

Skeena Region

**MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
STATEMENT**

March 2003

for Craig Headwaters
Protected Area



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

Ministry of Water, Land
and Air Protection
Environmental Stewardshi
Division

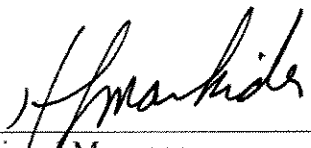
Craig Headwaters Protected Area Approvals Page

Forward

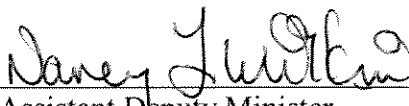
This management direction statement for Craig Headwaters Protected Area provides management direction until such time as the plan is revised or a more detailed management plan is prepared. Ongoing consultation with First Nations may require changes to this management direction statement. Aboriginal rights are honoured and respected within the protected area.

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

Approvals



Regional Manager
Skeena Region
Environmental Stewardship Division



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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Craig Headwaters Protected Area 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 established Craig Headwaters Protected Area by an Order in Council under the *Environment and Land Use Act* in April 2001. Craig Headwaters has been identified as a Goal 2 Special Feature protected area to protect a representative example of low elevation coastal western hemlock forest and associated ecosystems. In addition, the protected area conserves a remote, coastal valley containing verdant forest values and extensive undisturbed salmon spawning and grizzly bear habitat. Designation followed the recommendations of the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP).

Craig Headwaters Protected Area covers 7,101 hectares of the Craig River Valley bottomland from the Alaskan border to its junction with the Jekill River, about 120 kilometres south of the community of Telegraph Creek. The protected area extends over the bottomland and mid slope of the river valley. The protected area is surrounded by the 202,000 hectare lower Stikine-Iskut Coastal Grizzly/Salmon Zone established to maintain habitat values for grizzly and salmon in recognition of their role as keystone species in the ecosystem of the Stikine-Iskut.

Currently, road access is unavailable to this remote protected area. A road may be considered through the protected area as part of a future mining development. Some business and political groups in Alaska have also expressed interest in building a road through the Craig River Valley to reach the Bradfield Canal in Alaska where a deep-sea port would be constructed. The latter road project for purposes other than mining is not provided for in the order establishing the protected area.

The protected area lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Tahltan First Nation.

Several provincial protected areas are located near Craig Headwaters Protected Area. About 20 kilometres southeast lies Lava Forks Provincial Park which protects Canada's most recent lava flow. Just another 10 kilometres further east is Border Lake Provincial Park that conserves high value fish habitat and significant wetland ecosystems. Great Glacier Provincial Park offers a spectacular glacial landscape next to the lower Stikine River, about 45 kilometres west of Craig Headwaters Protected Area. Just across the Stikine River from Great Glacier Provincial Park is the Choquette Hot Springs Provincial Park. About 100 kilometres to the north and northeast, lay several large protected areas including Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Park, Gladys Lake Ecological

Reserve, Stikine River Provincial Park, and Mount Edziza Provincial Park. These protected areas protect entire ecosystems and offer a wide variety of backcountry outdoor recreation opportunities.

Protected Area Attributes

Conservation

- One of only four protected areas in the Southern Boundary Ranges Ecosection. This ecosection is poorly represented (2.11%) in the protected areas system. Craig Headwaters Protected Area provides the best representation of this ecosection in the protected areas system (47.62% of overall representation).
- This protected area is situated in the CWHwm (wet maritime coastal western hemlock biogeoclimatic subzone). The protected areas system conserves 7.46% of the CWHwm biogeoclimatic subzone. Craig Headwaters Protected Area provides the second best representation of this ecosystem in the protected areas system (21.27% of overall representation).
- Protects important micro-sites with 60 metre tall Sitka spruce trees.
- Conserves high value fish habitat including main stem spawning and rearing habitats; one of the main coho spawning areas in the Stikine; also sockeye, chinook, Dolly Varden/bull trout, and steelhead. Rainbow trout, cutthroat trout and mountain whitefish may also occur.
- Preserves undisturbed high value/quality coastal grizzly bear habitat.
- Key area of grizzly/salmon interaction.
- Mountain goat populations on south facing habitats may extend into the protected area.
- High value moose habitat.
- Conserves cool springs and mud with associated uncommon plant communities.
- Opportunities for baseline salmon and bear research.

