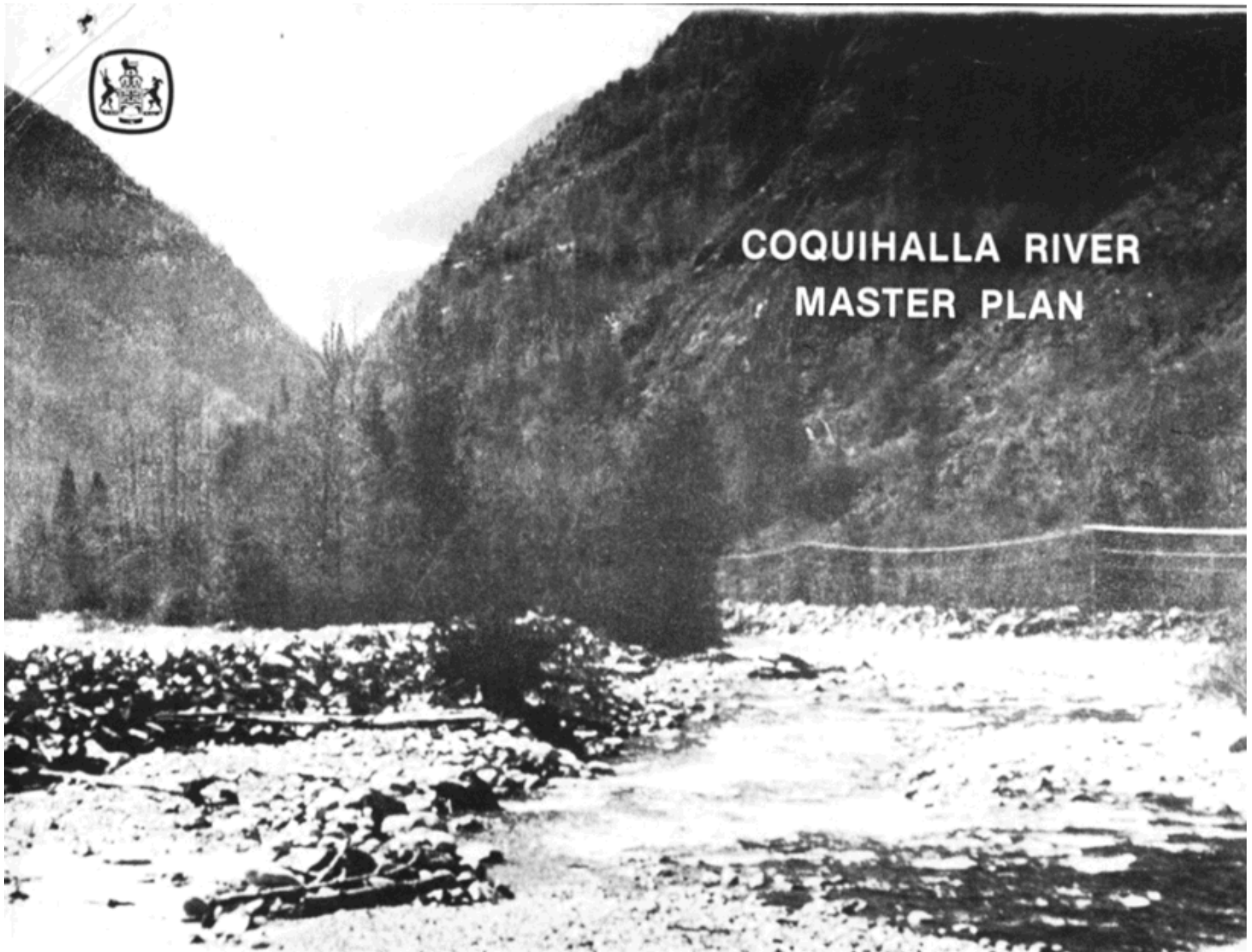




COQUIHALLA RIVER MASTER PLAN



Ministry of Environment and Parks
Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division
South Coast Region

COQUIHALLA RIVER RECREATION AREA


MASTER PLAN

MAY, 1988

Mr. George Trachuk
Regional Director
South Coast Region

Mr. Mel Turner
Manager of Planning and Research
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This Master Plan for Coquihalla River Recreation Area is submitted for your consideration and approval.



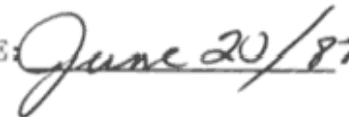
M. H. Turner
Manager of Planning and Research
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RECOMMENDED:

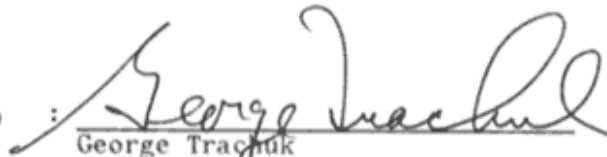


D. Eggen
District Manager
Fraser Valley District

DATE:



APPROVED :



George Trachuk
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COQUIHALLA RIVER RECREATION AREA MASTER PLAN

1.0 Plan Highlights

The Coquihalla River Recreation Area was established in 1986 as part of a series of parks to be developed along the new Coquihalla Highway. Its purpose is to provide rest stop recreational opportunities such as picnicking, fishing and viewing, while assisting in the conservation and enhancement of endemic fish species. Although the recreation area and highway have been open since 1980, use levels are observed to be low owing to the newness of the area.

There are two main issues to be considered in this plan: the type and level of future development and the boundary additions.

