

Skeena Region

**MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
STATEMENT**

September 2004



**for Gingietl Creek
Ecological Reserve**



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

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

Gingietl Creek Approvals Page

Forward


On August 29, 1985, Order In Council 1654/85 established Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve. Legislated status was provided on June 29, 2000, when the ecological reserve was named and described in Schedule A of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*.

The boundaries of the ecological reserve are also defined in the Nisga'a Final Agreement. The Nisga'a Final Agreement is a treaty and a land claims agreement within the meaning of sections 25 and 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. As the ecological reserve is identified within the Nisga'a Treaty, changes to the areas designation may not occur except in accordance with the treaty itself.

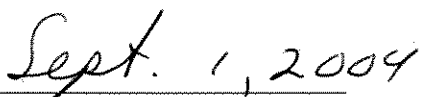
This management direction statement for Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve (#115) provides management direction under and consistent with the *Ecological Reserve Act*, regulations and policies.

Implementation of strategies identified in this management direction statement will be dependent on available funding and Environmental Stewardship Division priorities.


Approvals:




Regional Manager
Skeena Region
Environmental Stewardship Division



Date



Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division



Date

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Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve

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 statements from other planning processes. While the MDS identifies strategies, the completion of strategies is dependent on funding and funding procedures. All development associated with these strategies is subject to the Park and Protected Areas Branch's Impact Assessment Policy.

Context

Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve is located 35 km upstream from the mouth of the Nass River adjacent to the Nisga'a community of Gitwinksihlkw and is approximately 85 km north - northwest of Terrace. The 2,873-hectare ecological reserve was established on August 29, 1985 to conserve an undisturbed coastal watershed of wide elevational range for forest ecology, vegetation, wildlife ecology and hydrology studies.

The ecological reserve was identified by ecologists from the Ministry of Forests. Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve includes the entire drainage system of Gingietl Creek and an elevational sequence along four biogeoclimatic zones (Interior Cedar Hemlock - ICHmc2, Coastal Western Hemlock – CWHws2, Mountain Hemlock – MHmm2, , and Alpine Tundra - AT) within the Nass Basin and the Meziadin Mountains ecosections. The Nass Basin Ecosection has been ranked as a Class I ecosection on a scale of I to IV (highest to lowest priority for protection) by the Prince Rupert Regional Protected Areas Team. This classification is based on the current gaps in representation and the extent of existing and anticipated disturbance in the ecosection.

[Click here for Figure 1: Regional Context Map - 1,240 kb pdf](#)