Recreation and Tourism

- Supports high backcountry recreation values.
- Provides backcountry outdoor recreation opportunities for a range of wilderness activities in a remote forested coastal valley.

Commercial Business Opportunities

- Provides limited to moderate commercial business opportunities for backcountry recreation activities, guided hunting and angling. (See Appendix 1 for activities allowed in this park).

Cultural Heritage

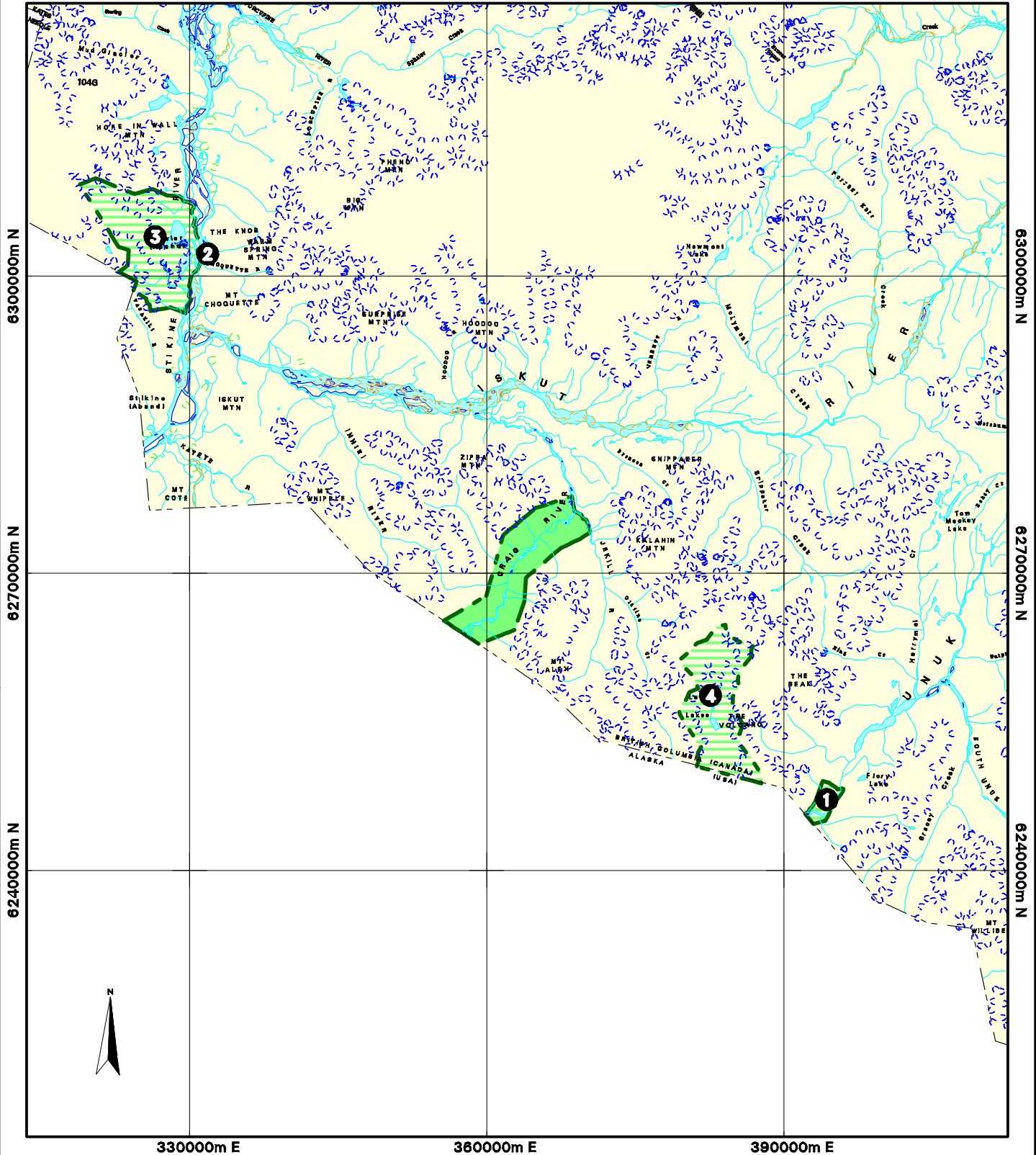
- Cultural heritage values remain undocumented at this time. Environmental Stewardship Division is seeking Tahltan First Nations' contributions to resolve this lack of knowledge.

