

Skeena Region

**MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
STATEMENT**

March 2003

**for Gamble Creek
Ecological Reserve**



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

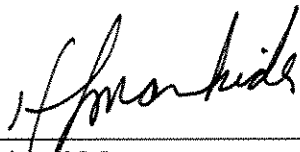
**Ministry of Water, Land
and Air Protection
Environmental Stewards
Division**

Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve Approvals Page

Forward

This management direction statement for Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve provides management direction under the *Ecological Reserve Act*, regulations and policies. This Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve Management Direction Statement provides management direction until such time as the plan is revised. Ongoing consultations between the Environmental Stewardship Division and First Nations may result in revisions as appropriate.

Approvals:



Regional Manager
Skeena Region
Environmental Stewardship Division



Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

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Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve

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 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 management strategies are subject to the Parks and Protected Areas Branch's Impact Assessment Policy.

Context

The objective of the ecological reserve program in British Columbia is the conservation of representative and special natural ecosystems, plants and animal species, features and phenomena. Ecological reserves contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and the protection of genetic materials. They also offer opportunities for scientific research and educational activities. In most ecological reserves, non-consumptive low-intensity uses such as nature appreciation, wildlife viewing, bird watching and photography are allowed.

The provincial government established Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve (E.R. #133) on March 28, 1991 by Order-in-Council 415/91 under the *Ecological Reserve Act*. The *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act* provided legislated status to the ecological reserve boundaries on June 12, 2000. The ecological reserve is located 23 kilometres southeast of Prince Rupert along Highway 16, and covers 1,026 hectares of hypermaritime north coast forest and bog vegetation in the Coastal Western Hemlock and Mountain Hemlock biogeoclimatic zones. The ecological reserve is within the asserted traditional territory of the Tsimshian First Nations.

This ecological reserve conserves a lowland to mid-elevation forest and bog complex that is common on the north coast but is not well represented in other protected areas in the protected area system. Nearby provincial parks include Prudhomme Lake Park, which provides full camping facilities, and Diana Lake Park, which provides day-use opportunities.

Ecological Reserve Attributes

Conservation

- Protects a small area of the moderately represented Hecate Lowlands Ecosection. Currently 4% of this ecosection is included in the protected areas system.
- Protects approximately 400 hectares of the CWHvh2 (Coastal Western Hemlock very wet Hypermaritime subzone, Central variant). This variant is well represented in the protected areas system (9.96%).
- Protects approximately 600 hectares of the MHwh (Mountain Hemlock wet hypermaritime subzone, Windward variant). This variant is moderately represented in the protected areas system (5.18%). Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve provides the greatest extent of representation of the MHwh among provincial protected area designations (5.62%). South Moresby National Park Reserve provides most of the representation of the MHwh subzone.
- The ecological reserve is likely to contain the following rare plant communities that are listed with the Conservation Data Centre: CWHvh2/04 Western hemlock - Sitka spruce / lanky moss (*Tsuga heterophylla* - *Picea sitchensis* / *Rhytidiadelphus loreus*) (blue-listed), and CWHvh2/13 Western redcedar/Sitka spruce - skunk cabbage (*Thuja plicata*/*Picea sitchensis* - *Lysichitum americanum*) (blue listed).
- Protects a forest and bog complex typical of the north coast.
- Contains forest with all exposure aspects and a wide elevation sequence.
- Protects a small area of grizzly bear habitat with suitability rated as moderate at higher elevations and low at low elevations.

Research and Educational

- Provides research and education opportunities focused on forest/wetland complexes on the hypermaritime north coast

Other Values of Interest

- The Environmental Stewardship Division does not have knowledge of cultural resource information. Local First Nations, however, have been working on traditional use studies that may provide additional information about the ecological reserve.

