

Kootenay Region

**MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
STATEMENT**

September 2004

for **Cody Caves**
Provincial Park



**BRITISH
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Cody Caves Provincial Park Approvals Page

Foreword

This management direction statement for Cody Caves Provincial Park provides management direction until such time as a more detailed management plan may be prepared. Cody Caves Provincial Park protects an extensive cave system, and associated karst features.

Approvals:

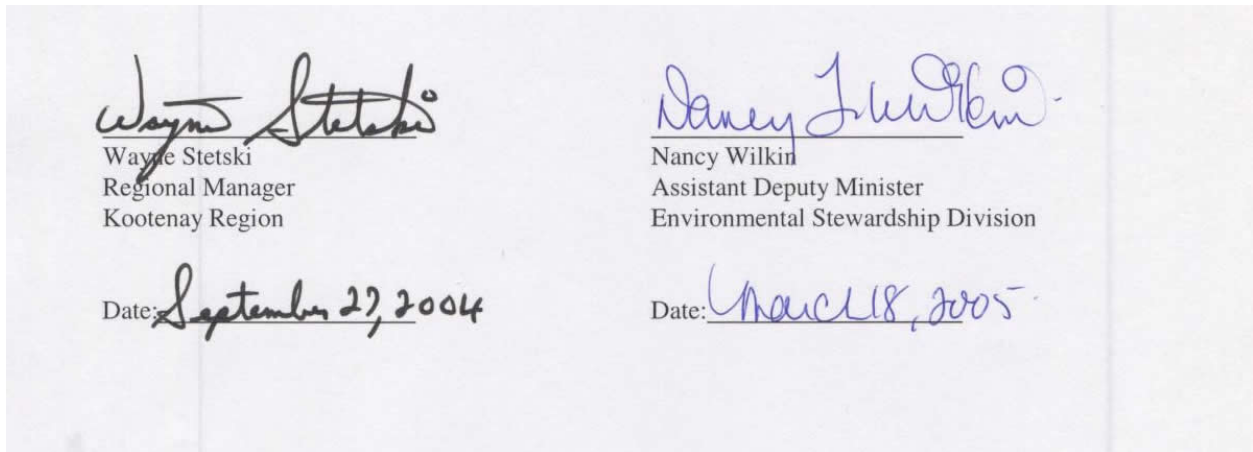


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Cody Caves Provincial Park

Management Direction Statement

Introduction

Purpose of the Management Direction Statement

Management direction statements (MDS) provide strategic management direction for all protected areas that do not have an approved management plan. Management direction statements do not necessarily negate the need for more detailed management plans in the future. Management direction statements also describe protected area values, management issues and concerns; a management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies; and, direction statements from other planning processes. While strategies may be identified in the MDS, the completion of all these strategies is subject to funding and funding procedures. In addition, all development associated with these strategies within the protected area is subject to the Environmental Stewardship Division's (ESD) Impact Assessment Policy.

Context (Figure 1)

Cody Caves Provincial Park encompasses 49 hectares, located in the West Kootenay Region of British Columbia, on the east facing slopes above Kootenay Lake approximately 13 km west of Ainsworth Hot Springs. The City of Nelson (pop. 9,500) is within a 40 minute drive and the Village of Kaslo is about 20 km to the north. There are a number of protected areas within an hour drive of Cody Caves offering a wide variety of recreational opportunities and natural attractions. They include large wilderness parks such as Kokanee Glacier, West Arm, and the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy as well as several smaller provincial park sites along the shores of Kootenay Lake such as Lost Ledge and Davis Creek.

The park was established in July 1966 to protect one of the best examples of a cave system in British Columbia that is easily accessible by a wide range of people from expert spelunkers to the novice and family groups. It contributes to Goal 2 of the Protected Areas Strategy, namely, the protection of a special natural feature. Cody Caves is renowned for being the first subterranean provincial park created in British Columbia. It has a number of surface karst features and subsurface features that have helped diversify recreational opportunities in the protected areas system and have encouraged growth in spelunking.

