

Finn Creek Park

Management Direction Statement Amendment

November 2013



Management Direction Statement Amendment

Approved by:



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November 12, 2013

Date



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November 14, 2013

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1.0 Context

This document outlines amendments to the Management Direction Statement approved in 1999.

This amendment was initiated due to BC Parks becoming aware of an ongoing and increasing issue regarding snowmobiling and public safety adjacent to Finn Creek Park. A suggested solution was to consider utilizing the existing pipeline right-of-way in Finn Creek Park as part of a snowmobile trail. BC Parks reviewed the existing Management Direction Statement and determined that a public review and a possible amendment to the Management Direction Statement would be considered. The amendment process was initiated in November of 2012.

1.1 Scope

The review of the Management Direction Statement was to consider whether to allow snowmobiles to transit Finn Creek Park along the existing pipeline right-of-way in the northeastern corner of the park.

1.2 Planning Area

This amendment applies only to the use of the pipeline right-of-way in the northeast part of the park as shown in Figure 1.

1.3 Public Process

- The proposed amendment was placed on the BC Parks website for public comment in November 2012 for 30 days.
- Notification of the amendment was sent to potentially interested groups and agencies (Town of Blue River, Thompson Headwater Services Committee, Thompson Nicola Regional District, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Yellowhead Ecological Association).
- Consultation with the Simpcw First Nation was undertaken between November 2012 and October 2013.

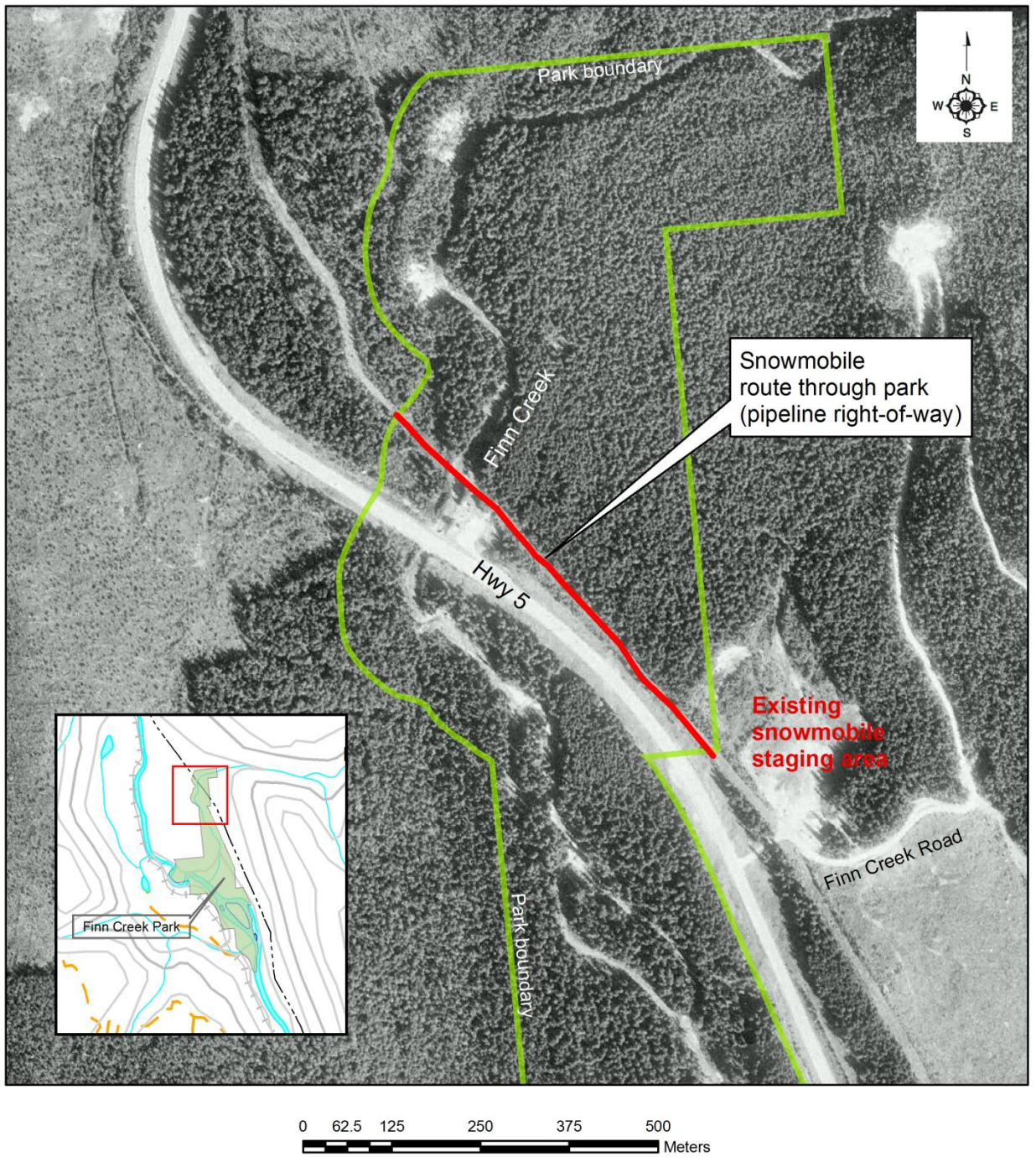


Figure 1: Finn Creek Park Snowmobile Access Trail

2.0 Analysis and Recommended Amendment

2.1 Rationale for Amendment

Snowmobile access is not presently allowed within the park. A popular parking and snowmobile staging area is located immediately adjacent to the park boundary on Finn Creek Road (Figure 1) from which snowmobiles travel along Finn Creek Road to higher elevation. Snowmobiles also travel up the Foam Creek Forest Service Road, which is found immediately north of the park off of Highway 5, either making their way along the highway from the staging area or parking along the highway, creating a safety hazard for snowmobilers and highway traffic.

