


FINLAY RUSSEL PROVINCIAL PARK AND PROTECTED AREA

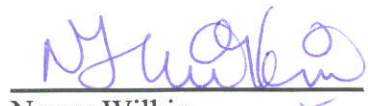
PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN Omineca Region 2005

Approved by:



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Date: Nov. 4th 2005



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Date: Oct. 31 2005

Finlay – Russel PROVINCIAL PARK and PROTECTED AREA Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Finlay - Russel is a large, 122,771 ha Provincial Park and Protected Area north of Williston Reservoir. The park consists of an 85 km corridor along the Finlay River between the Fox River confluence, immediately west of Kwadacha village (Fort Ware) and the Toodoggone River confluence. The Park area also includes 20 km of the Upper Pelly Creek Valley and the northern end of the Russel Range. The park is remote, and accessible by air or limited road access from Ft. Ware.

Ground access through the Protected Area to resource lands beyond may be required in the future. For this reason, two road corridors under the *Environment and Land Use (ELU) Act* were approved through the Protected Area, for mining or oil and gas purposes only, to access the Upper Pelly and Obo River Resource Management Zones (RMZs)

- north of the Finlay River at Cut Off Creek, and
- along Pelly Creek valley.

Any such road will be reviewed and approved by a public process.

The park and Protected Area provide 82% of the provincial representation of the Northern Omineca Mountains Ecoregion within BC's Protected Area system and contributes towards representation of the Cassiar Ranges Ecoregion.

Finlay - Russel Provincial Park and Protected Area protects important fish and wildlife habitat. The park provides very important sheep habitat for a provincially significant population of Stone sheep. This is the most significant population of sheep in the Omineca Region. Most of the interior of the Omineca has snow depths that are too deep to support sheep. The Russel Range is in the snow shadow of the Fishing Range and thus supports this relatively isolated population. Negative impacts on this population could have long term consequences due to its isolation and resulting lack of potential immigrants. This range is also important to mountain goats and supports significant populations although these populations are contiguous with other populations. The park also includes important habitat for caribou and moose. The population of Arctic grayling in the Finlay River is part of the red-listed Williston population.

From a fisheries perspective, the Fishing Lakes are important because they have a species composition that is somewhat different than most other lakes in the region. The lakes support several species of sport fish – rainbow trout, Arctic grayling, bull trout and lake trout. It is unusual to have two top order predators such as bull trout and lake trout in the same lake. The lake trout (a true lake environment species) moves between the Fishing Lakes and the Finlay River.

The Upper Pelly likely supports bull trout spawning areas and a small rainbow trout fishery.

There are high First Nations cultural values, and continued sustenance use within Finlay - Russel Provincial Park and Protected Area. The park includes a section of the First Nation trail from Kwadacha to Caribou Hide and the Stikine country.

The park and Protected Area provide opportunities for wilderness recreation, notably hunting and fishing. Canoeing, kayaking, rafting and heavy jet boat use all occur on the Finlay River. Winter snowmobiling occurs up to Rainbow Lake.

The Park and Protected Area are located within the 6.4 million hectare Muskwa-Kechika Management Area, one of North America's last true wilderness areas south of the 60th parallel. This area is considered to have national, international and global significance for its untouched beauty, natural resources and abundant wildlife. Work and research undertaken within the Muskwa Kechika, which is applicable to Finlay Russel Provincial Park will be incorporated into the management of the park as appropriate.

Primary Role

The primary role of the park is conservation. It provides representation of the Northern Omineca Mountains, a full elevational range of ecosystems and significant fish and wildlife habitat.

Secondary Role

The secondary role is to protect First Nations cultural values, including a historic trail.

Tertiary Role

The park provides opportunities for river-oriented wilderness recreation, and hunting.

Known Management Issues	Response
Unauthorized recreational facilities	Limit to re-establishment of heritage trails until completion of a Management Direction Statement
First Nations concerns regarding high levels of motorized boat use and potential heli-skiing/hiking activities	Meet with First Nations to discuss their concerns Review any new backcountry recreation tenure applications.
Stone sheep population	Monitor for impacts from unauthorized recreational use. Consider in any new backcountry recreation tenures.

