

LITTLE GRAND LAKE PROVISIONAL ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

Little Grand Lake Provisional Ecological Reserve is part of the Little Grand Lake Reserve System, which also includes the Little Grand Lake Wild Life Reserve and the Glover Island Public Reserve. Located ~ 20 km southeast of Corner Brook, the total reserve system covers almost 1500 km² or 62, 300 hectares of bog, barren and forest. Little Grand Lake Provisional Ecological Reserve is the largest of the three (731 km²), followed by Little Grand Lake Wild Life Reserve (568 km²) and Glover Island Public Reserve (178 km²).



Photo Credit Kerry Hutchings

Glover Island

The Little Grand Lake Provisional Ecological Reserve is a true ecosystem ecological reserve as it incorporates three ecoregions: Western Newfoundland Forest (Corner Brook subregion); Central Newfoundland Forest (Portage Pond subregion); and Long Range Barrens (Buchans Plateau/Topsails subregion). The transition zone (ecotone) where these three ecoregions overlap is of particular interest as it provides habitat for a greater variety of plant and animal species. The topography of the Little Grand Lake Reserve System is rugged, interspersed with wetlands and waterbodies. The boreal forests of the reserve system (balsam fir mixed with white pine and black spruce) have the largest remaining core population of Newfoundland Pine Marten on the island. The woodland caribou frequent the bogs, barrens, and some of the most extensive ribbed fens (marsh) in Newfoundland.



Photo Credit Bruce Coombs

Historically, activities in this area consisted of limited timber harvesting, mineral exploration, hunting, trapping, fishing, snowmobiling, outfitting and scientific research. Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited owned the timber rights to most of the area in the reserve system, and in the early 1980's were extending roads and infrastructure to access a portion of the timber. The Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council (WERAC) were informed of the biological significance of Little Grand Lake at this time, and an environmental assessment area was established to assess the impact of forest harvesting on Newfoundland marten. The results convinced WERAC of the need to protect the marten, and by 1994 work started on the establishment of the Little Grand Lake provisional reserve boundary. With the establishment of the provisional reserve, all timber harvesting activities ceased and Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited was compensated for roads and bridges constructed within the reserve boundaries. All three reserves in the Little Grand Lake Reserve System were established in 2002. A draft management plan for the Little Grand Lake Provisional Ecological Reserve submitted to the Government in January 2005 awaits approval.

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Photo Credit Joe Brazil

Access to the Reserve System is allowed by vehicle and hiking; a permit is required for a boat, snowmobile, helicopter or floatplane. No all-terrain vehicles are permitted access. The best way to access the Reserve System by vehicle is by Camp 185 Road, ~ 4 km west of Gallants turnoff. Then travel ~ 31 km to Little Grand Lake Road, and hike ~ 4 km to Little Grand Lake. Boaters can access Grand Lake from Camp 33 Road, directly across from Gallants turnoff, but must be cautious of the wind and other potential hazards of Grand Lake.



Little Grand Lake

Hiking and sightseeing are permitted in all three of the reserves in the Little Grand Lake Reserve System. Other activities permitted vary from one reserve to the other with the exception of no hunting or snaring of the Newfoundland Marten. More information on the Little Grand Lake Reserve System and other permitted activities can be found on the Department of Environment and Conservation website: http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/parks/wer/r_lgle/index.html.

Little Grand Lake Reserve System was once part of the timber limits of Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Ltd., but in 2010 the timber rights for this and other parcels of land were sold to the Crown, to be used for protected areas or sources of fibre. However, the two share common boundaries, and when operating adjacent to protected areas Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Ltd. follows the government guidelines of no construction of roads within 500m of the boundary.