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- Provides the second best representation of the CWHwm ecosystem in the protected areas system (21.27% of overall representation).
- Protects important grizzly bear and fish habitats.

Figure 1: Context





Craig Headwaters Protected Area



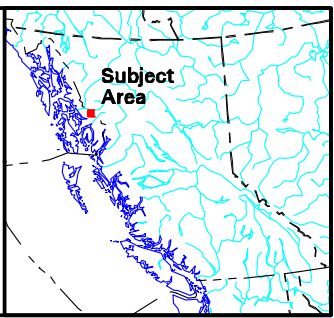
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	Subject Area	Other Provincial Protected Areas
	Other Protected Areas	1 Border Lake
	Highway	2 Choquette Hot Springs
	Road	3 Great Glacier
		4 Lava Forks

0 10
km



Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

Craig Headwaters Protected Area is remote and accessible by boat and helicopter. Highway 37 runs 100 kilometres to the east. Access may change because of possible mining development on lands adjacent to the protected area.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- Mineral tenures exist within the protected area but they are save and excepted from the protected area until they lapse. (See Figure 2).
- Active traplines 621T002 and 621T011 but these resource use activities are not authorized under valid park use permits.
- Guide-outfitters territories 621G002 and 621G003 authorized by park use permit SK9710016.

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- No permanent or fixed facilities.
- The protected area is visited on rare occasions by hunters, fishers and backcountry hikers and campers.

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- Lies within the Lower Stikine-Iskut Coastal Grizzly/Salmon Resource Management Zone allowing mineral exploration, but no commercial forest harvesting.
- Alaska forms the southwest border of the protected area. The adjacent area in Alaska is within an inventoried roadless area in the Tongass National Forest.
 - Under a decision on roadless area conservation (36CFR Part 294 RIN 0596-AB77; US Federal Register Department of Agriculture – Forest Service), roads are currently prohibited in the area¹.

First Nations Interests

- The protected area is within the asserted traditional territory of the Tahltan First Nation.
- Tahltan First Nation has an interest in maintaining their aboriginal traditional uses and activities in the protected area.

Other Agency Interests

- Department of Fisheries and Oceans has an interest in the fisheries values of the Craig River and uses the Craig as a coho indicator stream (i.e. the Department carries out annual spawning counts in the autumn).
- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section has an interest in wildlife, particularly grizzly bears.
- Ministry of Energy and Mines has an interest in road access through the protected area and in active mining tenures within the protected area.

¹ In December 2002, a federal appeals court lifted a stay on the implementation of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, a landmark forest-conservation measure opposed by timber industry interests in the United States. The court's ruling came in response to an appeal filed by National Resources Defense Council of New York and the Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund located in California.

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Mining interests have an interest in the Craig Headwaters Protected Area because protected area status places a more intensive management regime governing active mineral claims and mine access road proposals affecting the protected area.
- Backcountry outdoor recreation enthusiasts are interested in the protected area as a place to enjoy an undisturbed natural environment.
- Fishers have an interest in Craig Headwaters Protected Area because of its important angling opportunities provided by the Craig River.
- Scientists who have recently visited the area have an interest in continuing studies.
- The trapline holders are interested in the protected area because protected area regulations may place limits on their exploitation of fur-bearing animal species in the protected area.
- The guide-outfitter owner is interested in the protected area because protected area regulations may place restrictions on the trapping of fur-bearing animal species in the protected area.

