

Skeena District

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

September 2000

for Bulkley Junction
Provincial Park



Ministry of Environment
Lands and Parks
BC Parks Division

Bulkley Junction Park

Approvals Page

Forward

Bulkley Junction Provincial Park was originally recognised in 1962 as a candidate protected area following a visit by the area land inspector. The following year the Director of Parks requested and was granted a reserve to be set-aside for the future use, recreation and enjoyment of the public. Nearly twenty years later in 1991, Parks Plan 90 identified the site as possessing world class fishing opportunities for users of the Highway 16 corridor. In 1996, the Kispiox Land and Resource Management Plan approved BC Parks' recommendation to provide park status to Bulkley Junction. Official Class A Park designation was granted with the passing of the Park Amendment Act 1997.

Further consultation with the Gitxsan First Nation may result in the need to amend this plan.

This management direction statement for Bulkley Junction Provincial Park provides management direction until such time as a more detailed management plan is prepared.

Approvals



District Manager
Skeena District



Assistant Deputy Minister
Parks Division

This management direction statement was developed through direction received from the Kispiox Land and Resource Management Plan.

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Introduction

Purpose

This management direction statement (MDS) provides management for Bulkley Junction Park. It identifies key strategies that will be ranked according to priority and completed as funding permits. Implementation of the MDS strategies will be dependent on available funding and agency priorities. All development associated with these strategies is subject to BC Parks Impact Assessment Policy.

Setting and Context

Bulkley Junction Provincial Park is located directly across from Hazelton and the confluence of the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers. The 133 ha park has regionally significant conservation and recreation values. A glaciofluvial terrace and adjacent floodplain represent a small, but important, sample of the Nass Basin Ecoregion. As well, Bulkley Junction helps fulfil a BC Parks Goal of facilitating tourism access to the world-class fishery adjacent to Highway 16.

Protected Area Attributes

Conservation

- Nass Basin Ecoregion; ICHmc3 (interior cedar hemlock)
- riparian zone on the Skeena River's alluvial floodplain
- gently sloping glaciofluvial terrace
- possible freshwater spring along the park's northeast bank
- moose and bear habitat along the river bank and the terrace

