

MANAGEMENT PLAN

September, 2004



for Goat Range Provincial
Park



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Water, Land
and Air Protection
Environmental
Stewardship Division

Goat Range Provincial Park

MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Goat Range
Provincial Park


Management Plan

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Cover photo: Spyglass Valley by Dave Gluns

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Village of New Denver
Village of Silverton
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White Grizzly Adventures

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Executive Summary

This management plan establishes objectives and strategies for the long-term management of Goat Range Provincial Park. It is intended to provide strategic direction and guidance for park managers and anyone interested in the management and stewardship of this park. The plan is based on direction from the West Kootenay-Boundary Land-Use Plan, goals of the Protected Areas Strategy, BC Parks' conservation and recreation goals and a management vision that was itself based on the goals, dreams and aspirations of a variety of people that considered themselves users and stewards of the park.

Significant Initiatives

- The vision for the future of Goat Range Provincial Park sees the park managed so that it continues to be recognized as an internationally significant area that protects and preserves for perpetuity the wilderness values of the Southern Selkirk Mountains. Natural values have been improved over time through the restoration of unnatural areas, and on-going research and park management have reduced human impacts on wildlife. An ecosystem-based management approach has been developed and applied to restore species at risk back to sustainable levels. Goat Range Provincial Park has established strong linkages with other parks and wildlife management areas in the Kootenays. The park continues to fulfil backcountry users' expectations for solitude in a relatively undisturbed wilderness setting. Wilderness recreation opportunities and ecologically sustainable ecotourism continue to play an important role in fostering a greater understanding of and appreciation for natural and cultural heritage values and continues to contribute to the economy of local communities.
- With wilderness values and wilderness recreation opportunities being the focus for Goat Range Provincial Park, about 98% of the park's area has been zoned Wilderness Recreation. This will protect most of the park as a remote undisturbed natural landscape and provide for wilderness recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment.
- Management of natural and cultural values include:
 - restoring to a natural state 120 km of old forestry roads
 - restoring fish habitat
 - developing a comprehensive wildlife management strategy
 - increasing understanding and knowledge of natural and cultural values
 - discontinuing the hunting and trapping of species at risk
- Management of outdoor recreation opportunities include:
 - focusing on providing wilderness recreation opportunities
 - continuing international destination heli-skiing and snowcat skiing
 - considering ecologically sustainable ecotourism developed from regional ecotourism strategies
 - providing motorized access to four staging areas
 - allowing the continuation of mountain biking and snowmobiling from Meadow Mountain to the McKian Creek staging area
 - expanding trail access
 - low levels of backcountry horseback riding

Introduction

The Management Planning Process

A management plan is a document prepared to guide a park's management for the future. It sets objectives and strategies for conservation, development, interpretation, and operation of the park. This management plan relies on current information relating to park values obtained from the background report. Additional information is gathered from park managers, government agencies, public interest groups, First Nations and from the public. It is important to be familiar with the background report to fully understand this plan.

Preparation of a management plan involves a thorough analysis of the overall goals of the park, levels of use, and management objectives. Through this process, various options for managing the park are developed and assessed.

The Environmental Stewardship Division (ESD) prepares management plans with a high degree of public involvement. The general public and public interest groups have opportunities to provide input through a variety of means, including public meetings and mail-outs. Additional information was gathered from the West Kootenay-Boundary Land-Use Plan (1995) and Implementation Strategy (1997), the Goat Range Park Management Direction Statement (1999) and the Goat Range Park Background Report (1999)¹.

The plan focuses on management issues, objectives, and recommended strategies. There are five main sections in this document:

- 1) Introduction - highlights planning issues and provides a background summary of the park.
- 2) Role of the Park and Vision Statement - describes the importance of the park and the overall guiding principles for management.
- 3) Park Zoning - establishes management zones.
- 4) Management Objectives and Strategies – establishes objectives and actions for managing the natural and cultural values and the outdoor recreation opportunities.
- 5) Plan Implementation – sets priorities for implementing the management strategies.

¹ Available at http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/planning/mgmtplns/goat_mg/intro.pdf

Relationship with Other Planning

Kootenay-Boundary Land-Use Plan

Land use planning for land resources and conservation in the Kootenay-Boundary region of southeastern British Columbia entered a new era with the provincial government initiative to prepare a strategic land use plan, the West Kootenay-Boundary Land-Use Plan (WKBLUP). The major component of this plan was the designation of various land uses, including protected areas, over the entire region.

In addition to allocating land use, the WKBLUP also established land use management guidelines through the Kootenay-Boundary Land Use Plan Implementation Strategy (KBLUP-IS). These guidelines help to integrate land use management with a variety of government strategic policies from the Forest Practices Code to the Provincial Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy. They are intended to provide broad, corporate guidance to managing agencies.

With respect to protected areas, the KBLUP-IS emphasises the importance of co-operative management of values both within parks and adjacent areas “to ensure that parks can effectively protect sensitive values contained within them.” To this end, general management objectives and strategies associated with environmental, recreational and tourism values are provided for inclusion in park management including:

- Park Planning
- Pre-existing Tenures
- In-holdings
- Natural Occurrences
- Park Management

Additionally, guidelines are provided for co-ordinating management for wildlife movement through connectivity corridors. Details for each of these sections are in Appendix A with specific management strategies included in this management plan.

