

# Cat Lake - Slate Falls

## Community Based Land Use Plan

“Niigaan Bimaadiziwin” - A Future Life



Cat Lake First Nation  
Slate Falls Nation  
and  
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

July 2011

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**Cat Lake - Slate Falls  
Community Based Land Use Plan  
“Niigaan Bimaadiziwin” – A Future Life**

Cat Lake First Nation, Slate Falls Nation and Ontario have reached an important milestone with the completion of a final Community Based Land Use Plan. This accomplishment is the result of working together over several years in good faith and with mutual respect. The foundation has now been set to continue this relationship throughout plan implementation.

Setting a course for the well-being of future generations, this plan affirms the importance of ongoing traditional use and the First Nations’ relationship to the land. Area dedications in the plan provide for protection of important waterways and natural and cultural heritage features and offer certainty for sustainable economic development opportunities. In finding a balance, the plan will contribute to a strong future for Cat Lake and Slate Falls communities and provide meaningful opportunities for the youth.

In 2009, as this planning process was getting underway, Ontario introduced Bill 191, the Far North Act, to provide a legal basis for planning. We are now pleased to recognize our plan under the Far North Act, 2010, as approved by Cat Lake First Nation, Slate Falls Nation and Ontario. From this point forward, land use activities in the planning area must be consistent with the land use direction specified in this plan.

It is with sincere pleasure that we endorse the Cat Lake - Slate Falls Community Based Land Use Plan, “Niigaan Bimaadiziwin” - A Future Life.



Honourable Linda Jeffrey  
Minister of Natural  
Resources

By Minister's Order  
Far North Act 2010



Chief Matthew Keewaykapow  
Cat Lake First Nation

By Band Council Resolution



Chief Lorraine Crane  
Slate Falls Nation

By Band Council Resolution

## *Acknowledgements*

Approval of the Cat Lake-Slate Falls Community Based Land Use Plan is the result of the leadership, efforts and support of many people - people in the community, people outside the community, people working with funding organizations, and with the province. The Cat Lake-Slate Falls Planning team would like to acknowledge everyone's support and collaborative efforts to reach this achievement.

We acknowledge the leadership of the Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations' Chiefs and Council, guidance of community elders and participation of community members. The communities have many important issues to address. The time taken to participate in this planning process was appreciated.

We acknowledge the participation and support of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the support, advice and expertise provided by the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forests. We acknowledge Sioux Lookout District and Northwest Regional staff, and advisors with Far North Branch, Water Resources Information Program, Climate Change Section and Ontario Parks.

We acknowledge the agencies that have provided funding to support our process including the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forests, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Industry Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada. Without your support, the completion of this Community Based Land Use Plan and the initiation of the communities' goal for a strong, sustainable and vibrant future would not have transpired.

And we appreciate the contribution of all people and organizations providing views, perspectives and advice, including those who have participated in consultation opportunities.

*Kichi Meegwetch*

# Cat Lake - Slate Falls Community Based Land Use Plan 2011

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# *Cat Lake-Slate Falls Community Based Land Use Plan 2011*

## *Plan Summary*

The Cat Lake-Slate Falls Community Based Land Use Plan is the result of three years of planning. Cat Lake First Nation, Slate Falls Nation and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources worked in partnership to prepare the plan. The plan is approved by both First Nations and the Government of Ontario, under the Far North Act 2010. The partners will now move forward to implement the plan and enable opportunities for environmentally sustainable economic development, including a new forest management opportunity.

The plan addresses a 1.5 million hectare area, encompassing a portion of the communities' self-described traditional territories in the Far North of Ontario. The plan conveys an understanding of Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nation people's relationship to the land as a primary context for decision making.

The land use plan articulates Cat Lake and Slate Falls' vision to support the well-being of future generations by affirming an ongoing relationship with the land and continuation of ancestral stewardship responsibilities. This is affirmed in the context of contemporary interests and new resource-based opportunities.

The plan establishes goals and objectives for planning which address cultural, social, environment and economic interests, including the Far North Act 2010 objectives for planning. The economic development objective speaks to defining opportunities that will benefit the First Nations. A catalyst for planning was a potential forestry opportunity, but all potential opportunities in the planning area have been considered.

Extensive community-led Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) data collection programs supported planning. In addition, Ontario assembled the most current information on natural resource values, watershed mapping, bedrock and surficial geology and mineral potential. Expert advisors provided guidance on climate change emerging directions and technology, species at risk protection and the consideration of cumulative impacts.

The land use plan defines three land use areas, land use designations and permitted activities. The plan recognizes that proposals for specific activities will also be subject to any additional requirements that exist in policy, guidelines or legislation (e.g., environmental assessment). The Cat Lake-Slate Falls land use areas are:

- a Dedicated Protected Area ( 495,833 hectares; 34% of the planning area\*) with a focus on waterway protection, traditional use and tourism;
- an Enhanced Management Area - cultural heritage category (369,311 hectares; 25% of the planning area), providing for all land uses with additional direction to protect special features/values; and
- a General Use Area (576,613 hectares; 40% of the planning area) providing for all land uses.

\*The total protected areas as a percentage of the planning area is 35%. This is the sum of Dedicated Protected Area (34%) and the existing Pipestone River Provincial Park (1%).

Strategic direction statements in the plan guide how land use activities should take place to achieve desired outcomes and objectives. Key strategic directions:

- provide for traditional use and new livelihood opportunities in a manner that will be guided by the First Nation community members, working together with Ontario;
- emphasize Cat Lake-Slate Falls Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge as a foundation for decision making, now and in future;
- encourage realization of sustainable economic development that can benefit the First Nations of Cat Lake and Slate Falls;
- promote protection of community and ecological values while supporting mineral sector economic development opportunities by applying Cat Lake-Slate Falls Guidelines for Mineral Sector Projects: Best Management Practices for mineral sector activities;
- provide for conservation and protection of ecosystems by:
  - providing for interconnection of major waterways and headwater areas;
  - supporting species at risk habitat needs;
  - supporting linkages within and beyond the planning area for the interconnection of fish and wildlife habitat; and,
  - adopting a strategic access planning approach;
- apply water resources information to enhance watershed protection measures and provide for consideration of cumulative impacts in subsequent decisions; and
- recognize the need to understand and adapt to climate change.

Separate appendices (available upon request) provide background information maps and Cat Lake-Slate Falls Guidelines for Mineral Sector Projects: Best Management Practices. Contact information is included in the plan.

### **Implementation of the Plan**

The plan is a living document subject to ongoing monitoring and full review every fifteen years. Ten action items will be addressed in the near future including establishing a joint implementation approach, pursuing economic opportunities and jointly determining the type of protected area designation. An implementation team will advance the understanding of new watershed information, cumulative impacts analysis, and climate change effects and mitigation measures.

The next step is to realize a new forest management opportunity for Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations. The MNR will work together with the communities to seek new Environmental Assessment Act coverage for forest management activities in areas of the Cat Lake-Slate Falls plan, where forestry has been identified as a permitted land use activity.



## *Preface*

A primary reason for Cat Lake First Nation and Slate Falls Nation to be leading this land use planning initiative is to provide for the well-being of future generations. The land is an integral part of the cultural, economic and spiritual existence of our First Nations. This relationship between the People and the land must be the cornerstone of all future decision making.

When we speak of the land, we are also speaking of the water. Water and water systems are vital to all life, and inseparable from Cat Lake and Slate Falls peoples' spiritual and cultural existence. The footprint of our people existing in harmony on the land for centuries can be directly linked to the water, as affirmed through Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and teachings. Thus, the protection of water systems is a key focus for our land use plan.

Our vision statement is:

“Cat Lake First Nation and Slate Falls Nation will maintain our ancestral stewardship responsibilities for the land that was given to us as a sacred gift from the Creator and pursue resource-based opportunities including forest management.”

This vision expresses our intention to maintain the Anishnawbe relationship to the land and to maintain the Anishnawbe way of life in harmony with new land use activities. These new activities will be integrated with traditional land uses in a way that is guided by our traditional values and principles.

*“I hope one day this (Land Use Plan) will be a reality for our future, as a First Nation member, I consider this to be a challenge for a better tomorrow. Stabilize future development by contacting directly and openly with all ages. Lastly, my hope is that one day we will return to enjoy what is rightfully ours, interact with Mother Nature.”*

*Frank Sakakeesic, Cat Lake First Nation*

## *PART ONE: Plan Context*

### *1.1 Introduction*

Cat Lake First Nation and Slate Falls Nation are pleased to introduce this community based land use plan as it provides direction for land use now and into the future. The plan is the result of a collaborative effort between the communities and with the province of Ontario. The planning process itself took three years to complete but the communities' planning initiative began more than ten years ago. And, with the communities' continuing dedication and guidance, a joint implementation approach will keep the plan alive and current.

Cat Lake and Slate Falls are striving to achieve a vision in which ancestral relationships and responsibilities are maintained and new sustainable development opportunities are realized. Resources of the Cat Lake-Slate Falls landscape can support many such opportunities including tourism, mineral exploration and mining and forest management. The communities' intent is to identify and manage opportunities and by doing so, provide for a better future with increased community self-reliance and the means to address long-term community development priorities.

The Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning initiative formally began on December 5, 2000 with a joint signing of a Statement of Intent with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). This statement confirmed the parties' intention to work cooperatively in land use and resource development planning. Planning would provide the framework for integrating economic, social and environmental values in decision making and balancing competing interests. The partners engaged in a dialogue to build a relationship, and clarify understandings and expectations.

In 2008, Cat Lake First Nation, Slate Falls Nation and MNR signed the Terms of Reference for preparation of the Cat Lake-Slate Falls Community Based Land Use Plan. The Terms set out a process to be led by the First Nations working together with Ontario, bringing forward Cat Lake and Slate Falls' principles, values and direction for land use and resource development as well as those of Ontario. Cat Lake and Slate Falls agreed to take equal responsibility for completion of the consensus-based decision-making process.

Near the time of the signing the Terms of Reference, Ontario introduced the Far North Land Use Planning Initiative and Bill 191, the Far North Act. The Cat Lake-Slate Falls process has moved forward in step with this emerging direction and is now approved as a plan under the Far North Act 2010.

As more First Nation communities in the Far North are becoming interested and beginning to initiate their own community-based process, Cat Lake and Slate Falls are frequently invited to share their experience in planning. Cat Lake and Slate Falls have assisted in community meetings, youth engagement sessions, Chief and Council meetings and Tribal Council Meetings to help communities build their own capacity for planning. Topics of discussion often include Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge data collection projects, species at risk inventories, assembly and understanding of

resource data, Ontario-First Nation partnership arrangements, shared area approaches, planning process, funding proposal development, and community training initiatives.

The Cat Lake-Slate Falls Community Based Land Use Plan (the *Cat Lake-Slate Falls Plan*) addresses nearly 1.5 million hectares in the Far North of Ontario. This planning area is a portion of Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations' self-described traditional territories. Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations also describe traditional territory extending outside the planning area, including areas extending to the south of the Far North boundary.

It is hoped that this plan will give the reader a sense of the landscape and of Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nation people's relationship to the land as a primary context for decision making. The plan is presented in three parts: Part One describes the context for decision-making; Part Two describes the land use areas and strategic direction; and Part Three provides direction for implementation of the plan.

To begin, the guiding direction for preparation and implementation of the land use plan expressed as goals, objectives and principles is provided in the next section.

*"Our vision is for the well-being of our future generations. With this plan, Cat Lake and Slate Falls are setting a course to protect our water and water systems as they are an essential part of our spiritual and cultural existence, while moving forward with the potential of the land for new resource-based opportunities."*

*Chief Matthew Keewaykapow, Cat Lake First Nation*

## ***1.2. Guiding Direction - Goals, Objectives & Principles***

Goals, objectives and principles are expressed to guide the preparation and implementation of the land use plan. These guiding statements are designed to support achievement of Cat Lake and Slate Falls' vision to maintain the Anishnawbe relationship to the land and to maintain the Anishnawbe way of life in harmony with new land use activities, providing for a strong, sustainable and vibrant future for these communities.

The *Cat Lake-Slate Falls Plan* is designed to respond to the guiding statements by setting out land use areas, identifying desired and compatible land uses and providing strategic direction for the manner in which activities will take place. The plan adds to the existing foundation of policy and legislation in Ontario that underpins environmental sustainability.