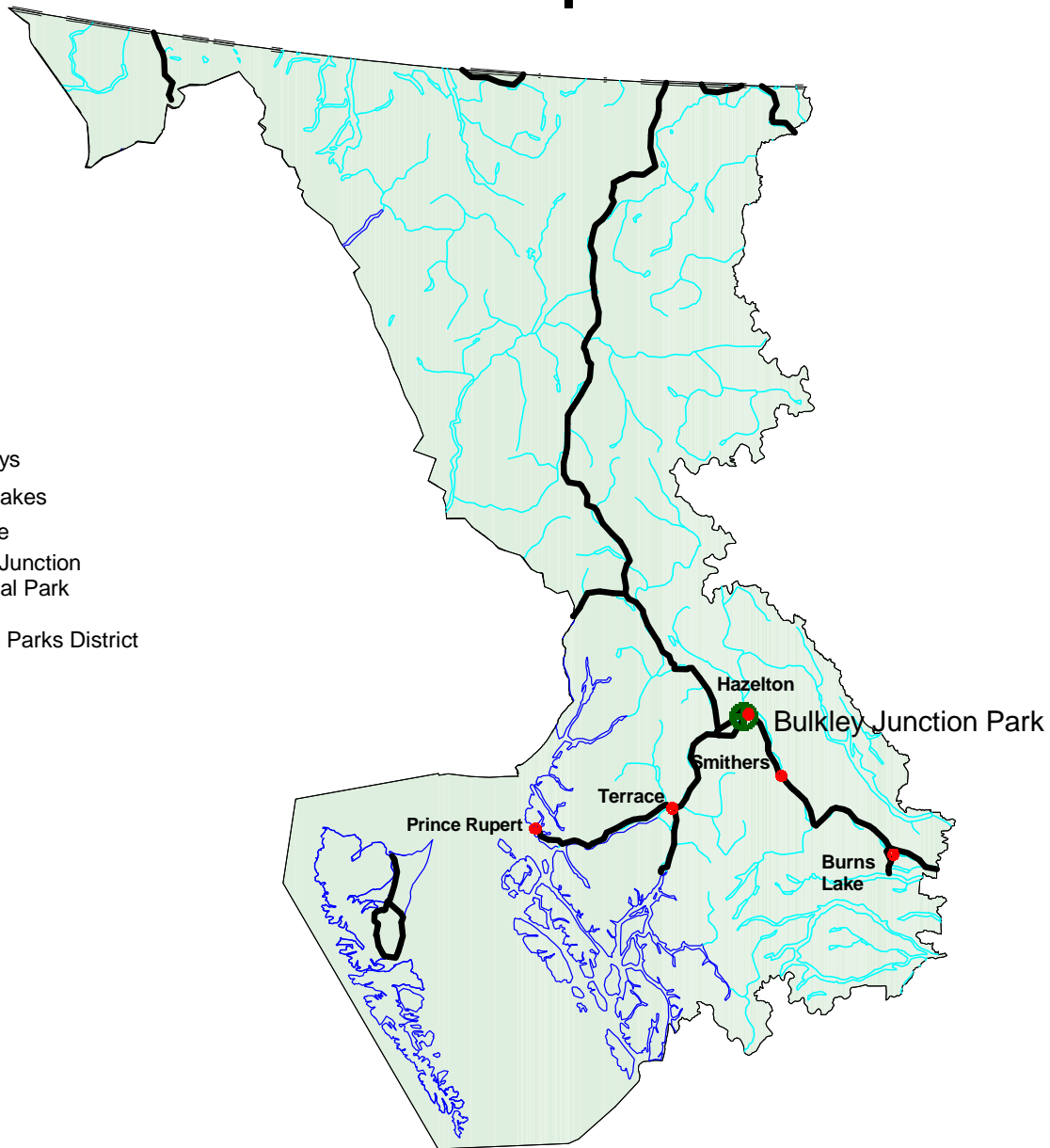
Recreation and Tourism

The scenic views and excellent angling opportunities in the Skeena River have led to local day use of the shoreline area. The park is used primarily by local residents; however, the travel route of a Regional District publication titled the "Hands of History Driving Tour" passes through the park. This brochure describes First Nations history in the Hazeltons and along the Kitwanga Back Road and has a stop 4-km to the west of the park at a sign called Temlahan.

Features include:

- 2.5 km of shoreline along the Skeena River
- recreational angling
- scenic views of Hagwilget Mountain, the Junction of the Bulkley and the Skeena Rivers, a railway trestle bridge, and steep eroded river banks
- recognised by Parks Plan 90 as a logical location to provide angling opportunities for users of the Highway 16 corridor
- First Nations fishery at the south end of the park
- potential river raft/boat camping location

Bulkley Junction Provincial Park Locator Map

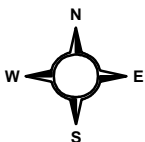


Legend

- Highways
- Rivers/Lakes
- Coastline
- Bulkley Junction Provincial Park
- Skeena Parks District

0 100 200 300 Kilometers

Scale 1:6,000,000

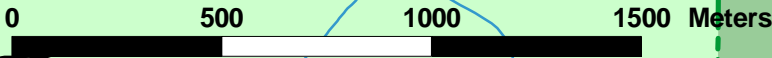




Bulkley Junction Provincial Park

LEGEND

- Minor Road
- ++++ Railway
- Fishing



To Hazelton
12 km.