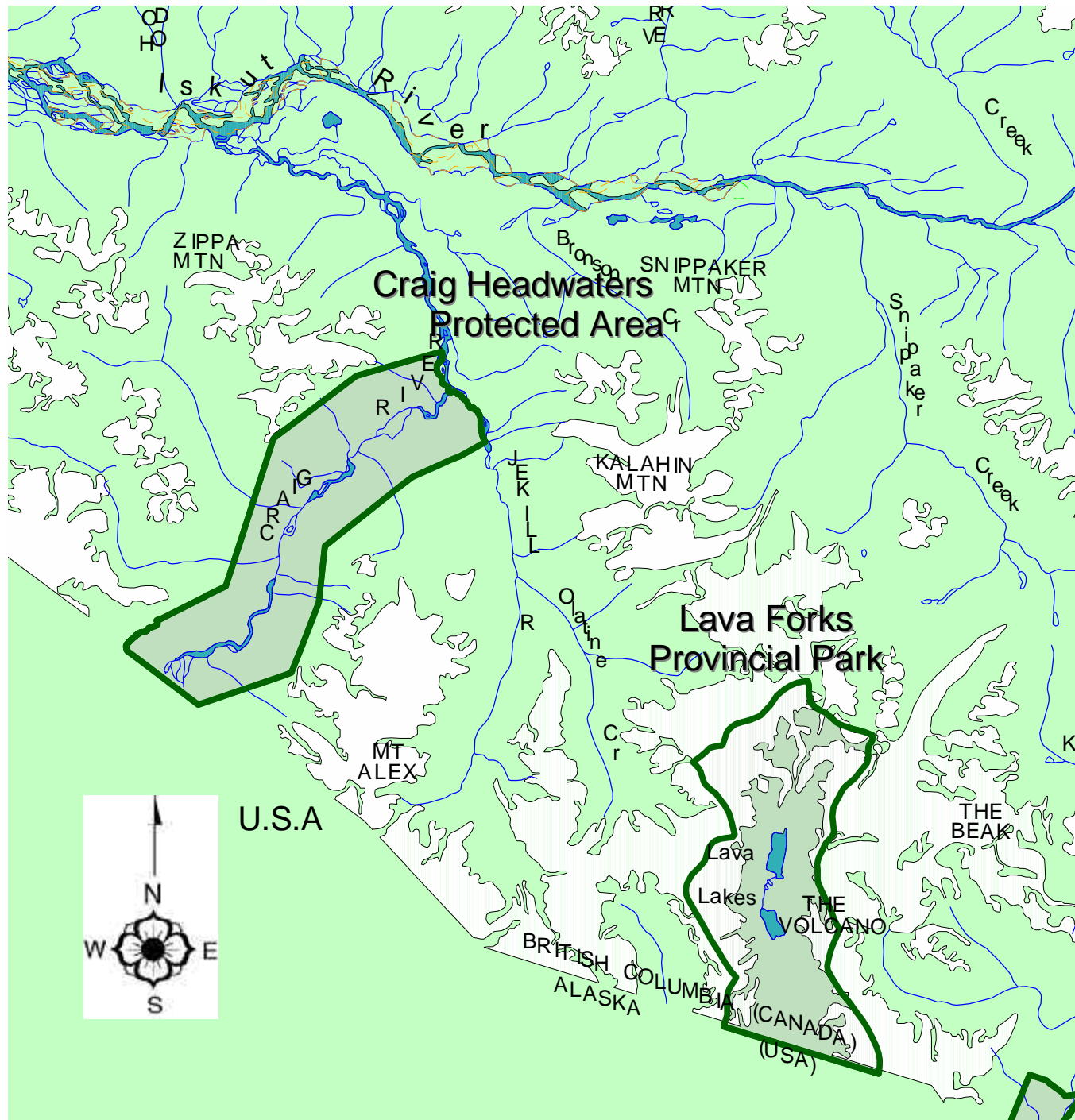
Role of Craig Headwaters Protected Area

The primary role of Craig Headwaters Protected Area is to conserve about 7,101 hectares of the Craig River bottomland extending north from the international boundary between Canada and the United States of America to the river's confluence with Jekill River. The protected area protects old-growth spruce forests. In addition, extremely significant salmon spawning and rearing habitats are contained in the protected area. Craig Headwaters Protected Area's conservation role is further highlighted by transient and resident coastal grizzly bears that depend on this river valley as a source of food and shelter. Also, the protected area likely supports moose and mountain goat habitat and populations.

Craig Headwaters Protect Area fulfills a secondary outdoor recreation role. The protected area presents significant backcountry recreation opportunities in a relatively undisturbed natural wildland setting. Moderate to excellent opportunities exist for hikers, fishers and hunters who are able to reach this remote river valley.