Figure 1: Context

CODY CAVES

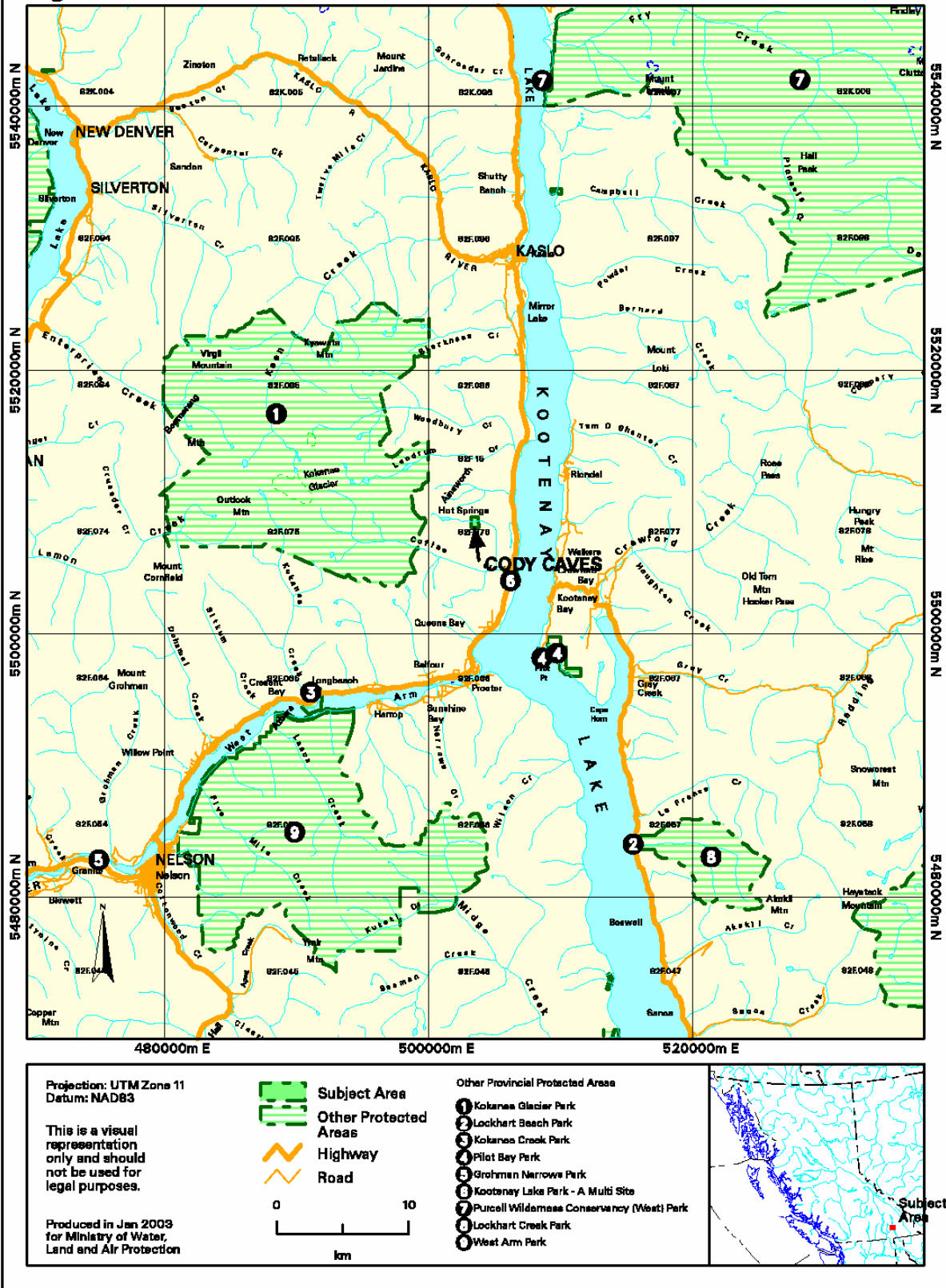
