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MANITOBA GOVERNMENT RECEIVES PROVINCIAL PARKS TOURISM REPORT

The Manitoba government has received the *Evaluating the Tourism Potential of Manitoba's Provincial Parks* report prepared by MNP on behalf of Travel Manitoba that demonstrates the significant untapped potential of Manitoba Parks, which will help inform the development of a new Manitoba Parks strategy, Environment, Climate and Parks Minister Jeff Wharton and Sport, Culture and Heritage Minister Andrew Smith, minister responsible for Travel Manitoba, announced today.

“Manitobans cherish provincial parks and the unforgettable experiences they offer,” said Wharton. “This report echoes last month’s speech from the throne, which promised a capital plan for major investment in parks and confirms the importance of continuing the legacy of the treasured parks systems. Our provincial parks are not for sale and we look forward to developing a bold, future-focused comprehensive strategy to enhance and preserve the provincial park system and ecosystems they support.

Among its recommendations, the report examines opportunities to enhance visitor experiences by making strategic investments in infrastructure and taking a client-centred approach to operations involving expanded partnerships including with Indigenous communities. The report recommends the modernization of the parks reservation system which is already underway, and undertaking a review of park-related fees to support the sustainability of the parks system, among other recommendations.

The Manitoba government is not considering any changes to park entry and camping fees at this time, Wharton noted.

“Our provincial parks are incredible places and we are committed to investing in our parks and ensuring accessibility for all Manitobans for generations to come,” said Wharton. “Our government is focused on making life more affordable for all Manitobans. With the rising cost of living, our government is committed to helping families make ends meet and we want to increase accessibility at our parks for all Manitobans to enjoy.”

The study’s recommendations include:

- welcoming more visitors from all walks of life including Manitobans with disabilities, low-income Manitobans, and newcomers to Canada;
- promoting of unique experiences in provincial parks;
- developing of partnerships to enrich parks guided by a deep commitment to advancing Indigenous reconciliation; and
- offering more quality accommodations and services.

“Manitoba’s parks are world-class destinations,” Smith said. “The information gathered in this report will help inform investments in parks that will be welcomed by all visitors, guests to the province and Manitobans alike.”

The Manitoba government will take these recommendations under consideration as it develops a new provincial park strategy to enhance visitor experiences and park services for Manitobans to enjoy for generations to come, Wharton added.

“This report confirms that there is tremendous potential to improve the visitor experience in our provincial parks for the benefit of both Manitobans and visitors alike,” said Colin Ferguson, president and CEO, Travel Manitoba. “We’re looking forward to working with the Manitoba government to advance some of the key initiatives recommended in the report.”

The Manitoba government will launch a public survey in the new year to seek input on all aspects of the new strategy.

To learn more about how these findings align with Manitoba’s tourism strategy, visit: <https://manitoba.ca/sd/parks/parks-strategy.html>.