Hazelton

Bulkley River

Proposed Parking

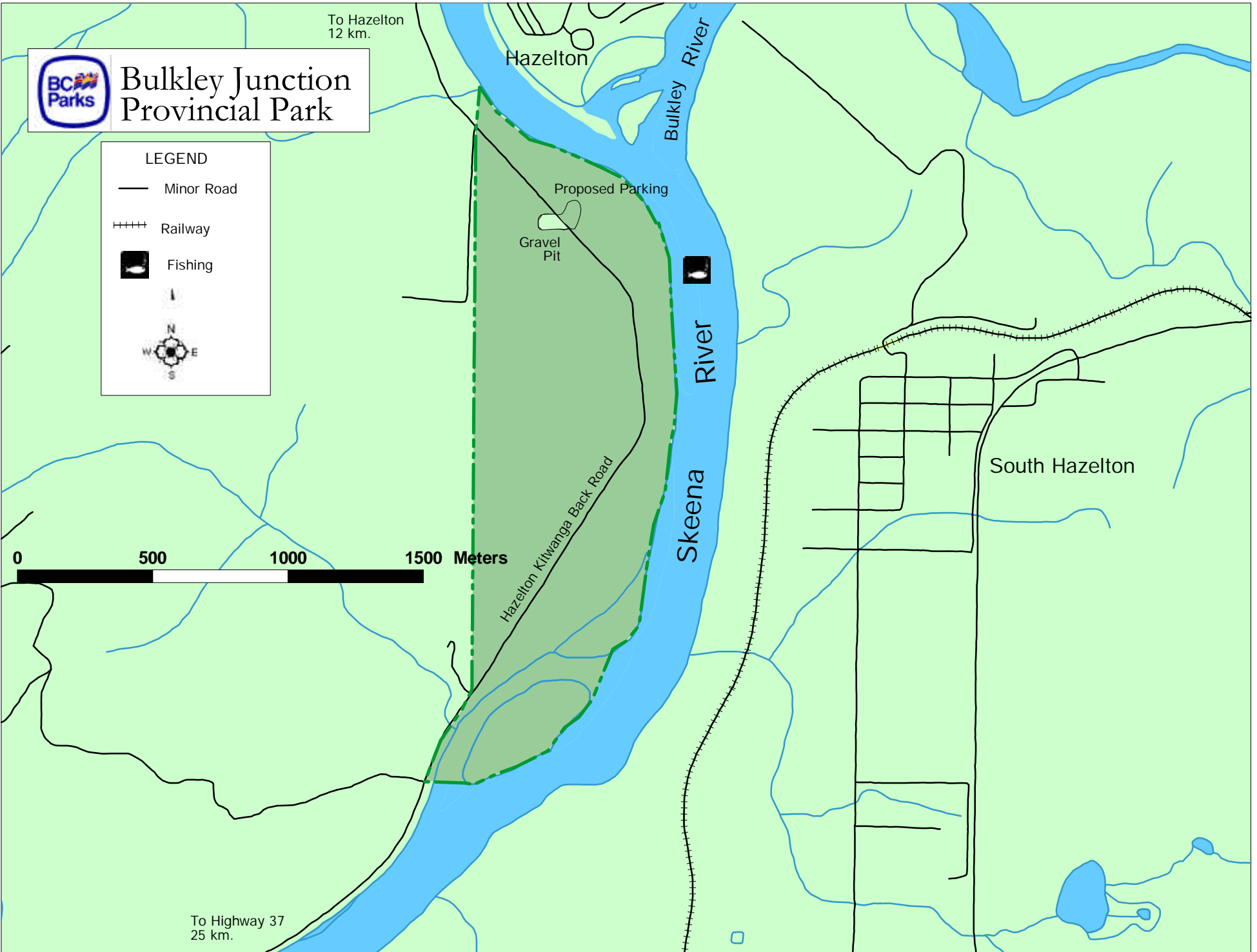
Gravel Pit

Skeena River

Hazelton Kiwanga Back Road

South Hazelton

To Highway 37
25 km.



Cultural Heritage

- asserted Gitx̱san Traditional Territory - identified Gitx̱san Chief is Luutkudziiwus
- Temlaham signpost 4 km to the west describes the terrace as a place of origin for many of the areas' First Nations
- an old cart trail and possibly a grease trail may have crossed through this area
- other attributes unknown

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- provides a 2.5 km long forested buffer zone between the Skeena River and private farmland
- provides angling access to the Skeena River for local residents and for Highway 16 Corridor visitors
- provides an important recreational destination along an increasingly developed and inaccessible shoreline
- protects important riparian zone habitat along the shoreline of the Skeena River
- represents a small area of an underrepresented biogeoclimatic zone, Interior Cedar Hemlock (ICHmc3), in the Nass Basin Ecosection

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

The unpaved Kitwanga Back Road, km 7-9, bisects the park. The back road is accessed from the Kispiox Road at a point just north of the Skeena River Bridge. No formal trails or parking areas exist within the park. Currently, visitors park on the side of the road and find their own route to the shoreline.

Existing Tenures

- Hazelton-Kitwanga Back Road No. 113 is excluded from the park
- Ministry of Transportation and Highways Quarrying Reserve No. 84650 as shown on lands file 6401981 is excluded from the park
- UREP Reserve 0245022 is entirely within the park and is superseded by the *Park Amendment Act*
- No Staking Reserve BC Regulation 161/96 is superseded by the *Park Amendment Act*
- Guide Outfitting License 630G001
- Trap Line 0630T003
- License 633000 file 0331911 - Distribution line right of way, held in favour of BC Hydro, through portions of Block B District Lots 147 and 148
- Dominion Telegraph Line Right of Way may impact upon the park

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- an old gravel pit lies within the park across from the active gravel pit
- in the centre of the old gravel pit a McElhanney pin #9501 marks the location of a makeshift helicopter landing pad
- overgrown remnants of an old cart road exist