### **Goals**

The land use plan will provide direction to guide future land and resource management, seeking to:

- Improve the social and economical benefits of lands and resources to Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations through identification of environmentally sustainable economic development opportunities;
- Provide for development that will contribute to self reliant, self sustaining communities;
- Provide for new livelihood opportunities in a manner that will be harmonized with customary and existing uses; and
- Provide for conservation and protection of ecosystems.

### **Objectives**

The land use plan and its implementation will contribute to the following objectives:

- Communicate the relationship of First Nations to the land;
- Describe and support maintenance of the inherent cultural, social and economic benefits of the lands and resources to Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nation people who traditionally use the area for subsistence and spiritual value;
- Provide a balance between protection and sustainable economic development;
- Sustain waterways that are a defining feature of the planning area and the foundation of the communities;
- Provide strategic direction that will contribute to the sustainability of lands and resources, including to:
  - sustain free flowing waterways; and
  - sustain biological diversity and abundance, including support for the needs of species at risk (e.g., woodland caribou, lake sturgeon and wolverine);

- Provide zoning and strategic direction to support existing land uses and identify new livelihood opportunities for Cat Lake and Slate Falls, addressing:
  - a new sustainable commercial forestry opportunity<sup>1</sup>;
  - existing and new tourism opportunities;
  - mineral sector interests with emphasis on areas of significant mineral potential;
  - new renewable energy business opportunities;
  - electrical transmission and telecommunications priorities;
  - areas of dedicated protection and areas of fragility/vulnerability requiring protection;
  - identification of areas where access would be suitable and areas where access would not be suitable, considering community needs and traditional activities, and new land use opportunities; and
  - recreation opportunities in the planning area.
- Provide direction for the harmony of new uses with customary uses;
- Identify learning, training and educational opportunities for communities to build long term planning and resource management capacity;
- Provide strategic direction to support decision making in subsequent processes such as resource management planning or environmental assessments;
- Emphasize the importance of environmentally sound practices to sustain economic opportunities; and
- Consider opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Additional sources of direction informing the preparation and implementation of the land use plan include:

- Our Sustainable Future (2005) and Our Sustainable Future: A Renewed Call to Action (April 2011) which outlines MNR's vision of sustainable development and the mission of ecological sustainability, and establishes a commitment to the conservation of biodiversity;
- MNR Community-based Land Use Planning policy (2002), guiding the planning initiative prior to introduction of the Far North Planning Initiative in 2008;
- MNR's Statement of Environmental Values under the Ontario Bill of Rights;
- Ontario's Caribou Conservation Plan (2009) and Ontario's Endangered Species Act (2007);
- Sustainability in a Changing Climate: A Strategy for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources 2011-2014, and, Climate Ready: Ontario's Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan 2011-2014;
- Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011; and
- Ontario's Far North Planning Initiative (2008), and the Far North Act 2010 which provide direction on policy and planning. The objectives for land use planning in the Far North are provided in the Far North Act 2010:
  1. A significant role for First Nations in the planning.
  2. The protection of areas of cultural value in the Far North and the protection of ecological systems in the Far North by including at least 225,000 square kilometres of the Far North in an interconnected

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<sup>1</sup> Cat Lake First Nation and Slate Falls Nation wish to realize benefits from future commercial forest management. It is the goal of Cat Lake and Slate Falls to have one hundred (100%) percent ownership in a First Nations corporate entity that holds a Sustainable Forest License (SFL). Through land use planning, forestry opportunities will be considered in an integrated manner with all other land use interests and capabilities.

- network of protected areas designated in community based land use plans.
3. The maintenance of biological diversity, ecological processes and ecological functions, including the storage and sequestration of carbon in the Far North.
  4. Enabling sustainable economic development that benefits the First Nations.

## Principles

The following principles express underlying values to guide both the land use plan and future decision making for land and resource activities:

- All land use direction is premised upon respect for Aboriginal and treaty rights;
- Incorporate Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in all facets of planning, including the knowledge and advice of community elders and traditional teachers;
- Incorporate contemporary science and management approaches representing the best and most current information available;
- Seek advice and strive to reach community consensus on land use plan development and land and resource designations;
- Ensure that identified land and resource development occurs in a manner that sustains the environment;
- Cat Lake and Slate Falls will apply our traditional values and principles to harmonize new livelihood opportunities with customary and existing uses;
- Address conservation and protection of the environment as a priority, initial step in planning;
- Support maintenance of natural landscape patterns to provide a continuous supply of wildlife habitat;
- Maintain intact, healthy watersheds to support human existence, fish and wildlife populations;
- Conserve ecological features and functions;
- Protect cultural and natural heritage values from negative impacts. Mitigation of potential impacts on the communities' social and cultural fabric is a key priority;
- In situations where infrastructure is considered, provide direction to support the highest possible long term value to the communities of Cat lake and Slate Falls (e.g. access); and
- Support achievement of employment and business development opportunities by First Nation members including promotion of training and skills development.

### 1.3. Land Use Planning Area

This section provides a description of the Cat Lake-Slate Falls Planning Area geography, the lands and resources, and past and present land uses.

#### Cat Lake -Slate Falls Planning Area

The Cat Lake -Slate Falls Planning Area covers 1,462,975 hectares, defined on the basis of traplines, existing planning boundaries and arrangements respecting neighbouring First Nation communities (See Figure 1). This planning area is a portion of Cat Lake's and Slate Falls' self-described traditional territories in the Far North of Ontario. The planning area does not define Cat Lake or Slate Falls First Nations' full self-described traditional territories; Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations describe traditional territory extending outside the planning area, including areas extending to the south of the Far North boundary. The planning area figure excludes First Nation reserve lands.

Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nation both belong to Treaty 9, Nishnawbe Aski Nation. The communities decided to adopt a joint planning approach and defined a joint planning area recognizing that they have many shared interests and values, close family ties, shared historical occupancy and traditional use along the Cat River system.

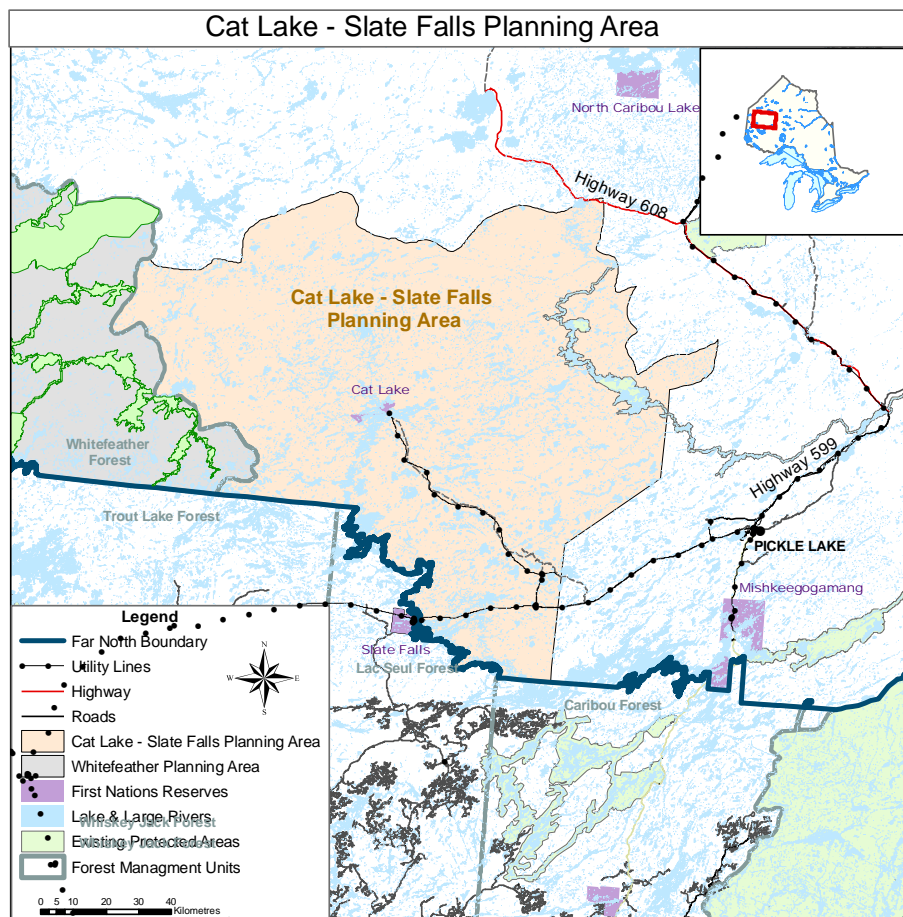


Figure 1: Cat Lake - Slate Falls Planning Area

The planning area is bordered by the Whitefeather Forest, Trout Lake Forest Management Unit (FMU), Lac Seul FMU, and the Caribou FMU. Adjacent communities are Mishkeegogamang First Nation, North Caribou First Nation, Pikangikum First Nation and MacDowell Lake.

Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations recognize that this planning area includes shared areas of traditional use with adjacent First Nations including Mishkeegogamang First Nation, North Caribou First Nation, and Pikangikum First Nation. During the planning process, Cat Lake and Slate Falls have engaged adjacent First Nation communities in dialogue to discuss the planning process, shared interests and the planning area boundary. This dialogue affirmed that the land use planning area does not alter recognition of shared areas of traditional use. As well, communities identified, and determined approaches to address, interests and concerns through reaching consensus with each community's leadership and membership.

The Cat Lake-Slate Falls Planning Area boundary has been confirmed along with the following specific agreements:

- Pikangikum First Nation, Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations reached consensus on the western boundary of the Cat Lake and Slate Falls Planning Area. Slight modifications were made to the western Cat Lake-Slate Falls Planning Area boundary to align with traplines and the Whitefeather Forest Plan planning area;
- On the eastern side of the planning boundary, a specific arrangement was developed by Cat Lake First Nation, Slate Falls Nation and Mishkeegogamang First Nation to address an area of shared interest and traditional use. This arrangement confirmed that a First Nation to First Nation dialogue would be followed to provide for involvement of the communities in planning and subsequent decision making including provisions for:
  - ongoing dialogue throughout the planning process
  - dialogue in plan implementation, including subsequent resource management planning.
  - sharing information and exploring approaches to strengthen achievement of each others' plan objectives, for example for an interconnected design for waterway protection and complementary land use designations.
- On the northern planning area boundary, Cat Lake First Nation, Slate Falls Nation and North Caribou Lake First Nation reached consensus that an area of shared interest near Ochek Lake (Trapline #250) which was originally included in the Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning area would be addressed in the North Caribou Lake land use planning process. The head trapper in this area is a member of North Caribou Lake. The area was removed from the Cat Lake-Slate Falls Planning Area at the Draft Plan stage in 2009.



## Land and Resources

The Cat-Slate Planning Area is rich in natural resources; it is a pristine, largely remote wilderness environment with clean free flowing rivers and healthy, productive fish and wildlife populations. These resources have been protected by aboriginal people since time immemorial and managed for subsistence and traditional activities that rely upon the land, water and air. A high degree of remoteness is characteristic of the area.

The lands and resources are described under the following topics: water, ecology, forest, mammals, birds, waterfowl and reptiles, fish, and geology.

### **Water**

Water courses are a dominant feature of this landscape and traditional transportation patterns. The planning area is notable for having a primary watershed divide and the headwaters of 5 tertiary watersheds. Water flows west to the Nelson River in Manitoba, north to Hudson Bay, and north-east to James Bay. Headwater watersheds represent the most upper reaches of a watershed and provide the source or starting point for stream systems. Many wetlands and lakes are located in close proximity to the watershed divides within the Cat Lake-Slate Falls Planning Area, providing key source water for the formation of headwater streams. Figure 2 illustrates the watersheds within and beyond the Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning area.

The presence of surficial geology deposits, such as eskers and ground moraines, serve as groundwater recharge areas and act as a natural water filtration system. Groundwater eventually resurfaces in the lower portions of these headwater areas as seepage areas and springs.

Riparian areas, or nearshore low-lying areas, are numerous due to the number of rivers and lakes that exist. These riparian areas also contribute directly to river and lake systems either through surface water flow or through groundwater.

*"Water is inseparable from the spiritual and cultural existence of the people of Cat Lake First Nations and Slate Falls Nation. Water is the dominant, sensitive feature that supports all living things during various phases of life. Water to the land, is life...like blood in our veins that supports all functions of our existence and well being. Water is the cornerstone of existence, the cycle of life, without water there is no future for Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations."*

*Gordon Carpenter, Slate Falls Nation*



Soils are characterized by very thin organic material over gray sand over fine red brown sand. Ground cover consists mainly of sphagnum moss (peat moss), dogwood, bearberry, Labrador tea, wild rose, spotted dog lichen, horsetail moss, caribou lichen, club moss and blueberry. Various parts of plants, shrubs and trees have been traditionally and currently used for medicines.

