

Portage Sandhills Wildlife Management Area  
(located 11 miles south of Portage la Prairie on PR240)

The Portage Sandhills is one of four sandhill complexes in Manitoba. Around 15,000 years ago at the end of the last Ice Age, the glaciers began to melt and the ancient Assiniboine River began to flow into Lake Agassiz, bringing loads of silt and sand with it and forming a huge delta. The delta finally rose above the level of the lake and when the waters drained and shrunk back, the exposed sand was formed into dunes by the wind. The Portage Sandhills are located on the eastern edge of that huge delta and the Carberry Sandhills on the western edge. (The Lauder and and Routledge sandhills were created by deltas formed by floodwaters rushing into Glacial Lake Hind.) The southwestern corner of the province was the first area to become ice free and plants began to grow and adapt to the hot and dry conditions on the sandhills. The climate was warmer then. When the climate started to cool about 5,000 years ago and the prairies retreated, trees and other plants began to take over the dunes, but a few of these specialized plant species remained and some are still there today. In the Portage W.M.A., which comprises 1600 ha or about five sections of land, one can still find unusual plant species like hairy prairie clover, prickly pear cactus, long-leaved houstonia, plantain-leaved everlasting, skeleton weed and creeping juniper, as well as many other beautiful and interesting plants and animals.

Potential Species List

Marigolds ( <i>Caltha palustris</i> )	Sand umbrella sedge ( <i>Carex schweinitzii</i> )
Coltsfoot ( <i>Petasites sagittatus</i> )	Beaked willow ( <i>Salix bebbiana</i> )
Chokecherry ( <i>Prunus virginiana</i> )	Strawberry ( <i>Fragaria virginianum</i> )
Sandcherry ( <i>Prunus pumila</i> )	Pygmyflower ( <i>Androsace septentrionalis</i> )
Pincherry ( <i>Prunus pensylvanica</i> )	American vetch ( <i>Vicia americanum</i> )
Saskatoon ( <i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i> )	Dandelion ( <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> )
Blueberry ( <i>Vaccinium augustifolium</i> )	Rock cress ( <i>Arabis</i> sp.)
Blue-eyed grass ( <i>Sisyrinchium montanum</i> )	Common bearberry ( <i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i> )
Hoary puccoon ( <i>Lithospermum canescens</i> )	Evening primrose ( <i>Oenothera biennis</i> )
Three-flowered avens ( <i>Geum triflorum</i> )	Horizontal juniper ( <i>Juniperus horizontalis</i> )
Speckled alder ( <i>Alnus rugosa</i> )	Long-eared chickweed ( <i>Stellaria longifolia</i> )
Bastard toadflax ( <i>Comandra umbellata</i> )	Meadow rue ( <i>Thalictrum dasycarpum</i> )
Sun-loving sedge ( <i>Carex pensylvanica</i> )	Early blue violet ( <i>Viola adunca</i> )
Sweet grass ( <i>Hierochloa odorata</i> )	Pussytoes ( <i>Antennaria</i> sp.)
Wormseed mustard ( <i>Erysimum cheiranthoides</i> )	
Wild lily of the valley ( <i>Maianthemum canadense</i> )	
Cream coloured vetchling ( <i>Lathyrus ochroleucus</i> )	
Three-leaved false solomon seal ( <i>Smilicina trifolia</i> )	
Pincherry	Goldenrod



Arrow-leaved coltsfoot



Prickly-pear cactus



Pygmy flower



Three-flowered avens (aka prairie smoke)