Figure 2: Tenures and Land Use

Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve

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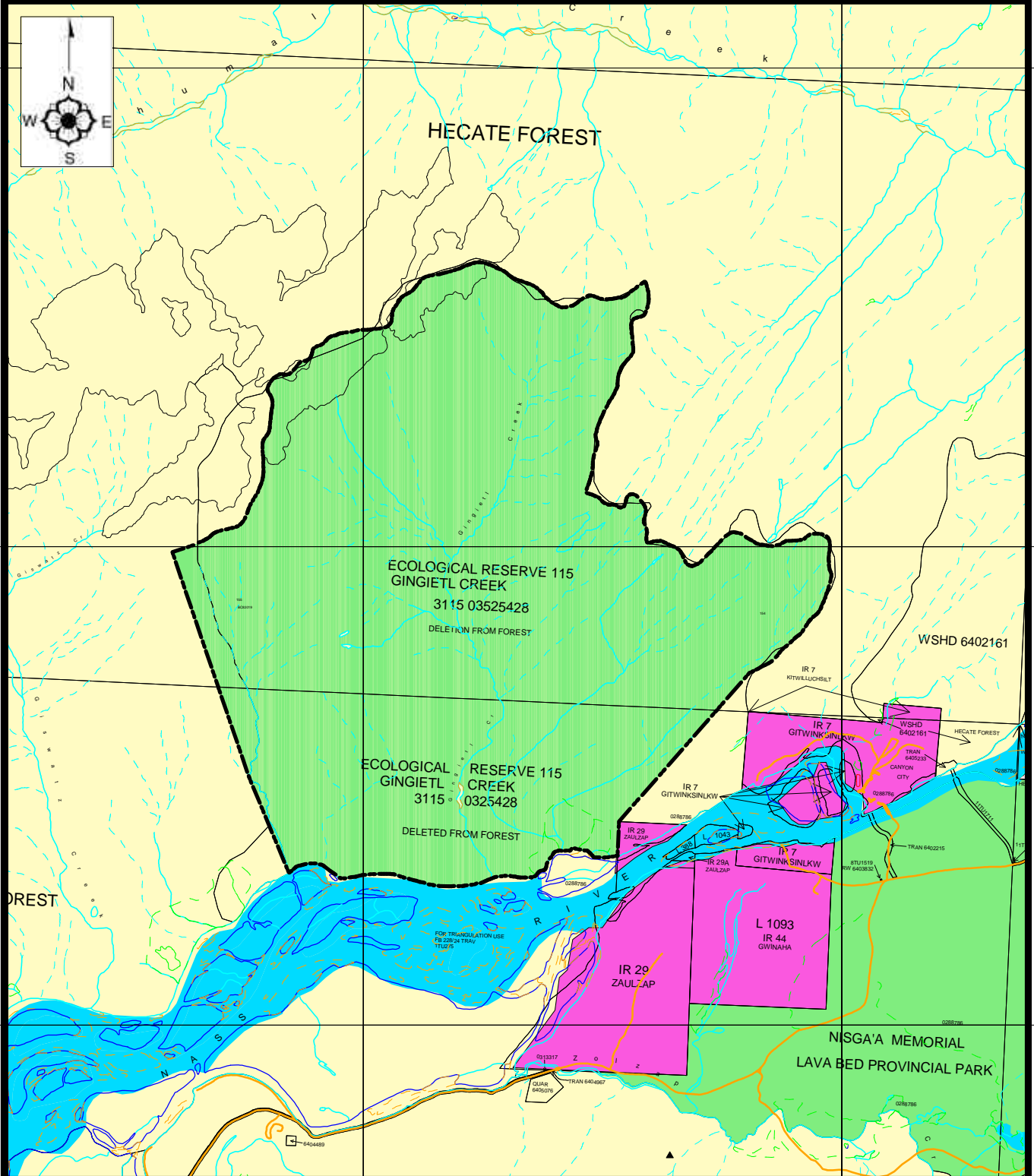
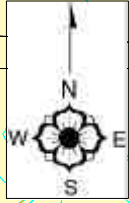
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- Water
- Roads
- +++++ Rail
- Gingietl Ck (ER) Boundary
- Cadastral Data/Tenures
- ▲ EMPR Mines and Showings
- Former Indian Reserve
- Protected Areas



Skeena District

Ecological Reserve Attributes

Conservation

- Gengietl Creek Ecological Reserve is situated in the Meziadin Mountains and Nass Basin ecosections. The Meziadin Mountains Ecosection is extremely poorly represented (0.50%). Gengietl Creek is one of only 2 protected areas in this ecosection and contributes 77.58% of the overall protected areas system representation of this ecosection. Nass Basin Ecosection is moderately represented in the protected areas system (6.2%). Gengietl Creek's contribution is minimal (3% of overall representation); Swan Lake Upper Kispiox River is the principal contributor (77.58%).
- Four biogeoclimatic subzone/variants are found in the ecological reserve: Interior Cedar Hemlock – Moist Cold subzone; Hazelton variant (ICHmc2); Coastal Western Hemlock Wet Submaritime subzone; Montane variant (CWHws2); Mountain Hemlock, Moist Maritime subzone; Leeward variant (MHmm2); and Alpine Tundra (ATunp). The ICHmc2 is poorly represented in the protected areas system. Gengietl Creek Ecological is the third greatest contributor to the representation of this variant (8% of the overall representation of the variant), behind Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park and Seven Sisters Park and Protected Area.
- Gengietl Creek Ecological Reserve protects an elevational sequence of forested ecosystems within the undisturbed coastal watershed of Gengietl Creek.
 - Mature and old-growth forests that are representative of the Nass Basin Ecosection are protected in the ecological reserve.

Flora

- One provincially blue-listed plant community is located in Gengietl Creek Ecological Reserve. In addition, one (1) red-listed, eight (8) blue-listed, and one (1) yellow-listed plant communities are associated with the biogeoclimatic subzone/variants that occur in the ecological reserve.
 - It is likely that one or more of these provincially significant plant communities occur in the ecological reserve, however inventory data are necessary to confirm their presence.
- Gengietl Creek Ecological Reserve contains the provincially blue-listed black cottonwood – red-osier dogwood (*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa* / *Cornus stolonifera*) plant community.
 - The black cottonwood community is at the most westerly limit of its natural range in the ecological reserve.
- Gengietl Creek Ecological Reserve contains hybrid Engelmann – Sitka spruce (*Picea engelmanni* x *P. sitchensis*).
 - Engelmann x Sitka spruce hybrids are relatively uncommon; the more common spruce hybrid is Engelmann x White spruce (*Picea glauca* ssp. *engelmanni*).
- Gengietl Creek Ecological Reserve contains mature and old-growth forests. Old-growth forests are provincially significant and provide critical habitat for many wildlife species.
 - Six (6) forested plant communities that are associated with the biogeoclimatic subzones and variants found in the ecological reserve are on the provincial red, blue, or yellow lists and may occur in the ecological reserve.
 - Although the listed communities are particularly valuable in the old-growth stage, conservation of early successional stages ensures old-growth attributes and habitats will continue to develop.