### **Mammals**

The Boreal forest shelters more than 85 species of mammals. The planning area is part of the boreal forest and supports habitat requirements for boreal forest dwelling wildlife species throughout various life stages. Wildlife typical of this area includes black bear, moose, woodland caribou, wolf, lynx, pine marten, red squirrel, wolverine, fisher, short-tailed weasel, red-backed vole, least chipmunk, beaver, snowshoe hare, otter, ermine, mink and fox. Wildlife species in the planning area classified as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act 2007 are woodland caribou and wolverine. Recent studies and surveys confirm that the planning area provides summer and winter habitat for woodland caribou, over time.

### **Birds, Waterfowl and Reptiles**

Greater than 300 species of migratory birds inhabit Ontario's far north. Bird species in the Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning area include the spruce grouse, herring gull, and double-crested cormorant, as well as bald eagle, osprey, great horned owl, red-tailed hawk, waterfowl, sharp-tailed grouse, common nighthawk, raven, gray jay, bald eagle, hawk owl, among others. Geese, ducks and other waterfowl are seasonally hunted. Bald eagles are considered sacred and their locations are noted. Bird species in the Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning area classified under the Endangered Species Act 2007 are: golden eagle (Endangered), whip-poor-will (Threatened), and the bald eagle, short eared owl, Canada warbler, olive-sided flycatcher and common nighthawk (all Species of Special Concern). The common snapping turtle, a special concern species in Ontario, has the potential to occur in the Cat-Slate Planning Area as well.

### **Fish**

Walleye, yellow perch, northern pike, lake trout, lake whitefish and lake sturgeon are all important species in the planning area. Many species of baitfish are also present. Fish have been important as a food source for subsistence and whitefish and lake sturgeon have been utilized for cultural practices for generations.

Several large lakes and rivers in the planning area are known to have lake sturgeon present, evidenced by historical records, Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and present occurrences. Lake sturgeon in the Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning is assigned to the special concern designation under the Endangered Species Act 2007 (as part of the Southern Hudson Bay/James Bay population). This means that populations in the planning area are sensitive to human activities and natural events.

### **Geology**

The geology of the planning area can be divided into bedrock and surficial components:

- The surficial geology consists of glacial moraines, ridges, and other deposits of silt, sand, gravel and till left by the most recent glaciation. These glacial

- deposits can be valuable resources of construction materials for the communities; and
- The bedrock geology consists of Archean-age greenstone and granitic rocks. The southern half of the planning area hosts the Birch-Uchi, Lake St. Joseph, Meen-Dempster, and Lang Lake greenstone belts of the Uchi Subprovince. The northeastern part of the planning area hosts the Horseshoe Lake and Windigo Lake greenstone belts, part of the North Caribou Terrane. These greenstone belts typically have high mineral potential and have seen considerable exploration activity for gold, silver, nickel, copper, iron, and other metals over the years. Granitic rocks occur within and between the greenstone belts; these rocks also dominate the central part of the planning area. While the granitic rocks have low mineral potential for base metals and gold, they may have potential for a variety of rare metals including uranium, molybdenum, lithium, and tantalum as well as rare earth elements and diamonds.

### Land and Resources Use

The people of Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations are a part of the land as much as the land is a part of them. The tie of the people to the land is continuous, as a living breathing ecosystem; all decisions relating to the land must respect and protect the land for future generations and these values must be integrated with economic development planning.

The land and resources use is described under the following topics: traditional use; commercial use; access and infrastructure; and mining and mineral sector activities.

*"Never use the land to improve your own life, but use your life to improve the land."*

*(Wilfred Wesley, Cat Lake First Nation)*

### **Traditional Use**

Lands and resources of the Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning area have been managed and protected by Aboriginal people for centuries, for subsistence (food, clothing), traditional livelihood activities (fur harvesters) and spiritual and cultural practices.

Substantial quantities of country food, meat and fish are harvested for consumption in the communities and for family and community members in Sioux Lookout and beyond. The nature and geographic extent of harvesting has changed, but it remains a profoundly significant and defining activity for Cat Lake and Slate Falls communities. There is also a considerable amount of infrastructure in the field that harvesters rely upon for these harvesting activities (e.g., campsites, trails, portages). This infrastructure needs protection so it can continue to be used, especially where it can be accessed by waterways.

Waterways that emerge from and/or flow through the planning area have always been valued travel routes for the people of Cat Lake and Slate Falls. As their traditional highways, waterways have provided access for traditional livelihood activities, and are often the location of cultural values and heritage sites that were historically utilized by their forefathers, as protectors and caregivers. Water supports life that people depend on for spiritual, hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering activities, providing berries and medicine plants and habitat for fish as well as wildlife such as moose or caribou. The footprint of the Cat Lake and Slate Falls people who have existed in harmony on the land for centuries can be linked directly to the water as affirmed through Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and teachings.

### **Commercial Use**

Resource-based commercial activities in the past have included commercial fur harvesting, commercial fishing and commercial tourism. Tourism continues to be an important commercial interest. Commercial fur harvesting is still ongoing and commercial fishing is a possible activity, however in the present day, these activities have a much reduced role in the communities' economy. A brief overview of each commercial activity is provided:

- Prior to the 1970s, the fur harvesting industry provided a primary source of economic benefit to Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations. The fur industry declined drastically in the 1970s due to marketability issues (including the animal rights political movement) and high trapping costs. Community members still actively pursue trapping as a traditional livelihood activity, but reliance on trapping as a commercial activity has been reduced substantially. Trapping activities support cultural, traditional, recreational and subsistence purposes.
- In the early 1950's, commercial fishing was a significant source of income for Cat Lake and Slate Falls community members. Local families would go out fishing and would sell the fish to non-native buyers either for cash or in exchange for boxes of food and equipment (e.g., nets). Expenses were low and the commercial fishery was built on the tradition of the family summer fishing camp. In the 1970's there was a decline in commercial fishing. Several reasons contributed to this decline including lower economic return, allocation of fisheries to tourism operations, and the addition of a new legislative and marketing system. As they reached more advanced ages, the first generation of commercial fishermen became less actively involved. Additionally, in some locations commercial fishing activity was ended where lakes were documented to have mercury as a naturally occurring contaminant.

In 2011, there are two active commercial fishing licences: one held by a Cat Lake member and one held by a Slate Falls member. Fisheries resources that once supported commercial fishing opportunities are now of interest to Cat Lake and Slate Falls as they may support tourism ventures.

- There are 42 commercial tourism establishments consisting of 41 single outposts and one main base lodge. There are also numerous commercial boat caches. Both Cat Lake and Slate Falls are actively involved in the tourism industry. Existing tourism operations and interests are respected as an ongoing land use.

### **Access and Infrastructure**

Slate Falls Nation has all-season access by the Vermillion River Road (through the Lac Seul FMU) and an airport. Cat Lake First Nation is a remote community with airport and seasonal road access only. The winter road follows a transmission corridor linking Cat Lake with the Township of Pickle Lake. Cat Lake has interest in having an all weather road accessing the municipality of Sioux Lookout and beyond for goods and services (health care, building supplies, education, etc).

Both Cat Lake and Slate Falls are connected to Ontario's electricity system (i.e., on the grid). A review of the Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning area identified that waterways have limited hydro-electric generating potential, however small-scale hydro potential on the Cat River system may be of interest to supplement community needs and would be compatible with protected area designations.

### **Mining and Mineral Sector Activities**

The southern half of the planning area hosts the Birch-Uchi, Lake St. Joseph, Meen-Dempster, and Lang Lake greenstone belts which all have high mineral potential. These greenstone belts are all part of the Uchi Subprovince, which has thus far yielded production of over 25 million ounces of gold throughout its length from Red Lake to Pickle Lake. Within the planning area, the presence of these greenstone belts with their favourable geology has meant considerable mineral exploration since the 1930's, one past producer (Golden Patricia, with production of 620,000 ounces of gold) and a number of currently-active exploration projects. Numerous mining claims are currently recorded in the planning area with the greatest interest being shown for gold. Exploration activities are presently concentrated mainly in the Birch Lake-Little Shabumeni Lake area, the Meen Lake-Wright Lake area which hosted the Golden Patricia Mine, and along a trend extending eastward from the community of Slate Falls through Bamaji Lake, North Bamaji Lake, and Fry Lake. The planning area also has potential for many other types of mineral deposits, including copper-nickel deposits, copper-zinc-silver deposits, and diamonds.

The history of mineral-related activities in this area and the presence of the highly prospective greenstone belts suggest that mineral activities will continue to be a part of both communities' economic development planning in future. There may also be valuable surficial deposits that may contribute to the communities' prosperity in future.

## 1.4. Process

The Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning process is described under the following topics: planning process, decision-making approach, preparing direction; and engagement and consultation.

The Terms of Reference, approved in June 2008 (with an addendum signed November 2008) set out the planning process, structure for the team and advisors, and consultation requirements. The Terms also described expected outcomes of the process including the anticipated scope of decision making. The Terms of Reference is available on request from the contacts listed at the front of this document or can be accessed online at Far North Ontario ([www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/FarNorth](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/FarNorth)).

### Planning process

The planning process is illustrated in Figure 3. The process included a preparatory step and four formal planning phases. Timing for each step was adjusted as necessary along the way in response to direction from the communities and to address logistic considerations (e.g., suitable timing for open houses, etc.). Consultation opportunities were provided at key stages.

Phases I and II addressed preparation of the Terms of Reference, assembly of background information, clarification of objectives, assessment of resource capabilities and description of opportunities. Combined Phase I and II material was shared as the first consultation point. In Phase III, the Draft Plan was prepared and shared in a second consultation opportunity. Phase IV included consideration of input to the Draft Plan, preparation of the Final Plan and endorsement of the plan by Cat Lake First Nation, Slate Falls Nation and Ontario. A summary description of the engagement and consultation process is provided in this section.

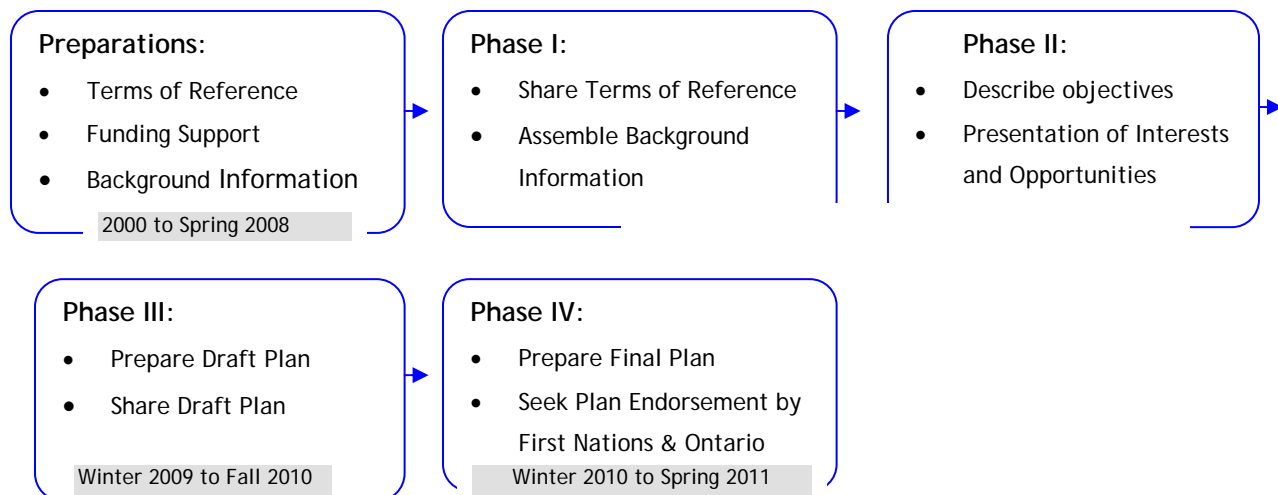


Figure 3: Summary of Planning Process Phases

## Decision-making approach

A consensus-based decision-making approach was followed to prepare and reach endorsement of the plan. Initially, the planning team would reach agreement on proposals considering both community and provincial interests as expressed by the goals and objectives. Proposals were then shared within each community and with provincial agencies to continue building consensus. Direction would be adjusted along the way to arrive at sound, well-supported outcomes. Proposals were then shared broadly in meetings and consultation opportunities with other First Nations, interested people and organizations, and input was considered by the planning team.

