

**PIKITIGUSHI
ENHANCED MANAGEMENT AREA
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE**

CHAPTER 12

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Pikitigushi Enhanced Management was established as a result of the *Lands for Life* and *Ontario's Living Legacy* land use planning processes. It is recognized in the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* (1999) as part of the Lake Nipigon Basin Featured Area (also known as Signature Site), one of nine identified featured areas.

This enhanced management area (EMA) is one of seventeen Land Use Designations that form the Lake Nipigon Basin Signature Site. *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* recognizes this area as providing significant woodland caribou habitat as well as ensuring a landscape linkage between Wabakimi Park and Lake Nipigon.

The designation of enhanced management area allows for more detailed land use direction in areas with special features or values. The same activities that occur in general use areas can also occur in EMAs (i.e. forestry, mining, trapping, hunting, aggregate extraction), however these activities may be subject to special conditions that are designed to support the special values of the area.

The planning process and public consultation required for the development of this resource management guideline was an integral part of the overall development of the *Ecological Land Use and Resource Management Strategy for the Lake Nipigon Basin*. Detailed information relating to the process followed and the public input obtained can be found in Appendix A of the Strategy document.

2 DESCRIPTION

The Pikitigushi Enhanced Management Area is a fish and wildlife category EMA. It is located north and northwest of Lake Nipigon and is 36,062.5 hectares in size (Figure 49 and 50). The EMA includes several areas of critical winter habitat for forest-dwelling woodland caribou, and along with the recommended Whitesand River Park, contributes to an important travel route for caribou between Lake Nipigon and Wabakimi Provincial Park.

Forest-dwelling Woodland caribou are a threatened species in Ontario. The Lake Nipigon caribou are one of the most southerly herds in Ontario, and are considered to be a vital link between the populations along the shore of Lake Superior and the current zone of continuous occupied caribou range.

The animals travel from the islands on Lake Nipigon after summer calving, and move north to their wintering habitat. The Pikitigushi EMA, in conjunction with the provincial parks and conservation reserves along the north portion of Lake Nipigon provide both winter habitat as well as cover habitat to facilitate movement to more distant winter habitat blocks. If the winter habitat on the mainland disappears or if that connectivity function is severed, the entire Lake Nipigon population will be placed in jeopardy. In addition, this strategically valuable population needs to be connected to other animals in the areas to the north, east, west and south of the basin, to ensure reproductive linkages with the remainder of the caribou metapopulation are maintained.

While the general location of the Pikitigushi EMA as displayed in the OLL Land Use Strategy is correct, it does not adequately encompass the most critical elements of the caribou's winter habitat or travel routes. As a result, the boundary has been modified significantly to capture the essential portions of winter habitat that is needed to meet the intent of the EMA. Specifically, the modified boundary of the EMA now better represents the:

- known winter habitat tracts
- known travel corridors; and through silviculture and roads management will become available in the future

3 LAND USE DIRECTION

Land uses in the Pikitigushi Enhanced Management Area will be governed on the basis of their compatibility with the intent to conserve and manage for the sustainability of the caribou winter habitat within the EMA.

Given that this is a fish and wildlife category EMA, the primary objective of retaining and enhancing the woodland caribou winter habitat must not be compromised. For example, critical habitat tracts that exist on sand flats, sand dune complexes and other landforms that are naturally conducive to retaining the appropriate vegetation composition and structure for caribou must be managed with extreme care (Figure 51).

Forestry operations will be guided by the *Forest Management Guidelines for the Conservation of Woodland Caribou: A Landscape Approach*. In order to reduce impacts through predation and human-made disturbances, new permanent road access within the EMA should be avoided. Secondary and tertiary roads must be made impassable and be rehabilitated when no longer required.

This area may also be subject to future research and recovery strategies for caribou as warranted.

4 CROWN LAND DISPOSITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Alienated lands within the Pikitigushi Enhanced Management Area are limited to the Armstrong airport area and some lands near the community of Armstrong. No further development, sale or lease of Crown lands will be permitted in the EMA, except under the *Mining Act* or where required to address health and safety requirements associated with existing development.

4.1 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION:

4.1.1 TOURISM

Tourism development (e.g., sale, lease) will not be permitted and tourism activities will not be promoted in the area, especially during the winter season.

4.1.2 COTTAGING

No cottage development will be permitted on Crown land in the EMA.

4.1.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Necessary infrastructure development, (e.g. for communities of Armstrong and Whitesand or the CNR) may be permitted in the EMA, where no other alternatives exist.

5.0 COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

A number of commercial activities are permitted within the Pikitigushi Enhanced Management Area, including mineral exploration, forestry, fur harvesting, bait fishing and aggregate extraction. There is no potential for hydroelectric power generation development. These uses are permitted to continue while ensuring that the significant caribou habitat in this area is protected.

5.1 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

5.1.1 FOREST OPERATIONS

Domtar Inc. is the current Sustainable Forest Licence holder for the Armstrong Forest in which the Pikitigushi Enhanced Management Area is located. Forest management practices in this EMA will be modified in a manner that will ensure the maintenance of important woodland caribou wintering habitat in the EMA. These modifications will be implemented with no impact on wood supply and only in exceptional cases will wood cost be affected.