Based on the purpose of this plan and the issues to be addressed, this master plan establishes a set of management guidelines and direction statements. Specifically, the plan recommends:

1. park development remain at present levels until use patterns establish a clear direction and rationale for expansion;
2. the status of the Kettle Valley Railway right-of-way be monitored periodically in conjunction with use patterns to determine the appropriate time to consider this area as a park addition;
3. the existing mineral claims be eventually extinguished and the entire park be reclassified to a Class A status.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Plan Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to initiate and guide the development and management of day use recreational facilities of the Coquihalla River Recreation Area.

2.2 Background Summary

The Coquihalla River Recreation Area is located approximately 25 kilometers north of Hope. Encompassing 100 hectares, the recreation area consists of two narrow strips of land bisected by the Coquihalla River. The main natural feature of the park is the river. Day use opportunities such as fishing and viewing can be obtained along the river's edge, while picnicking is concentrated in the forested area beside the river.

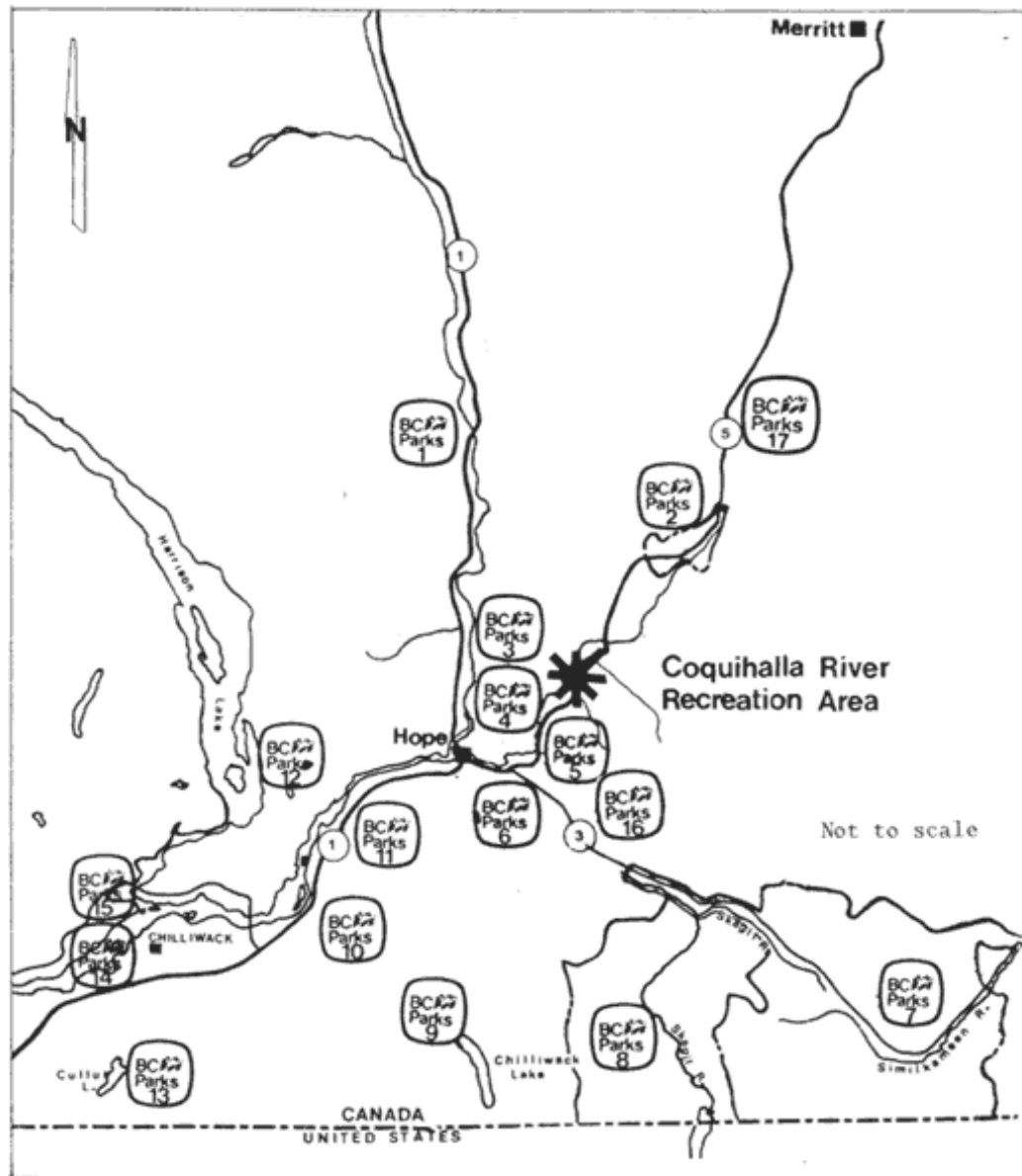
The Kettle Valley Railway, which serves as the area's western boundary, provides some historical context for the park's resources, as well as having the potential of becoming a park attraction.

3.0 Role of the Park

3.1 Regional and Provincial Context

The Coquihalla River Recreation Area is situated in one of the major valleys linking the south coast area of the province to the southern interior. Access improvements provided through the construction of the Coquihalla Highway have created the third major travel corridor between these regions enhancing routes through the Fraser Canyon (Route #1) and the Similkameen Valley (Route #3). The Coquihalla Highway is expected to become equally as popular for tourist travel as the other routes have been in the past.