KBLUP-IS Management Direction for Goat Range Provincial Park

KBLUP-IS provided specific management direction for each protected area that was established. For Goat Range Provincial Park, the management emphasis was to be on conservation given the importance of the natural wilderness values in the park. Although motorized recreation is not normally considered compatible with the remote, undisturbed qualities of wilderness, the KBLUP-IS recognised that existing tenured motorized uses such as heli-skiing and snowcat skiing were to continue, but management conditions of the tenure could be amended through a management planning process. Similarly, trapping of fur bearing animals is not normally associated with the protection of wilderness but was also identified in the KBLUP-IS for continuance under the same conditions as the other existing tenures.

Specific management direction for adjacent areas was given in the form of identified wildlife connectivity corridors and the recognition of the support role to the park of the adjacent Hamling Lakes Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The Hamling Lakes WMA provides management emphasis on lower elevation wildlife habitats for a variety of species that are absent from the park or in low numbers. In particular, it provides important habitat for old growth dependent species such as mountain caribou, as well as other ungulates, grizzly bears, wolverines, range birds and fish species.

Goat Range Provincial Park Management Direction Statement

Management direction statements were developed for all the new parks that were created through the WKBLUP. These documents provide management guidance in the absence of comprehensive management plans. They were initially developed in 1996 and reviewed in association with the KBLUP-IS. This new management plan will replace the existing management direction statement for Goat Range Provincial Park.

Background Summary

Goat Range Provincial Park is one of the largest generally undisturbed wilderness areas in the Kootenay Region. It is located in southeastern British Columbia in the Selkirk Mountains south of Trout Lake and east of Nakusp (Figure 1).

This unique area was proposed for protection by two groups during the provincial government's "Parks and Wilderness for the 90s" (PW90) initiative. The Valhalla Wilderness Society proposed the White Grizzly Wilderness (120,000 ha) while the Ministry of Forests proposed the Goat Range Wilderness Area (50,000 ha). Through the subsequent Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) and the Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE) round table process, the area's values were recognised in the context of regional land use planning and recommended for protection through the WKBLUP. The area was established as a Class "A" park on July 12, 1995 by the *Park Amendment Act, 1995*. The park is currently named and described in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*.

This 78,947 ha park (Figure 2) protects representative natural, cultural and recreational values of the Central Columbia Mountains Ecoregion.² Conservation values include a full elevational range of ecosystem types and habitat from riparian corridors and old growth forest to alpine tundra.

Goat Range Provincial Park supports a wide range of species, many of which are provincially listed as rare or endangered. The park provides important habitat for caribou, grizzly bear, elk, mountain goat, wolverine, red-tailed chipmunk, and other species at risk. Significant fish values are also present including critical spawning ground for the internationally significant Gerrard rainbow trout (largest subspecies of rainbow trout) and provincially listed bull trout species.

Recreation values lie in the spectacular peaks rising over 2,700 metres (e.g. Mount Cooper), extensive alpine meadows, scenic valleys (e.g. Spyglass Valley), low elevation old-growth forests, alpine lakes (e.g. Poplar Lakes), waterfalls (e.g. Wilson Creek Falls), and significant fish and wildlife resources. A small section of the spectacular Trout Lake adds to the diversity of the park's recreation settings. The park is generally an intact natural unit with little development or facilities, although there are a few areas that have been affected by past resource activities. The majority of the park is remote wilderness providing opportunities for backpacking and wildlife viewing. During the winter, about 40% of the park is used for internationally significant heli-skiing. Heli-skiing has been a major supplier of recreational opportunities in the area for many years. It significantly diversifies and supports the local economy.

² The smallest ecological unit type in the Ecoregion Classification System of British Columbia that defines an area with minor physiographic and macroclimatic or oceanographic variation

