



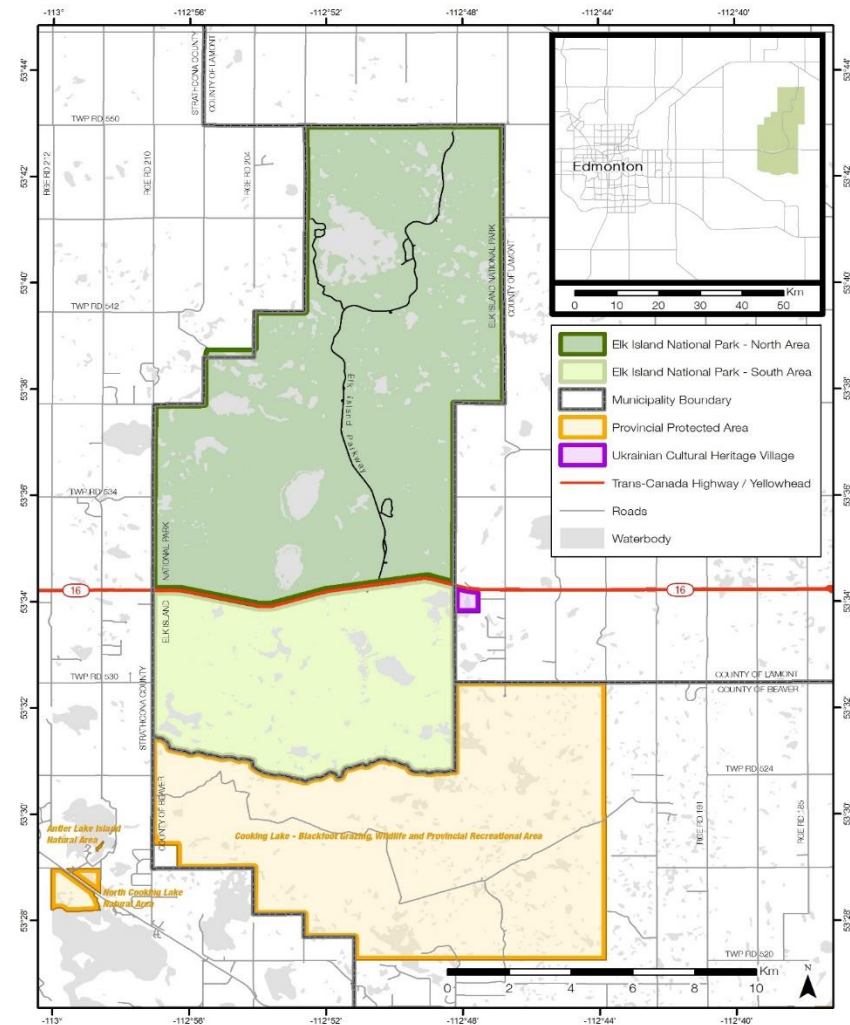
# Elk Island National Park Prescribed Fire

Dale Kirkland  
Park Superintendent  
Presentation: *Priorities Committee Meeting*  
January 28, 2020



# Elk Island National Park (EINP)

- EINP comprises a total area of 194 km<sup>2</sup>.
- Canada's only fully-fenced national park (enclosed by a 2.2 metre high fence).
- Boundaries are shared with Strathcona County, Beaver County, Lamont County, and the Government of Alberta.







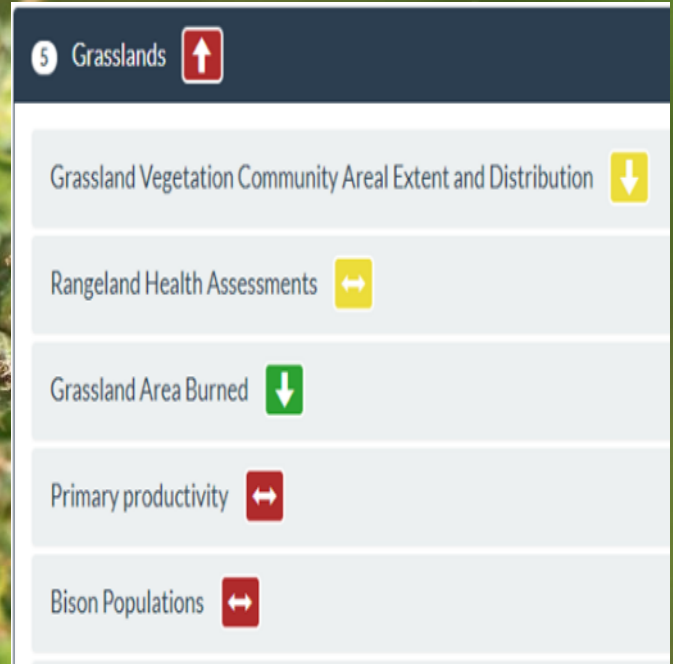
## Fire Management – Vision

- The ecological role of fire is managed in a manner that prioritizes public safety and enhances visitor experience.
- Fire regimes in the park are managed for the maintenance and restoration of the landscape composition and structure of the vegetation representative of the Southern Boreal Plains and Plateaux natural region.
- This management also ensures the protection of the public and park facilities as well as considering objectives of adjacent land managers.
- Protection of the public and values at risk occurs through pro-active risk management measures and effective wildfire management.
- Ecological integrity is restored through careful, considered application of prescribed fire.