The communities of Merritt and Hope have traditionally used this region to serve their recreational needs for hunting, fishing, hiking and snowmobiling. There are a number of provincial parks throughout this area offering a wide range of recreation opportunities (Figure 1). Forestry and mining companies have been major land users for many years, in addition to major utilities and railways. The new highway has taken over the transportation role of the railways however, the remaining resource land users are expected to continue to play a significant role in influencing land use.



Regional Context

1. Alexander Bridge Provincial Park
2. Coquihalla Summit Recreation Area
3. Emory Creek Provincial Park
4. Kawkawa Lake Provincial Park
5. Coquihalla Canyon Recreation Area
6. Silver Lake Provincial Park
7. E. C. Manning Provincial Park (Cascade Wilderness)
8. Skagit Valley Recreation Area
9. Chilliwack Lake Provincial Park
10. Bridal Veil Falls Provincial Park
11. F. H. Barber Provincial Park
12. Sasquatch Provincial Park
13. Cultus Lake Provincial Park
14. Sumas Mountain Provincial Park
15. Kilby Historic Provincial Park
16. Nicolum River Provincial Park
17. Coldwater River Provincial Park

FIGURE 1

3.2 Conservation Role

One of the conservation objectives of the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division is to have a park system that contains representative examples of British Columbia's natural landscapes. Although the Coquihalla River Recreation Area is small in size and lies at the transition of two natural landscapes, the recreation area has a conservation role to play in contributing to the conservation of these landscapes. It's contribution lies in the preservation and enhancement of Steelhead, a species endemic to the area. The gravel bars and spawning channels in the recreation area are of major significance in conserving this living component of the natural landscapes. Consequently, the conservation role of the Coquihalla River Recreation Area is to assist in the preservation and enhancement of fish species endemic to the Coquihalla River.

3.3 Recreation Role

One of the recreation objectives of the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division is to provide park opportunities along major travel corridors so that the touring public has a basic network of scenic stop-offs and facilities which complement those offered by other agencies and the private sector. Within this context, the recreation role of the Coquihalla River Recreation Area can be defined more specifically as an area providing rest stop opportunities such as picnicking, fishing and viewing in a river environment.

4.0 Zoning

To assist in park planning and management, a zoning procedure is used to divide each park or recreation area into logical land and water units based upon uniform and consistent management objectives. Zones are intended to reflect future land use, levels of management development required and the level of human activity that is to be accommodated. If the nature of the zone needs to be more specific, then it is broken down into sub-zones which give more detail in respect to area, objectives and management guidelines.

The Coquihalla River Recreation Area is divided into two zones: Natural Environment Zone, Integrated Resource Use Zone and two sub-zones: Special Feature Sub-Zone and Development Sub-Zone.

1. Natural Environment Zone

The prime objective of the zone is to provide for a variety of easily accessible outdoor recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment. At present, use levels are not usually high and the park site is left primarily in its natural state. Consequently, most of the recreation area is zoned as natural environment.

2. Integrated Resource Use Zone

The Integrated Resource Use Zone provides for the integration of recreation and non-recreational extractive uses in a Recreation Area while protecting existing outdoor recreation values. This applies to the north-west portions of the park where forest values are significant but recreation values are also important. Forestry use in this area is considered a temporary tenure, the integrated resource use zone will be changed to the natural environment zone when this tenure expires.

3. Special Feature Sub-Zone

This sub-zone classification is designated for areas of the park which include natural or cultural resources which should be preserved and presented to the public. The Karen Creek spawning channel is included in this sub-zone.

4. Development Sub-Zone

The purpose of the development sub-zone is to provide for concentrations of high use visitor services facilities. This would include the day use parking area and picnicking facilities of the park.