Figure 1: Context

Goat Range Park

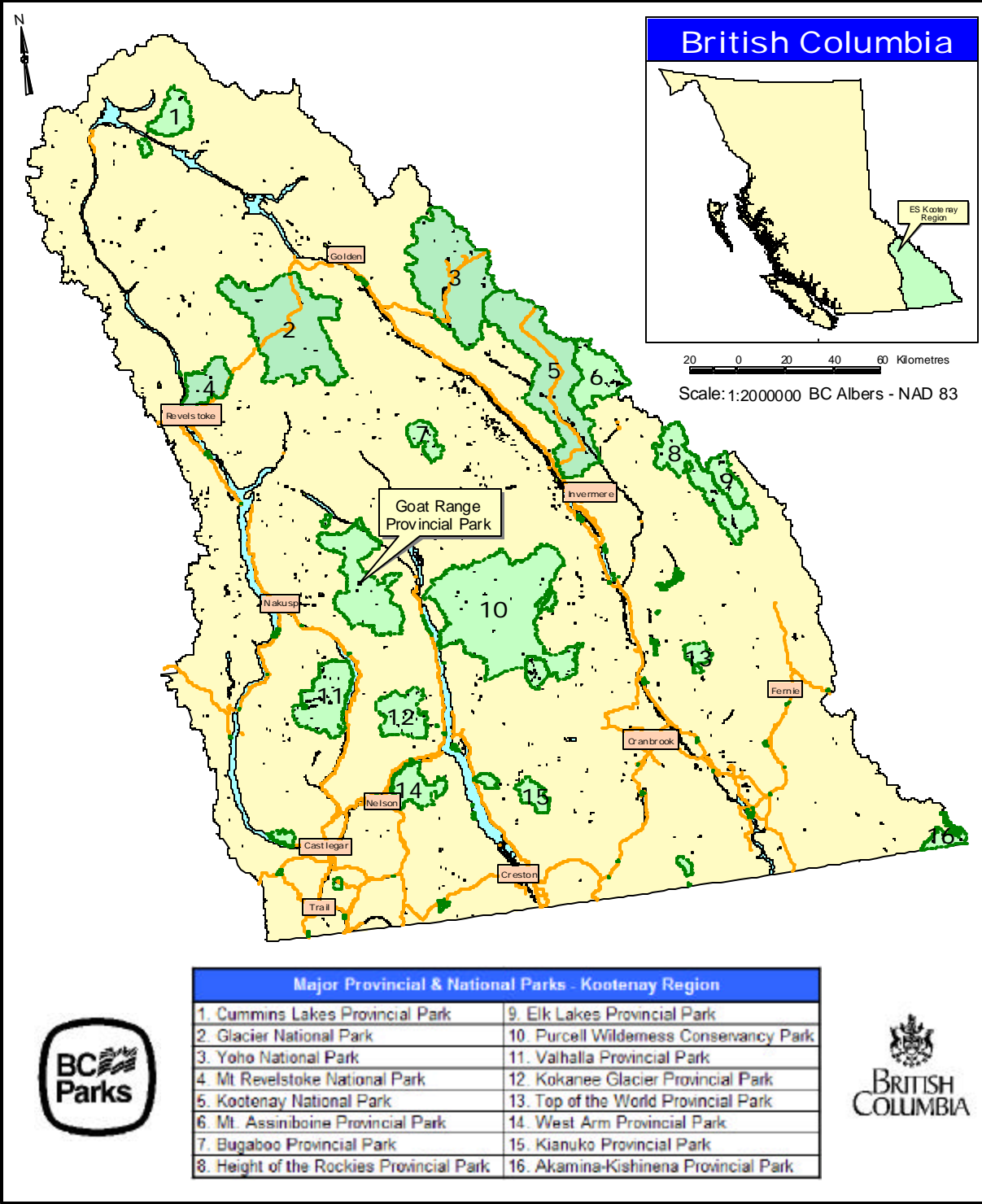
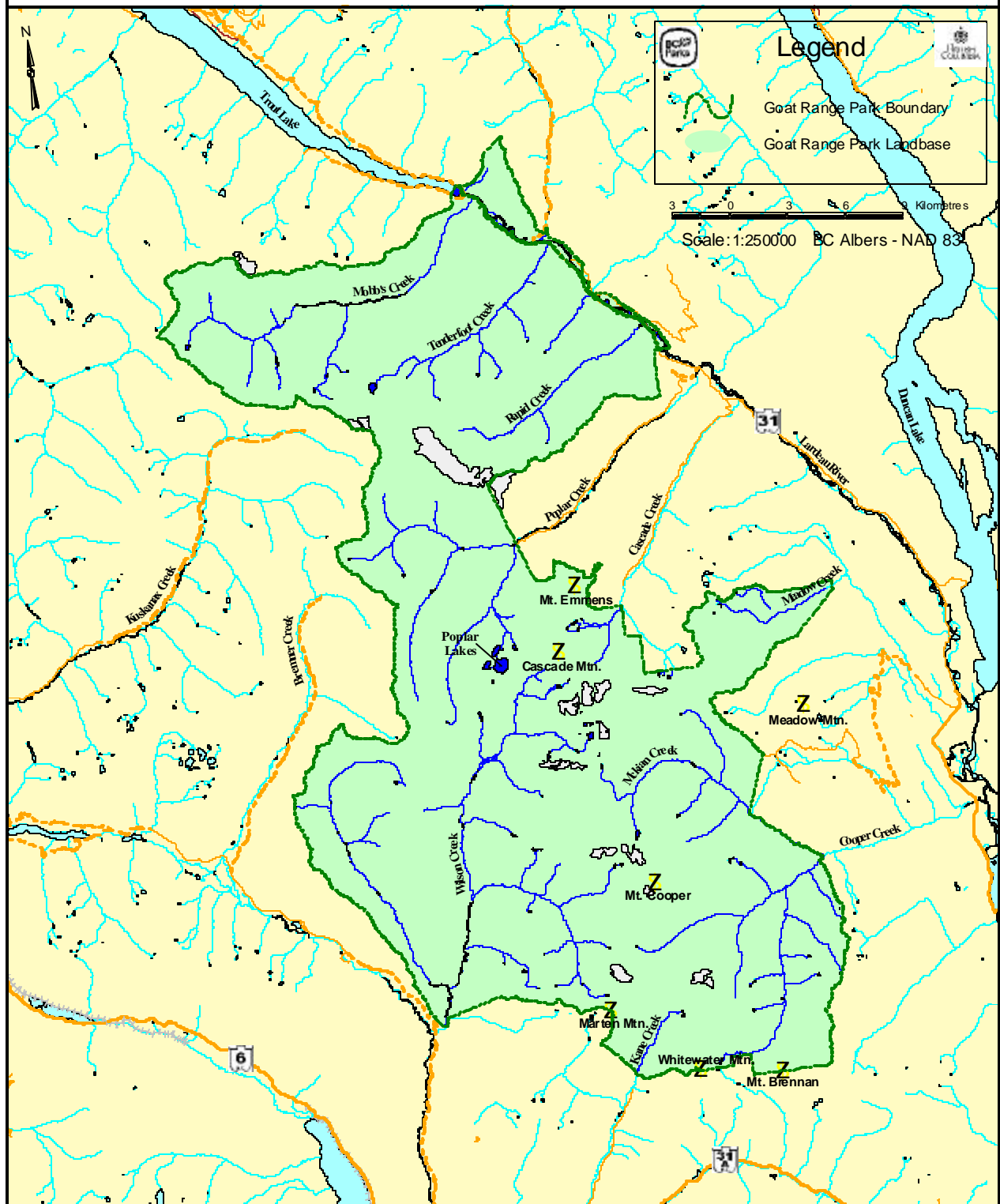


Figure 2: Base Map

Goat Range Park





D. Gluns

Plate 1: Mount Cooper

Trail access to backcountry areas has been variable over time given that access to the park boundary is by forestry roads, which can vary with the levels of resource management activity. Most of the popular recreation destinations in the area are just outside the park boundary, including the Alps Alturus trail (Marten Mountain), Whitewater Mountain trail, and the Mount Brennan trail.