Forestry activities will be planned to protect caribou habitat and enhance travel routes from the Lake Nipigon calving grounds to critical winter habitat within the EMA. This will generally be accomplished through adherence to the *Forest Management Guidelines for the Conservation of Woodland Caribou: A Landscape Approach*, as forest management plans are prepared for the area.

With regard to access for forest management operations, the overall intent is to limit, within operational constraints, the number, duration and standard of roads built in the EMA, and to limit the number of accessible roadbeds remaining after operations are complete in order to minimize impacts on

woodland caribou. Roads will be planned and constructed to the lowest standard possible (including but not necessarily winter roads only), taking into account economic and operational requirements. New permanent roads will only be permitted where no other reasonable alternative exists. Secondary and tertiary roads will be made impassable when no longer required for forestry activities, in accordance with the use management strategy for each road. Road abandonment will normally include removing all culverts and bridges from crossings and in most cases will require making the road impassable by ditching, scarifying or creating a berm. In areas of the most critical caribou habitat within the EMA, rehabilitation of roadbeds may be required. New roads for second chance harvest should be directed to existing roadbeds where possible, with road location and construction facilitating access controls and abandonment.

Forest management practices will be implemented to ensure the protection of important fish habitat in Lake Nipigon tributaries. Normally, temporary bridges will be used at stream crossings unless site conditions do not allow this. A close liaison between the Ministry of Natural Resources biologist and Sustainable Forest Licence holder will be maintained when carrying out road planning and planning for construction and abandonment of water crossings. A joint site inspection will be required for any crossings requiring in-stream work or culvert installation unless it is mutually agreed that this is not required.

It will be critical to ensure that the planning and management of existing and future forest access in the EMA takes into account potential long-term impacts on caribou populations. To this end, forest management planning teams should ensure that road management strategies consider the following as forest management plans are developed:

- The location and management of permanent access required for forestry and transportation, and its potential effects on caribou populations;

- Areas of special caribou habitat (i.e. critical winter habitat) where access should be limited; and
- The identification of existing and future roads that will be physically removed, rehabilitated or allowed to naturally deteriorate in relation to caribou habitat concerns.

Forest management activities and prescriptions will consider landscape and ecological linkages, habitat requirements for caribou and in particular the need to maintain a linked network, spatially and temporally, of mature forest tracts between Lake Nipigon and Wabakimi Park.

Aggregate supplies may be extracted from pits within the road right-of-way or within areas approved for allocations, where required for the construction and maintenance of forest access roads within the EMA. In the cases where sufficient aggregate supplies are not available, aggregate may be extracted outside of the road right-of-way or approved allocations through the standard permitting process currently in place. All pits will be rehabilitated at the end of the period of use.

5.1.2 MINERAL EXPLORATION

Mineral exploration and extraction is permitted in this EMA. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) in conjunction with MNR has developed *Guidelines for Exploration Practices in Enhanced Management Areas in Ontario* (2002). These Guidelines set out a code of “best practices” which prospectors will be encouraged to follow to ensure minimal impact on the environment, addressing road/trail building, working around water, camp operation and abandonment procedures. When work permits or other forms of approval are required for exploration activities, the best practice guidelines will be incorporated into the permit or approval document. An appropriate protocol will be developed to make certain that up-to-date values information is provided to MNDM by MNR and subsequently, to the prospectors working in the EMA so that they can conduct

their activities without negatively impacting on known values. A copy of this Guideline is appended to the *Lake Nipigon Basin Signature Site Ecological Land Use and Resource Management Strategy*.

5.1.3 AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

Aggregate extraction in this enhanced management area will be restricted to the construction of forest access roads and for mining exploration and development.

Commercial aggregate operations are not permitted.

5.1.4 BAIT FISHING

There are two bait fish blocks that fall entirely or partly within the EMA. Bait fishing will continue to be a permitted use.

5.1.5 FUR HARVESTING

A portion of trapline NG-21 falls within the enhanced management area. Trapping is a permitted use in enhanced management areas. Through education and communication, efforts will be made to ensure that trapping activities and current and future recreation activities do not conflict. Trapping cabins are a permitted use associated with fur harvesting; trappers will be encouraged to locate their cabins outside of the EMA.

5.1.6 OTHER COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

Other commercial activities having the potential to affect the habitat values of the EMA will not be permitted (e.g., peat extraction, new Hydroelectric Development, etc). Commercial fishing does not occur within the EMA. Commercial activities that do not impact on the values within the EMA may be permitted (e.g., wild rice harvesting).

6.0 CROWN LAND RECREATION

Angling, hunting and camping are the primary recreational activities that take place in the Pikitigushi Enhanced Management Area and form an integral part of the social and economic aspect of the surrounding communities.

6.1 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

6.1.1 CROWN LAND RECREATION

Crown land recreation activities such as angling, camping, hunting and berry picking all occur in the enhanced management area and will continue to be permitted.