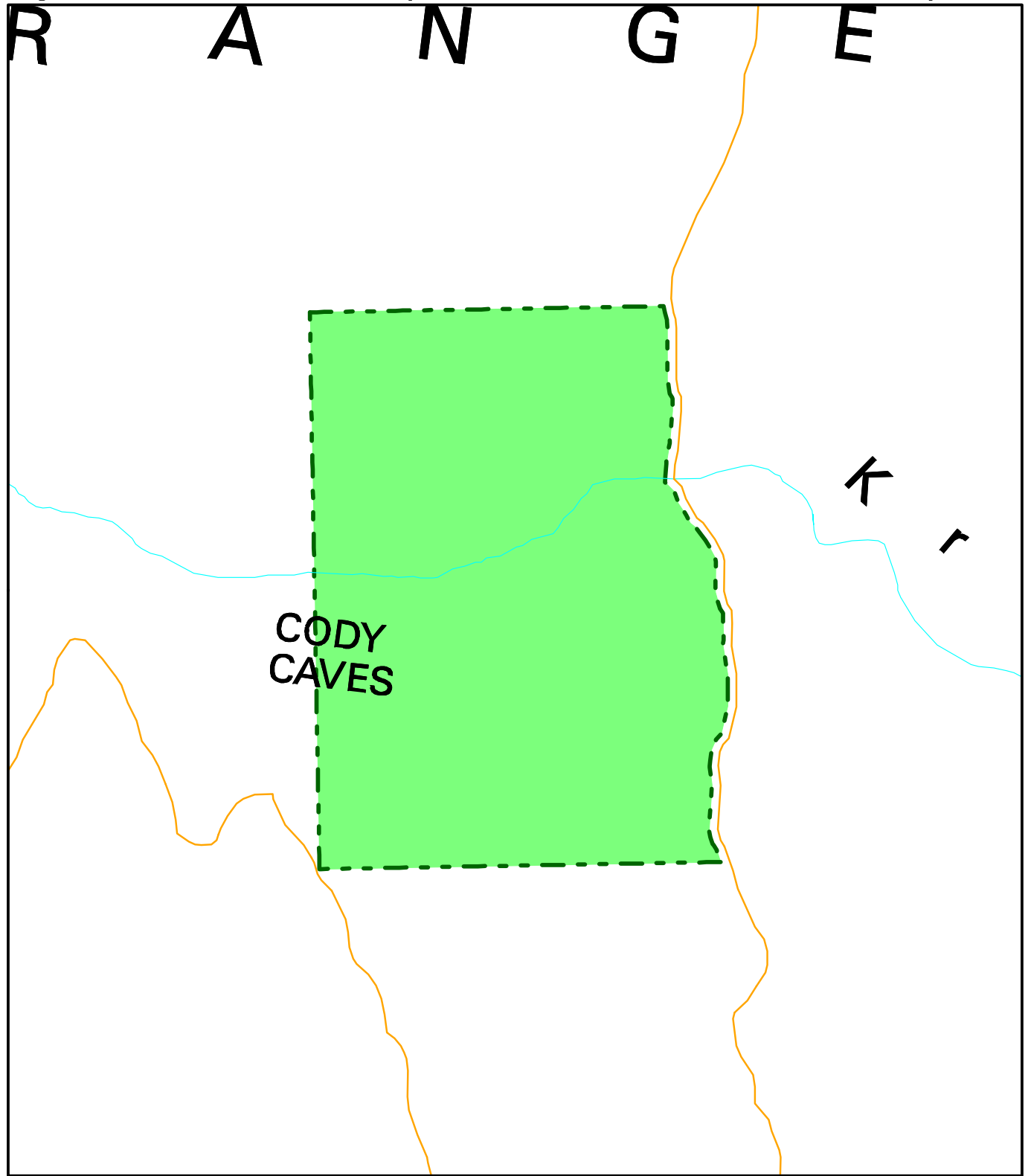
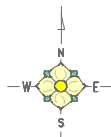