- an old cart trail leads halfway down the hillside at the north end of the park until it suddenly drops 13 m straight down due to erosion from the Skeena River
- an old narrow trail, 200 m south of the end of the cart road, provides access to the northern portion of the park
- unnamed island at the south end is used for First Nations food fishery
- possible trespass situation along the western boundary including farm access roads, farm land, farm fences, old building and outhouse (at the south southwest boundary)

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

The area surrounding the park is zoned as agricultural land reserve and is privately held. Clearing of this adjacent farm land will leave the park's valuable riparian zone and the forested upland section fragmented from nearby wilderness and not part of a co-ordinated Ecosystem Network.

- a non-status road leads onto the floodplain, from the Kitwanga Back Road, and provides vehicle access to the southern island
- Ministry of Transportation and Highways Road, Survey No. 5149 - Plan No. 8747, abuts the western boundary of the southernmost portion of the park and is known as Wayne Road
- privately held farmland lies adjacent to the western boundary of the park
- a small private sawmill is situated adjacent to the southwest boundary of the park
- the Skeena River forms most of the north, south and east boundaries of the park
- Old Town Hazelton lies across the river at the north end of the park
- across the river to the northeast lies the Bulkley River Delta, locally known as Anderson Flats, at its confluence with the Skeena River
- South Hazelton is situated across the river to the east of the park

First Nations Interests

- asserted traditional territory of Gitx̱san people
- identified by the Gitx̱san Treaty Office as Luutkudziiwus House
- First Nation's net fishing is conducted from the southern unnamed island in the park
- a grease trail may have crossed through the park area
- consultation by BC Parks ongoing; First Nations aboriginal rights will be honoured and protected subject to safety and conservation concerns

Other Agency Interests

- BC Environment administers trapping and guide-outfitting tenures and has an interest in wildlife habitat and management in the area
- BC Environment and Department of Fisheries and Oceans manage the Skeena fisheries resource
- Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine identifies the park and surrounding area as Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR Plan was filed after area was reserved for BC Parks)

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- recreational users: anglers, recreational boaters, Hazelton Cross Country Ski Club
- local residents: Hazelton and Kispiox communities, Kispiox Valley Community Association
- Hagwilget Village Council, Glen Vowell Indian Band, Kispiox Indian Band, Regional District of Kitimat - Stikine
- Kispiox Land and Resource Management Plan Table Members
- trapper and guide outfitter, Northwest Guides and Outfitters Association
- farmers with land bordering the park
- Northern British Columbia Tourism Association
- Steelhead Society of BC, Sport Fish Advisory Board
- Local Schools

Role of Bulkley Junction Park

Bulkley Junction Park serves both conservation and recreation roles. The park's chief conservation role focuses on protecting special features including important riparian zone habitat along the shoreline of the Skeena River and a small area of an underrepresented biogeoclimatic zone in the protected areas system, the Interior Cedar Hemlock (ICHmc3), in the Nass Basin Ecoregion.

The park's recreation role is important as it provides angling access to the Skeena River for local residents and for Highway 16 Corridor visitors and serves as a preferred recreational destination along an increasingly developed and inaccessible shoreline.

Management Commitments and Issues

Direction from Previous Planning

The Kispiox Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) approved park designation as part of their final report in 1996. The area was one of a few special features protected areas identified to the table after consensus recommendation was reached, and therefore little direction has been provided. The LRMP approved and recognised the site as an important recreational fishing and day use area. The LRMP is consistent with earlier Park's Plan for the 90's direction which identified Bulkley Junction as a strategic location offering world-class fishing opportunities for travelers using the Highway 16 corridor. Furthermore, the Protected areas strategy recognised the Skeena River as an area providing "outstanding fishing opportunities in a wilderness setting" and this park provides such an opportunity.

Management Issues

The following issues require management action. In addition, Appendix I contains a list of acceptable activities uses and facilities appropriate within this park.