6.1.2 HUNTING

Hunting will continue to be a permitted use in the enhanced management area. The EMA falls within Wildlife Management Units 15B and 16C. Moose are the principal big game animal in the area. Subsistence hunting also occurs in this area.

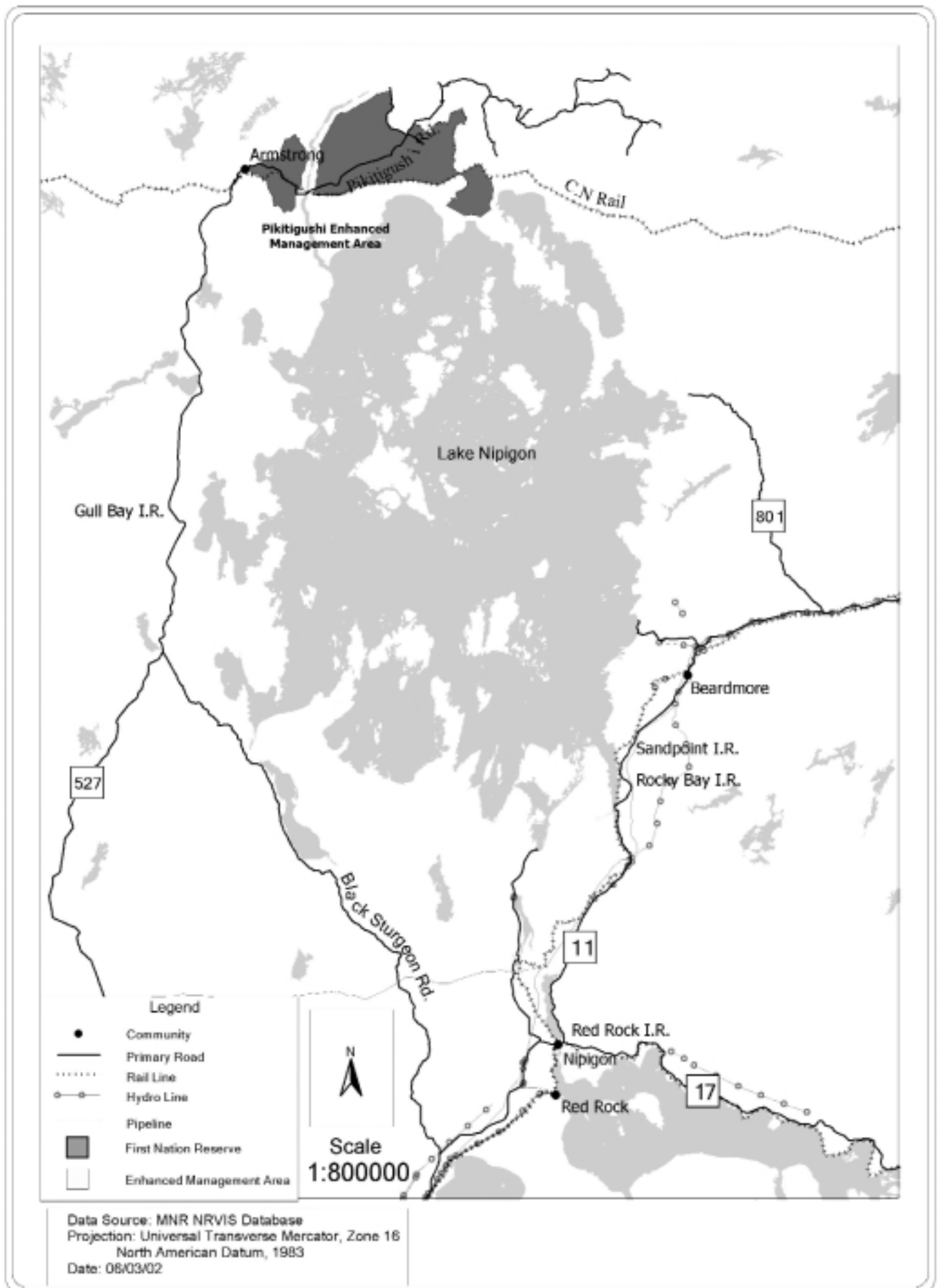
6.1.3 ANGLING

Angling is a permitted use within the Pikitigushi EMA. The entire EMA is in Fishing Division 33 however, some Division 34 regulations apply in the tributaries up to the first barrier to migration (i.e. northern pike season opens the third Saturday in May and walleye and sauger open June 10).

6.1.4 TRAILS

Organized snowmachine and/or ATV trails will be discouraged in the EMA, due to their undesirable impact on caribou wintering in the area. Trails that facilitate travel through the area where no reasonable alternatives exist may be permitted.

FIGURE 49: REGIONAL SETTING MAP FOR PIKITIGUSHI ENHANCED MANAGEMENT AREA



INSERT FIGURE 50
BOUNDARY MAP FOR PIKITIGUSHI ENHANCED MANAGEMENT AREA

INSERT FIGURE 51
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MAP FOR PIKITIGUSHI ENHANCED MANAGEMENT AREA