Day use parking area

COQUIHALLA RIVER RECREATION AREA

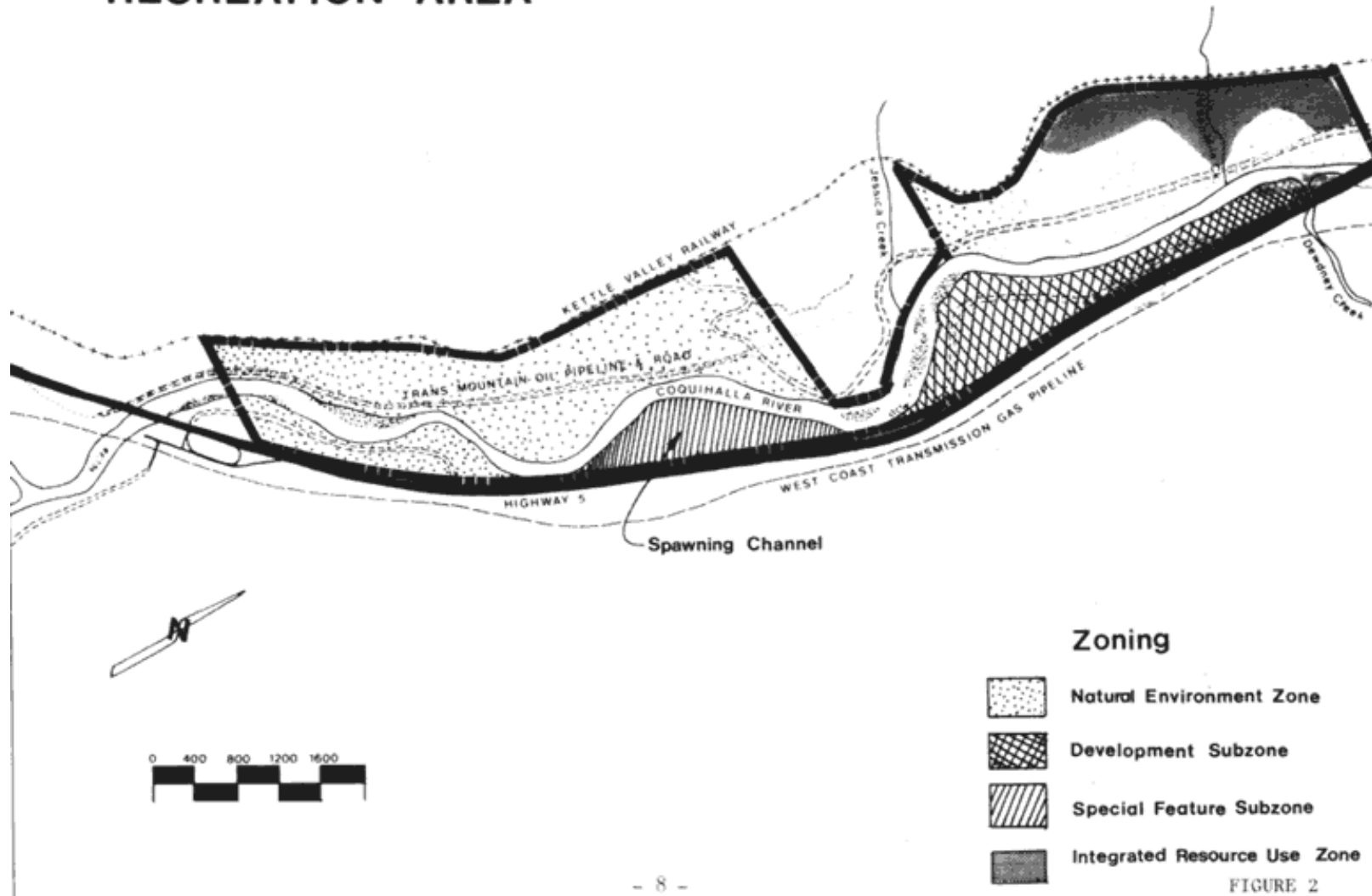


FIGURE 2

5.0 Natural and Heritage Resources Management

5.1 Introduction

The overall management of resources will be based upon the *Park Act*, park regulations and ministry and division policies and the role of Coquihalla River Recreation Area in the system of provincial parks and recreation areas.

The resource management objective is to ensure that Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division goals are met by:

- protecting the natural and heritage resources of the park;
- providing only minimum levels of development opportunities to the existing levels of recreational use;
- monitoring use impacts and resource conditions so that appropriate actions may be taken;
- establishing resource guidelines that will protect the park's recreation and conservation resources.

5.2 Objectives/Actions/Policies

5.2.1 Land Management/Boundaries

The acquisition of the Kettle Valley Railway right-of-way will be delayed until such time as recreational use patterns suggest a need for expanded opportunities and the land is made available by the owner.

5.2.2 Mineral Claims

There are two mineral claims in the recreation area that had tenure prior to the Coquihalla Canyon Recreation Area's establishment.

Objective:

To extinguish the mineral claims in the recreational area and reclassify the area to a Class "A" Park.

Action:

The Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division will allow exploration of the existing claims. No new alienations will be permitted. Upon expiry, lapse or acquisition of interest in commitments, the area will be reclassified as a Class "A" Park.

5.2.3 Vegetation Management

With the combination of immature and mature shrubs and tree species that comprise the vegetation in the park, it seems improbable that any significant management action would be required.

Objective:

To allow existing vegetation to flourish and to restore any damaged areas.

Action:

- i) Follow the standard division policies regarding hazard tree removal;
- ii) Limit to a minimum, the number of trees to be cleared for enhanced views of the river from the picnic area;
- iii) Phase out Timber Sale A21419 and ensure the area is re-forested.

5.2.4 Fish Management

The spawning channels in Karen Creek for Steelhead enhancement are a vulnerable resource and require high standards of protection.

Objective:

To conserve and protect the enhancement area action;

Action:

- i) Co-operative monitoring of natural damage and potential hazards to spawning area by the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division and the Fish and Wildlife Branch;
- ii) Provide interpretive signing or displays to guide public in understanding the importance of enhancement areas.

5.2.5 Wildlife Management

With the wildlife resources being somewhat limited, management issues lie more with the protection of wildlife habitat.

Objective:

To maintain, preserve and protect existing wildlife habitat areas of the park;

Action:

Limit any development that may threaten to reduce wildlife habitats.

5.2.6 Visual Resource Management

A high priority for enhancement and preservation will be given to the visual experiences identified for this park.

Objective:

To enhance and preserve the major visual experiences of the park;

Action:

- i) Confine all vehicle access to day use parking area;
- ii) Selectively clear vegetation along the river to open up views to the river from the picnic area.

6.0 Visitor Services

6.1 Introduction

The Coquihalla River Recreation Area is primarily a stop-off point for travellers on the Coquihalla Highway.

The visitor services concept for this park is to provide roadside recreation opportunities including picnicking etc., with special attention given to the Kettle Valley Railway by providing interpretive signing.

The information strategy will involve providing information during transit, upon arrival in the park and while participating in park activities.

6.2 Visitor Opportunities

There are two main visitor services opportunities available at the Coquihalla River Recreation Area; picnicking and fishing. The objective for each opportunity is as follows:

Picnicking: To provide river-oriented picnicking opportunities for travellers on the Coquihalla Highway.