Figure 2: Protected Area Map

Cody Caves



Projection: UTM Zone 11
Datum: NAD83



 Subject Area

0 100
m

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of Water, Land and Air Protection

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only and should not be used for
legal purposes.

Protected Area Attributes (Figure 2)

Conservation

- Many of the karst features have provincial significance and the honeycomb-like "box work" on the cave walls in an area called the "conservancy" is considered to be world class.
- Associated karst features such as sinkholes and sumps.
- Moist climatic region - transitional forest in between Interior Cedar-Hemlock (ICHmw2) subzone/variant with hot, moist summers and very mild winters with light snowfall; and Englemann Spruce-Subalpine fir (ESSFwc4) subzone/variant with cooler temperatures and more snow.
- Diverse tree species such as western red cedar, western hemlock, Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir.
- Many visible rock types exposed providing good potential for geological interpretation.
- Photo monitoring in the cave system by the commercial operator has been in place for 12 years. This provides important baseline information on the condition of the caves and provides a monitoring system to determine the impacts of visitation on the cave environment.

Recreation and Tourism

- Parts of the caves are 'user friendly' for all ages, given a reasonable level of fitness.
- Visitors can be equipped and guided through parts of the caves by a commercial operator.
- Small numbers of independent spelunkers visit the caves - primarily to explore the "conservancy" and other caverns and chambers of the caves that are not accessible to the average public. The rear portion and passages of the caves are suitable for advanced spelunkers.
- There are few facilities in the park. A small trail leads from the parking area on the access road to the cave entrance (takes about 15-20 minutes to walk to the cave entrance). There is a pit toilet and small visitor information building adjacent to the parking area.
- Approximately 1,000-1,500 visitors/month for July and August (>90% of visitation occurs in these months).
- Contributes to tourism in the region and is marketed as a tourist opportunity.

Cultural Heritage

- Post-contact mining exploration and development nearby at Ainsworth.
- Cave was discovered in the 1890s by Henry Cody, a prospector from Kaslo.
- Governor General of Canada, Earl Grey visited the caves in 1908.
- Pre-contact cultural values unknown.

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- Cody Caves is one of the most significant cave systems in British Columbia because it is one of only two caves that are accessible to a wide variety of visitors. As such it serves the useful function of introducing the public to the unique and relatively unknown ecosystems associated with caves.
- The "box work" in the conservancy is considered to be one of the best examples in the world because it protrudes from the cave walls up to 20.3 cm, when 2.5cm to 5 cm is typical.
- Cave tours contribute to diversifying tourism opportunities in support of local communities developing as tourism destinations.

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

- Provincial Highway 31 to just west of Ainsworth Hot Springs (48 km NE of Nelson). Then 13 km on Cedar Creek Forest Service Road.
- Cedar Creek FSR is an active logging road that is steep and winding in places. It is unsuitable for trailers or motor homes.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- High Adventure Tours (Ian Fraser - Kaslo) has a Park Use Permit to take visitors through the caves.
- Cedar Creek FSR (project 0199) is excluded from the park (30m right of way).

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- Active logging takes place on the provincial forestlands adjacent to the park.
- Cedar Creek FSR forms the eastern boundary of the park.

First Nations Interests

- Ktunaxa Nation and the Okanagan Nation Alliance have included the park within their asserted traditional territory.
- Possible historical use of cave entrance by First Nations.
- Aboriginal Rights will be honored and protected subject to conservation, health and safety concerns. Consultation with First Nations will be done before implementing any of the management strategies that potentially may affect First Nations interests.

Other Agency Interests

- Ministry of Forests, Research Branch, is currently conducting research on karst features of the area.
- The park will be managed in close coordination with various resource agencies, particularly Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (Goal 2 addition) and the Ministry of Forests (logging that may affect water flow into the caves).

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Meadow Creek Cedars Ltd. has an active logging operation in the area immediately adjacent to the park.
- High Adventure Tours (Kaslo) holds a Park Use Permit to lead cave tours.
- Spelunkers have an interest in access into the cave.

Protected Area Role Statement

The primary role of Cody Caves Provincial Park in the protected area system is to protect the unique and fragile karst features of the park for sustainable recreational use and appreciation. This is one of the very few locations in western Canada where the public can be easily introduced to the fascinating world of caves and creatures (spiders) that exist in the total absence of light. The park also protects a transitional forest zone between the Interior Cedar Hemlock old-growth forest and the Engelmann Spruce - Subalpine Fir ecosystem of higher elevations. Because of the uniqueness of the caves, and relatively high visitation for such a small area, there is an excellent opportunity to promote the role of the Environmental Stewardship Division in protecting small unique features of the province.

Management Commitments and Issues

Management Direction from Previous Planning Processes

A 26-hectare extension to Cody Caves Provincial Park was recommended as part of the Protected Areas Strategy Goal 2 (special features) process, subsequent to the Kootenay-Boundary Land Use Plan (1995). The Goal 2 Proposal is intended to expand the boundaries of the park to include the entire karst formation and all the associated subsurface features. This will protect the existing features and opportunities and will also protect more features that in turn will provide expanded opportunities for visitors and tourists. As of the writing of this plan the Goal 2 park process continues to be on hold pending further government direction..

