

**Skeena Region**

# **MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT**

**March 2003**



**for Border Lake  
Provincial Park**



**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**

**Ministry of Water, Land  
and Air Protection  
Environmental Stewardship  
Division**



# Border Lake Provincial Park Approvals Page

## Forward

This management direction statement for Border Lake Provincial Park provides management direction until such time as the plan is revised. Ongoing consultation with First Nations may require changes to this management direction statement. Aboriginal rights are honoured and respected within the park.

Implementation of strategies identified in the MDS will be dependent on available funding and Environmental Stewardship Division priorities.

## Approvals



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Regional Manager  
Skeena Region  
Environmental Stewardship Division



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Assistant Deputy Minister  
Environmental Stewardship Division

**This management direction statement was developed through direction received from the  
Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan.**

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# **Border Lake Provincial Park Management Direction Statement**

## **Introduction**

### **Purpose of the Management Direction Statement**

Management direction statements (MDS) provide strategic management direction for protected areas that do not have an approved management plan. Management direction statements also describe protected area values, management issues and concerns; a management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies; and, direction from other planning processes. While strategies may be identified in the MDS, the completion of all these strategies is dependent on funding and funding procedures. All development associated with these strategies is subject to the Parks and Protected Areas Branch's Impact Assessment Policy.

### **Context**

The provincial government designated Border Lake Provincial Park as a Class A park on January 25, 2001 by order in council under the *Park Act*. The park is currently named and described in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*. Border Lake had been identified as a Goal 2, Special Feature protected area in recognition of its exceptionally productive lake and wetland ecosystem. The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) recommended Border Lake as a protected area.

Border Lake Provincial Park covers 814 hectares of the Unuk River Valley, bordering Alaska, about 180 kilometres south of the community of Telegraph Creek. No road access is available to this remote area. The park lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Tahltan First Nation.

Border Lake Provincial Park includes a wetlands environment surrounding three small lakes within the wide Unuk River valley. The braided Unuk River runs through the east and south part of the park and flows into Misty Fjords National Monument in Alaska.

Nearby, Lava Forks Provincial Park protects Canada's most recent lava flow. Craig Headwaters Provincial Park protects representative riparian and forested ecosystems. Great Glacier Provincial Park, on the Stikine River, provides outstanding riverside glacier scenery. About 150 kilometres to the north and northeast lay several large protected areas, including Mount Edziza Provincial Park, Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park, Stikine River Provincial Park and Tatlatui Provincial Park. These parks protect intact ecosystems and provide a wide range of backcountry recreation opportunities.

## **Provincial Park Attributes**

### **Conservation**

- One of only four protected areas in the poorly represented Southern Boundary Ranges Ecoregion (2.11%); Border Lake Provincial Park contributes 5% of the overall protected areas system representation of this ecoregion.
- One of seven protected areas contributing to the representation of the CWHwm (wet maritime coastal western hemlock biogeoclimatic subzone). This ecosystem is

underrepresented (7.46%) in the protected areas system. Border Lake's contribution is minimal as it contributes only 3% of the overall representation of this ecosystem.

- Highly productive lake and wetland environments.
- Lush plant communities including rare species (e.g. *Caltha palustris* - yellow marsh-marigold).
- Very high value fish habitat for sockeye salmon (lake spawning) and unusual anadromous cutthroat trout.
- Critical spring patch habitat for grizzly bears.
- Excellent waterfowl nesting and forage habitat.

## **Recreation and Tourism**

- Presents high outdoor recreation values, primarily for river rafting, because of the Unuk River's pristine, free-flowing condition.
- Offers potential wilderness campsites for river travellers.

## **Commercial Business Opportunities**

- Provides limited commercial business opportunities for guided river rafting tour groups and angling. (See Appendix 1 for activities allowed in this park).

## **Cultural Heritage**

- Cultural heritage values remain undocumented at this time. Environmental Stewardship Division is seeking Tahltan First Nations' contributions to resolve this lack of knowledge.

## **Significance in the Protected Areas System**

- Protects regionally significant fish and grizzly bear habitats; the sea-run cutthroat population is provincially significant.
- Protects rich wetland plant communities including rare plants.
- Offers excellent river-based backcountry recreation opportunities.

## **Land Uses, Tenures and Interests**

### **Access**

Border Lake Provincial Park is extremely remote. River rafters fly from Bell II to the upper reaches of the Unuk River, and float down to the park. Highway 37 runs 70 kilometres to the north. Border Lake is too small to land float planes.