Commercial Business Opportunities

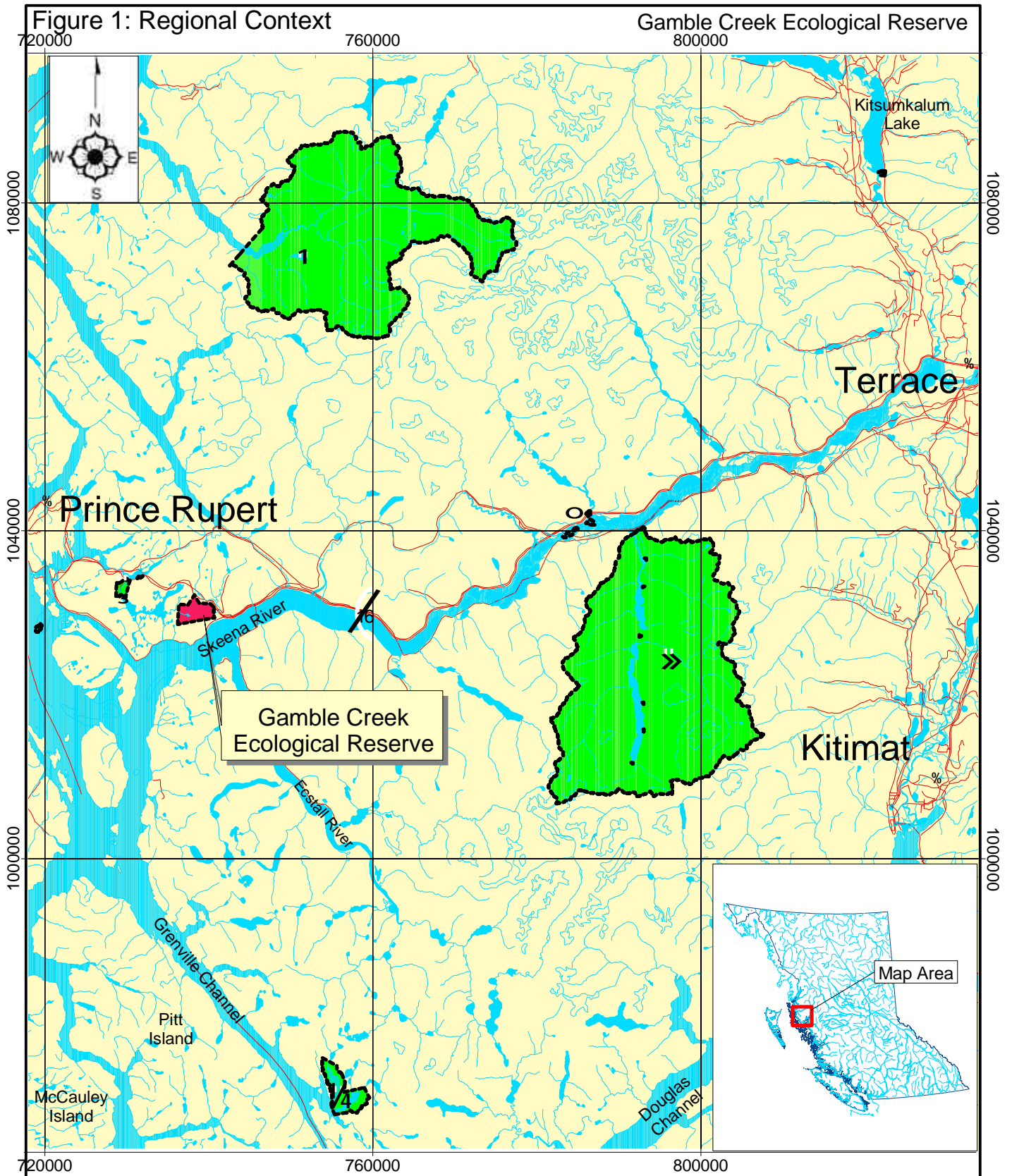
- Due to the sensitive nature of the ecological reserve, human use activities, except for research and limited education, should be discouraged. There are no opportunities for commercial use.

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- Protects a small example of a typical forest and wetland complex that is common on the north coast.
- Provides opportunity to research this ecosystem type in an undisturbed setting.

Figure 1: Regional Context

Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve



720000

760000

800000

1080000

1040000

1000000

1080000

1040000

1000000



- MDS Study Area
- Lakes, Ocean
- Rivers

- Diana Lake Park
- Khutzeymateen Park
- Skeena River Ecological Reserve
- Gitnadoix Park

Klewnuggit Inlet Marine Park

Scale 1:650000

10 0 10 Kilometers



Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

Access to Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve is gained from Highway 16 at the McNeil River Bridge. The road to the old Rainbow Ski Hill passes along the north side of the ecological reserve.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- No known tenures, alienations or encumbrances affect the ecological reserve.