Some frontcountry recreation opportunities in the park (e.g. fishing and hiking) are also available and accessible within a short drive of local communities.

Cultural heritage values of the park include First Nation traditional uses, early mining, wildlife, recreation, forestry and settlement history. Although much of the early First Nations' use was concentrated in the valleys between the rugged mountain ranges, it is believed that a trade corridor over Cooper Pass was used for transportation between Nakusp and Earl Grey Pass.

The remnants of an 1890s town site (Gerrard) can be found scattered in the forest at the south end of Trout Lake. Stone building foundations, log cabins and a wooden water wheel remain as a legacy to the interesting history typical of the region.

Management Issues

This management plan addresses a number of issues identified by the Environmental Stewardship Division through previous land use planning processes and through consultation with other government agencies, First Nations, user groups, and the public.

With conservation identified as the management priority for Goat Range Provincial Park by the Kootenay-Boundary Land Use Plan Implementation Strategy (KBLUP-IS), the overall challenge for the management of this park will be to conserve and protect important natural values while maintaining high quality backcountry recreational experiences. The degree of emphasis placed on managing for wilderness recreation and conservation values affects many aspects of planning and management. The following have been identified as the main issues.

Natural Values Management

Wildlife

The park plays an important role in protecting wildlife and habitat while adding to the biodiversity and wildlife connectivity of the Central Columbia Mountains. There is a need for current information on the numbers and the health of wildlife species of international importance that use this park, especially mountain caribou and grizzly bear.

Wildlife populations and habitat requirements transcend park boundaries. It is critical for the continued health and viability of the wildlife in the park that co-operative management strategies be developed with adjacent land managers.

Vegetation

Natural disturbances such as fire, disease, and insect infestations are fundamental in maintaining ecosystem complexity. While allowing natural phenomena to occur without interference is consistent with wilderness management, this strategy contains an element of risk to facilities in the park and to adjacent managed forestlands.

Fisheries

The Environmental Stewardship Division must consider the fisheries values in the park including the management of the Gerrard rainbow trout, impacts of natural disturbances (e.g. slides), unnatural fish migration, and the use of regulations and closures to ensure viable populations.

Boundaries and Access

Several trails and trailheads are outside the park boundary in areas administered by the Ministry of Forests. Use and maintenance of resource roads leading to trailheads will affect use of these trails. For example, road deactivation will decrease use in some areas, however, public information on the new park will encourage recreational use and increase the demand for safe access. In other areas of the park, improved access and trends in recreation may also increase use. Cooperation between the Environmental Stewardship Division, the Ministry

of Forests and forest licensees is required in order to determine appropriate levels of access to the park and the management of trails and trailheads adjacent to the park boundaries.

Adjacent Land Management

It is important to co-ordinate planning for commercial and non-commercial uses surrounding the park. Equally important is the co-ordination of park management with land use planning outside the park. Currently, there are plans to harvest the forests adjacent to the park as well as proposals to increase commercial recreation opportunities.

Visitor Management

Levels and Types of Recreational Opportunities

Although a wide range of potential recreational opportunities exists, the natural undisturbed character of the backcountry is important to maintain. Ensuring that recreational activities have minimal effect on the landscape, including minimising hazardous encounters between visitors and wildlife, is a high priority.

Horse Use

Horses have used the Kane Creek area in the past. They provide an enjoyable way to see the park but care must be taken to not over use areas, conflict with other visitors or damage the park's sensitive natural areas.

Mechanized Activities

Mechanized forms of recreation in general, from helicopter access to snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles and mountain bikes, have increased in popularity. The demand to use some park areas for these activities is high and requires a comprehensive management strategy.

Role of the Protected Area

Provincial and Regional Context

Goat Range Provincial Park lies in southeastern British Columbia in the Goat Range of the Selkirk Mountains lying between the Monashee Mountains to the west and the Purcell Mountains to the east. The Selkirk Mountains are often referred to as an island of mountains being nearly surrounded by the major lakes that dominate the West Kootenay landscape.

Goat Range Provincial Park was the last relatively undisturbed large wilderness area remaining in the region that was not yet protected. It is now a key component in a system of large protected areas, which includes Valhalla, Kokanee Glacier, West Arm and the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy provincial parks, as well as Mount Revelstoke and Glacier national parks.

With the establishment of Goat Range Provincial Park, a strategic centre link was formed with all of the major protected areas in the region joining the Southern Selkirks to the Purcells and creating a natural bridge reaching toward the Northern Selkirks. These connections and linking corridors (Figure 3) are critical to providing for genetic exchange and dispersal of migrating species throughout the region. Collectively, the protected areas that conserve representative examples of the ecosystems found in the West Kootenays/Boundary area cover 11.3% of the total land base.

Each park and protected area in the system contributes uniquely in both the values they protect and the role they serve. Unlike Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park and West Arm Provincial Park that provide backcountry recreation opportunities near urban development and regional tourism centres, Goat Range Provincial Park in comparison is geographically remote and for the most part not easily accessed. While Valhalla Provincial Park has significant wilderness qualities, it has much higher use than Goat Range and has well-developed areas.