### **Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances**

- Active trapline 621T001 but this resource use activity is not authorized under a valid park use permit.
- Guide-outfitter 621G002 authorized under park use permit SK9710016.

### **Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities**

- Small cabin near lake of unknown status.
- Few river rafting trips along the Unuk River (about one a year).
- Occasional hunting trips, primarily up river from Alaska.



[Click here for Figure 1: Regional Context Map - 1,230 kb pdf](#)

## **Adjacent Patterns of Land Use**

- Lies within the Unuk Resource Management Zone with direction to maintain high value grizzly bear habitat and to maintain visual quality from the Unuk River while allowing for resource development.
- Located within Ministry of Forests initial attack zone for fire management.
- Misty Fjords National Monument lies in Alaska, adjacent to the park's southwest border; the purpose of Wilderness National Monuments is to protect and perpetuate natural biophysical and ecological conditions.

## **First Nations Interests**

- Asserted traditional territory of the Tahltan First Nation.
- Tahltan First Nation has an interest in maintaining their aboriginal traditional uses and activities in the park.

## **Other Agency Interests**

- Note that Department of Fisheries and Oceans does not have a management plan for this watershed as there is no Canadian in-stream fishery.
- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section, has an interest in the park's wildlife, particularly grizzly bears.
- Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (British Columbia Conservation Data Centre (CDC)) has an interest in the species at risk in this park.

## **Private and Public Stakeholder Interests**

- Naturalists have an interest in the park because of its variety of important grizzly bear and fish habitats and the significant vegetation.
- Anglers have an interest in the park because of its excellent cutthroat trout and sockeye salmon habitats as well as the important angling opportunities in Border Lake and the Unuk River.
- The trapline holder has an interest in the park because it contains fur bearers and the park may be an area for restrictions to trapping.
- Private and commercial river rafters have an interest in the park because of the opportunities to travel down the Unuk River below Border Lake.
- Guide outfitters have an interest in the park because park regulations may require limits to hunting opportunities to meet conservation and visitor safety requirements.

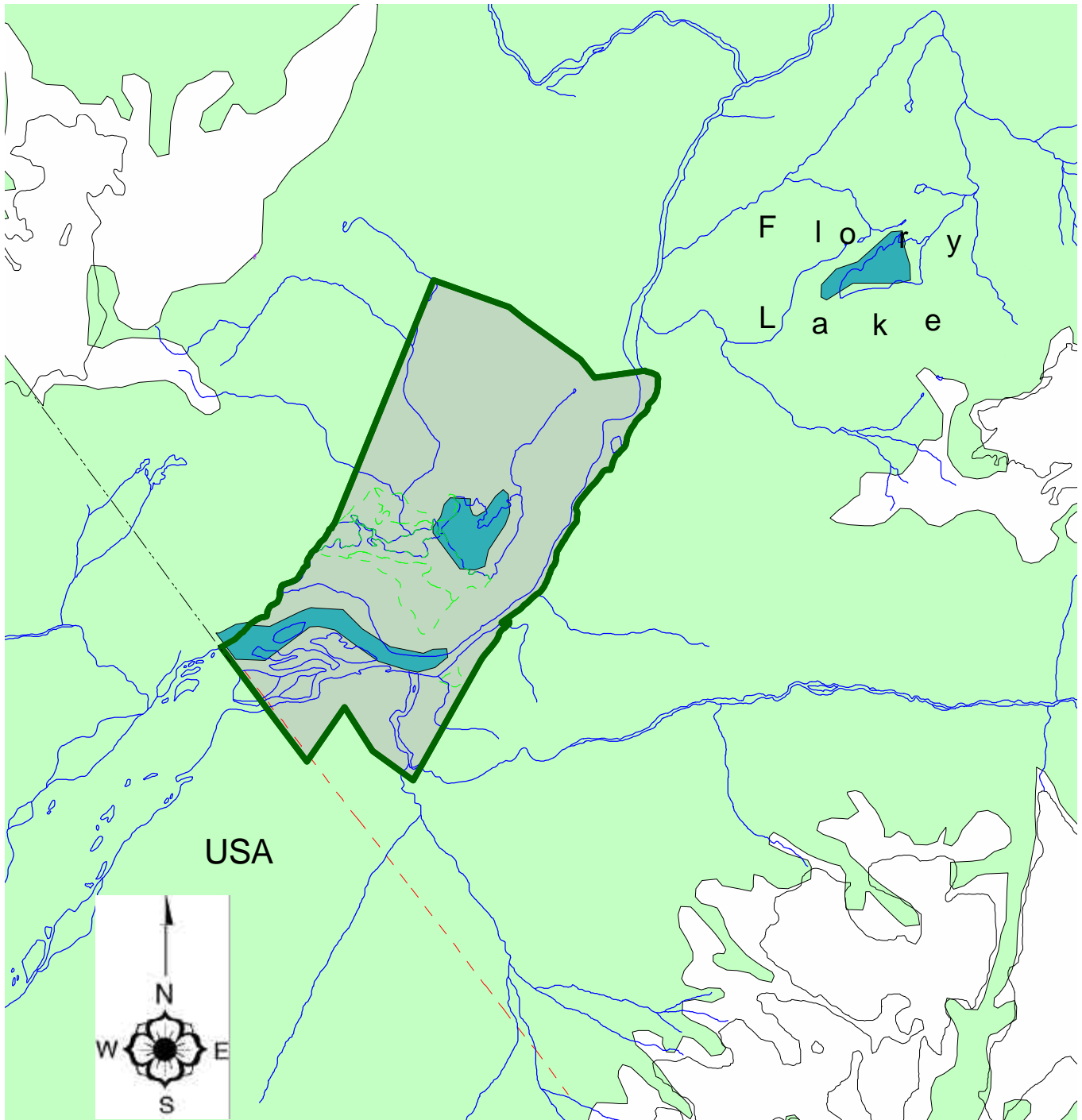
## **Role of Border Lake Provincial Park**