Management Issues

Theme	Issue
Protection of Geological Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• impacts on groundwater flow from adjacent logging
Access Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• access to the park on steep, winding active logging road
Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• potential for accidents in caves
Vandalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• broken locks and gate on cave entrance, potential damage to cave features

Management Direction

Management direction for appropriate activities, uses and facilities, is provided in Appendix A.

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

Objective	Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure availability of access and increase the safety of sharing use with industrial traffic on the forest access road to the cave parking lot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote voluntary restrictions on industrial traffic on access road from July 1 to Labour Day. Work with Ministry of Forests and the forest tenure holder to continue providing access along the road and promote safe use of the road. Consider requiring the park operator to provide clients with group transportation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain the natural qualities of the park including the surface and subsurface geology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the impact of adjacent logging practices on water flow and the karst features. Establish baseline indicators for water flow and implement best option for monitoring and maintaining indicators. Review proposed harvesting plans in the drainage, liaise and collaborate with the Ministry of Forests and forest tenure holder(s) during the operational planning of adjacent forestlands to provide comments relative to the park's integrity. Continue to support photo-monitoring system of cave environment and expand to cover additional areas of the caves. Develop "limits of acceptable change" indicators to the subsurface environment for assessing human use impacts. Acquire additional land under Goal 2 park creation to protect karst features and water flows.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide for continued recreational use with the minimal amount of development necessary to provide access and protect features from human use impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with commercial operator to develop guidelines and ensure standards for public safety are met. Allow self-regulated access by qualified caving groups (spelunkers). Work with cavers to develop recreational use protocol specific to Cody Caves. Continue with general public access into the caves through organized tours conducted by qualified guides.

Objective	Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase knowledge of park values over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete inventory of all karst features, associated species at risk and adjacent proposed Goal 2 addition.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage sustainable tourism and recreational use in support of the local tourism economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local tourism operators and spelunkers to encourage appropriate use of the park and to secure the proposed land addition.

Consultation and Future Planning

Environmental Stewardship Division (ESD) is accountable for the planning, administration and management of the park through application of, regulations and policies under the *Park Act*. Environmental Stewardship Division will consult and coordinate management of Cody Caves Provincial Park with other agencies, various public planning groups and First Nations as required

Zoning Plan (Figure 3)

The zoning plan defines the types of uses and overall level of use, including facilities development, that are permitted in a given area of a park. Cody Caves has been divided into two zones: Special Features and Intensive Recreation;