Craig Headwaters Protected Area & Lava Forks Provincial Park



U.S.A

Legend

freshWater	River/Stream - Right Bank
glaciersAndSnow	Lake - Definite
Rivers and Streams	Lake - Indefinite
River/Stream - Definite	Marsh
River/Stream - Indefinite	Island - Definite
River/Stream - Left Bank	Sand/Gravel Bar
BC Parks Protected Area	

2.5 0 2.5 5 7.5 10 Kilometers



1 : 109,556 1 inch = 2.78 kilometers

Management Commitments and Issues

Direction from Previous Planning

The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP recommended Craig Headwaters for protection in 2000 and provided the following management direction:

- To protect a representative example of low elevation coastal western hemlock forest and associated ecosystem which includes high fisheries values, high value grizzly habitat, key area of grizzly/salmon interaction and high recreation values.
- Consider allowing road access through the protected area: “In the event that a request is made for access and where reasonable review determines that no practicable alternative exists outside of the protected area, then a decision regarding the most appropriate access will be made by Government authorities. The decision will be made in full consideration of the functional integrity of the protected area and the need for access for mineral activities, in accordance with applicable review and approval processes.”²
- Exclude mineral tenures from the protected area until such time as the tenures lapse.
- Allow hunting.

Management Issues

The following management issues require attention:

Theme	Issue
Protecting protected area ecological values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The protected area’s natural features remain relatively unknown because an accurate inventory is incomplete. • The protected area’s forest and aquatic ecosystems may be at risk because road construction and development may occur within the protected area. • The trapline owners are in contravention of the <i>Park Act</i> because the owners do not have valid park use permits authorizing this resource activity. • The protected area’s fish and wildlife populations and their habitats may be at risk because mine road access will permit higher levels of human angling and hunting activities and direct impacts on habitats.
Protecting protected area outdoor recreation values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The protected area’s outdoor recreation values associated with its wildland, forest and river environments may be at risk because road construction and development may occur within the protected area. Such development would likely have major impacts on the wilderness qualities of the protected area. • Impacts on salmon stocks of possible road construction could affect traditional, recreational and commercial fisheries downstream on the Stikine River.
Protecting protected area cultural heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craig Headwaters Protected Area’s cultural heritage features may be at risk because an inventory of such values is incomplete.

² Province of BC, *Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan* Table in Section 2.5.2 New Protected Areas, Internet version of the plan, URL: http://5rmwww.gov.bc.ca/rmd/rmp/cassiar/final/2_5htm#2.5.2. 2000.

Management Direction

The vision for Craig Headwaters Protected Area comprises the retention of an undisturbed river corridor with associated intact forest and aquatic ecosystems that receives occasional visitors.

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

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

Objectives	Strategies
<p>To protect the protected area's ecological integrity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake baseline inventories of fauna and flora in the protected area as soon as practical. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focus the highest priority on an accurate survey of fish populations and their habitats, compiling data on grizzly bear populations and their habitat, and grizzly/salmon interactions, and cultural heritage values; ➤ Other inventories should proceed as funding permits. ➤ Complete inventories so that they are available for consideration of any proposals for mineral road access. • As per the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP and <i>Environment and Land Use Act</i> order, consider road access for mineral purposes through the protected area if no practical alternative exists outside the protected area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Investigate potential effects on the protected area's natural environment should industrial interests propose road development through the protected area. ➤ Work cooperatively with the BC Environmental Assessment Office, the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section), Ministry of Energy and Mines and the federal government Department of Fisheries and Oceans to document and mitigate the effects of road development within the protected area as stipulated in the Craig Headwaters Protected Area Order in Council. (See Appendix 2). • Contact the trapline owners to place their trapping operations affecting the protected area under valid park use permits. • Work with the US National Forest Service to coordinate management programs and initiatives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Investigate status of appeal on the roadless area decision. • Review of the <i>Environment and Land Use Act</i> order to better reflect the approved LRMP with respect to conditions for possible mining road access.
<p>To protect the protected area's outdoor recreation opportunities and recreation features.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate potential effects on protected area outdoor recreation values and features caused by industrial road development through the protected area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ See the above management strategies for the protection of the protected area's ecological integrity. • Consider opportunities for commercial recreation ventures.

