considered in isolation.
2. These items are recommended in O2 Planning and Design, *Sub-Zoning Report Phase 2: Sub-Zoning and Conceptual Design* (see Appendices).

3.2 Partnerships and Public Stewardship

Principles for type of development appropriate to the park's role and vision.

There are certain services within the park system that are not typically covered by provincial funding, either due to policy or priority. Some of these services include concessions, golf courses, equestrian, marinas, multi-year long-term camping, cabin rentals, outfitting etc. These services are traditionally established through a commercial business arrangement.

Similarly, stewardship groups or “friends of” groups can be very beneficial to supporting the park’s goals through the many programs or initiatives they might undertake. They often demonstrate a vested interest and pride in the park that can be very beneficial to the park’s vision and identity.

The management plan and zoning provide the framework for considering developments and/or project proposals. The plan gives the proponent/group an initial sense as to the acceptability and priority of an idea – an understanding as to what projects would be welcome and where they would be best located. With some level of shared involvement, there is also an opportunity to advance priorities that are pre-defined in the management plan.

3.3 Monitoring

3.3.1 Annual Reporting

The management plan is not a static document; it is intended to be dynamic – something that is used to consider capital budget planning priorities, operational decisions and investment proposals – while providing a measure of public commitment and transparency. The plan also acts as a reference for affected service areas in the annual work planning process to ensure that there is a collective effort to consider the recommended action items, realizing there may be cases that, upon consideration, may no longer be appropriate. Lastly, the plan is a tool that can be used to ensure the accountability of staff and departments as part of an annual review process, recognizing that other governmental priorities or budget limitations will need to be considered.

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Glossary

Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) - a systems approach to resource management that emphasizes an ecosystem perspective as opposed to the traditional species-centric approach to natural resource management. In EBM the focus is on managing the effects of human activities on ecosystems. Ecosystem-based managers recognize that ecosystems are most effectively managed through the astute control of human activity and impact. EBM blends the needs of people with environmental values in such a way that lands remain diverse, healthy, productive, and sustainable.

The EBM approach recognizes that humans are an intrinsic part of all ecosystems on earth and the outdated dualism of “natural” versus “human” must be supplanted by a higher concept of earth and its ecosystems as the invaluable, creative and integrated home place of all species (after the thinking of Canadian ecologist Stan Rowe). The EBM approach explicitly acknowledges that the maintenance of ecosystem integrity and evolutionary potential are essential for the long-term survival of all species. Evolutionary potential is a characteristic of the synergy between ecosystems and species.

Natural Capital – those components of nature that can be linked directly or indirectly with human welfare, including traditional natural resources (e.g., timber, water, energy and mineral resources) and biodiversity, species-at-risk, and ecosystem function (e.g., nutrient flow, symbioses, etc.). This is an augmentation of the three traditionally- recognized forms of capital – manufactured, human and social capital.

Range Management - A distinct discipline founded on ecological principles and dealing with the use of rangelands and range resources for a variety of purposes. These purposes include use as watersheds, wildlife habitat, grazing by livestock, recreation, and aesthetics, as well as other associated uses. (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada 2008)

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Appendix A

Saskatchewan Landing Sub-Zoning Report

Phase 1: Literature Review, Gap Analysis and Field Investigation

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Appendix B

Saskatchewan Landing Sub-Zoning Report

Phase 2: Sub-Zoning and Conceptual Design