Scientific Name	Common Name	BEC	Provincial Rank	Provincial List
<i>Pinus contorta</i> / <i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Lodgepole pine / kinnikinnick	CWHws2/02	S2	Red
<i>Tsuga heterophylla</i> / <i>Arctostaphylos</i> / <i>Cladonia</i>	Western hemlock / kinnikinnick / Cladonia	ICHmc2/02	S3	Blue
<i>Abies amabilis</i> - <i>Thuja plicata</i> / <i>Gymnocarpium dryopteris</i>	Amabilis fir - western redcedar / oak fern	CWHws2/04	S3	Blue
<i>Abies amabilis</i> - <i>Thuja plicata</i> / <i>Oplopanax horridus</i> Wet Submaritime	Amabilis fir - western redcedar / devil's club Wet Submaritime	CWHws2/06	S3	Blue
<i>Picea sitchensis</i> / <i>Rubus</i> <i>spectabilis</i> Wet Submaritime 2	Sitka spruce / salmonberry Wet Submaritime 2	CWHws2/07	S3	Blue
<i>Picea engelmannii</i> x <i>glauca</i> – <i>Betula papyrifera</i> – <i>Oplopanax</i>	Hybrid white spruce/paper birch – devil's club \$	ICHmc2/54	S3	Blue
<i>Picea engelmannii</i> x <i>glauca</i> – <i>Lonicera</i> □ <i>involucrate</i> – <i>Petasites</i>	Hybrid white spruce – twinberry – coltsfoot	ICHmc2/51	S3	Blue
<i>Tsuga mertensiana</i> - <i>Abies</i> <i>amabilis</i> / <i>Vaccinium</i> <i>alaskaense</i>	Mountain hemlock - amabilis fir / blueberry	MHmm2/01	S3S4	Yellow

- One (1) alpine plant community is provincially significant (Blue list) and may occur at the higher elevations in Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve

Scientific Name	Common Name	BEC	Provincial Rank	Provincial List
<i>Poa rupicola</i>	Timberland Bluegrass	AT	S3	Blue

Fauna

- The ecological reserve provides valuable habitat for provincial blue-listed grizzly, as well as for moose, mountain goat, beaver, deer, eagles, and ravens.
- Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve provides fish habitat for the provincial blue-listed Dolly Varden, coho, and rainbow trout (FISS database 2003).
- Other provincial red- and blue-listed wildlife species may occur in the ecological reserve, however, inventory data are lacking.

Research and Education

Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve provides opportunities to study and research an undisturbed coastal watershed that contains an elevational gradient of forested ecosystems. Unlimited studies for forest and wildlife ecology, autecology of plant species and hydrology are possible in the ecological reserve.

Recreation and Commercial Use

Recreational use is neither provided for nor encouraged. Opportunities associated with educational tours that are consistent with the *Ecological Reserve Act* and Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve are considered to be very limited.

Other Values of Importance

- A Nisga'a First Nation sustenance fishery occurs in the Nass River at the boundary of the ecological reserve.
- The Nisga'a First Nation collects medicinal plants from the ecological reserve.

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve protects an intact, undisturbed coastal watershed in the under-represented Nass Basin Ecoregion. The watershed is extremely valuable as it is a low-elevation basin in the coastal/interior transition zone, an area that has been subjected to extensive forest harvesting.
- The ecological reserve protects an elevational gradient of mature and old-growth forested ecosystems that provide critical wildlife habitat.

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

- Access to the ecological reserve is by boat or on foot.
 - Boats can be launched from the south side of the Nass River, which is accessed by a logging road.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- Traditional uses per the Nisga'a Final Agreement Chapter 3 paragraph 100.