Border Lake Provincial Park plays primarily a conservation role, protecting significant fish habitat, grizzly bear habitat and wetland plant communities in the Unuk River Valley. Little fish habitat exists further up the watershed.

Border Lake Provincial Park performs a secondary outdoor recreation role because the Unuk River offers excellent river recreation opportunities in a beautiful, remote wilderness river setting. Use, however, will likely remain low because of the relative closeness of the spectacular, more accessible Stikine River. The susceptibility of Border Lake Provincial Park's lake and wetland environments to damage through human use limits land-based outdoor recreation opportunities.

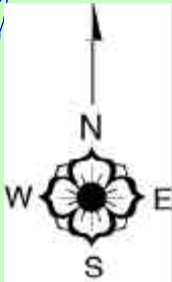


# Border Lake Provincial Park



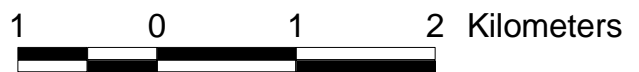
USA

F i o r l y  
L a k e



### Legend

- |                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| BC Parks Protected Area   | Ice Field - Permanent Snow & Ice |
| Rivers and Streams        | Island - Definite                |
| River/Stream - Definite   | <b>Seismic Lines</b>             |
| River/Stream - Left Bank  | Outline Seismic Line             |
| River/Stream - Right Bank | <b>Natural Features</b>          |
| Lake - Definite           | freshWater                       |
| Lake - Intermittent       | glaciersAndSnow                  |
| Marsh                     |                                  |
| Swamp                     |                                  |



1:54307

## Management Commitments and Issues

### Direction from Previous Planning

The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP recommended Border Lake for protection as a Goal 2 protected area in 2000 and gave management direction to:

- Allow hunting to continue;
- Manage recreation use to be compatible with the ecological sensitivity of the lake and wetland complex

### Management Issues

The following management issues require attention:

Theme	Issue
Protecting ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The park's natural features remain relatively unknown because an accurate inventory is incomplete.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Border Lake may have formed because of a recent lava flow (as did Blue Lake nearby in Alaska) and has, as a result, interesting chemistry and pioneer vegetation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Park values may be at risk because of mineral exploration activities on lands next to the park with high mineral values.</li> <li>• Park values may be at risk because land next to the park may be open to specially-managed forestry activities.</li> <li>• The trapline owner may be operating in the park without a valid park use permit.</li> <li>• Risk of illegal activities associated with helicopter access from nearby Alaska.</li> </ul>
Protecting cultural heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Border Lake Provincial Park's cultural features may be at risk because no inventory of such values is completed.</li> </ul>

### Management Direction

The vision for Border Lake Provincial Park includes maintaining the park's ecological integrity, healthy fish and wildlife populations, and presenting park visitors stopping on trips along the Unuk River with spectacular wildland scenery and wetland ecosystems.

### Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

The following table describes the priority management objectives and strategies to deal with the identified management issues. In addition, Appendix 1 contains a list of acceptable activities, uses and facilities for this provincial park.

Objectives	Strategies
To protect the park's natural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake an inventory of fauna and flora.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Grizzly bear and fish species will be the highest priority in this inventory.</li> <li>➢ A second priority is identifying rare plant species in the park.</li> <li>➢ Request the assistance and cooperation of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Wildlife and Habitat Management Branch, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection in this inventory work.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Investigate the geological origin of Border Lake.</li> <li>• Monitor development activities on lands next to the park.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Place priority on potential road development</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Liaise with the owners of the Eskay Creek Mine, the Ministry of Energy and Mines and the Ministry of Forests to reduce any</li> </ul>

Objectives	Strategies
	<p>potential impacts on Border Lake Provincial Park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In particular, discuss the possibility for access controls on roads developed for mining activities.</li> <li>• Communicate with the US National Forest Service about cross-border ecosystem management that embraces Misty Fjords National Monument in Alaska and Border Lake Provincial Park in British Columbia.</li> <li>• Determine status, condition and use of cabin on Border Lake.</li> <li>• Manage recreational use so it is compatible with the ecological fragility of the Border Lake and its wetlands.</li> <li>• Evaluate potential for damage to park values should access to the park change because of development on lands next to the park.</li> <li>• Contact the trapline owner to place this resource use under a valid park use permit.</li> </ul>
To protect the park's cultural heritage values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate and collate, in cooperation with the Tahltan First Nation, existing information on cultural heritage values within Border Lake Provincial Park.</li> <li>• Meet with the Tahltan First Nation to discuss issues that affect the protection and management of Border Lake Provincial Park.</li> </ul>
To provide information to the public about Border Lake Provincial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure information about Border Lake Provincial Park on the official Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection Website is accurate and current. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Emphasis will be on conservation rather than outdoor recreation themes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
To manage outdoor recreation that occurs within Border Lake Provincial Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the need for guidelines controlling recreational use (e.g. location for stopping and/or camping; commercial use).</li> </ul>

## Consultation and Future Planning

Environmental Stewardship Division will continue to consult with the Tahltan First Nation through the Tahltan – Environmental Stewardship Division Protected Areas Committee. The Environmental Stewardship Division will meet with local stakeholders and resource users as issues arise.

The priority for developing a management plan for Border Lake Provincial Park is ranked as low at this time.