Fishing: To provide river-bank fishing opportunities and increase awareness of the important role the Karen Creek Spawning Channel plays in conservation.

Since the recreational patterns of use have yet to be established, there is little basis for proposing additional facilities or quantifying the visitor opportunity objectives. Recreational use will be monitored and these objectives will be reviewed if use levels are gradually defined. The private sector will continue to be relied upon to provide camping, accommodation and other support facilities.

6.3 Management Services

i) Headquarters and Service Yard

This park is managed out of the park office at Cultus Lake and, in view of the small size of the park, service facilities within the park would not be required.

ii) Site and Facility Design Standards

All facilities will meet the standards of the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division. Emphasis will be on consideration of safety, visual values and efficient operation, while at the same time, providing esthetic, durable and cost-efficient products.

6.4 Marketing and Information Program

The focus for the marketing strategy of this park will be on the direction of facilities and services to the user group which has the best potential for increasing park visitation and tourism. This user group has been identified as distance travellers using the Coquihalla Highway. Secondary target groups such as fishermen and kayakers also have good potential for introducing new visitors to the park.

The experience or product that the marketing will revolve around are the natural and recreational features of the park and the Coquihalla Corridor, such as river viewing, picnicking, paddling and spectacular mountain scenery. The information presently available is in the form of park brochures and maps that are widely distributed throughout the province, as well as the tourist information centres in Merritt and Hope. Other methods of information dissemination would be road signs and maps with information appropriate to the location.

The understanding and awareness of park values can be successfully achieved through the information program. Other marketing efforts such as articles in local and regional papers and radio spots are more direct and perhaps more effective.

7.0 Plan Implementation

Most of the actions recommended on this plan can be undertaken immediately as part of the normal management procedures of the park.

APPENDIX 1

BACKGROUND REPORT

1.0 Introduction

Since the time of early exploration and settlement in British Columbia, the Coquihalla Valley has served as the corridor for every single transportation route into the interior of B.C., beginning with the Hope-Nicola Trail in 1876.

In 1986, upon completion of yet another transportation route through this canyon, the 'Coquihalla Highway', the first provincial park along this route was established adjacent to the Coquihalla River.

The Coquihalla River Recreation Area lies approximately 25 kilometers north of Hope near Dewdney Creek and encompasses 100 hectares of land.

2.0 Natural and Heritage Resources

2.1. Natural Resources

2.1.1 Physiography

Physiographically, the park is situated at the transition between two regional landscapes: the Lower Mainland-Skagit Mountains and the Coast-Cascade Dry Belt. Natural characteristics common to both landscapes, such as the predominance of rounded peaks and the lack of permanent snowfields and glaciers, are evident in addition to some features that are typically characteristic of the individual regional landscapes. In the case of the Lower Mainland-Skagit Mountain Regional Landscape, the dominance of Coastal Western Hemlock on the site is one of its distinct qualities, while the presence of Douglas-fir is one characteristic of the Coast Cascade Dry Belt. The Hozameen Range of the Cascade Mountains encompasses the park site which consists of portions of the Coquihalla River Flood Plain and the west slopes of the valley. Most of the park is situated on an old flood terrace blanketed by a Coastal Western Hemlock forest. The west valley slopes are, for the most part, bare of trees as it has given way to erosions and slides due to extreme slope and highly erodible soils.

2.1.2 Soils

Glacial activity has had quite an effect on the surface materials comprising the Coquihalla River Valley. Examples of Kame terrace sands and delta deposits, as well as lacustrine materials and pitted hummocky gravel terraces, have been identified on the park site. Recent fluvial activity has removed many of these glacio-fluvial remains and, in turn, has created river terraces and flood plains consisting mainly of large, rounded rubble and boulders in a sand/silt base.

2.1.3 Vegetation

The predominant tree species found on the park site are characteristic of the Coastal Western Hemlock Biogeoclimatic Zone. These species include Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Broadleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) and Vine Maple (*Acer circinatum*). The understory is dominated by Salmon Berry (*Rubus spectabilis*), Oregon Grape (*Berberis nervosa*), Red Huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*), Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), Swordfern (*Polystichum munitum*), Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*) and thistles. All these species reflect a temperate, marine, humid climate and are an indication of mesic soils which, in this case, are found on the middle slopes and deep, well-drained soils on the river terraces and flood plains. Several large cedar stumps (approximately three meters in diameter) remain from an early logging show and are providing excellent nursery areas for successive species.

Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*) and Northern Black Cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*) are predominant on the river's edge and gravel bars while Vine Maple (*Acer circinatum*) can be found occupying most of the remaining park area.

2.1.4 Atmosphere

The Coquihalla River Recreation Area is situated on the windward side of the Cascade Mountains, at an elevation of 320 metres, and has a typical coastal climate of dry, warm summers and wet, cool winters. The mean average temperature for July, measured at the Hope-Kawkawa Lake weather station, is 61^o F (30^o C) with only a four centimetre average rainfall. The average snow accumulation over the winter months (November - February) is about 187.5 cm.

2.1.5 Fish and Wildlife

a) Fish

The construction of the Coquihalla Highway in 1984 resulted in major modifications to the Coquihalla River and the disruption to Steelhead and Dolly Varden populations. To compensate for the loss of the Steelhead habitat, man-made spawning and rearing channels were created in the Karen Creek portion of the park. Having been assessed by the Fish & Wildlife Branch prior to highway development as a potential Steelhead enhancement area, the construction of the Karen Creek spawning and rearing channels was carried out as a joint project between the Department of Highways and the Ministry of Environment and Parks. Enhancement work included placement of spawning gravel, cobbles, rearing pools, cut banks and vegetation plantings.