Goat Range Provincial Park is similar to the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Provincial Park in terms of wilderness values having a high degree of remoteness, few facilities, and generally a pristine environment. However, unlike the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, Goat Range has some frontcountry opportunities at its fringe and provides significant heli-skiing opportunities.

Significance in the Protected Areas System

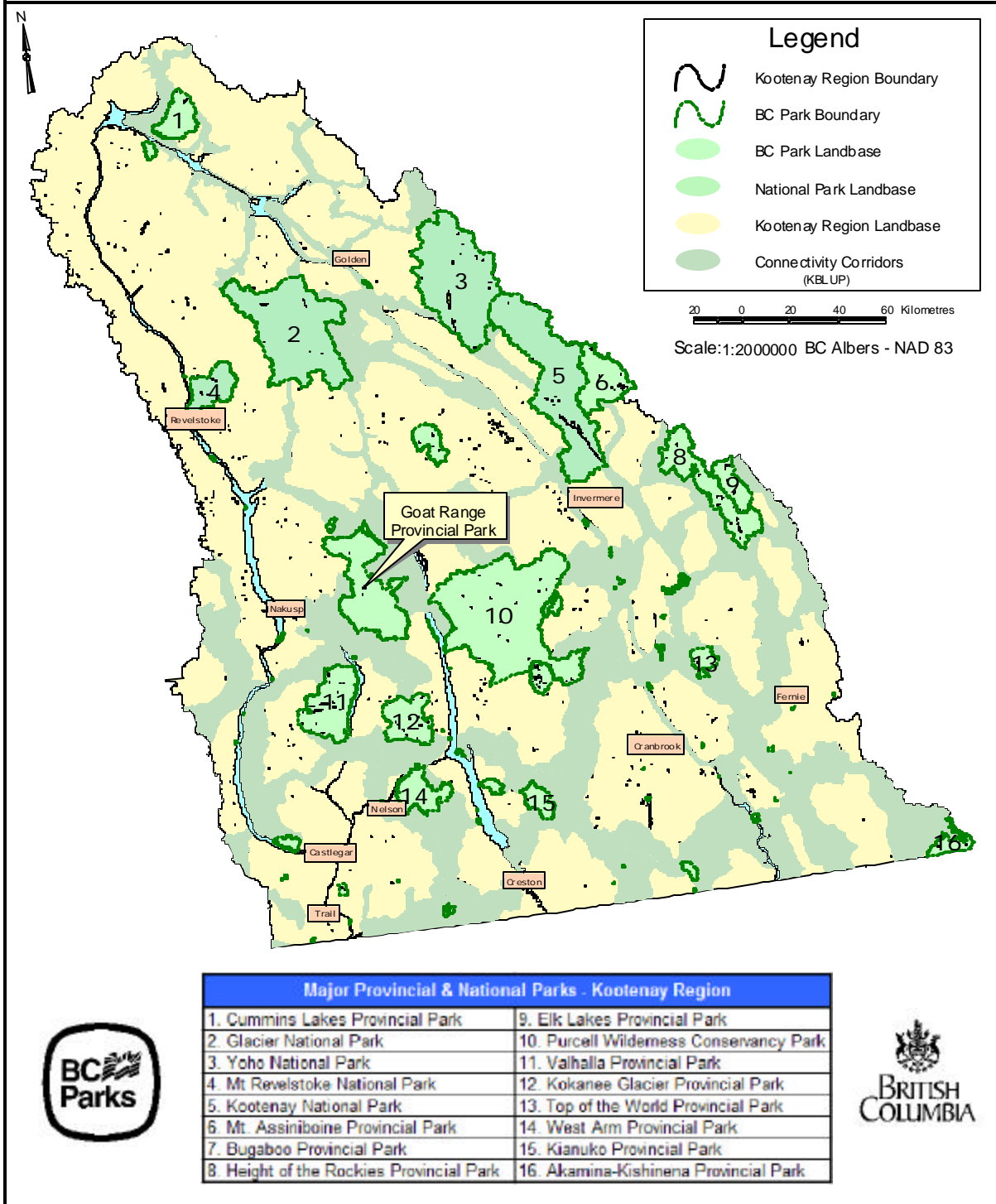
The Province of British Columbia is more physically and biologically diverse than any comparable region in Canada. Its protected areas system conserves viable representative examples of the province's diverse natural ecosystems and special natural, cultural, and recreational features. Goat Range Provincial Park contributes to the biological diversity of the Central Columbia Mountains (CCM) Ecosection, an area of high mountain ridges with some wide, lake filled trenches and narrow valleys. The park contains many complete watersheds that add to the representation of natural ecosystems in the province.

Protected Areas Strategy Goal 1

Goat Range Provincial Park is an excellent example of a Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) Goal 1 area.

Figure 3: Regional Connectivity

Goat Range Park



The natural values in the park encompass the representativeness, biodiversity, and opportunities for use and appreciation qualities of Goal 1.

Representativeness

- Goat Range Provincial Park is one of 21 protected areas contributing to representation of the Central Columbia Mountains Ecosection which is well represented (18.8%) in the province’s protected areas system. Goat Range Provincial Park is the second greatest contributor to the representation of this ecosection, following Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Park.
- Goat Range Provincial Park contains the most common sequence of biogeoclimatic zones in the Central Columbia Mountains Ecosection from low to high elevation and encompasses the following seven biogeoclimatic variants – AT un, AT unp, ESSF wc1, ESSF wc4, ESSF wcp4, ICH mw2 and ICH wk1.