## Preparing Direction

The planning team had the responsibility to develop proposals and complete preparation of the land use plan following the consensus-based approach.

Approaching this task, the team:

- developed a sound understanding of desired outcomes, goals and objectives;
- assembled the best available information on land and resource capabilities;
- mapped sensitive and vulnerable areas;
- mapped areas having capabilities for economic development opportunities;
- identified compatible land uses by area to protect values and enable opportunities;
- mapped and assigned areas to a land use designation appropriate to the purpose and desired activities (dedicated protected area, enhanced management area, general use area); and
- provided strategic direction to guide activities in a manner that would support achievement of objectives and reduce potential conflicts.

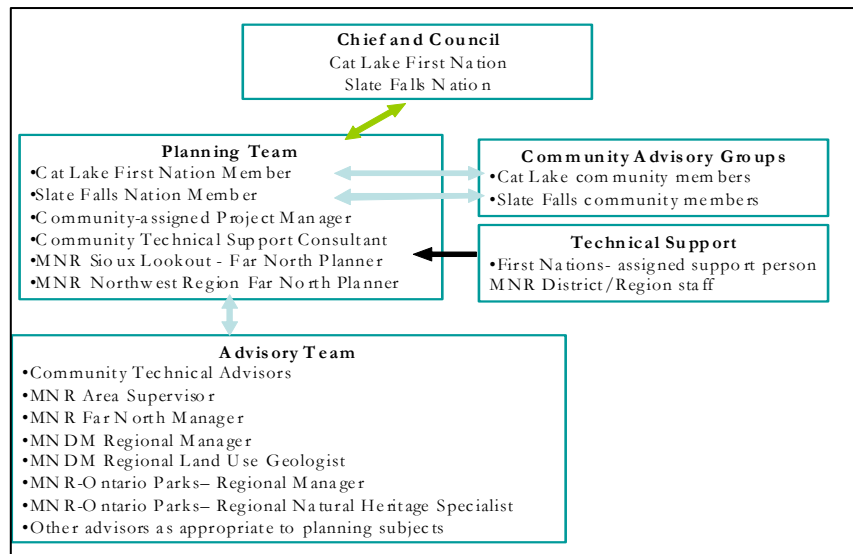


Figure 4: Cat Lake-Slate Falls Planning Structure

The structure for planning (illustrated in Figure 4) was designed for the planning team to seek advice from community members and external advisors. Specific examples are noted on the next page.



Examples of community and external advisor connections with the planning team are:

- community members provided interpretation and advice on the importance of waterways and interests of the communities including Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and cultural values;
- advisors with the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and Forests participated frequently at planning team meetings and consultation opportunities to provide and interpret mineral related information, discuss mineral sector interests generally and advise Cat Lake and Slate Falls on approaches to achieve objectives;
- advisors with Ontario Parks participated regularly with the planning team in a dialogue on the role and design of protected areas, broad scale considerations, and analysis of draft proposals. Ontario Parks' ecologist and geologist worked with the community members to verify information on areas of conservation interest;
- scientists with MNR's Water Resources Information Program contributed information and analysis of water systems in the planning area supporting Cat Lake and Slate Falls' focus on the protection of water and water courses; and
- science advisors specializing in climate change and woodland caribou conservation provided advice to the planning team.

### Engagement and Consultation

Engagement and consultation is described as: Cat Lake and Slate Falls community engagement; adjacent First Nation communities' dialogue; and public consultation.

#### **Cat Lake and Slate Falls Community Engagement**

Cat Lake and Slate Falls provided opportunities for community member involvement in the process through a variety of approaches, for people to contribute information, build an understanding of the process and information, and to encourage expression of views and interests. Community members and Elders who are knowledgeable about the land and who have knowledge through their use of the land for livelihood and spiritual pursuits were encouraged to participate and provide guidance for planning.

Community involvement was encouraged by providing for:

- involvement in Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge data collection projects over the past 8 years to contribute both mapped information and knowledge on cultural lands, values and ecology, e.g., fisheries information (spawning sites), wildlife data (calving habitat), historical travel routes, spiritual sites, burial grounds, traditional use areas, supporting infrastructure (trap cabins), etc.;
- monthly community meetings held in Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations to help people build an understanding of the land use planning process, planning timelines, assembly and analysis of data (i.e. ATK, hydrology, FRI, PSMP) and the development of area zoning (including permitted uses, economic development and protection);
- radio shows in Cat Lake First Nation in which the community liaison worker and members of Council provided land use planning process updates, notification of upcoming community meetings and stakeholder engagement sessions (e.g., mineral sector, renewable energy) and current research initiatives (e.g., caribou inventories, growth & yield surveys);
- school presentations in both Cat Lake and Slate Falls on several occasions for all classes from Kindergarten - Grade 8 to discuss land use planning, species at

- risk education and awareness (woodland caribou, wolverine & lake sturgeon), forest resource inventories (stem and taper project, growth and yield surveys), protected area planning considerations, future training and education aspirations, and land use planning as a topic in the education curriculum;
- participation in Chief and Council meetings held on a quarterly basis and on request at key times in the process to seek direction and input during plan development;
  - training sessions for community members on forest management growth and yield studies, woodland caribou winter use habitat inventories, woodland caribou summer calving surveys, mineral prospecting and staking, Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge data collection techniques, and GPS and GIS capacity training;
  - community presentations on woodland caribou conservation initiatives and management such as aerial inventories, radio telemetry collaring projects, forest cover and ground vegetation analysis;
  - door-to-door engagement within both communities to share and gather information, with personal invitations to generate interest and participation in the land use planning process; and
  - written material (e.g., translated fact sheets) to raise awareness and build capacity within each community to effectively participate in the planning process.

Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations are pleased with the effort made and the variety of opportunities for community members to participate and be involved in the process.

#### **Adjacent First Nation Communities Dialogue**

Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations have initiated and supported discussions with adjacent First Nation communities during the planning process, to confirm the planning boundary (see Section 1.3) and to ensure adjacent community interests and concerns have been respected and considered in the plan.

Adjacent First Nations communities include Pikangikum, MacDowell Lake, North Caribou Lake, and Mishkeegogamang. Pikangikum First Nation Elders and community leaders attended an open house in Cat Lake at the Draft Plan stage, providing support and advice on their experience with land use plan preparation and implementation.

#### **Public Consultation**

Cat Lake, Slate Falls and MNR facilitated an open, consultative approach during preparation of the plan to ensure that all interested people and organizations could participate, become familiar with information and proposals, and provide input. Invitations to participate were distributed broadly, including to resource sector organizations, NGOs, municipalities, academic organizations, tribal councils and First Nations. Consultation opportunities were provided by:

- Notice of the project through local newspapers, mail-outs and phone;
- Notice of planning team contact information;
- Sharing of documents electronically and on request;
- Environmental Bill of Rights - Environmental Registry Policy Proposal Notice 010-4061:
  - Initially posted November 12, 2008 for a 65 day comment period at the Invitation to Participate, Terms of Reference and Presentation of Objectives and opportunities stage;

- Republished November 9, 2010 to provide for a 66 day comment period at the Draft Plan stage.
- Open House events at two progress points (for a combined Phase I and II in December 2009, and at the Draft Plan stage in November 2010); and
- Facilitated teleconference meeting with representatives of resource sectors and organizations to share material in advance of the Draft Plan open house event.
- Presentations and dialogue at various meetings and workshops.

A summary of the consultation undertaken with this project is on record and available at the Sioux Lookout District Office. A summary of the effect of consultation input on preparation of the plan is also available on the Environmental Registry, EBR Registry Number 010-4061.

At the draft plan stage, ten comments were received, four by response to the Environmental Registry posting and six provided directly to the communities and MNR. Key messages offered to Cat Lake, Slate Falls and MNR included:

- general support for Cat Lake's and Slate Falls' goals and efforts in planning, with support for the focus on protection of water systems;
- support for guiding ecological and cultural sustainability by drawing upon traditional knowledge and cultural values along with the best available information from all sources;
- recognition of the plan's attention to tourism as it is important in the planning area, including existing operations and future opportunities; and
- recommendations for:
  - providing a land use plan that is a decision-making framework which can be responsive in a changing environment (e.g., climate change adaptation) and recognize risks to the success of the plan;
  - additional direction in the plan to consider potential cumulative impacts, identification of cumulative impact indicators and thresholds and guidance should these thresholds be reached;
  - including a monitoring strategy and a framework for adapting the plan;
  - provide more description of how the plan was created, how information was used and how the plan will be measurable for achievement of goals and objectives;
  - description of conservation strategies for species at risk located within the planning area;
  - incorporating comprehensive watershed planning and an ecosystem based plan to protect ecological processes and functions; and
  - expression of the expectations and direction for benefits to be achieved by the communities in the mineral sector activities.

All comments and recommendations provided in writing at the Draft Plan stage are part of the public record. Cat Lake, Slate Falls and MNR appreciated and carefully reviewed all comments and views. As a result, the planning team invited advice and prepared additional direction in the Final Plan to:

- enhance protection of the water systems by applying the latest watersheds and hydrology mapping to support land use area boundary definition;

- support consideration of cumulative impact assessment with provisions for a Strategic Access Planning Approach and water-based units for analysis of landscape disturbances, cumulative and downstream effects;
- complete preparation of Guidelines for Mineral Sector Projects: Best Management Practices to provide for protection of values while encouraging mineral exploration and mining activities;
- provide additional direction to support the needs of species at risk and address desired outcomes expressed in Ontario's Caribou Conservation Plan; and
- provide an expanded description of the decision-making process.

## ***1.5. Information***

Information from all sources has supported the planning process. Primary information sources were Cat Lake and Slate Falls and Ontario (MNR, and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forests (MNDMF)).

Cat Lake-Slate Falls adopted extensive data collection programs over eight (8) years to collect new information and confirm existing information. Information collection was completed by individuals and groups from Cat Lake and Slate Falls, supported by GIS support staff who helped organize data and prepare maps. Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) provided information on cultural lands values and ecological information as well as detailed plant and animal information.

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources added information and mapping of natural resource values, watershed analysis (including hydro potential), and existing land uses. Information from historic and recent field surveys was made available, including fish and wildlife surveys, species at risk information, forest dynamics and provincially significant natural heritage features. The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forests (MNDMF) provided information on the bedrock and surficial geology, including areas of high mineral potential and historical records.

The following is a summary description of information presented in December 2008 at the 1<sup>st</sup> Open House and updated throughout the process. Further inquiries on information sources or analyses can be directed to the contacts listed at the front of this document. Mapped information is available in the Appendix.

- 1) Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge includes points, lines and polygons associated with cultural heritage, traditional use, spiritual values, fish and wildlife values and structural features. This information is held by the communities and brought forward/interpreted in the planning process by the communities. The communities will manage and update this information over time. The values maps illustrate the relationship/proximity of values to waterways and the high percentage of values that are associated with protection interests.
- 2) Information on fish and wildlife values, structural values and existing interests including bear management areas, trapline areas and baitfish blocks was obtained from the Ministry of Natural Resources Values Information System (NRVIS).
- 3) Forest Resource Inventory: The 1984 forest resource inventory was used to develop a series of maps that described the various characteristics of the planning area

including - summaries of working group, age class and site class distribution. A geographic information system was used to help sort the information into categories and maps supporting analysis of the forest management opportunity.