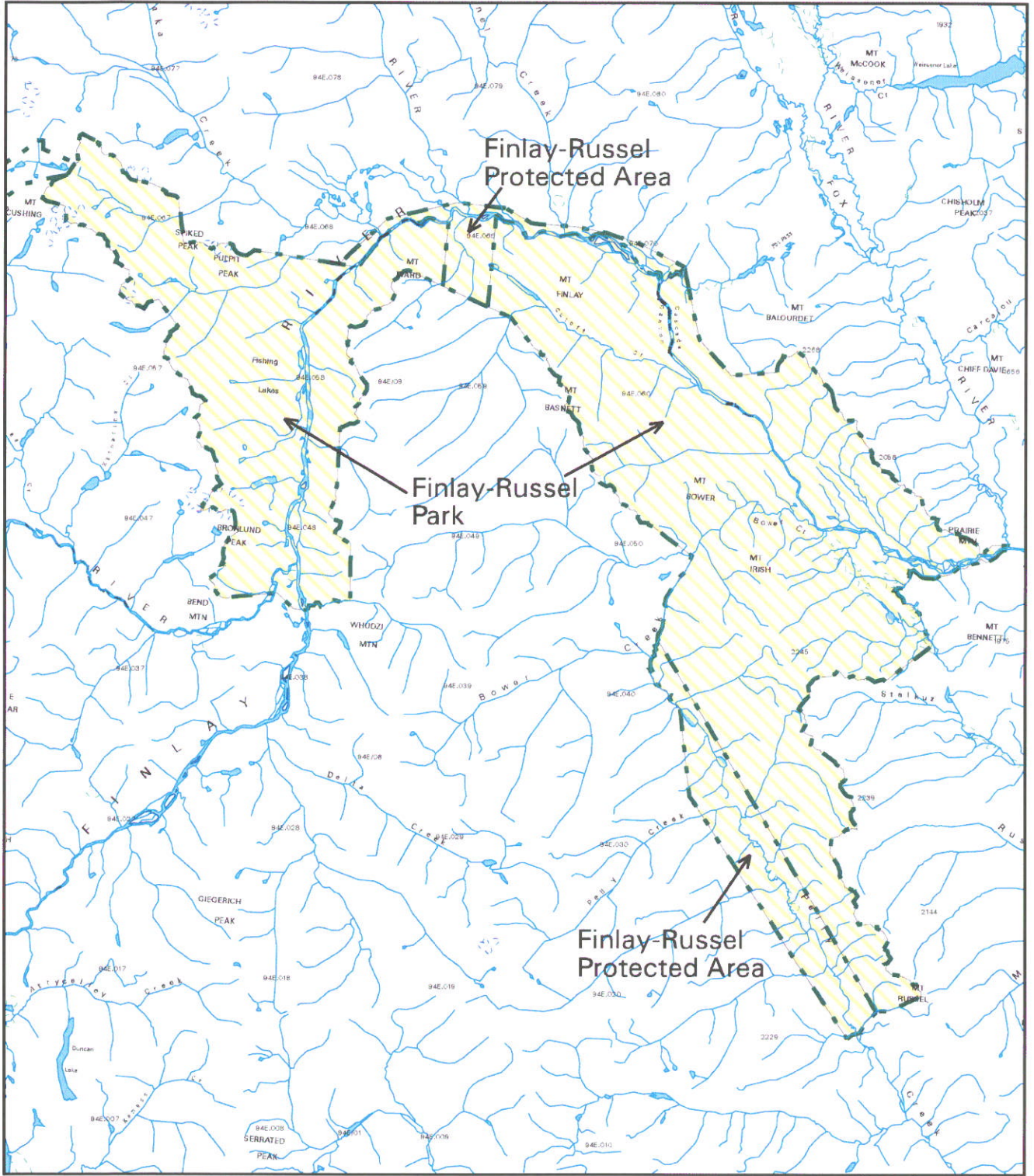
Commercial fishing guides	Determine angling use and monitor which species are being taken in Fishing Lakes. Review Angling Guides annual report of client days, fish caught and fish harvested.
Impacts to riparian values	Carefully monitor to make sure the riparian values are not being negatively impacted by motorized recreational use (both snowmobiling and jet boats). River corridors are heavily used by wildlife. Particularly in winter, wildlife can be significantly impacted by any disturbance that causes extra energy output.
Unauthorized activities	Work with First Nations to develop an observe, record and reporting mechanism.

Zoning

Finlay -- Russel will be zoned for:



- Nature Recreation (protection of scenic values and provision of backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed setting) to permit motorized boating and snowmobiling up the river corridors.
- Wilderness Recreation (protection of a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide non-motorized backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment) in the Russel Ranges (for sheep habitat values) and the Fishing Lakes area.

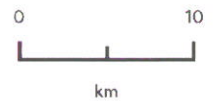
Zoning Map - Finlay-Russel Provincial Park and Finlay-Russel Protected Area



Projection: UTM Zone 10
Datum: NAD83



-  Nature Recreation
-  Protected Area Boundary



Produced in May 2005 for
Ministry of Water, Land and
Air Protection by MSRM, Business
Solutions Branch

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