

# Land Management

May 2021

## Introduction

The lower Winnipeg River basin (LWRB) is located in the northwest section of the entire Winnipeg River basin (WRB), which spans parts of western Ontario and small parts of Manitoba and northern Minnesota, United States. The Discussion Sheet Series highlights research on ecological and socio-economic aspects of the basin to encourage discussion with experts, government departments, Indigenous groups, and stakeholders. The Discussion Sheet Series is based on available data collected in 2018 and 2019. Sheet 9 of 11 summarizes land management in the LWRB.

## Land Management

Land management includes activities related to the ownership, use, and development of land for personal, community, and economic purposes (Government of Canada, 2013). Land ownership in Canada is divided into public (Crown) and private lands. Crown land is the land held in trust and administered by federal and provincial governments, which designate their use, such as parks, forests, Indigenous land, wildlife management areas, etc. (Manitoba Wildlands, 2014; Neimanis, 2011). Zoning policies are municipally developed rules for the use and development of land and buildings in a community mandated under the Planning Act, 2005 (Government of Manitoba, 2015).

The Figure 1 depicts designated Crown and private land types in the LWRB, including zoning policies developed by municipalities.

The following observations can be made:

- Agricultural Zones cover 7% of the basin and are comprised of Agricultural Zones, General Agricultural Zones, and Limited Agricultural Zones (Figure 1). In terms of actual landcover, cropland covers 3% of the total area of the LWRB (see Sheet 2: Landscape Characteristics).



- Resource Development Zone covers 23% of the basin. According to the Zoning By-Law of the RM of Lac du Bonnet, Rural Development Zones identify “those rural lands in the municipality with a high capability for wildlife, natural resource activities and extensive recreational uses” (Rural Municipality of Lac Du Bonnet Zoning By-Law, 2004).
- Provincial forest covers 27% of the total area of the LWRB. The protected area is 16% of the total area of the LWRB, which overlaps with provincial parks and provincial forest areas.
- The Whiteshell Provincial Park covers an extensive area of the LWRB (1,073 km<sup>2</sup>). Only 660 km<sup>2</sup> of the park area is designated as protected, therefore the remaining park area (413 km<sup>2</sup>) is available to commercial resource development, such as mining. The Whiteshell Provincial Park does not have a management plan,<sup>1</sup> as required under Manitoba’s Provincial Parks Act (Government of Manitoba, 2018).
- First Nation reserves constitute around 1% of the total area of the LWRB. One First Nation community is located in the LWRB: Sagkeeng First Nation (or Fort Alexander Indian Reserve #3). In addition to designated reserve lands in the LWRB, all of the LWRB is also a traditional hunting and medicinal plant area of the Sagkeeng First Nation (Sagkeeng Anicinabe, 2015). In June 2007, the Sagkeeng Chief and Council filed a Statement of Claim with the Manitoba Court of Queen’s Bench seeking recognition of unextinguished Indigenous title<sup>2</sup> over traditional lands situated outside Treaty #1—from Fort Alexander east to the Ontario border (Sagkeeng Anicinabe, n.d.), which includes the LWRB.
- Brokenhead Ojibway Nation is located outside the LWRB boundaries (see Figure 2), but its members traditionally used the lands of the LWRB to hunt, fish, and gather. Brokenhead Ojibway Nation is undergoing a treaty land entitlement process to convert lands within the LWRB (RM of Lac du Bonnet) to reserve status (Treaty Land Entitlement Committee of Manitoba Inc., 2018; Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2015).
- The LWRB is also a Métis Recognized Harvesting Area, which enables the Métis to exercise their right to harvest natural resources for food and domestic use (Manitoba Métis Federation, 2018).
- Indigenous Peoples, including First Nations and Métis people, have a right to “free, prior and informed consent”<sup>3</sup> regarding all developments that may adversely impact Indigenous and Treaty rights (Government of Canada, 2018). Provincial and federal governments are obligated to exercise a Duty to Consult in these types of projects and policies, which has a direct effect on project approvals, licensing and authorization of permits, and other decisions (Government of Canada, 2019).

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<sup>1</sup> The last available management plan for the park is dated 1983. Available at [https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/pubs/parks-protected-spaces/park\\_info/whiteshell\\_master\\_plan.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/pubs/parks-protected-spaces/park_info/whiteshell_master_plan.pdf)