- 4) Fire Disturbance history mapping describes the year of fire, the location and size of the disturbance from the 1920's to present day, by decade.
- 5) Caribou survey data: A number of caribou surveys have been conducted over the past decade that helped inform decision making. In 1999 a caribou calving survey was conducted on a number of lakes along the Cat River system including Bamaji, Blackstone, Senior and Wesleyan lakes. In 2003, as part of a larger inventory project, a two stage aerial winter survey was conducted in the planning area. In 2008 this two stage aerial winter survey was replicated for the entire planning area, and also included adjacent areas. Caribou calving surveys were completed in the summers of 2008 and 2009. The results of these studies have been summarized, mapped and analyzed by the planning team to help the decision-making process and support definition of protected areas.
- 6) Conservation values: Provincial areas of conservation interest in the northwest were identified in the 1980s and 90s and verified for the Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning area in a helicopter reconnaissance program that was carried out in 2008 and 2009. The reconnaissance included involvement of planning team members as well as advisory team members. Analysis using "gaptool" was completed by Ontario Parks to assess the relative achievement of representation of various land form and vegetation combinations.
- 7) An initial tourism and recreation assessment was completed utilizing a number of sources of information including Cat Lake and Slate Falls community information and MNR information. Further analysis will be completed in the implementation phase of the land use planning process to provide more detailed information on capability and opportunities.
- 8) Watershed analysis: Watershed mapping for the Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning area has been recently updated by the Water Resources Information Program and has been applied to define natural boundaries for land use areas.
- 9) Ecological Land Classification information for the planning area includes data collected in growth and yield plots, forest ecosystem classification plots and a stem and taper study. This information provides a basis to further develop the forest management opportunity in subsequent planning efforts (e.g., Environmental Assessment, Forest Management Planning)
- 10) Waterpower potential mapping was provided by MNR. The mapping provides an overview of hydro-electric generation potential within the planning area, most of which is associated with the Cat River system.
- 11) Mineral Resources information has been provided by MNDMF and includes information on surficial geology, bedrock geology, existing claims, existing mine locations and historical mineral occurrences. This information was used to develop an analysis of mineral potential utilizing a model called MMPET (Metallic Mineral Potential Estimation Tool). The output of the model provided the planning team with information on the potential future for economic development opportunities in the mineral sector.

## ***PART TWO - Cat Lake-Slate Falls Plan Direction***

The *Cat Lake-Slate Falls Plan* supports the achievement of community and provincial objectives by providing certainty for land use and by informing subsequent decision making (e.g., resource management processes, environmental assessment). All direction is provided to include consideration of local and broad scale contexts, implications for and linkages with adjacent communities, and existing land uses and plans.

Plan direction is presented as:

- 2.1: Land Use Areas;
- 2.2: Strategic direction; and
- 2.3: A summary of land use activities direction, by area.

*" With this Plan, we are moving closer to achieving our communities' desire for a strong, vibrant and sustainable future for our people. Land use proposals are guided by our traditional knowledge and principles, respecting the land and all life that's interconnected."*

*Chief Matthew Keewaykapow, Cat Lake First Nation*

### ***2.1. Land Use Areas***

The Cat-Slate planning area is designated as three land use areas:

- 1: Cat Lake-Slate Falls General Use Area (40% of planning area)
- 2: Cat Lake-Slate Falls Enhanced Management Area - Cultural Heritage category (25% of planning area)
- 3: Cat-Slate River System Dedicated Protected Area (34% of planning area<sup>2</sup>)

These mapped areas are shown in Figure 5 and described in detail on the next pages. Each type of land use designation conveys an overall purpose and intent for that zone:

- Dedicated Protected Areas (DPAs) provide the highest level of protection for natural and cultural landscapes supporting compatible activities such as traditional use, recreation, tourism, and research, and excluding industrial activities such as commercial forestry, mineral sector activities, commercial electricity generation, aggregate extraction and peat extraction;
- Enhanced Management Areas (EMAs) generally support all land use activities with additional guidelines or restrictions to protect or emphasize special interests, features or values. For example, access may be limited; and
- General Use Areas (GUAs) support all land use activities. Protection of features and values takes place through application of requirements in legislation, policy and guidelines.

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<sup>2</sup> The total protected areas as a percentage of the planning area is 35%. This is the sum of Dedicated Protected Area (34%) and the existing Pipestone River Provincial Park (1%).

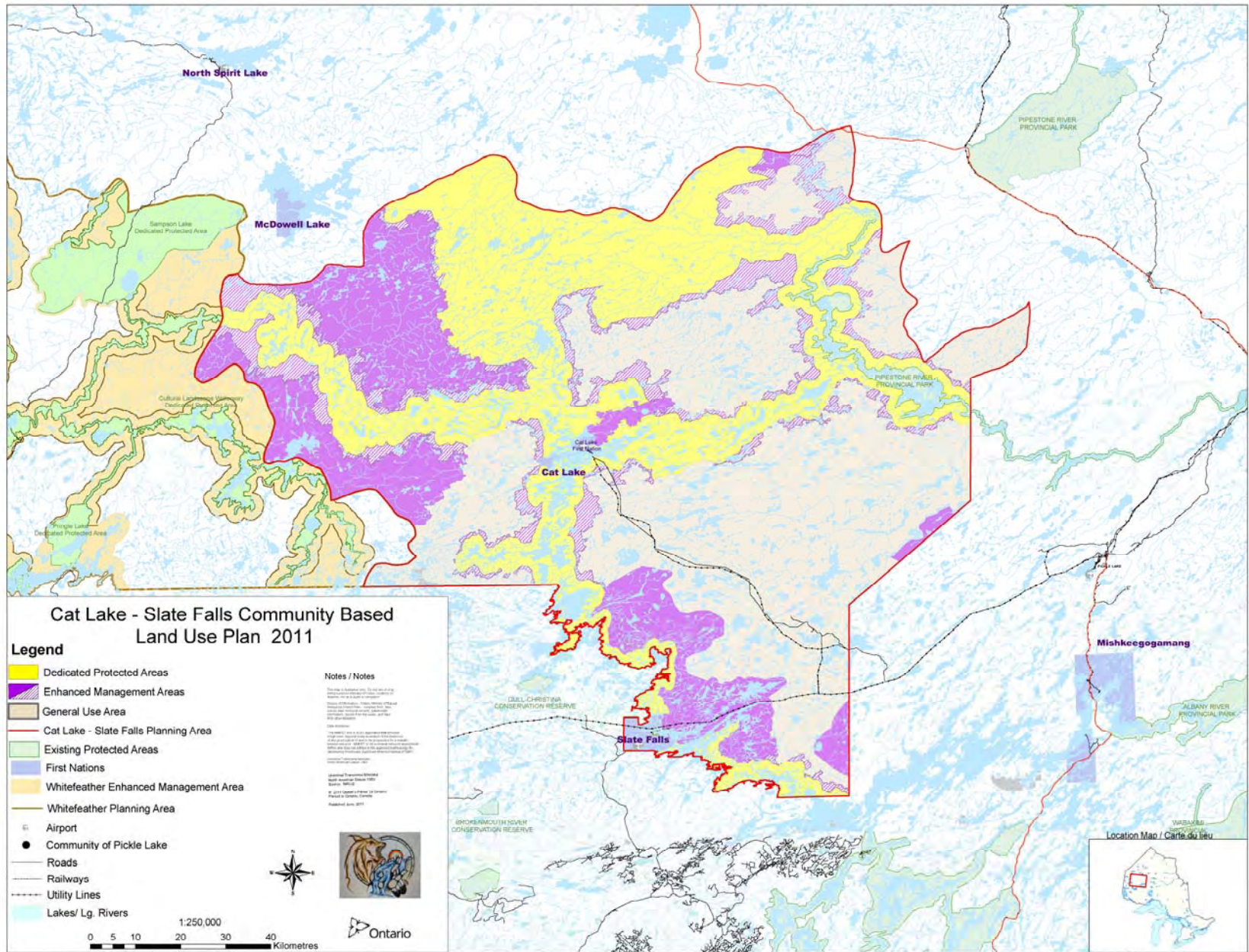


Figure 5: Cat Lake-Slate Falls Land Use Areas

## 1. Cat Lake-Slate Falls General Use Area

**Size: 576,613 ha**

### **Description:**

The Cat Lake-Slate Falls General Use Area is comprised of five geographic areas in the central to eastern portion of the planning area. All five areas are characterized by extensive traditional use and presence of cultural heritage values. There are forest resources capable of sustaining a forest management opportunity, several areas of high mineral potential, existing mining claims, existing tourism operations and potential for additional tourism opportunities. Tourism opportunities focus on remote landscapes and high quality fish and wildlife resources. The ecology of the area is typical of the northern boreal forest. Surveys and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge confirm habitat availability and presence of species at risk including woodland caribou, wolverine, lake sturgeon, and bald eagles.

A transmission corridor originating in Ear Falls extends through the area, with a connection in Slate Falls and then a connection to the north, via the winter road, to Cat Lake.

### **Land Use Intent:**

The land use intent for this area is to provide social and economic benefits of lands and resources, while contributing to self-reliant and self-sustaining communities. This is to be accomplished through responsible stewardship of lands and resources. The intent is to use this area for environmentally sustainable economic development, including commercial forest management, and mineral opportunities in areas of high mineral potential, while ensuring the protection of important values and features. Site-specific cultural values may be withdrawn from mineral exploration. A Strategic Access Planning Approach will support decision making. In addition, access provisions recognize the potential for an all season road to Cat Lake in this land use area.

New economic development opportunities will be encouraged in ways that sustain the nature of the lands and the relationship of the people to the land. All activities would proceed in a manner guided by traditional values and principles. Protection is emphasized for natural heritage and cultural values, including for high water quality and ecological integrity.

### **Management Direction:**

Strategic direction for the manner in which land uses will take place is described in Part 2, section 2.2. Note that site-specific cultural values may be withdrawn from mineral exploration.

Aboriginal traditional activities which include (but are not limited to) hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering are respected as historical and current uses.

### **Permitted Uses:**

- All activities are permitted, subject to current policy direction and requirements that may exist (e.g., licences, permits). Applications for permitted activities will be reviewed for consistency with the specific intent of the area.
- Cat Lake and Slate Falls may seek a forest management opportunity in this area. The proposed activities of forestry must be enabled through a new



- approval under the Environmental Assessment Act. MNR will seek approval that will set out direction for the manner in which forestry can proceed. MNR will work together with Cat Lake and Slate Falls to prepare the submission for Environmental Assessment Act coverage.
- Provision for access recognizes the potential for an all season road to Cat Lake.
  - All proposals for road access will be considered using the Strategic Access Planning Approach.
  - Cat Lake-Slate Falls Guidelines for Mineral Sector Projects: Best Management Practices are applicable in this area

## 2. Cat Lake-Slate Falls Enhanced Management Area - Cultural Heritage

**Size: 369,311 ha**

### **Description:**

This EMA includes six named geographic areas: (Fawcett-Fry Lake, Pembina, Bow River, Harth Lake, Madden Lake, Upper Goose Lake); an esker feature northeast of Cat Lake; and a variable width buffer surrounding the Cat Lake-Slate Falls Dedicated Protected Area (CLSF-DPA). All areas have significant cultural heritage values and extensive traditional use. Natural heritage is described by substantial woodland caribou habitat and several provincially-significant natural heritage features representative of boreal shield vegetation and landforms. Mineral potential is present, but varies by location, with the highest potential noted in the Fawcett-Fry Lake area near Slate Falls. Overall, forest resources can contribute to sustaining a commercial forest management opportunity. Tourism is an important focus in the Fawcett-Fry, Madden and Upper Goose areas. Additional description of the geographic areas follows:

- Madden Lake and Upper Goose are located in the western portion of the planning area, north and south of the Throat River respectively. Both areas have many significant cultural values for Cat Lake members, with Cat Lake members' traditional activities as the predominant land use. Current land uses also include recreation and tourism (one outpost facility is located on Upper Goose Lake and a community owned tourism operation on Madden Lake). The landscape includes a high concentration of wintering habitat for woodland caribou and "Mix Lake ", a provincially-significant natural heritage feature composed of a large peatland complex with an esker ridge association. There is one area identified with high mineral potential near Mattin Lake (east of Upper Goose Lake); Cat Lake community members have also described interest in mineral potential in other locations (e.g., Madden Lake).
- The Fawcett-Fry Lake portion of this EMA is in the south-central portion of the planning area, located adjacent to Slate Falls and extending north. The area includes the "Fawcett Lake complex", a provincially-significant natural heritage feature described by shallow glacial sediments overlying bedrock with wetlands and peat deposits. This area is also part of the Cat Lake-Slate Falls river system, including headwaters of the Upper Albany secondary watershed. A 'greenstone belt' geological formation extends through Slate Falls, east to Fry Lake and beyond. Land use in this area includes extensive traditional use by Slate Falls and Cat Lake First Nation members, existing tourism facilities including community owned and operated tourism establishments (Knobby's Fly-in Camps), and exploration

activities associated with several existing mining claims. High quality water resources in the area are vital, sustaining Slate Falls' people, tourism and ecology.