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- Ministry of Forests has an interest in the surrounding forest lands.
- District lots L595, L3079, L4011, L4405 and L4406 abut the ecological reserve.
- Adjacent to the former Rainbow Lake ski area.

First Nations Interests

Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve is within the asserted traditional territory of the Allied Tsimshian Tribe and of the Metlakatla Band. Both the Allied Tsimshian Tribes and the Metlakatla Band are affiliated with the Tsimshian Tribal Council.

Other Agency Interests

The Fish and Wildlife Recreation and Allocation Branch of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection has an interest in the wildlife in the ecological reserve.

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Research and educational institutions have an interest in the special features and benchmark attributes of the ecological reserve.
- Local ecologists and naturalists have an interest in the continued protection of this ecological reserve.
- Residents of Port Edward and Prince Rupert have an interest in the ecological reserve's special features and its continued protection.

Ecological Reserve Role Statement

Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve primarily serves a conservation role within British Columbia's protected areas system. The ecological reserve protects a small example of a range of forest stands and wetland vegetation, extending from near sea level to 900 metres elevation, typical of the north coast. Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve also contains the potential for a research role on forest and wetland ecosystems in a hypermaritime coastal setting, and an education role through ecosystem studies and nature appreciation.

Management Commitments and Issues

Management Direction from Previous Planning

A fisheries information summary and management strategy for the ecological reserve indicates that the current information about aquatic life in the ecological reserve is adequate and that presently no concerns or issues require attention.

Management Issues

Theme	Issue
Protecting ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The park's flora and fauna are relatively unknown because inventory of these values is incomplete. Damage to vegetation in the northern portion of the ecological reserve adjacent to Rainbow Ski Hill road because of snowmobile user activities. Damage to the ecological reserve may be occurring because people are unaware of the area's ecological reserve status. Monitoring of the ecological reserve does not occur because the volunteer ecological reserve warden position remains vacant.
Protecting cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significance of cultural values is unknown because of the lack of cultural and historical inventories available to Environmental Stewardship Division.
Public Knowledge of the ecological reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The public is unaware of the ecological reserve because no signs identify the ecological reserve boundary. The public is unaware of the ecological reserve because the Environmental Stewardship Division does not identify it in public information brochures.

Management Direction

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

Objective	Strategy
To protect the ecological reserve's ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an inventory of flora and fauna Work with local snowmobile users to ensure they are aware of the ecological reserve and the need to observe regulations governing its protection. Place ecological reserve signs at strategic points along the reserve boundary so visitors are aware of the ecological reserve and its special status. Recruit a volunteer ecological reserve warden for the ecological reserve.
To protect the ecological reserve's cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and collect information on cultural heritage values.
To protect First Nations values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with the Allied Tsimshian Tribes and Metlakatla Band or the Tsimshian Tribal Council as issues require Follow ministry guidelines in consultation Aboriginal rights may be exercised subject to conservation and safety concerns
To provide information to the public regarding the ecological reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place approved ecological reserve signs in strategic locations to notify visitors of ecological reserve status. Evaluate the need for the publication of a brochure to inform the public about this ecological reserve.

Consultation and Future Planning

Environmental Stewardship Division will consult with the Tsimshian people, local stakeholders and adjacent resource users as necessary. The priority for preparing a full management plan for Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve is ranked as low. This management direction statement will be reviewed and revised, if necessary, in five to seven years time.

**Appendix 1. Gamble Creek Ecological Reserve
Table of Acceptable Uses, Activities and Facilities**

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptability
Aboriginal traditional uses	Y
Hunting	N
Fishing	N
Trapping	N
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational Gold Panning/Rock Hounding	N
Utility corridors	N
Communication Sites	N
Horse Use/ Pack Animals	N
Guide Outfitting (hunting)	N
Guide Outfitting (fishing)	N
Guide Outfitting (nature tours)	N
Guide Outfitting (river rafting)	N
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	N
Off-road Access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road Access (motorized)	N
Off-road Access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorized Water Access	N
Aircraft Access	N
Fire Management (suppression)	Y
Fire Management (prescribed fire management)	M
Fire Management (prevention)	N
Forest Insect/Disease Control	M
Noxious Weed Control	Y
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	N1
Scientific Research (specimen collection)	Y
Scientific Research (manipulative activities)	M
Supervised Education and Scientific Observation by permit only	Y

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