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- Three trapping licences are adjacent to the ecological reserve: 0614T065, 0614T069 and 0614T067.
- One trapping licence 0614T066 includes the ecological reserve within its boundary but the ecological reserve is excluded from the tenure by virtue of the ecological reserve designation.
- One guide outfitting licence 610G001 includes the ecological reserve within its boundary but the ecological reserve is excluded from the tenure by virtue of the ecological reserve designation.
- Nisga'a Lands, as defined in the Nisga'a Final Agreement, surround the ecological reserve.
 - Nisga'a Lands include the former Indian Reserves of Zaulzap and Kitwilluchsilt.
- Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park is located 3 km to the southeast of the ecological reserve.
- Pine mushroom harvesting occurs adjacent to the ecological reserve.
 - The mushroom harvest is regulated by the Nisga'a Lisims Government.
- Adjacent forestry on Nisga'a Lands occurs under the transitional provisions (2000 - 2005) for forest resources (Nisga'a Final Agreement, Chapter 5) and includes:
 - No harvesting in the Nass Bottomlands polygon which lies south and at lower elevations to the west of the ecological reserve (Nisga'a Final Agreement – Appendix H details this area).

- Southeast of the ecological reserve and north of the Nass River, a minimum of 80% of the forest cover will be retained at an age of at least 120 years (Nisga'a Final Agreement – Appendix H pine mushroom polygon).

First Nations Interests

- Provisions of the Nisga'a Final Agreement related to Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve are as follows:
 - The Nisga'a Nation is interested in ensuring that the Nisga'a Final Agreement is respected and that Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve continues as designated unless the Nisga'a Nation and the Province of British Columbia agree otherwise.
 - At the request of the Nisga'a Nation, the Nisga'a Nation and British Columbia will jointly determine whether, and the terms and conditions under which, a road across the ecological reserve can be located, constructed, and controlled, in a manner that will have minimal adverse impact on the unique ecological values for which the ecological reserve was established (Nisga'a Final Agreement, Chapter 3 Paragraph 116).
 - In accordance and subject to the Nisga'a Final Agreement, Nisga'a citizens have the right to traditional uses of the lands and resources within the ecological reserve, including domestic resource harvesting.
 - That the joint park management committee be the forum for reviewing and making recommendations in respect of:
 - Archaeological and other research projects, cultural and interpretive programs, publications, and communications strategies proposed for the ecological reserve.
 - Issues relating to the management of the ecological reserve; and
 - Issues relating to the traditional use of resources, including cedar trees.

Other Agency Interests

- Nisga'a Lisims Government has an interest in and management responsibility for adjacent forests, mushroom harvesting, community development, and land use and management.
- Various provincial agencies have an interest and participate in adjacent resource use and implementation of the final agreement.
- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Fisheries Committee, established pursuant to the Nisga'a Final Agreement, have an interest in the management of salmonids within the ecological reserve and adjacent watersheds.

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Local residents
- Friends of Ecological Reserves
- Interested scientific communities

Ecological Reserve Role Statement

The primary role of Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve is to conserve an undisturbed coastal watershed of wide elevational range for forest ecology, vegetation, wildlife ecology and hydrology studies.

Conservation Role

To protect the entire drainage system of Gingietl Creek and an elevational sequence containing four biogeoclimatic zones within the Nass Basin Ecosection.

Research and Education Role

Gingietl Creek offers researchers the opportunity to study and research an elevational gradient of mature and old growth forest with a focus on its ecology, vegetation, wildlife and hydrology.

Management Direction from Previous Planning

The Nisga’a Final Agreement provides direction into how the Nisga’a Nation is to be involved in the ecological reserve’s management (Chapter 3 paragraphs 98-118). This includes provisions to maintain the area’s designation, to investigate the feasibility of a road through the ecological reserve at some point and gives the park management committee authority to discuss a variety of issues pertaining to the ecological reserve and its management.

Originally, the ecological reserve was identified for possible ecological reserve status by the Ministry of Forests, Research Branch. Gap analysis conducted by the Prince Rupert Regional Protected Area Team identified the Nass Basin Ecosection, which the ecological reserve helps represent, as a Class I ecosection on a scale of I to IV (highest to lowest priority) for protection. This classification is based on existing gaps in representation and the extent of existing and anticipated disturbance to the ecosection.

Management Issues

Theme	Issue
Protecting ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access and visitor use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access will increase if road development through the ecological reserve, as indicated in the Nisga’a Final Agreement (see Appendix 1), is undertaken. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – fish habitat (coho, Dolly Varden, rainbow trout) within the ecological reserve and on adjacent lands may be threatened by the potential road development. ▪ There is an unknown amount of use by visitors. • The First Nation sustenance fisheries harvest numbers are unknown. • The inventory of flora and fauna is incomplete. • Commercial mushroom picking within the ecological reserve conflicts with the <i>Ecological Reserve Act</i>.
Protecting cultural heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural features have not been identified to Environmental Stewardship Division. • Sites of First Nations spiritual values may exist within ecological reserve.