- Pembina, Bow River, and Harth Lake are three small areas located on the north and east side of the planning area. Each area is named for (and defined by) a provincially-significant landscape feature having glacial landforms with associated wetlands and peat deposits. All areas support habitat needs of woodland caribou, particularly wintering habitat. All three of these areas are characterized by traditional customary activities of both Cat Lake and Slate Falls' members relating to subsistence and recreation, and all have areas of mineral potential. The Bow River and Pembina Lake areas promote shared traditional use with Mishkeegogamang First Nation community members.
- An esker that is potentially an important source of gravel for Cat Lake is situated roughly 5 km northeast of the community. In the future, this esker may also be considered for access from Cat Lake to the general use area. Community engagement and field surveys would be needed to document values requiring protection should activities be considered in this area.
- A variable width buffer on the Cat Lake-Slate Falls Dedicated Protected Area (CLSF-DPA) is defined by major lake, river and wetland catchment areas that drain towards the CLSF-DPA. This EMA area is designed to complement the protection focus of the CLSF-DPA by supporting consideration of the potential effects of activities on a watershed basis.

#### **Land Use Intent:**

The intent of this EMA is to promote protection of cultural heritage, including traditional use while supporting other existing activities and future opportunities associated with the tourism and mineral sector. These areas can also contribute to sustaining a commercial forest management opportunity. This land use intent requires moving ahead with all activities in a manner that will provide strong protection of natural heritage features, water quality and associated fish and wildlife habitat, including woodland caribou habitat. The land use intent to protect water quality including headwater areas will be supported by detailed watershed analysis and mapping that can inform decision making for individual projects and/or resource management plans now and into the future.

All access needs and proposals will be considered through a Strategic Access Planning Approach. In Madden and Upper Goose areas, the use of access strategies to retain remoteness and protect cultural sites will complement the adjacent Whitefeather Forest Remote Access Enhanced Management Areas. The recognition of Cat Lake's desire for all-season access through this zone is supported by Slate Falls Nation.

A set of Cat Lake-Slate Falls Guidelines for Mineral Sector Projects: Best Management Practices have been developed to apply throughout the planning area where mineral sector activities are permitted (i.e., in the General Use Area and in all EMA areas). The content of these best management practices was developed through dialogue to address community direction for the Fawcett Fry Lake Area, where there are current mineral sector activities and significant community interests and values.

Enhanced consultation requirements for mineral sector activities including a process for mineral sector withdrawals from culturally significant sites will also apply, as described by the regulations that are currently being developed (Ontario's Modernized Mining Act).

### **Management Direction**

Strategic direction for the manner in which land uses will take place is set out above in Part 2, section 2.2. Note that site-specific cultural values may be withdrawn from mineral exploration.

Cat Lake and Slate Falls may seek a forest management opportunity in this area. Provision for access recognizes the potential for an all season road to Cat Lake. The character of and existing uses in this area will be supported by minimizing the number of roads/access necessary for economic development opportunities while encouraging multi-use access (commercial and community use) supporting the highest possible long term value to each First Nation community.

Aboriginal traditional activities which include (but are not limited to) hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering are respected as historical and current uses. Additionally, Bow River and Pembina Lake areas promote the shared traditional use of the area with Mishkeegogamang First Nation community members, with the exception of Harth Lake area which is shared with North Caribou Lake First Nation.

### Permitted Uses:

- All activities are permitted, subject to current policy direction and requirements that may exist (e.g., licences, permits). Applications for permitted activities will be reviewed for consistency with the specific intent of the area, emphasizing consistency with the maintenance and protection of cultural and natural heritage features, water quality and retention of the remote character.
- Cat Lake and Slate Falls may seek a forest management opportunity in this area. The proposed activities of forestry must be enabled through a new approval under the Environmental Assessment Act. MNR will seek approval that will set out direction for the manner in which forestry can proceed. MNR will work together with Cat Lake and Slate Falls to prepare the submission for Environmental Assessment Act coverage.
- Mineral exploration and development: Protection of features and water quality can be promoted through development and communication of Guidelines for Mineral Sector Projects: Best Management Practices. During the preparation of the Land Use Plan, Guidelines for Mineral Sector Projects: Best Management Practices were developed specifically for the Fawcett-Fry Lake area. Through community engagement the guidelines were supported and adopted to guide activities in the entire EMA zone as well as the GUA designations. Additionally, site-specific cultural values (e.g. burial site) may be withdrawn from mineral exploration.
- All proposals for road access will be considered using the Strategic Access Planning Approach. Roads for industrial and commercial use are permitted, but the number of roads will be minimized. They will be developed in a manner that seeks to retain the integrity of the cultural values, natural heritage features and high quality tourism operations. Some guidelines are:

- avoid culturally or ecologically significant sites;
- preference would be given for temporary or seasonal use (e.g., winter roads);
- temporary roads will be assigned to accommodate forestry, commercial non-timber forest product enterprise, and mineral sector activities, and other activities provided they are consistent with the primary intent of the area;
- encourage use of best available tools for temporary road design such as consideration of aesthetics, bridge/crossing removals, strategic location of temporary water crossings, ice roads, ferries, gates with permit access only, etc;
- design and construction would consider access controls and closure/rehabilitation;
- road design will consider opportunities to enhance access for recreation purposes;
- if required, new roads may be restricted from public use to provide for protection of remote tourism values or to protect community, natural and cultural values; and
- Aggregate extraction is permitted for roads within the area; extraction for export of aggregate beyond the area is discouraged. Natural features are to be maintained.

### **3. Cat - Slate River System Dedicated Protected Area**

**Size: 495,833 ha**

#### **Description:**

The Cat Lake-Slate Falls Dedicated Protected Area (CLSF-DPA) is defined by a minimum two kilometer protection buffer on major rivers flowing through the planning area, plus several areas with notable landscape features. Major rivers include the Cat River system and to the west, the Throat River. The Cat River system is a defining feature of the landscape, vital to the spiritual and cultural existence of the people of Cat Lake First Nations and Slate Falls Nation.

To the east, the waterway connection from the community of Cat Lake to the Pipestone River is comprised of numerous small lakes and rivers that have been used by Cat Lake over many years as a travel route including the existing Pipestone River Provincial Waterway Park. These river systems contribute to the spiritual and cultural existence of the people of Cat Lake First Nation and Slate Falls Nation, and all have extensive historical and traditional use relating to subsistence, recreation and economics. There are substantial existing tourism interests within the CLSF-DPA: Both communities own and operate tourism facilities within this zone.

The area includes a primary watershed divide, where five tertiary watersheds exist with water flowing west to the Nelson River in Manitoba, north to Hudson Bay and northeast to James Bay. The headwater areas for the 5 tertiary watersheds are within this land use area; There are four headwater areas near Whitestone Lake (west of Cat Lake), and three headwater areas near Paddison Lake (east of Cat Lake). The two kilometre variable width protection buffer will include riparian areas that contribute surface water and ground water directly to the major waterways.

This area includes several landscape features identified by the province to be representative of boreal shield vegetation and landforms including: Moose Mountain Interlobate Moraine, Kishikas Lake, Kishikas River Dunes, Damer Lake Hummocky Moraine and Fawcett Lake Wetland Complex. Notable to the landforms in the northern portion of the area is the presence of a large glacial moraine, esker and dune deposits within headwater watershed areas which serve as groundwater recharge areas for headwater streams and spring-fed lakes. Also, the Kishikas River Dunes southeast of Moose Mountain are one of the largest peatland complexes in this region.

Surveys and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge confirm habitat availability and presence of species at risk including woodland caribou, wolverine, lake sturgeon, and bald eagles.

**Land Use Intent:**

The intent is to regulate the CLSF-DPA as a protected area, although the specific designation and category have not been determined.

The CLSF-DPA offers outstanding recreational water routes with representative natural features and historical resources, and high quality cultural, recreational and educational experiences. The protection of water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and cultural values is a key focus in this zone. Maintaining existing tourism, developing new tourism opportunities, and natural and cultural heritage appreciation are important land use intents. Hydro-electric generation opportunities would remain available for First Nation use. While maintaining the remote nature of the waterways is a key objective, limited crossing of waterways to facilitate access will be supported for new opportunities including mining and forestry, community access, energy transmission and communications corridors. Providing support for the conservation of woodland caribou and other species including lake sturgeon is also a key factor.

The purpose of the designation is to promote protection objectives while supporting continuation of traditional uses and existing tourism, and to contribute to social and economic objectives identified by Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations by advancing potential for new tourism opportunities. Also, this designation promotes maintenance of the remote character of the area with considerations for limited access only.

The land use intent recognizes the importance of waterways as historical travel routes having significant cultural and ecological values and promotes activities that are complementary to protection of those values, including protection of special cultural sites identified by the community.

Protection of water quality and headwater watersheds is a high priority. Cat Lake and Slate Falls recommend that a watershed approach be taken to provide for protection of the Cat Lake-Slate Falls waterway along the southern boundary of the planning area (within the Lac Seul FMU), and will continue to work with MNR to pursue this interest in separate processes (e.g., forest management plans and/or CLUPA amendment).

This protected area designation will protect specific values or features on the landscape that represent Ontario's geological, aquatic and terrestrial diversity, protect landscapes of natural or cultural significance and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological integrity.

**Management Direction:**

This management direction is interim: additional specific direction will be determined by the final designation assigned to this Dedicated Protected Area and by future resource management planning.

New proposals for specific activities will be subject to a review by MNR together with Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nation. This review will consider the intent of the area, direction provided in the *Cat Lake-Slate Falls Plan*, impacts on resources and values associated with the CLSF-DPA, compatible economic opportunities, and potential for economic benefit to Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nation.

The Pipestone River Provincial Waterway Park is situated within the boundaries of this CLSF-DPA. For the area of the Pipestone River Provincial Waterway Park, direction is provided by the approved Park Management Plan, 2002.

Aboriginal traditional activities which include (but are not limited to) hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering are respected as historical and current uses.

**Permitted Uses:**

- Travel by motorized boat, snow machine or airplane.
- Recreational sport fishing and hunting.
- Research/education initiatives
- Commercial fur harvesting, commercial fishing, wild rice harvesting.
- Renewable energy projects for community use
- Existing and new commercial tourism

**Excluded uses:**

- New energy transmission and communication corridors are discouraged.
- Road building is discouraged with recognition that road access crossing the waterways may be required, however the focus would be to minimize/limit the number of crossings necessary for community access or economic development opportunities.
- commercial forestry, mineral exploration, mining, commercial hydroelectric development (transmission or generation), commercial wind power development, peat extraction.
- Commercial aggregate extraction is not permitted. Additional specific direction for aggregate extraction for community needs may be required.

New commercial activities in the protected area (e.g. sale of water) are subject to review for consistency with the CLSF-DPA objectives and values. Additional direction may be provided in a management plan.

## 2.2 Strategic Direction

Strategic direction is provided to guide the manner in which land uses will be conducted to achieve objectives. This direction incorporates and adds to existing direction, policy and legislated requirements for the management of lands and resources. Land Use Plan direction does not alter existing authority(ies) or requirements that exist. Strategic direction statements are to inform future decision making in subsequent processes (e.g., resource management planning, environmental assessment).

*“While the Plan identifies substantial areas for protection, it also provides for sustainable economic development opportunities that will contribute to a strong future for our communities and meaningful opportunities for our youth.”*

*Chief Lorraine Crane, Slate Falls Nation*

Strategic direction is provided below and on the next six pages for:

- all land uses;
- specific land uses; and
- other subjects (e.g., climate change, access).

### All Land Uses

All land uses will be conducted in a manner which:

- respects Aboriginal and treaty rights;
- recognizes a primary focus for economic benefits to Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations, without limiting consideration of opportunities for shared benefits with adjacent First Nations;
- protects traditional /customary uses and values, by maintaining natural landscape features and characteristics (e.g., waterways, remoteness) and harmonizing traditional use activities with new economic development opportunities;
- engages community members in planning for proposed activities and projects (i.e., an internal community consensus building approach will be facilitated by each community);
- incorporates Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in land and resource management decisions, encourages expanding this knowledge through ongoing engagement and participation in planning and development;
- integrates new activities with traditional land uses in a way that is guided by traditional values and principles;
- respects existing stakeholder interests, including tourism; and
- protects:
  - cultural and natural heritage values
  - a continuous supply of fish and wildlife habitat, including habitat for species at risk; and
  - intact healthy watersheds.

