



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—February 8, 2008

## **Shameful Destruction Discovered in Manitoba Provincial Park**

Wilderness Committee expedition finds current mining, logging, and hydro operations laying waste to the forests in Nopiming Provincial Park.

Winnipeg, Manitoba – A Wilderness Committee expedition to mark snowshoe and ski trails on Thursday instead found industrial devastation at every turn in Manitoba's Nopiming Provincial Park, located 130 km northeast of Winnipeg and adjacent to the Ontario border.

Mining speculators are bulldozing the forest in the south end of the park just off the main highway, in order to drill exploration holes. What was only recently untouched forest is now a tangled pile of debris lining the newly bulldozed road. Water from the wetlands next to the road was being pumped through the forest to use in the drilling operation.

Further on in the park, a 14 kilometer road has been bulldozed along the Manigotagan River, presumably to access a hydro transmission line running through the area. This newly bulldozed path provides unhindered access deep into a forested area that saw little human presence beforehand. There was evidence that wolves and humans are using this cleared road to hunt moose.

The final assault on this provincial park was found near Beresford Lake. Logging operators for Tembec, a large Canadian company based in Montreal that lists environmental protection as a key part of their mission, drove a tracked vehicle through a section of forest along the Beresford Subdivision Road, leaving destruction in its wake. The path of vehicle tracks appeared random and left considerable damage, crushing trees and ripping ground cover and shrubs.

“I could never have imagined a more horrible hike in a park,” said Eric Reder, Campaign Director for the Wilderness Committee. “Finding any one of these disasters is disturbing, something you might expect in a third world country. Finding all three on the same day in a Canadian park is beyond belief. It's shameful. In just a few short hours we witnessed everything that is wrong with the way Manitoba's parks are being managed by our government.”

In the 1990s the Manitoba government enshrined industrial development in parks with the Provincial Parks Act legislation. The Wilderness Committee's Manitoba Office has been at the forefront of fighting to make Manitoba's parks truly protected. Close to 10,000 Manitobans have written letters to Premier Doer in the last year, demanding that industrial activity in provincial parks be stopped.

Joe Foy, Wilderness Committee National Campaign Director said, “I’ve been working to protect wilderness for a long time and was astounded when I saw this devastation, and in a park of all places. All Canadians and those living around the world who value Canada’s natural heritage need to remind Manitoba Premier Doer that people expect parks to be off-limits to industrial developments so we can protect nature for future generations.”

A rally against industrial activity in provincial parks is scheduled for Manitoba’s Legislature on Wednesday, February 27 at 12:30 PM.

*The Wilderness Committee is Canada's largest member-based, citizen-funded wilderness protection group. Founded in 1980, the Wilderness Committee has five offices in four Canadian provinces and has helped gained preservation for over six million hectares of wilderness in Western Canada.*

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**To view pictures of devastation in Manitoba’s Nopiming Provincial Park**

Please visit [www.wildernesscommittee.mb.ca](http://www.wildernesscommittee.mb.ca)