# Grasslands

- Grassland indicator is Poor:
  - Increased cover of woody species
  - Grassland health is generally low
  - Lack of fire on the landscape
  - Overgrazing of preferred habitat
  - High cover of invasive plant species
- Restoring fire to EINP will help support recovery of grassland habitat and will improve the overall health of grassland habitat.







## Fire Timeline at EINP

- Historical burning 12,000 years ago
- Fire Suppression early 1900's
- Prescribed fires resumed 1979
- Fire suppression begins again 2002
- Fire Management Plan approved 2018
- Prescribed Fire resumes 2020



Photo Credit: Dale Kirkland



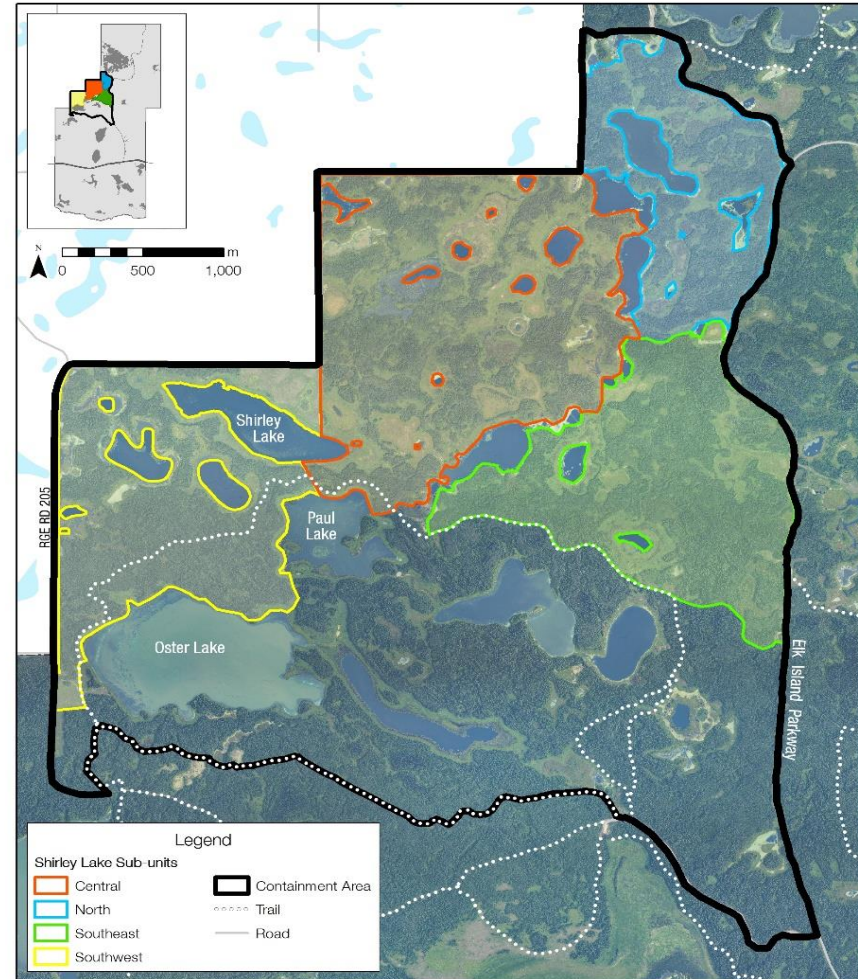
# Shirley Lake Prescribe Fire

- 928 hectare (ha) northwest area of the park.
- Contained by man-made and natural boundaries including the western boundary of the park and multiple shallow waterbodies. April/May 2020.
- Adjacent to the park boundary.
- Four sub-units make up the Shirley Lake fire unit; **southwest (219 ha)**, **central (336 ha)**, **north (136 ha)** and **southeast (237 ha)**.
- April/May 2020 **southwest unit**.
- Prescribe fire will only proceed if prescribed conditions are met.



Elk Island  
National Park

Shirley Lake Prescribed Fire Boundary







## Communication and Engagement (Shirley Lake Prescribe Fire)

- Nearby residents, key partners and the public are aware and informed of a prescribed fire before, during and upon completion of the Shirley Lake prescribed fire program operations in 2020.
  - Online/website updates
  - Posters and fact sheets
  - Outreach presentation opportunities
  - Proactive media
  - County(s) mail-out
  - Meetings with stakeholders
  - Meetings with adjacent neighbours
  - Open house for the public







## Key Messages

- The safety of people, infrastructure and neighbouring lands is Parks Canada's number one priority.
- Through safe and effective fire management, the health of forests and grasslands is improved and the danger of wildfire to the public, infrastructure and neighbouring lands is reduced.
- Prescribed fire is a positive disturbance for the fire-dependent ecosystems found in Elk Island National Park that releases nutrients and creates a mosaic of ecosystems to support diverse plants and wildlife.







## Contact

Fire Webpage:

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/ab/elkisland/nature/feu-fire>

General Fire Information email:

[pc.elkisland.fireinfo-infoincendie.elkisland.pc@canada.ca](mailto:pc.elkisland.fireinfo-infoincendie.elkisland.pc@canada.ca)



## Questions

Photo credit: Steven Edgerton