

Holmgren Pines Ecological Reserve

Backgrounder

Land Designation

Ecological reserves play a key role in Manitoba's Protected Areas Initiative by protecting unique, rare and representative examples of plants, animals, geological features and ecosystems. They are the most protected of the provincially designated sites within Manitoba's network of protected areas.

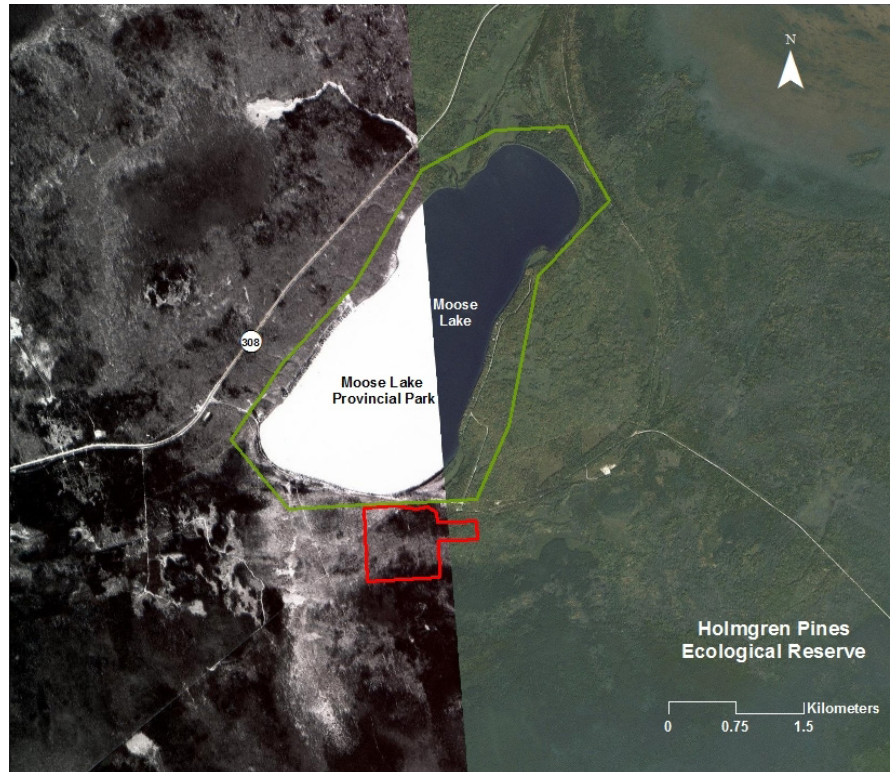
Landscape Description

The 81 hectare Holmgren Pines Ecological Reserve is located in the south eastern corner of Manitoba near the south shore of Moose Lake, about 35 kilometres northeast of the town of Sprague, Manitoba. Moose Lake Provincial Park lies along the northern boundary of the area. The area is largely covered by deciduous and mixed coniferous forest communities. The landscape is composed of irregular topography that is very gently to moderately sloping with localised depressions.



Outstanding Features

This is the only known location in Manitoba where all three native pine species – eastern white pine, red pine and Jack pine grow together. Eastern white pine is considered to be provincially rare and has been classified as 'vulnerable' by the Manitoba Endangered Species Advisory Committee. Additionally, eastern white pine is considered a species of special concern because it is at the northeastern edge of its range in southeastern Manitoba. Since this species is considered to be so rare provincially, individuals at the edge of their range are considered to be genetically unique. Red pine is also considered provincially rare to uncommon according to the Manitoba Conservation Data Centre (CDC). Jack pine is very common and abundant in suitable sites throughout a large portion of Manitoba.



The ecological reserve also supports a diverse understory shrub layer including: twining honeysuckle, wild red current, and blueberry, as well as ground cover herbs such as: woodland strawberry, wild sarsparilla, mountain rice grass, pale vetching, northern starflower, and stemless lady's-slipper. Another uncommon plant that is possibly in the Holmgren Pines region is the large white-flowered ground cherry, which has been reported in the Moose Lake area.

Small mammals that can be found in the area include the pygmy shrew, heather vole, striped skunk, and star-nosed mole. There have also been sightings of various wildlife including moose, white-tailed deer and Manitoba's provincial bird, great gray owl in the area. In addition to this, blue-spotted salamanders are found on the site, which is not perceived to be typical habitat.

Holmgren Pines Ecological Reserve will protect and conserve the only known location in Manitoba where all three native pine species are known to grow together, including the provincially rare red pine and eastern white pine. Passive visits by foot will be allowed along the existing main trail. Indigenous peoples are permitted to carry out their treaty and aboriginal rights within the ecological reserve.

This area is categorized by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as a protected area under the management category Ia – a protected area managed for strict nature protection available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring. These protected lands are free from logging, mining, hydroelectric development, oil and gas development, and any other activities that could harm habitat.