In 1987, the density of fingerlings and fry was very high, actually denser than anywhere else in the Coquihalla River. Such success indicates that this portion of the Coquihalla River will prove to be a prime sport fishing area in future years.

h) Wildlife

Due to the small area of the park, the wildlife is limited in diversity and quantity of species. This small recreation area has food and habitat limitations and primarily serves the needs of resident species such as raccoons, squirrels, chipmunks, shrews and moles. Transient larger mammals, however, have been observed, including black-tailed deer and black bears. Mountain goats are frequently spotted on the bluffs above Jessica Creek and, in 1984, during the construction of the highway, a young bull moose inhabited the Karen Creek area.

2.1.6 Visual/Outdoor Recreation Features

The visual features include views along the river and a distant view south toward Wells Peak located near Hope (cover photo). From the picnic site there is a filtered view of the river through the trees and a large number of Vine Maples provide colour.

An overview of the park, highway and river valley can be obtained by hiking up the west valley slope to the old Kettle Valley Railway located about 60 metres above the river.

In terms of the outdoor recreation features, the Coquihalla River represents the major focus of recreational activity, offering an attractive environment to stop for a picnic and enjoy the views of the river. In some sections of the river, where there are small pools, opportunities exist for wading and, in high water, kayaking and fishing are possible.

2.2 Heritage Resources

With the exception of the Kettle Valley Railway, there are no cultural resources associated with this park. The eastern boundary of the park lies along the abandoned Kettle Valley Railway which, in 1916, operated as both passenger and freight service between Vancouver and Nelson. Plagued by numerous rock and snow slides, as well as many other climate-related problems, the line eventually closed and was officially abandoned in July, 1961. During its operation, one of the water stops for the steam trains was located at Jessica Creek, adjacent to the park. At present, the only reminder of the Kettle Valley Railroad is the grade and some old railway ties.