Theme	Issue
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent of Nisga’a harvest of plants for medicinal purposes is unknown.
First Nation Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Nisga’a Final Agreement indicates that certain issues and matters will be dealt with through the joint park management committee between the Province and the Nisga’a Lisims Government. First Nations sustenance fishery and traditional plant harvesting.

Management Direction

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

Objective	Strategy
Protecting ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a management approach to conserve biodiversity and allow natural processes to predominate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an inventory to identify sensitive habitats and red- and blue-listed wildlife, plant species, and plant communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventories should consider the potential for road development in the ecological reserve and concentrate on identifying the more sensitive areas of the ecological reserve and also areas where development would have minimal impact. Should a request to investigate road options be received from the Nisga’a Lisims Government then studies that can quantify the impact of road development on ecological reserve components should be initiated (for example: the size of the project footprint [both road and working space area that will be used]; effects of fragmentation on ecological reserve wildlife species; effects on fish habitat; blowdown impacts; possible soil stability issues; impacts of introducing foreign material into the ecological reserve [weeds contained in road fill]; expected impacts on the ecological reserve from increased access). Develop special management plans for rare, threatened and endangered species as required. Monitor the effects of scientific research and study and limit access if research is impacting the conservation values of the ecological reserve. Wildlife management plans and annual management plans prepared by the Wildlife Committee (Nisga’a Final Agreement, Chapter 9) should be shared with the Parks and Protected Areas Section. The Branch may assist in monitoring and enforcing sections of the plans relevant to Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve.

<p>Protecting ecological values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaise with the Nisga’a Lisims Government to ensure forest and mushroom harvesting practices on neighbouring land does not impact the conservation values of the ecological reserve. ▪ Cooperate with Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Joint Fisheries Management Committee (Nisga’a Final Agreement (Chapter 8, paragraph 77-82) regarding management of fisheries and watersheds within and adjacent to the ecological reserve. ▪ Prepare a fire management plan. • Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Post signs identifying the ecological reserve boundaries. ▪ Monitor human use in conjunction with other agencies (Ecological Reserve wardens, Nisga’a Lisims Government, Conservation Officer Service, Ministry of Forests, etc.) to determine impacts on the ecosystem ▪ At the request of the Nisga’a Nation jointly determine whether, and the terms and conditions under which, a road across the ecological reserve can be located, constructed and controlled, in a manner that will have minimal adverse impact on the unique ecological values for which the Ecological Reserve was established (Nisga’a Final Agreement, Chapter 3, paragraph 116).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a non-extractive research program for significant attributes of the ecological reserve. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Issue research permits (non-extractive) for all acceptable research.
<p>Protect cultural heritage values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and collate existing information on cultural heritage values • Work with the Nisga’a Nation through the joint park committee to identify cultural heritage sites and traditional use in the ecological reserve. • Prepare a cultural heritage management plan.
<p>Involve First Nations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per the Nisga’a Final Agreement, the joint park management committee is the forum for reviewing and making recommendations in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Archaeological and other research projects, cultural and interpretive programs, publications, and communications strategies proposed for the ecological reserve. ▪ Issues relating to the management of the ecological reserve; and ▪ Issues relating to the traditional use of resources, including cedar trees.

Consultation and Future Planning

Environmental Stewardship Division will review this MDS in about 5 years to account for increased knowledge about use, environmental impacts, and to account for changes in adjacent land use especially in relation to the end of the transition period related to forestry in the Nisga’a Final Agreement. The Skeena Region, Environmental Stewardship Division will continue to work with the Nisga’a Nation through the Joint Park Management Committee and maintain a liaison, as required, with Fisheries, Wildlife and Forestry Committees and activities conducted/established as part of the treaty.

Figure 3 Table of acceptable uses, activities and facilities in the Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve.

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptability
Treaty rights	Y
Hunting (see Nisga'a Final Agreement Chapter 3 Lands Paragraph 100)	N3
Fishing (see Nisga'a Final Agreement Chapter 3 Lands Paragraph 100)	N3
Trapping (see Nisga'a Final Agreement Chapter 3 Lands Paragraph 100)	N3
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 (motorised)	N
Off-road Access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorised Water Access	N
Aircraft Access	N
Fire Management (suppression)	N1
Fire Management (prescribed fire management)	N
Fire Management (prevention)	N1
Forest Insect/Disease Control	M
Noxious Weed Control	Y
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	Y
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
N3= subject to Nisga'a Final Agreement