Table 1: Biogeoclimatic Zone Variant Representation³

Biogeoclimatic Zone	Biogeoclimatic Zone Variant	Area in Goat Range Park (ha)	Percentage of CCM in Goat Range Park
Alpine Tundra	AT un	4,741	19.5
	AT unp	12035	8.9
Engelmann Spruce Sub-alpine Fir	ESSF wc1	2,428	2.5
	ESSF wc4	29,637	7.9
	ESSFwcp4	10,563	10.2
Interior Cedar Hemlock	ICH mw2	18,003	4.3
	ICH wk1	1,103	1.4

- Goat Range Provincial Park provides the greatest contribution to the representation of the ICH mw2 (21.4%), ESSF wcp4 (34.0%) and ESSF wc4 (24.1%) biogeoclimatic variants in the province’s protected areas system.
- Goat Range Provincial Park is second to only Valhalla Park (42.3%) in contributing to the representation of the ESSF wc1 (24.7%) biogeoclimatic variant in the province’s protected areas system.
- Goat Range Provincial Park (21.7%) provides the second greatest contribution to the representation of the ICH wk1 variant in the Central Columbia Mountains Ecosection following Monashee Park (67.5%).

Biodiversity

- The park protects high value wildlife and habitat for wide-ranging species at risk, such as mountain caribou, wolverine and grizzly bears as well as other species including elk and mountain goat.
- The Lardeau River is the only known indigenous spawning area in the world for giant Gerrard rainbow trout. With easy access provided by a provincial highway, the spawning channel is a significant opportunity for education, research and public appreciation. The park also protects the headwaters of Meadow Creek, which is the primary spawning drainage for Kootenay Lake kokanee (a popular sport fishing species that is undergoing recovery).

³ Representation data is derived from the Protected Areas Strategy Overview (PASO)

Use and Appreciation

- Goat Range Provincial Park is recreationally significant for the challenging summer wilderness opportunities it provides and the winter heli-skiing opportunities that have been developed in the region before the park was established. The park is one of a handful of areas in the protected areas system that has been developed into an international heli-skiing destination.

Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) Goal 2

There are also several significant special features included in the park that fulfil PAS Goal 2 criteria well.

- Wilson Falls is one of the best examples of a waterfall in the region given its height, large volume of flow and easy access.
- The Gerrard rainbow trout spawning beds are the only known indigenous spawning area for this species.⁴
- Meadow Creek watershed is the most important spawning area for Kootenay Lake kokanee.
- Mount Cooper is the highest peak in the Southern Selkirk Mountains.
- Gerrard town site is a regionally important cultural heritage feature.

Protected Area Roles

The role of a park or protected area is defined by the values it contains, goals of the Protected Areas Strategy, the BC Parks System Goals it serves, and the management vision that has been developed. Together, these components help to define an overall strategic management direction in which to guide the development of specific objectives and management strategies. The role of Goat Range Provincial Park to preserve wilderness values is described as follows within the context of the conservation, recreation and cultural value components.

Conservation Role

Goat Range Provincial Park plays a major role in contributing to BC Parks Conservation Goals (Appendix B) of protecting representative natural ecosystems of southeastern British Columbia and protecting British Columbia's key natural, cultural heritage and recreational features.

The park contributes significantly to protecting representative ecosystems and the biological diversity of the Central Columbia Mountains Ecoregion, one of three prominent ecoregions that cover the Selkirk Mountains. Representation is through the three biogeoclimatic zones⁵ that occur in the park, as well as in the major parks nearby (Kokanee Glacier, Valhalla, and Purcell Wilderness Conservancy).

In terms of special natural features, Goat Range Provincial Park contains significant habitat values for a variety of wildlife species. Habitat types range from valley bottom to mountaintop and include old-growth forests and riparian vegetation. Prominent wildlife species include mountain caribou, grizzly bear, elk and mountain goat.

⁴ Comments from B. Lindsay, Fisheries Biologist, Environmental Stewardship Division, Nelson

⁵ Areas of similar topographic, soils, climatic, and biological characteristics

Significant and critical fish habitat is another special feature protected in the park. An important impetus behind creation of the park was the protection of the spawning and rearing habitat of the Lardeau River for Gerrard rainbow trout and the tributaries used by kokanee, rainbow trout and the blue-listed bull trout.

The park plays an important role in contributing to a system of wildlife movement corridors for the Southern Selkirk Mountain ecosystem. It also supports the KBLUP objective of conserving regional biodiversity.

Goat Range Provincial Park is potentially used by 41 listed wildlife species (Appendix C) including 10 red-listed species (species being considered for designation as endangered or threatened) and 31 blue-listed species (species sensitive and/or deserving of management attention).

Tourism and Recreation Role

Although conservation is the primary role of Goat Range Provincial Park, the park has a significant role in contributing to BC Parks Recreation Goals. The park's primary recreation role is to provide outstanding backcountry recreation opportunities in a wilderness setting. As one of the largest relatively undisturbed wilderness areas in the region, the park is an important destination for remote backcountry recreation opportunities and complements Valhalla, Kokanee Glacier and the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy provincial parks. Goat Range Provincial Park is unique in that it also supports an internationally significant heli-skiing venture. The main factors contributing to the park's tourism/recreation role include:

- provides some of the best opportunities in the region to view a diversity of wildlife in a wilderness setting from mountain goats and grizzly bears to mountain caribou.
- provides challenging opportunities for mountaineering and wilderness travel.
- provides a large number of tourism opportunities (heli-skiing and snowcat skiing) and contributes significantly to the local economy.
- supports recreation opportunities and existing commercial lodges in adjacent areas outside the boundary by contributing to the natural setting and viewscape from Marten Mountain to Mount Brennan and from Meadow Mountain to Mount Cooper.