COQUIHALLA RIVER RECREATION AREA

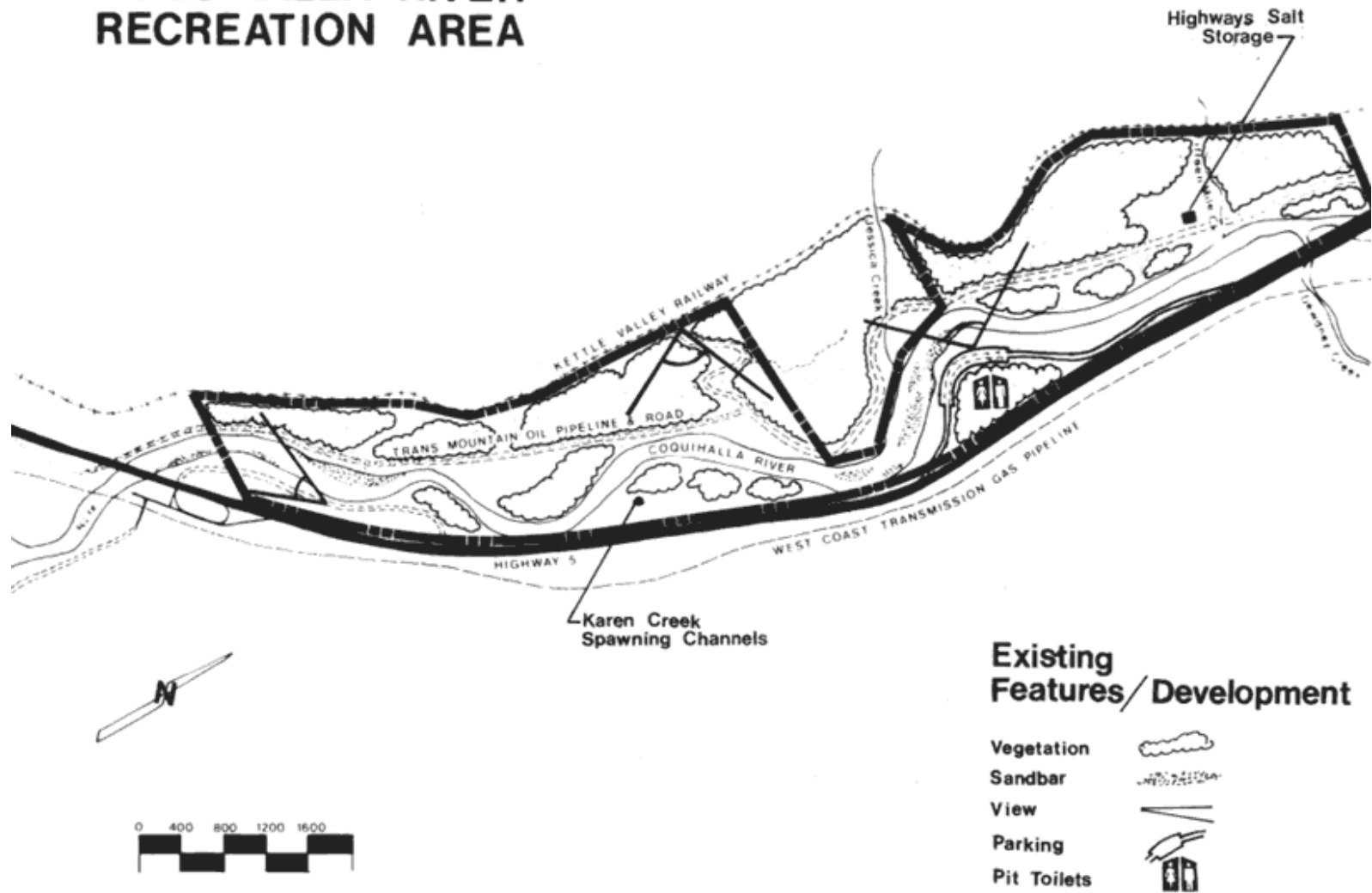


FIGURE 3

2.3. Resource Analysis

The natural resources of the Coquihalla River Recreation Area serve the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division's goals by providing convenient roadside recreational opportunities along the new provincial travel corridor. The park's easy access from the highway and its scenic roadside location are the main features of the site.

Some natural resources contribute to serving the recreation goal in specific ways. The present vegetation provides a natural setting for picnicking as well as a buffer from highway traffic. An abundance of Vine and Broadleaf Maples not only provide habitat for various birds, but also serve as a fall attraction. Access to the river and development and conservation of the spawning channels will enhance recreational fishing opportunities.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

View of the park from the Kettle Valley Railway

3.0 Tenures, Occupancy Rights and Jurisdictions

Lease Permits	- None
Fee Simple Inholdings	- None
Forest Tenures	- T.S.A. 21419
Water Rights	- None
Right-of-Ways	- Trans Mountain Oil Pipeline (1958) - West Coast Transmission Gas Pipeline (1960)
Mining Claims	- Spring 1 - 1219(6)m 26333/35H/37 (all expire July 13, 1990) 42347, 42071, 938(4)
Trespasses	- None
Statutory Jurisdictions	- None
Special Regulations, Fishing Regulations	- Fly fishing only, catch and release - No fishing October 1 - July 31

COQUIHALLA RIVER RECREATION AREA

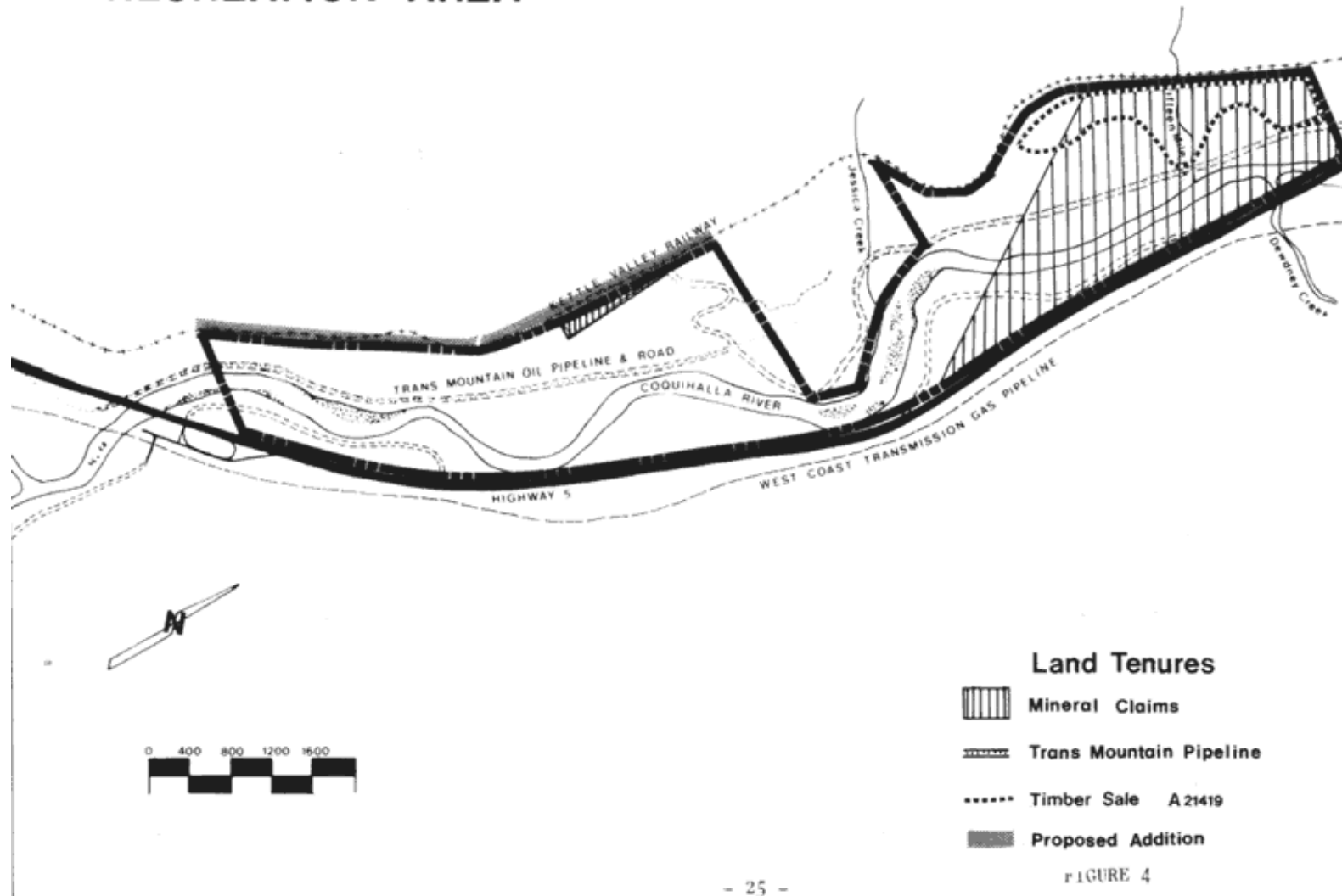


FIGURE 4

4.0 Recreation Opportunities

The main recreational opportunities are picnicking, fishing (in open season), walking and viewing along the river. This site has also been mentioned in Betty-Pratt Johnson's "Whitewater Guide" as a put-in point for kayakers, however, it does not appear that paddlers use the site yet.