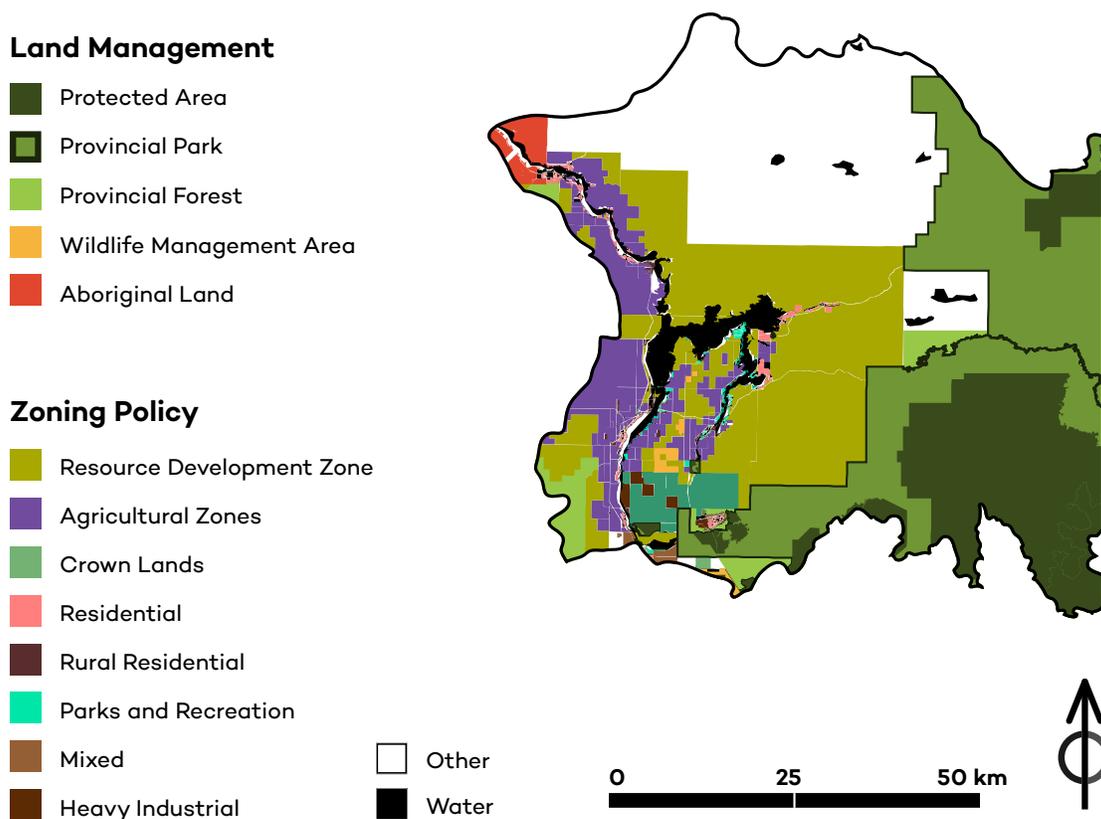
<sup>2</sup> Indigenous title is a communal land right that is based on an Indigenous group’s traditional use and occupancy of an area.

<sup>3</sup> As identified in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).



Current land management and land-use designations contribute to our understanding of developments in the basin and associated ecological impacts. The important land management considerations in the LWRB are resource development in parks and forests, agricultural development, the Treaty Land Entitlement process, and Indigenous interests and rights.

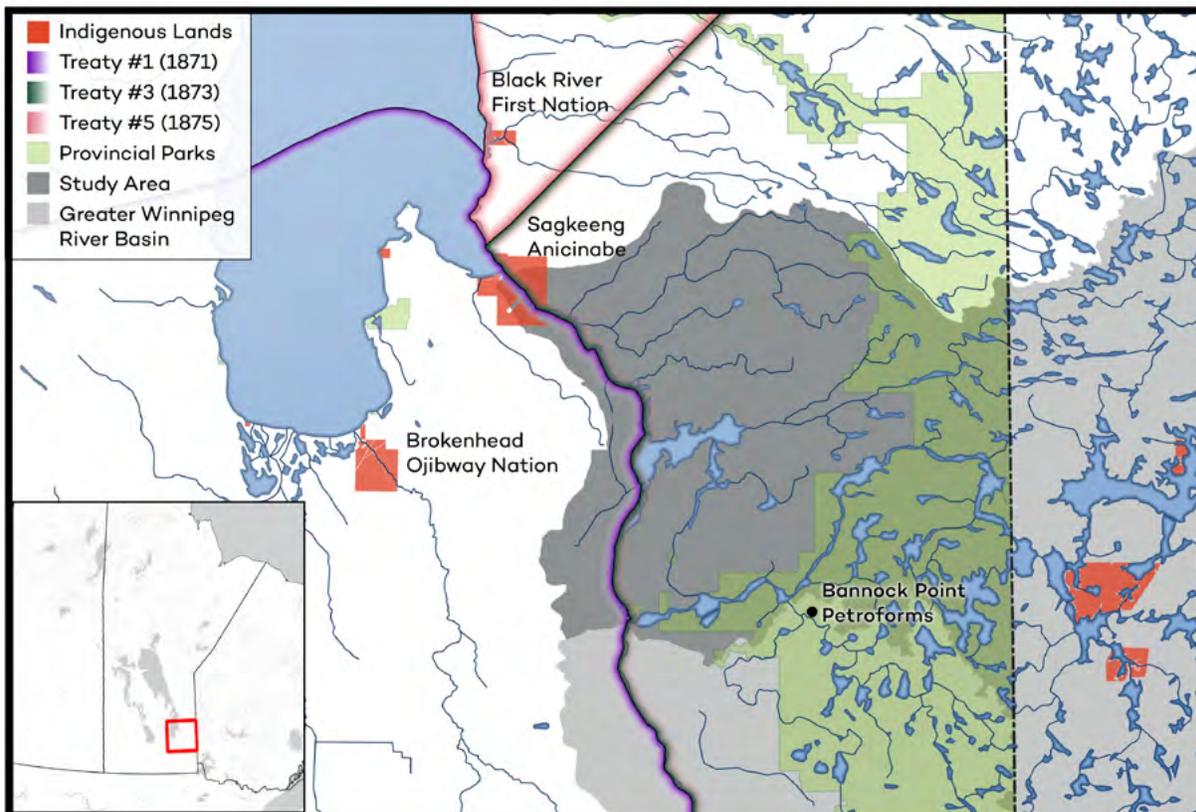
**Figure 1.** Land management and zoning policy map of the LWRB



Source: Government of Manitoba, n.d.



**Figure 2.** Map of Indigenous presence in the LWRB



Source: Natural Resources Canada, n.d.

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