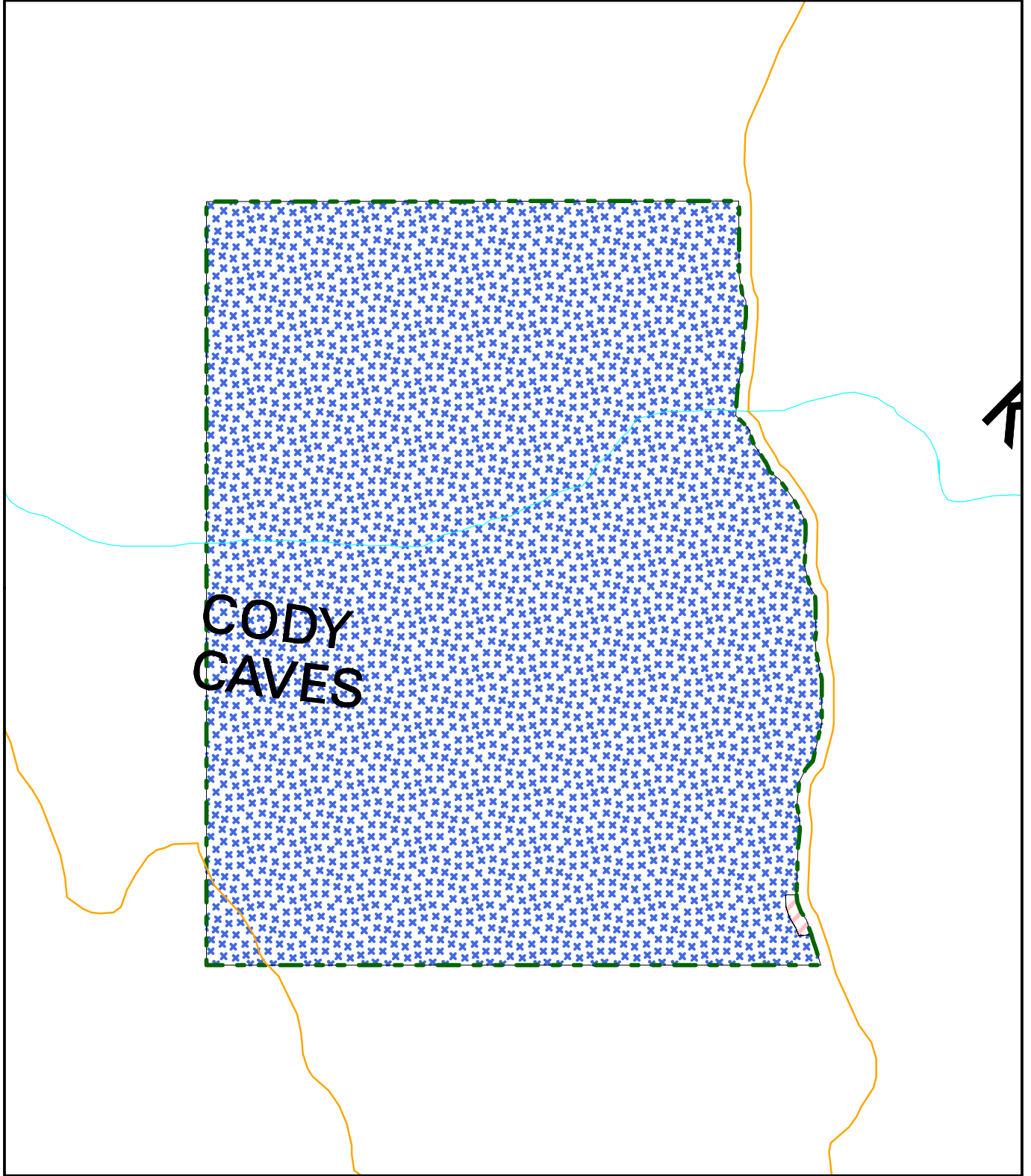
Special Feature Zone: The objective of this zone is to protect and present significant natural or cultural resources or features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage values.

With respect to Cody Caves Provincial Park, the entire karst feature lying in the park (60 ha) is included in the Special Feature Zone. If the proposed Goal 2 area is added (26 ha) this will also be zoned Special Feature.

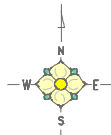
Intensive Recreation Zone: The objective of this zone is to provide for a variety of readily accessible, facility oriented outdoor recreation opportunities. This zone has been applied to a small area of the park (3 ha.) covering the parking lot/trailhead.

Figure 3: Zoning

Cody Caves



Projection: UTM Zone 11
Datum: NAD83



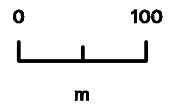
Intensive Recreation



Special Feature



Protected Area Boundary



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Appendix A: Table of Acceptable Uses, Activities, and Facilities in this park.

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptable uses
Aboriginal traditional activities and uses	Y
Hunting	N
Fishing	N/A
Trapping	N
Grazing	N/A
Rec. Gold Panning/Rock Hounding	N
Utility Corridors	N
Communication. Sites	N
Horse Use/Packing	N
Guide Outfitting-Hunting:	N/A
- Fishing	N/A
- Nature Tour	Y
- Canoeing	N/A
- Mountain Bike	N
Cat-Assisted Skiing	N/A
Ski Hills	N/A
Heli Skiing	N/A
Heli Hiking	N/A
Camping (Wilderness)	N
Camping (Serviced)	N
Tourist Resorts	N
Back Country Huts/Guest Ranch	N
Water Control Structure	N
Fish Stock/Enhance	N/A
Road Access	Y
Off Road Snowmobile	N
Off Road Motorized	N
Off Road Mechanical	N
Motorized Water Access	N/A
Aircraft Access (Fixed Wing)	N/A
Fire Management:	
- Prevention	Y
- Prescribed Fire	M
- Suppression	Y
Forest Insect/Disease Control	M
Noxious Weed Control	M
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	M
Scientific. Research (Specimens)	M
Scientific Research (Manipulations)	M
Forest Replanting	M

- Y = allowed subject to conditions identified in 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
 N/A = not applicable