## Specific Land Use Activities

Strategic direction is described for the specific activities of:

- traditional use
- forest management
- mineral exploration and mining
- tourism
- non-timber forest products

Traditional use will be addressed in a manner which:

- is premised upon respect for Aboriginal and Treaty Rights;
- is guided by our traditional values and principles;
- promotes integration with new economic development opportunities;
- recognizes that it is part of a conservation approach;
- supports the protection of cultural & natural heritage values from negative impacts;
- is enhanced by maintaining natural landscape features such as waterways; and
- supports Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge collection as a key element of land and resource management.

Forest management will be conducted in a manner which:

- maintains a healthy, sustainable forest ecosystem, employing current standards, guidelines and best management practices for forest management;
- maintains the structure and composition of the forest in a manner consistent with the maintenance of biodiversity including habitat for the plants and animals that occur within and depend upon the forest;
- gives a high priority to forest renewal and tending methods that minimize negative environmental impacts, and strive to maintain the current forest condition including forest composition and structure;
- reflects community preference for natural regeneration, whenever possible but recognize the need to apply regeneration practices that can restore forest composition and structure;
- employs minimal use of herbicides for tending;
- protects cultural and natural heritage values;
- promotes road use management strategies (including access restrictions and decommissioning) to maintain the remote character of the land and ongoing traditional use, protect environmental values, waterways, and intact healthy watersheds;
- supports protection and maintenance of healthy aquatic ecosystems;
- where suitable, identifies and implements practices for the production of value-added products that could support high economic benefits to the communities; and
- harmonizes economic development opportunities for non-timber forest products (e.g., berry picking, mushroom, medicine plants) with forest management operations.

Mineral exploration and mining activities will be conducted in a manner which:

- emphasizes use of 'Cat Lake-Slate Falls Guidelines for Mineral Sector Projects: Best Management Practices' for mineral sector development;
- supports early consultation & engagement requirements;



- encourages development of Impact Benefits Agreements with Cat Lake and Slate Falls
- addresses mining withdrawals for culturally sensitive sites as identified by community leadership and members;
- minimizes surface disturbance near water bodies and streams to ensure healthy/intake watersheds are maintained;
- respects that the people of Cat Lake and Slate Falls emphasize protection of fish and wildlife habitat;
- emphasizes the importance of rehabilitating mineral development areas in a timely manner; and
- incorporates ongoing monitoring schedules and water quality sampling.

Tourism will be conducted in a manner which:

- maintains natural landscape features and remote character;
- protects features of cultural and ecological significance, and the relationship of Cat Lake and Slate Falls people to these features;
- identifies areas and develops opportunities that respect Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge for cultural, ecological and subsistence requirements;
- shows respect for existing stakeholder interests;
- expects that new and existing tourism establishments operate in accordance with environmental standards, requirements and/or guidelines for water quality protection (e.g. septic systems);
- promotes First Nation owned operations for new tourism ventures; and
- promotes the use of Resource Stewardship Agreements (RSA's).

Non-timber forest products (NTFP) industry will be conducted in a manner where:

- traditional uses / customary practices are protected and preserved;
- cultural guidance directs existing and new uses for NTFPs;
- sensitive sites will be identified & protected by community direction; and
- decision making and subsequent resource management plans are responsive to NTFP opportunities.

Renewable energy development will be considered in a manner where:

- Cat Lake and Slate Falls may pursue opportunities for small-scale renewable energy based on capability on the Cat River system. This direction would be consistent with provisions of a Dedicated Protected Area and additional direction may be provided within a management plan.
- future opportunities such as for wind, solar or geothermal energy would be of interest to the communities.

## Other Subjects

Strategic level direction is provided for the subjects of:

- Access and Infrastructure
- Climate change
- Fish and wildlife management
- Consideration of cumulative impacts
- Fire management

### **Access and Infrastructure**

A strategic access planning approach will be incorporated into decision making for all future developments to:

- support the highest possible long term value to the First Nation communities;
- maintain remoteness and remote tourism industry viability;
- create the most effective and efficient transportation network with a minimum number of roads and trails and with the lowest cumulative impacts;
- consider how best to achieve enhanced economic development opportunities while minimizing the negative effects of new access infrastructure, including cumulative impacts;
- support a synergistic approach to provide for multiple benefits;
- respect the infrastructure development needs for neighbouring First Nations at a broad scale;
- support managing for woodland caribou conservation considerations, e.g., long-term availability of habitat through time, managing over large areas and recognizing the importance of habitat connectivity across the landscape; and
- support linkages between planning processes and policy developments (e.g. caribou conservation plan, conservation planning).

### **Climate change**

Climate change mitigation and adaptation will be incorporated into decision making in the following manner:

- Cat Lake and Slate Falls will:
  - embrace opportunities to build awareness of known and potential impacts of climate change to natural resources and systems;
  - contribute to knowledge of climate change and effects through ongoing documentation of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge;
  - participate in science and research studies, monitoring and assessment programs; and
  - investigate and facilitate the development of renewable energy for community use.
- As methods of analyses become available, the communities will work together and with advisors to:
  - identify areas that are important sources of carbon storage;
  - explore potential carbon offset market opportunities that may emerge in the future; and
  - explore options for undertaking a climate change vulnerability assessment to identify potential climate change adaptation options that can inform future planning and decision-making.

This approach and direction acknowledges that there is a responsibility to be engaged in the climate change dialogue, to build understanding, contribute to climate change mitigation, and to adapt to change.

As additional information and understanding of the effects of climate change emerge, it will be incorporated into plan monitoring and review opportunities. Evaluation and adjustments to land use activities decisions may be required to respond to climate change challenges.

### **Fish and Wildlife Management**

The *Cat Lake-Slate Falls Plan* describes land use designations and strategic direction to support healthy, sustainable fish and wildlife resources. In plan implementation, Cat Lake and Slate Falls will continue to work with Ontario to bring forward the communities' interests and work collaboratively in management for sustainable fisheries resources and wildlife management.

#### Species at risk

Systematic surveys and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge confirm habitat availability and the presence of species at risk in the Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning area including woodland caribou, wolverine, and lake sturgeon. The land use plan adopts a conservation approach for species at risk by:

- emphasizing the collection, analysis and interpretation of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge, along with science and research, to provide the best available information and knowledge;
- encouraging communication, education and participation in species at risk conservation activities, including local, regional and provincial conservation initiatives; and
- supporting efforts for species at risk conservation in harmony with current and emerging direction, including the Endangered Species Act 2007.

Woodland caribou conservation has been considered in the preparation of this land use plan and will be considered in implementation of the plan with recognition that:

- keeping caribou on the land will also take care of the needs of many other wildlife species;
- caribou conservation and recovery is a subject to be considered in all land use areas and beyond the planning area. For example, it will be important to integrate caribou habitat objectives and strategies across the boundaries that separate dedicated protected areas from areas licensed for forest management (or other development activities) and from adjacent planning areas;
- it is essential to manage for long-term availability of habitat through time, over large areas and with connections across land;
- it is essential to address the conservation of caribou and their habitat in subsequent decision-making for all activities and developments, including consideration of cumulative impacts across the entire landscape;
- planning for access will employ the Strategic Access Planning Approach to maintain remoteness, minimize linear features, limit road density and fragmentation, and conserve and maintain forest structure and composition while achieving desired economic opportunities; and
- conservation efforts will reflect and complement the Woodland Caribou Conservation Plan 2009.

### Consideration of Cumulative Impacts

Implementation of the *Cat Lake-Slate Falls Plan* will encourage consideration of cumulative impacts for proposed land use activities through plan provisions including:

- the Strategic Access Planning Approach described in Part 2, section 2.2; and
- Implementation of the most current watershed mapping data providing water-based units for analysis of landscape disturbances, cumulative and downstream effects;
- Application of emerging policy and planning tools to assess implications of cumulative impacts of disturbance for woodland caribou conservation, for example:
  - work with science advisors to:
    - evaluate habitat conditions and identify impacts on the long-term sustainability of woodland caribou ranges;
    - apply resource development screening tools (in preparation) to assess and evaluate cumulative effects; and
  - provide for consideration of social, economic and environmental concerns in the context of long-term caribou survival.

Additionally, the joint approach to be described for plan implementation will provide for incorporation of emerging guidance on this subject.

### Fire Management

Inherent in land use plan decisions are assumptions about the extent of fire and its effects on sustainable resource use. MNR is responsible for the Provincial Fire Management Strategy which establishes levels of protection, fire management investment, and protection priorities. The province has been divided into six Fire Management Zones based on common management objectives, land use, fire load, and forest ecology. The Cat Lake-Slate Falls planning area is located in the Northern Boreal Zone in which First Nations are the majority inhabitants and it is recognized that there are resource-based tourism interests along with new opportunities for commercial forestry.

Amendments may be required to the Fire Strategy to reflect new land use direction and priorities described in this Land Use Plan. Resource management planning will provide greater detail on the role of fire and fire management direction required to ensure long-term ecological processes are sustained while achieving forest and property protection objectives. This more detailed resource management planning will be the basis on which any amendments to the Fire Strategy are made.

## 2.3 Summary of Land Use Activities Direction

Land use activity direction in the *Cat Lake-Slate Falls Plan* is also presented in Crown Land Use Policy Atlas (CLUPA) reports. The Plan is the primary source of direction. CLUPA reports are prepared to be synonymous with the plan. CLUPA policy reports can include additional clarification of provincial requirements. The reports can be accessed online. Table 1 is a snapshot of the land use activity direction by area, as it appears in CLUPA. Footnotes provide additional clarification of "Yes, No or Maybe".

Table 1: *Cat Lake-Slate Falls Plan* Summary of Land Use Activities Direction

| Land Use Activities Permitted (Yes, Maybe or No)                                                                                                                   | GUA                | EMA                 | DPA                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Aboriginal traditional activities which include (but are not limited to) hunting, fishing and gathering are respected as historical and current uses in all areas. |                    |                     |                     |
| <b>Commercial Activities</b>                                                                                                                                       |                    |                     |                     |
| Aggregate extraction                                                                                                                                               | Yes                | Yes                 | No                  |
| Bait fishing <sup>1</sup>                                                                                                                                          | Maybe              | Maybe               | Maybe               |
| Commercial Fishing Existing                                                                                                                                        | Yes                | Yes                 | Yes                 |
| New                                                                                                                                                                | Yes                | Yes                 | Maybe <sup>2</sup>  |
| Commercial Fur Harvesting                                                                                                                                          | Yes                | Yes                 | Yes                 |
| Commercial Power Generation Development                                                                                                                            | Yes                | Yes                 | Maybe <sup>3</sup>  |
| Commercial Timber Harvest <sup>4</sup>                                                                                                                             | Yes                | Yes                 | No                  |
| Commercial Tourism Existing                                                                                                                                        | Yes                | Yes                 | Yes                 |
| New                                                                                                                                                                | Yes                | Yes                 | Maybe <sup>2</sup>  |
| Energy Transmission and Communications Corridors*                                                                                                                  |                    |                     | Maybe <sup>5</sup>  |
| Mineral Exploration and Development                                                                                                                                | Yes <sup>6</sup>   | Yes <sup>6</sup>    | No                  |
| Peat Extraction                                                                                                                                                    | Yes                | Yes                 | No                  |
| Wild Rice Harvesting                                                                                                                                               | Yes                | Yes                 | Yes <sup>2</sup>    |
| <b>Land and Resource Management Activities</b>                                                                                                                     |                    |                     |                     |
| Crown Land Disposition                                                                                                                                             | Maybe <sup>7</sup> | Maybe <sup>8</sup>  | Maybe <sup>9</sup>  |
| Road Development and Maintenance Existing:                                                                                                                         | Yes <sup>10</sup>  | Yes <sup>11</sup>   |                     |
| New:                                                                                                                                                               | Yes <sup>12</sup>  | Yes <sup>13</sup>   |                     |
| Roads (DPA direction) Existing:                                                                                                                                    |                    |                     | Yes <sup>14</sup>   |
| New:                                                                                                                                                               |                    |                     | Maybe <sup>15</sup> |
| <b>Recreation Activities and Facilities</b>                                                                                                                        |                    |                     |                     |
| Crown Land Recreation                                                                                                                                              | Yes                | Yes                 | Maybe <sup>2</sup>  |
| Hunting                                                                                                                                                            | Yes                | Yes                 | Yes                 |
| Road Use (public) Existing                                                                                                                                         | Yes <sup>16</sup>  | Yes <sup>11</sup>   | See 'Roads' above   |
| New                                                                                                                                                                | Yes <sup>17</sup>  | Maybe <sup>18</sup> |                     |
| Sport Fishing                                                                                                                                                      | Yes                | Yes                 | Yes                 |
| Research*                                                                                                                                                          |                    |                     | Yes <sup>2</sup>    |
| Motor Boat Use*                                                                                                                                                    |                    |                     |                     |
| Commercial                                                                                                                                                         |                    |                     | Yes                 |
| Private                                                                                                                                                            |                    |                     | Yes <sup>19</sup>   |

\* Please note that land use activities marked with an asterisk are 'Yes' for the GUA and EMA, in accordance with the plan. CLUPA reports include these activities for the DPA only, where there is additional direction.