Theme	Issue
Protecting ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inventory of natural features is incomplete • roadway outside of the park leads onto the floodplain and provides motorised access to the southern portion of the park • riparian ecosystem is susceptible to increased uncontrolled use • removal of adjacent forest for cultivation will leave the park's habitat isolated as a fragment; if a decision to include or not include this land into an integrated network is not made soon adjacent forested land will soon be cleared • existing farm development and access roads likely infringe on park land • gravel pit boundaries are poorly defined and could encroach onto park land • the north bank of the park is susceptible to erosion from the Skeena River which might eventually require Ministry of Transportation and Highways road realignment • park vegetation is susceptible to natural and human induced fire • park purpose and use puts increased pressure on the Skeena River Fishery
Protecting recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the two access trails, a cart road and a narrow trail, leading to the river at the north end of the park do not meet BC Parks standards and have become overgrown • no other formal facilities exist • provincial park signs identifying the area will be needed if the area is to serve recreational needs • currently visitor parking is along the sides of the Kitwanga Back Road which is not a permitted use of the road
Protecting cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unknown impacts on traditional activities and cultural features
Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safety concerns for swimmers and anglers • safety concerns along the steep and eroding river bank at the extreme north of the park • floodplain is submerged during spring runoff

Management Strategy

The following table describes management strategies to deal with outstanding issues raised. In addition, figure 1 contains a list of acceptable land and resource uses for this park.

Priority Management Objectives	Priority Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Bulkley Junction Park is safe for public use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy and plan to inform visitors about the hazards of swimming, and angling in the swift moving Skeena River, the dangerous cliffs adjacent to the Skeena River at the extreme north of the park • Provide parking lot for park visitors (see below)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the park's natural values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory fauna and flora; prepare Ecology Information Summary; identify and protect particularly sensitive areas within the riparian zone • Discuss the possibility of closing or restricting access to the road leading onto the floodplain at the south end of the park with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways and the Luutkudziiwus Chief • Discuss linking park with forested habitat with adjacent land owners, Environment Officials and with the Ministry of Forests • Conduct a survey of the western boundary of the park and ensure that natural vegetation processes take precedence over any unauthorised encroachments • Complete vegetation impact assessments prior to path or parking development • Do not provide facilities on the floodplain unless it is deemed necessary to protect the area's natural resources (i.e. fire pits to control the location of where fires are being set) • Prepare fire suppression and fire evacuation plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the park's recreational values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide angling and day-use access in a natural environment to the Skeena River for local residents and visitors using the Highway 16 corridor; provide access from Kitwanga Back Road; consider trails to the more scenic and natural north portion of the park • Post signs when access trail development occurs • Provide a parking area, possibly in the old gravel pit; Ministry of Transportation and Highways (MOTH) has agreed to contour and slope the old gravel pit to make it suitable for parking • Restrict all future park facilities, including possible information boards, garbage receptacles, etc. to the parking area

Priority Management Objectives	Priority Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the parks' recreational values Cont'd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a footpath from the parking area to the floodplain will need to be built to provide angling access; investigate the suitability of using portions of the old cart road or the narrow access trail down the hillside Survey visitor use and satisfaction to determine whether future paths along the riverbank or through the upland terrace should be considered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the park's cultural heritage values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and collate existing information on cultural heritage values; prepare Cultural Features Information Summary (based on Gitxsan interests and desires) Continue discussions with the Gitxsan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop appropriate facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop parking lot and foot trail access to river (see above)

Consultation and Future Planning

BC Parks will review this MDS in about 5 years to account for increased knowledge about visitor use, visitor satisfaction and local concerns. Meanwhile, the recreational and regional basis of this park provides an opportunity for a variety of local organisations to become involved and participate in developing, promoting and caring for this provincial park. Local groups will be informed of this park's creation and invited to help develop the park. BC Parks will hold a local meeting to invite public participation into managing and building the park. BC Parks will discuss heritage and cultural values, including the fishery and motorised access to the floodplain with the Llutkudziiwus Chief. BC Parks will work with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways to discuss floodplain access concerns and complete the parking lot. BC Parks will discuss ecosystem connectivity with adjacent land owners, the Ministry of Forest, BC Environment and BC Lands.

Preliminary Zoning

Bulkley Junction Park is zoned as Natural Environment to allow for a variety of recreation opportunities in a natural setting.

Appendix I -Table of Acceptable Activities, Uses and Facilities

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptable Uses
Aboriginal Rights	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)	Y
Guide outfitting (river rafting)	M
Cat-assisted skiing	N
Ski hills	N
Commercial recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility-based)	N
Backcountry huts	N
Water control structures	N
Fish stocking and enhancement	N
Road access	Y
Off-road access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road access (motorised)	N
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorised water access	N
Aircraft access	N
Fire management (suppression)	Y
Fire management (prescribed fire management)	M
Fire management (prevention)	M
Forest insect/disease control	N1
Noxious weed control	N1
Exotic insect/disease control	N1
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