## Zoning Plan

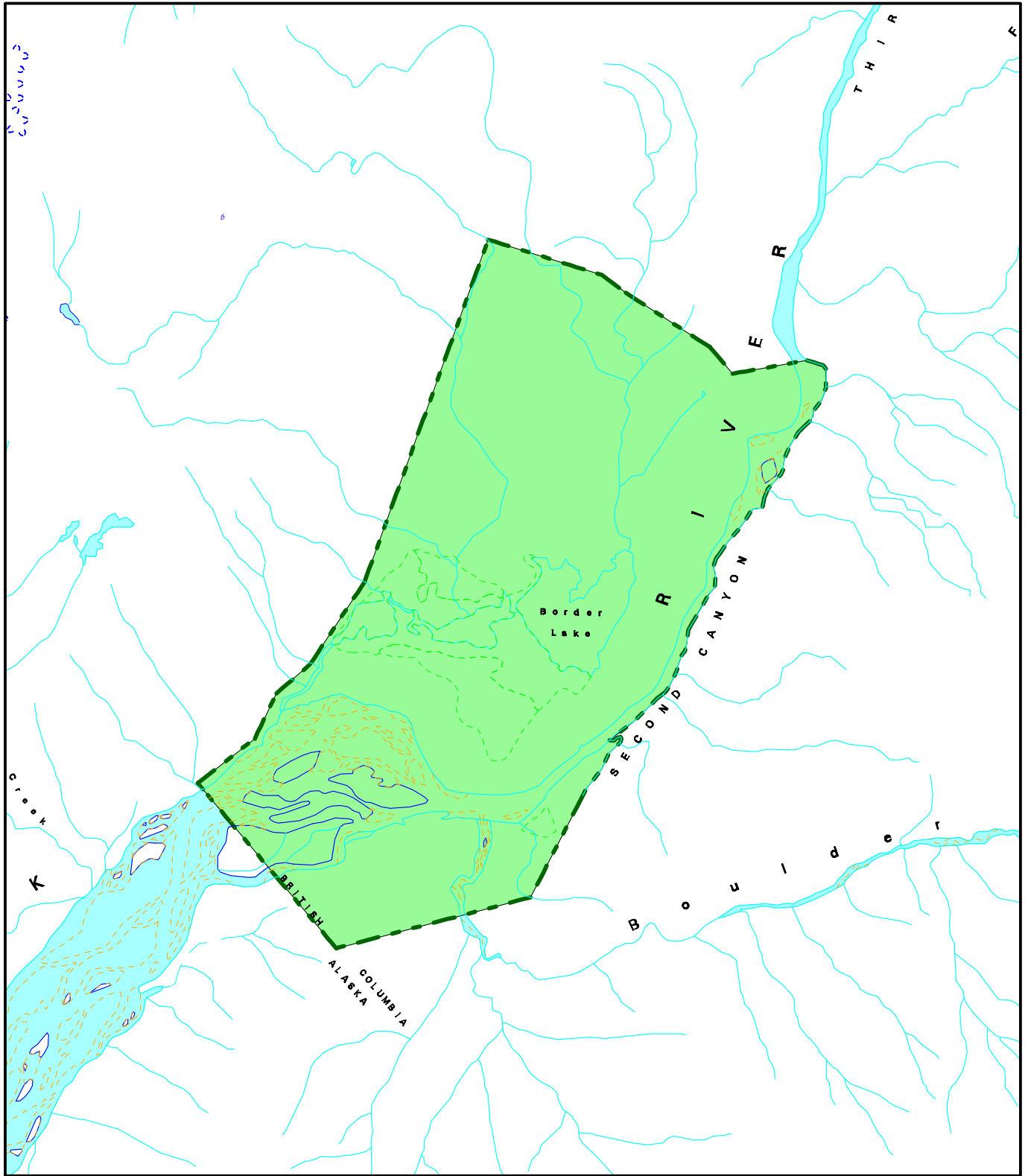
All of Border Lake Provincial Park is placed within a Wilderness Recreation Zone which entails the following:

### Wilderness Recreation Zone

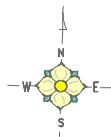
**Objective:** To protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment where air access may be permitted to designated sites

**Zone Description:** covers 814 hectares of the park. This zone covers all of Border Lake Park.

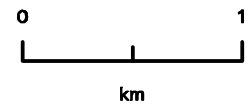
Figure 3: Zoning



Projection: UTM Zone 9  
Datum: NAD83



 Wilderness Recreation  
 Protected Area Boundary



Produced in Jan 2003 for Ministry  
of Water, Land and Air Protection

This is a visual representation  
only and should not be used for  
legal purposes.

**Appendix 1 - Border Lake Provincial Park**  
**Table of Acceptable Uses, Activities and Facilities**

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptability
Aboriginal traditional uses and activities	Y
Hunting	Y
Fishing	Y
Trapping	Y
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational gold panning/rock hounding	N
Utility corridors	N
Communication sites	N
Horse use/pack animals	N
Guide outfitting (hunting)	Y
Guide outfitting (fishing)	M
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	M
Guide outfitting (river rafting)	M
Cat-assisted skiing	N
Ski hills	N
Commercial recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility-based)	Y
Backcountry huts	N
Water control structures	N
Fish stocking and enhancement	N
Road access	N
Off-road access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road access (motorised)	N
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorised water access	N
Aircraft access – (helicopter access subject to prior approval)	Y
Fire management (suppression)	Y subject to initial attack plan
Fire management (prescribed fire management)	N
Fire management (prevention)	N
Forest insect/disease control	N1
Noxious weed control	N1
Exotic insect/disease control	N1
Commercial filming	M
Scientific research (specimen collection)	M
Scientific research (manipulative activities)	M

Y = allowed subject to conditions identified in the management direction statement or management plan

M = may be permitted if compatible with protected area objectives

N = not allowed

N1 = allowed for expressed management purposes only

N2 = present and allowed to continue, but not normally allowed