Use of the pipeline right-of-way in the park by snowmobiles would connect the parking and staging area to areas used by snowmobilers and backcountry skiers to the north. All snowmobilers would then use the one staging area to the south of the park. It would allow a safe route for snowmobilers, eliminating any safety hazard for recreational users, the travelling public or road maintenance crews caused by the use of the highway right-of-way for parking or pullouts on Highway 5 at or near the entrance to the Foam Creek Forest Service Road.

Mountain Caribou are found in higher elevation areas that are used by snowmobiles originating from the staging area. Providing transit of snowmobiles through the park would contribute to the broader provincial Mountain Caribou conservation effort by allowing dissemination of information on Mountain Caribou locations at the central snowmobile staging area so that areas used by caribou can be avoided as snowmobilers go to higher elevations. Presently, snowmobilers parking on the highway or at Foam Creek Forest Service Road to the north are not provided with this information.

The proposed snowmobile use was evaluated with respect to park values and existing uses, and in relation to safety and conservation goals in the broader area. It was determined that use of the pipeline right-of-way would not negatively impact natural values or public enjoyment within the park due to the already close proximity of the highway and existing staging area, and since the activity would occur during the “off” season. Snowmobile activity within the park would occur over high snowpack, on an already disturbed site (pipeline right-of-way), minimizing potential impacts on vegetation in the park. Allowing snowmobiles would dissipate snowmobiles and their associated noise more quickly from the staging area and greatly increase safety.

The greatest concern was the potential impact to salmon and trout and their habitat within Finn Creek by the crossing of the creek by snowmobiles. Protection of fish spawning and rearing habitats are the primary role and significance of the park. To assess this potential impact, BC Parks considered input from other agencies (Fish and Wildlife Section in the Ministry of Forests,

Lands and Resource Operations; federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans) and professional expertise of a consultant that provided recommendations to the local snowmobile club. The input received indicated that the crossing would not be detrimental to fish and fish habitat if all conditions stated by these agencies were met. These conditions were:

- Use six 36" culverts for the crossing.
- Tether the culverts only to the south creek bank to allow them to swing out of the main flow in the event of a rare winter flow increase.
- Avoid destruction of recently re-vegetated areas adjacent to the Kinder Morgan pipeline.
- Ensure adequate sized equipment is available to promptly remove the structure in the situation of a flow increase event that threatens the culverts.
- Minimize the environmental risk and worker safety by completing the work in a timely manner.
- Do not adversely impact the stream channel (including stream banks), fish habitat or fish passage.
- The natural rate of water flow must be maintained upstream and downstream of the worksite during all phases of in-stream activity.
- Removal of stable, naturally occurring material from the stream or stream channel is not permitted.
- All equipment must be located and operated in the dry season.
- Equipment used in close proximity to the wetted perimeter must be free of deleterious material (e.g., hydrocarbons) and in good mechanical condition (e.g., no fuel or hydraulic leaks). All refueling and servicing must be completed outside of the riparian management area. All machinery operating near a stream must have a spill kit.
- Measures must be taken to ensure that no harmful material (e.g., fuel and other hydrocarbons, soil, road fill, or sediment), which could adversely impact water quality, fish and other aquatic life, and/or fish habitat, can enter the wetted perimeter as a result of the project activities.
- Avoid disturbance to natural materials and vegetation that contribute to habitat or stream channel stability.
- Complete restoration activities (including erosion control), as required, that will lead to natural pre-disturbance conditions.

These conditions, along with the requirement to have a crossing designed by a Professional Engineer, should mitigate any concerns respecting impacts to salmon and trout in Finn Creek.

Snowmobiling will only occur in this one location within Finn Creek Park. This amendment will make a contribution to local recreation by allowing transit of snowmobiles through a small portion of the park.

2.2 Amendment

TO BE ADDED:

Page 3 in **Section III. Other Land Uses and Interests**, part **E. Private and Public Stakeholder Interests**, add a bullet stating:

“local snowmobile club is interested in utilizing the pipeline right-of-way to safely access snowmobiling areas to the north.”

TO BE DELETED:

On page 7, within the **Activity/Use Matrix**,

- Delete the “N” that applies to “Off-road Access (snowmobiling)”
- Delete footnote 3 “On designated trails only.”

REPLACE DELETED TEXT WITH:

On page 7, within the **Activity/Use Matrix**,

- Insert “Y³” in the table applying to “Off-road Access (snowmobiling).”
- Insert footnote “³ On pipeline right-of-way only.”