Objectives	Strategies
To protect the protected area's cultural heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and collate, in cooperation with the Tahltan First Nation, existing information on cultural heritage values within Craig Headwaters Protected Area. • Meet with the Tahltan First Nation to discuss issues that affect the protection and management of Craig Headwaters Protected Area.
To provide information to the public about the protected area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure information about Craig Headwaters Protected Area on the official Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection web site is accurate and current. • Emphasise the protected area's conservation role rather than outdoor recreation themes.

Consultation and Future Planning

The Environmental Stewardship Division will manage Craig Headwaters Protected Area as issues arise with a minimal level of monitoring. The Environmental Stewardship Division will collaborate with internal ministry sections and with the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, the Environmental Assessment Office, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Tahltan First Nation and local stakeholders to investigate potential impacts and mitigation measures for any proposed road through the protected area. If a road is proposed, the preparation of a management plan, with full public input, will be developed for the approval of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection.

The priority for preparing a management plan for Craig Headwaters Protected Area is ranked as high if the mine road is proposed.

Zoning Plan

All of Craig Headwaters Protected Area is placed within a Wilderness Recreation Zone which entails the following:

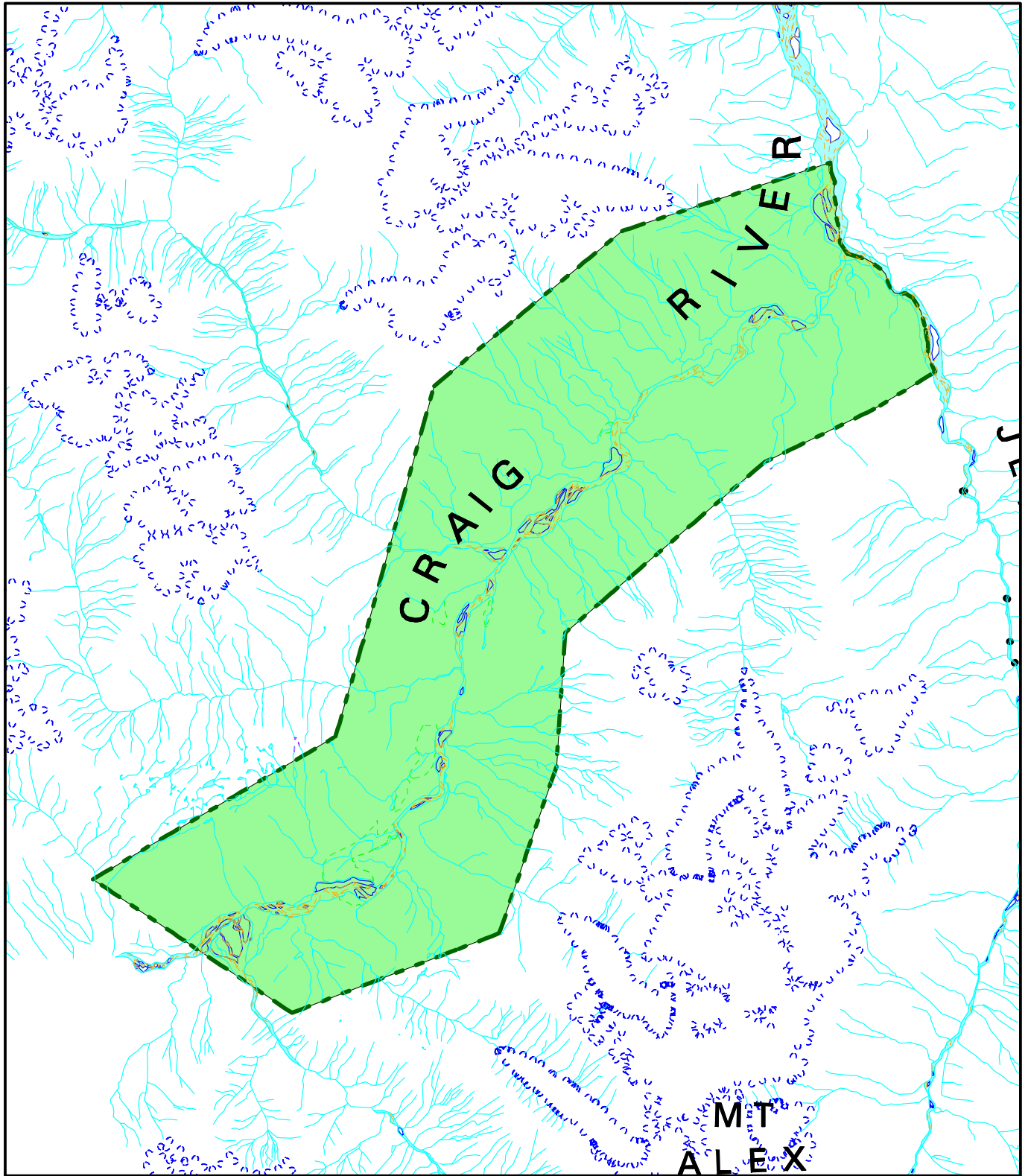
Objective: To protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment where air access may be permitted to designated sites.