Secondary to the BC Parks Recreation Goal of providing for backcountry recreation opportunities, the park also provides local recreation and tourism travel corridor opportunities. There are some frontcountry opportunities that add diversity to the activities available in the park. Specifically:

- Lardeau River is one of the most accessible opportunities to view spawning fish in the province.
- Wilson Creek Falls is a spectacular natural attraction that is easily accessible for Slocan Valley residents and tourists.

Cultural Heritage Role

The Environmental Stewardship Division plays an important role in protecting cultural heritage features in the province. The cultural heritage role of Goat Range Provincial Park is to conserve the cultural landscape, structural features, and traditional use sites important to First Nations and for representation of the cultural historic development of the region.

Fish and waterfowl of Kootenay and Trout lakes are examples of traditional use resources. Berry patches and stone outcrops (sources for tools) at higher elevation sites were also important. First Nations are believed to have continually used the park for sustenance, spiritual and cultural purposes. While there is little specific information on First Nations' traditional uses in the park, the south end of Trout Lake has been used for ceremonial purposes.

The Gerrard town site has an important role in representing the development and use of the land, including themes of early transportation, logging, and mining. While not much is left of the town, the remnants of building foundations and train rails remain to tell the history of the site and contribute to people understanding and appreciating the area's history.



ESD Photo

Plate 2: Building remnants of Gerrard Town site

Relationship with First Nations

With the emergence of treaty negotiations in British Columbia and the growing awareness of aboriginal rights and interests, the Environmental Stewardship Division has begun to forge stronger relationships with First Nations across the province. The provincial park system contains cultural and natural values that are highly significant to First Nations. Some parks are important as sources of natural medicines, foods or as sacred sites. The Environmental Stewardship Division needs to consider the traditional knowledge and concerns of First Nations.

Two First Nation⁶ tribal councils (Ktunaxa/Kinbasket and Shuswap Nation) and the Okanagan Nation Alliance have included Goat Range Provincial Park within their asserted traditional territory. The management plan proposes to develop working relationships between the Environmental Stewardship Division and First Nations in a number of areas to ensure that management of the park considers their traditional uses. The management plan does not address formal co-operative management arrangements (e.g. co-management agreements). The management plan will not limit subsequent treaty negotiations.

⁶ Another group known as the Sinixts Nation has also asserted that the park is in their traditional territory but the governments of Canada and British Columbia have not recognized their claim.

Vision Statement

The long-term management vision helps to guide what should be done in the short term. The Vision Statement is an important guide for reacting to changing demands for recreation or for incorporating new approaches to conservation management. This Vision Statement for Goat Range Provincial Park describes the condition of the park 20 years from now. It sets the tone for how the park may differ from what it is today.

Vision for Goat Range Provincial Park

Goat Range Provincial Park will continue to be recognised as an internationally significant park that protects and preserves, for perpetuity, the natural wilderness values of the Southern Selkirk Mountains. Natural values have been improved through the restoration of unnatural areas and ongoing research and park management have reduced the human impact on wildlife.

An ecosystem-based management approach has been developed and applied to restore species at risk back to sustainable levels. Goat Range Provincial Park has established strong wildlife linkages with the other parks and wildlife management areas in the Kootenays, forming a contiguous network that is sustaining biological diversity throughout the region.

The park continues to fulfil backcountry users' expectations for solitude in a relatively undisturbed wilderness setting. A range of low impact wilderness recreational experiences is available and supported by limited facilities such as primitive campsites and trails. Commercial recreation has increased in popularity owing to improved science around reducing impacts on species at risk, heightened demand by an ageing population with more leisure time and money, and the increased appreciation for heritage values and the culture of First Nations peoples. With the development of supporting tourism facilities outside the park in adjacent communities, ecologically sustainable ecotourism has continued to grow and become an important part of the local economy.

Protected Area Zoning

Introduction

Zoning is a tool to assist in the planning and management of a provincial park. In general terms, zones divide a park into logical units for management. It applies uniform and consistent management objectives based on natural, cultural and recreational values, and existing and projected patterns of access and recreation use in relation to specific conservation goals. The zones reflect the intended land use, the degree of human use, level of management and development permitted. The BC Parks Zoning Policy (Appendix D) includes five zones: Intensive Recreation, Natural Environment, Special Feature, Wilderness Recreation, and Wilderness Conservation.

Based on Goat Range Provincial Park's natural and cultural values, roles and vision statement, the park has been divided into three management planning zones: Wilderness Recreation, Natural Environment and Special Features (Figure 4). While most of the park is remote and relatively unmodified, hunting, trapping and frequent use by helicopters for heli-skiing precludes management at the highest level of conservation as a Wilderness Conservation Zone. The objectives, description, and rationale for each zone are as follows.

