



Manitoba Model Forest Inc.

A "Forest Communities Program" Site

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Honourable Bill Blaikie
Minister of Conservation
330 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

June 9, 2011

**Re: Moose Management Recommendations from the Manitoba Model Forest
Committee for Cooperative Moose Management**

Dear Minister Blaikie:

The Manitoba Model Forest Committee for Cooperative Moose Management (CCMM) would like to congratulate you on the several positive initiatives announced recently regarding the recovery of moose populations in the province. Since 1994, the CCMM has provided a venue for diverse interests, including First Nation, Metis and non-Aboriginal communities in eastern Manitoba, the forest industry, Manitoba Hydro, wildlife associations, Manitoba Trappers Association and others, to collaboratively and cooperatively have a voice in how moose are managed in game hunting areas (GHAs) of our region. Manitoba Conservation has also been an important part of the committee, providing staff, information and other resources. Over the years, the committee has undertaken research to understand wildlife population dynamics, assisted the provincial government financially in conducting aerial surveys, designed and implemented large-scale management experiments (for example, to study the effects road and hunting closures on moose populations), developed habitat supply and suitability models, educated residents in the region and beyond of the importance of moose, and (perhaps most importantly) provided management recommendations to government.

As a committee, we feel that the moose populations in several GHAs in eastern Manitoba are at a critical junction. Moose are a precious resource. They represent great cultural and social significance to not only people in our region, but in all of Manitoba. The moose population has significantly declined over the last decade in GHA 26 for a number

of reasons. We also recognize that management actions (those taken recently and those in the future) in GHA 26 can have ramifications for the moose population in adjacent and nearby GHAs (e.g., GHAs 17A and 17). A holistic view must be taken for the wise management of moose in our region. We believe that it is vitally important that management recommendations, developed at the grassroots level, be considered in government decisions. This ensures “buy-in” and greater effectiveness of regulations.

With this context, the Manitoba Model Forest CCMM, made up of those interests identified above, have developed a number of recommendations for moose management in our region to facilitate the recovery of moose in GHA 26, and to ensure sustainable populations in adjacent GHAs. Some recommendations are specific to GHA 26, while others take a more regional approach.

Our recommendations are that Manitoba Conservation:

Hunting

- Close moose hunting to all peoples in GHA 26 until the population reaches a level where a sustainable harvest can be re-introduced. The hunting closure should apply to both licensed and rights-based hunting;
- Develop a population target for moose by December 31, 2011, for re-introducing a future sustainable harvest;

Monitoring

- Ensure that appropriate programs, which are adequately resourced, are in place to monitor moose population numbers and factors contributing to population sustainability throughout the period of hunting closure;

Access

- Decommission access roads which pass through or encroach upon key areas critical to recovery of the moose population, including areas in both GHA 26 and 17A;
- Ensure opportunities for the CCMM, as well as economic stakeholders in the region (e.g., trappers, wild rice lake lease holders, etc) to provide recommendations on specific areas of access management, including short and long term road decommissioning plans;

Wolf Predation

- Establish a wolf management program to help the moose population recover;

The CCMM feels that the above recommendations are critical to the recovery of the moose population in GHA 26. The committee is also developing further recommendations, which, together with the above recommendations, will ensure sustainable moose populations in the broader region of eastern Manitoba into the future.

Finally, the CCMM recognizes the importance of community communications and consultations, and the importance of community support in undertaking moose conservation measures. We urge Manitoba Conservation to conclude the initial community consultations with respect to a moose hunting closure by mid – June. Further, we believe that it will be important to continue consultations thereafter and build upon the relationships that have been created through this process.

We thank you for the opportunity to take an active role in the recovery of the moose resource in eastern Manitoba. We look forward to assisting Manitoba Conservation with the implementation of these measures wherever possible.

Sincerely,



Dr. Brian G. Kotak
General Manager, and
Chair of the Committee for Cooperative Moose Management

cc:

Fred Meier, Deputy Minister, Manitoba Conservation
Serge Scrafield, Assistant Deputy Minister, Manitoba Conservation
Jack Dubois, Director, Wildlife and Ecosystem Protection
CCMM Members