Zone Description: Covers the entire protected area.

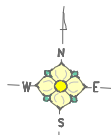
Management Guidelines: Oriented to protecting a pristine environment. Management actions are minimal and not evident. Managed to ensure low visitor use levels. Visitor access may be restricted to protect the natural environment and visitor experience.

Figure 3: Zoning

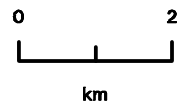
Craig Headwaters Protected Area



Projection: UTM Zone 9
Datum: NAD83



-  Wilderness Recreation
-  Protected Area Boundary



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**Appendix 1. Craig Headwaters Protected Area
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	M
Guide outfitting (hunting)	Y
Guide outfitting (fishing)	Y
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 (see Order-in-Council)	M
Off-road access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road access (motorised)	N
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorised water access	N
Aircraft access	Y
Fire management (suppression)	N
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

Appendix 2 – Order in Council for Craig Headwaters Protected Area

CRAIG HEADWATERS PROTECTED AREA ORDER

Contents

1. Definitions
2. Protected Area
3. Application of the *Park Act*
4. Management and Administration of Protected Area
5. New Roads
Schedule

Definitions

1. In this order:

“**minister**” means, unless the context requires otherwise, the minister responsible for the *Park Act*, and includes a person designated in writing by the minister;

“**protected area**” means the protected area established under section 2.

Protected Area

2. Craig Headwaters Protected Area, consisting of the land described in the Schedule, is established as a protected area.

Application of the *Park Act*

3. Subject to this order, sections 1, 2, 3, 6, 8 (1) and (2), 9 (1) and (2) and 13 to 30 of the *Park Act* and the regulations under the *Park Act* apply to the protected area as though it is a “park” of Class A continued or established under section 2 of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*.

Management and Administration of Protected Area

4. Subject to this order, the minister is authorized to and must manage and administer the protected area.

New Roads

5. (1) Subject to the completion of a process acceptable to the minister to assess the impacts of and to determine mitigation requirements for building a road through the protected area, the minister must approve on terms and conditions acceptable to the minister the construction, use and maintenance of a road through the protected area for the purpose of providing access to support mineral development.
- (2) The minister may require that the cost of the process referred to in subsection (1) be borne in whole or in part by the person or persons requesting permission to construct the road referred to in that subsection or by the person or persons who will use and maintain the road.

- (3) The terms and conditions referred to in subsection (1) may include, but are not limited to, a requirement that the person or persons who construct, use or maintain the road must be authorized to do so by park use permit, which permit may be issued despite sections 8, 9 and 30 of the *Park Act*.

Schedule

All those parcels or tracts of Crown land, together with all that foreshore or land covered by water, situated in Cassiar District and contained within the described boundaries as shown on the Official Plan deposited in the Crown Land Registry as Plan 7 Tube 1868; except the Crown land subject to the mineral rights under the *Mineral Tenure Act* for the “Stanley 7”, “Zeehan 5” to “Zeehan 7” and “Reg#9” claims, Record No.'s 222226, 222342 to 222344 and 302602 respectively.

The whole protected area containing approximately 7 101 hectares.