The facilities to support these uses consist of a 30-vehicle parking lot, pit toilets, picnic tables and a Type I information shelter.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

Fly fishing on the Coquihalla River

5.0 Market Analysis

5.1 Existing Use

Attendance figures recorded in 1987 indicate over 14,000 parties with most use occurring in August and September. Staff observations in the field suggest the dominant use pattern to be that of families stopping to use toilet facilities and picnic facilities.

5.2 Demand

As with any new major access route, there is an inherent demand for park opportunities based upon the expectation of the public. As the Coquihalla winds through some outstanding natural and cultural features, there is the common expectation that access and facilities will be provided. Quantitative evidence of demand for outdoor recreational opportunities in this area is limited. As use of this park is directly associated with highway use, some general measure of demand can be derived through examining traffic levels.

In 1985, the traffic count for July and August on the Fraser Canyon Highway, which is a major route to the interior, was 8,436 vehicles per day. In 1987, after construction of the Coquihalla Highway, that count was down by almost 50% to 4,649 vehicles per day. It does not appear that the Hope-Princeton route was affected by the Coquihalla Highway. In 1985, 6,228 vehicles per day were recorded for the Hope-Princeton route, while in 1987, the volumes had dropped marginally to 6,116 vehicles per day.

On the Coquihalla Highway, the vehicle count was 16,014 per day for July and August, 1987. Judging by these statistics from the Ministry of Transportation and Highways, the Coquihalla Highway has become as popular as the Fraser Canyon route.

* figures recorded at Dry Gulch, located just south of Toll Booth.

5.3 Supply

The existing supply of outdoor recreation opportunities of the Coquihalla Highway covers a large area. The market area for opportunities similar to that offered by the Coquihalla River Recreation Area can be defined as the area of the highway from Hope to Merritt. Most of the supply for camping and related services such as gas, groceries, etc. is concentrated in the town centres with very little found in between.

The only private campground, Wally's Retreat, is located on the north side of the toll booth adjacent to Coquihalla Lakes. The following table offers a summary of these opportunities:

PUBLIC	Camping	Picnicking	Hiking	Fishing	Viewing	Boat Launch	PRIVATE – HOPE AREA	Camping	Picnicking	Hiking	Fishing	Viewing	Boat Launch
Kawkawa Lake Provincial Park		X		X			Wild Rose Campground	68	X				
Coquihalla Canyon Recreation Area		X	X	X	X		Hope K.O.A. Kampground	150	X				
Coquihalla River Recreation Area		X		X			Holiday Motel & Campground	20	X				
Zopkios Ridge Rest Stop		X	X		X		Hunterville Campsite	30	X				
Needle Peak Rest Stop		X	X		X		Coquihalla River Park	120	X		X	X	
Zopkios Peak Rest Stop		X	X		X		Pooles Evergreen Resort	100	X		X	X	
Falls Creek Rest Stop		X	X		X		Othello Tunnels Campground	30	X			X	
Coldwater River Provincial Park		X		X	X		Rock Face Campground	30	X	X	X		
Forest Service Sites (Merritt Area)	X	X		X			Cariboo Trail Park	30	X		X		
							Campers Roust Park	52	X				
							PRIVATE – MERRITT						
									X				
							Claybanks Travel/Trailer Park	50					
							PRIVATE – COQUIHALLA LAKES						
							Wally's Retreat	23	X		X	X	X

6.0 Key Issues

6.1 Types and Level of Development

Although there has been some initial development in the recreation area to provide access to the Coquihalla River and meet the rest area needs of the public, further development could significantly enhance park opportunities by providing a greater number of things to do, such as hiking, cycling and camping; although there is, at present, no evidence of demand for these opportunities at this location.

Option I - Maintain Status Quo

To maintain the present situation would have no short term impact in view of present low use levels. Over the course of several years, however, repeat use may require more diverse opportunities and services in order to encourage continued use.

Option II - Develop Camping Opportunities

As previously indicated, there is presently no evidence of demand for camping opportunities in this section of the Coquihalla Highway. In view of the availability of camping opportunities at a private campground by Coquihalla Lakes, the extensive camping opportunities at Hope and Merritt and the high speed, limited stopping nature of the Coquihalla Highway, providing camping opportunities at the Coquihalla Recreation Area would seem inappropriate at this time.

6.2 Boundary Additions

The private lands encompassing the Kettle Valley Railway provide a number of park benefits, suggesting the appropriateness of its addition onto the park. In particular, the elevated vantage of the railway grade provides an attractive view overlooking the park and river valley, while a few old settlements and railway ties are evidence of the area's historic roots. Associating the park with the Kettle Valley Railway would establish a consistency in the heritage theme associated with the other parks created in the corridor. The main hindrance to establishing this area is the interest of the private land owner to retain the area for use as a potential utility right-of-way.