## Footnotes for Table 1

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1 Possession or harvesting of baitfish north of the 11th baseline is prohibited. South of the 11th baseline possession and harvest of baitfish may be allowed subject to provincial policy direction.

2 This management direction is interim; additional specific direction will be determined by the final designation assigned to this Dedicated Protected Area and by future resource management planning.

New proposals for specific activities will be subject to a review by MNR together with Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nation. This review will consider the intent of the area, direction provided in the Cat Lake Slate Falls Community Based Land Use Plan, impacts on resources and values associated with the CSRS-DPA, compatible economic opportunities, and potential for economic benefit to Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nation.

3 Hydro-electric generation opportunities will remain available for First Nation community use.

4 The proposed activities of forestry must be enabled through a new approval under the Environmental Assessment Act. OMNR will seek approval that will set out direction for the manner in which forestry can proceed.

5 Generally, access and required water crossings will be minimized within these dedicated protected areas. In certain circumstances such as for a major energy transmission and communications corridor, provisions for access and water crossings will be made through a planning process, considering the intent and values of the area.

6 A set of Guidelines for Mineral Sector Projects: Best Management Practices' (BMPs) has been developed for mineral sector activities in the General Use Area and Enhanced Management Area. Application of these BMPs will take place through a dialogue with Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations.

7 Must be consistent with the specific intent of the area.

8 Crown land disposition can occur for permitted activities, but only where it is consistent with the maintenance and protection of cultural and natural heritage features and retention of the remote character.

9 Private: No new land disposition for the private use of individuals is permitted, except for minor dispositions in support of existing uses (e.g., reconstruction of a septic system). Renewal of existing tenure for authorized uses is permitted.  
Commercial: New requests and/or transfer requests for commercial land use disposition to support approved activities may be considered subject to review per Note above.

10 Existing authorized access will continue.

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11 Winter roads only

12 All proposals for road access will be considered using a strategic access planning approach.

13 Roads for industrial and commercial use are permitted.

Roads are permitted within the area, but the number of roads will be minimized. They will be developed in a manner that seeks to retain the integrity of the natural features and high quality tourism operations through a strategic access planning approach. Some guidelines are:

- avoid culturally or ecologically significant sites;
- preference would be given for temporary or seasonal use (e.g., winter roads).
- temporary roads will be assigned to accommodate forestry, commercial non-timber forest product enterprise, and mineral sector activities, and other activities provided they are consistent with the primary intent of the area
- encourage use of best available tools for temporary road design such as consideration of aesthetics, bridge/crossing removals, strategic location of temporary water crossings, ice roads, ferries, gates with permit access only, etc.;
- design and construction would consider access controls and closure/rehabilitation.

14 Current use of winter and all weather roads will be allowed to continue.

15 New roads will not be permitted, with the recognition that road access across waterways may be required, however the focus would be to limit/minimize the number of crossings necessary for community access or economic development opportunities. In certain circumstances such as for a major all-weather crossing, for cultural heritage purposes, or for access to mining opportunities or forestry opportunities, provisions for access will be made through a planning process, considering the intent and values of the area.

16 Existing authorized access will continue.

17 Roads will generally be open; subject to strategic access planning that considers the values of the area and the land use intent.

18 New roads may be restricted from public use to provide for protection of remote tourism values or to protect community, natural and cultural values.

19 Existing use of motor boats can continue. Existing uses, such as boat caches, are permitted except where dedicated protected area objectives or values are threatened. For new activities, see Footnote Number 2.

## ***PART Three - Plan Implementation***

Now that the Land Use Plan is complete and endorsed by the First Nations and the MNR, the document will provide guiding direction to government, resource based industry and other land use regulatory agencies in their assessment of development projects.

The Far North Act 2010 (Section 14 (1)) directs that once a community based land use plan is approved, decisions respecting the allocation, disposition or use of public land and natural resources in the area must be consistent with the land use designations and permitted uses specified in the plan and the permitted uses prescribed for the purpose of the plan. The direction of the plan is included in the Ontario Crown Land Use Policy Atlas (CLUPA), an online compendium of land use direction in Ontario.

This plan has been created in good faith and with respect among Cat Lake First Nation, Slate Falls Nation and Ontario. Implementation of the plan will continue to be guided by this good faith and respect.

Part Three provides direction for plan implementation addressing:

1. Achieving goals and objectives
2. Review and renewal
3. Implementation Actions

*"The Land Use Plan is only the beginning...implementation of this plan will be beneficial to everyone, First Nations and the general public."*

*Former Chief, Ron Wesley*

### ***3.1 Achieving goals and objectives***

Monitoring achievements is important to assess progress and the effectiveness of the plan, and to support formal plan review and renewal. Cat Lake, Slate Falls and MNR will describe a joint approach to monitor ongoing achievement of the plan objectives.

The *Cat Lake-Slate Falls Plan* itself contributes to objectives of the communities and the Province (See Part One, Section 1.2) by providing certainty for land use and a foundation for future decision making that adds to the existing framework of policy and legislation in Ontario. Implementation of the plan will further contribute to achievement of objectives.

Achievements of the plan include:

- Cat Lake and Slate Falls First Nations have taken a significant role in the preparation of the plan and will continue to have a significant role in plan implementation;
- Planning has been guided by the people who live on this land. As a result, the plan respects the First Nations' relationship to the land and resources providing for traditional use and new livelihood opportunities in a manner that will be guided by the First Nation community members, working together with Ontario;



- Planning has incorporated considerations and interests of adjacent communities through provision of strategic directions and recognition of ongoing relationships in plan implementation;
- Provision of land use area designations permitting sustainable economic development that can benefit the First Nations of Cat Lake and Slate Falls, including for a new forest management opportunity supporting Cat Lake and Slate Falls' goal for a Sustainable Forest Licence, definition of areas permitting mineral sector activities, assessment of renewable energy opportunities and existing and new tourism opportunities;
- Protection of areas of cultural value and protection of ecological systems including by:
  - designating a Dedicated Protected Area (495,833 ha) supporting:
    - an interconnected network of protected areas with adjacent existing protected areas (Whitefeather Forest, Pipestone River Provincial Waterway Park); and
    - the interconnection of major waterways, protection of watershed headwater areas, protection of community cultural values and support for the habitat needs for fish and wildlife including species at risk;
  - promoting protection measures throughout the planning area, including in the Enhanced Management Area and General Use Area (e.g., strategic access planning, definition of Guidelines for Mineral Sector Projects: Best Management Practices, withdrawal of culturally significant sites); and
  - drawing upon the existing suite of provincial direction including from policy, guidelines and legislation.
- Maintenance of biological diversity, ecological processes and functions, including the storage and sequestration of carbon in the Far North by:
  - identifying protection of water and water courses as a priority in decision making for plan design and implementation;
  - incorporate advice on ecological considerations within and adjacent to the planning area (e.g. natural heritage values and features) and providing land use areas and direction that complements those adjacent interests;
    - interconnection of waterways adjacent to the planning area
    - recognition of the use of caribou habitat in and adjacent to the planning area (i.e. range consideration)
    - incorporate wetland features into protected areas design supporting an ecoregional approach
  - providing strategic direction to guide the manner in which activities will be conducted;
  - incorporating Cat Lake-Slate Falls Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge as a foundation for decision making, now and in the future; and
  - a joint commitment to make decisions informed by the best available information, existing and emerging direction and guidance.

The plan provides a balance for the future by identifying desired and compatible land uses enabling sustainable economic development and a comprehensive protected area design network. The communities are now in a better position to pursue interests and opportunities that can help strengthen their socioeconomic future.

### *3.2. Plan review and renewal*

The *Cat Lake-Slate Falls Plan* will be kept current and active by continuing to update information and providing documentation of implementation successes and issues.

Periodically, the effectiveness of direction and decisions contained in the plan will need to be re-evaluated. A formal review will take place once every fifteen years, beginning in 2026, following a joint process similar to that taken in preparation of the plan. During plan implementation Cat Lake, Slate Falls or, MNR may propose amendments to the plan addressing land use designations, the designation of protected areas or specification of permitted land uses.

### *3.3. Implementation Actions*

Ten implementation actions are recommended for the near future (i.e., within ten - fifteen years). A specific timeframe to address these actions will be determined during description of a joint implementation approach by Cat Lake, Slate Falls and Ontario.

Subsequent to the plan, land and resource allocations, resource management planning (e.g. forest management planning) and resource management activities will be subject to provincial obligations under the Environmental Assessment Act (EA Act) and other relevant legislation such as the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA).

#### Actions:

1. Cat Lake and Slate Falls will identify economic development priorities based on the opportunities identified in the land use plan, and will develop a strategy to pursue opportunities and develop partnerships.
2. Cat Lake and Slate Falls will continue to determine the communities' interest in obtaining a Sustainable Forest Licence (SFL). Immediately following the plan approval, MNR will seek a new approval under the Environmental Assessment Act for the proposed activities of forestry in those areas where the plan specifies that forestry is a desired and compatible activity. MNR will work together with Cat Lake and Slate Falls to prepare the submission for Environmental Assessment Act coverage. Should the communities wish to pursue an SFL, business opportunities will be explored and CFSA requirements must be addressed including definition of a new SFL and forest management planning.
3. For the Dedicated Protected Area, Cat Lake and Slate Falls and the MNR will;
  - determine final protected area regulatory mechanism and designation category(ies) in subsequent dialogue (the types of protected area designations available would include existing under the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (PPCRA) and may include new types associated with the Far North Planning Initiative);
  - during regulation, minor refinements to the DPA boundary for the headwaters northeast and northwest of Cat Lake may be considered to apply current watershed information ;
  - recommend a management planning approach that draws upon direction of both the DPA and the EMA as they provide for protection of waterways;
  - provide public consultation opportunities during the process when the protected areas are regulated and /or new policy direction is provided;

- prepare a management plan;
  - prepare a fire management plan; and
  - pursue an arrangement for the collaborative management of the protected area in Ontario.
4. Cat Lake, Slate Falls and MNR will describe a joint approach for plan implementation, including for:
    - monitoring the achievements of the plan;
    - plan review and renewal; and
    - decision making.
  5. A working group will be established to advance understanding of the Plan's watershed approach, to include providing guidance on:
    - application of watershed mapping data in decision making;
    - integrating strategic direction for the protection of water across land use designations; and
    - pursuing a watershed protection approach for the Cat Lake-Slate Falls waterway south of the planning area to complement the waterway protection within the planning area (along the northern shore of this waterway) working through available processes such as forest management plans and/or CLUPA amendment.
  6. A working group will be established to set out logistics supporting adoption of a Strategic Access Planning Approach. A structure will be put in place to effectively provide for review of access proposals, ensure consistency with land use plan direction and provide advice and recommendations. The working group will consist of representation from Cat Lake, Slate Falls and the MNR.
  7. Cat Lake and Slate Falls will work together with adjacent communities through First Nation to First Nation discussions to determine shared interests and opportunities in implementation of the plan.
  8. Explore steps for undertaking a climate change vulnerability assessment to identify potential climate change adaptation options that can inform future planning and decision-making.
  9. Cat Lake & Slate Falls First Nations will work together in a dialogue with MNDMF to discuss mineral sector interests and opportunities, community capacity building, and implementation of the land use plan direction. Cat Lake & Slate Falls will also work with MNDMF to identify cultural values for mineral sector withdrawals as part of the pilot project addressing the Fawcett-Fry Lake EMA (See Section 2.1).
  10. Cat Lake and Slate Falls will participate in the identification and submission of traditional place name research and mapping to the Ontario Geographic Names Board

Thank you for your interest in our Cat Lake-Slate Falls Community Based Land Use Plan. We encourage you to contact the communities and the Ministry of Natural Resources with your views, questions or comments on this plan.

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