Wilderness Recreation Zone

Zone Objective

To provide 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

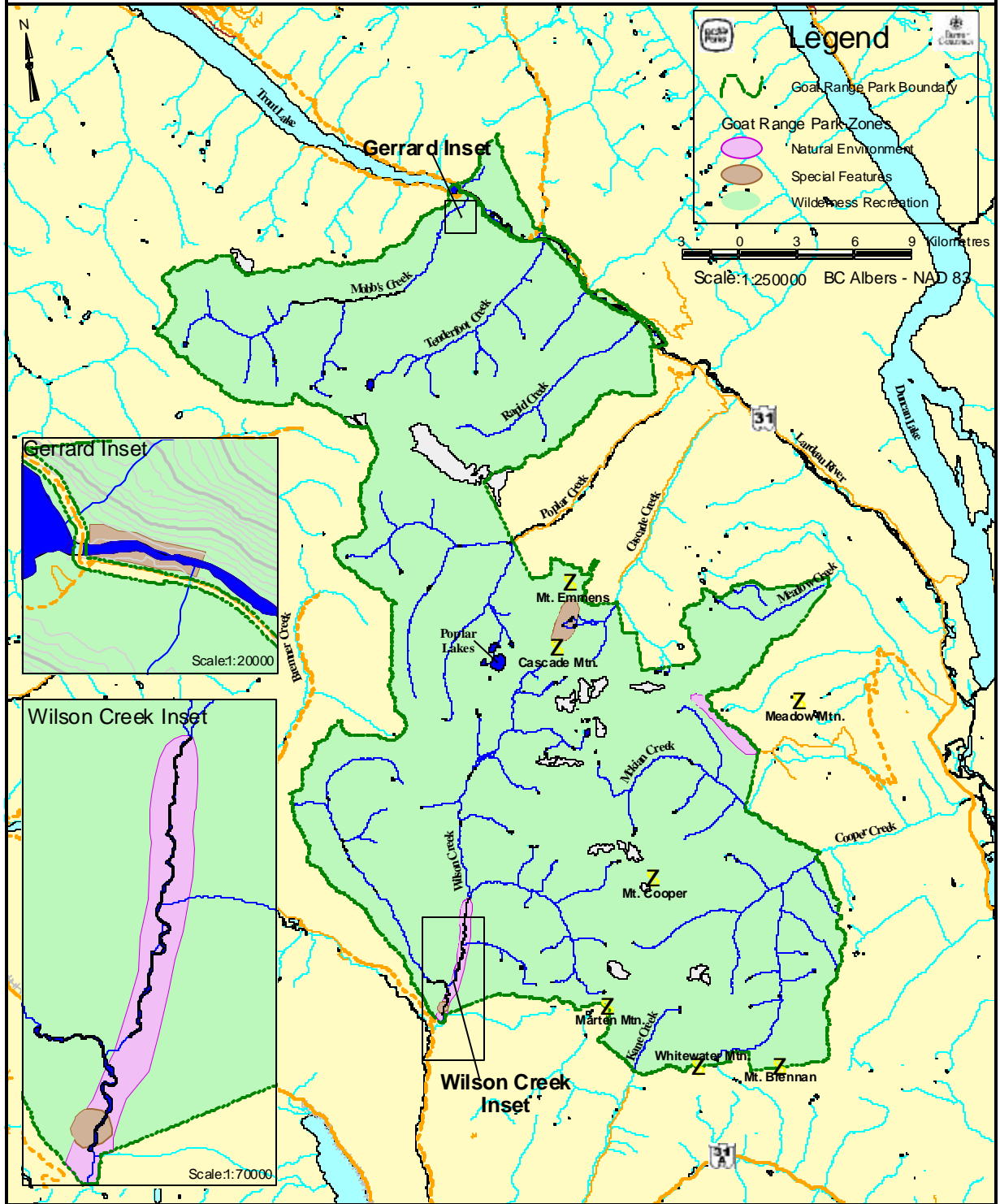
The Wilderness Recreation Zone encompasses approximately 98.8% (77, 999 ha) of Goat Range Provincial Park. This zone is applied to nearly all the major drainages of the park from valley bottom to alpine, including Mobbs Creek, Tenderfoot Creek, Rapid Creek, and the upper reaches of Wilson Creek, Cooper Creek, Meadow Creek and Poplar Creek.

Zone Rationale

The intent of this zone is to place a high priority on conserving the natural environment while providing some level of backcountry use that is consistent with its wilderness atmosphere. It is the second highest level of conservation management within the spectrum of management zones. Wilderness Recreation zones are large natural areas where natural ecological processes occur largely uninfluenced by human activity. Low levels of recreational use are permitted but evidence of human presence is confined to specific primitive facilities and sites. Travel within the zone is limited to non-mechanized forms with the exception of low frequency air access to designated sites.

Figure 4: Park Zoning

Goat Range Park



The Wilderness Recreation Zone allows for the continuation of dispersed, traditional wilderness recreational activities and primitive support facilities for hunting, fishing, backpacking, rock climbing, backcountry skiing and hiking. Although heli-skiing is not a traditional wilderness recreational activity and involves more frequent use than is intended for wilderness zones, it was continued by the KBLUP-IS but within the context of managing the wilderness values of the park for conservation.

Given the short operating season for heli-skiing and the intent of the KBLUP-IS to have the park mostly managed for conservation and wilderness, the areas used for heli-skiing are included in the Wilderness Recreation Zone but are acknowledged as non-conforming with the intent of the zone. To apply one of the zones that would accommodate motorized uses, such as the Natural Environment Zone, to the heli-skiing areas would be inconsistent with the conservation management intent.

Areas of the park with high grizzly bear activity are also included in this zone where possible to help reduce the potential for bear-human conflict through low levels of use and facility development.

Zone Activity/Use/Facility Matrix

The following Activity/Use/Facility Matrix defines the activities, uses and facilities that will apply to the Wilderness Recreation Zone in this park. The Allowable column indicates the generic status of such activity, use, or facility in the protected areas system. The Applied column indicates if the activity, use, or facility is applicable to the zone in this park. The symbols within the figures below are defined as follows: Y = allowed subject to conditions identified in the 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 (KBLUP-IS) but not normally allowed and N/A= not applicable.

Activity	Allowable in WR Zone	Applied in this Park's WR Zone
Beach activities (swimming, sunbathing, etc.)	Y	N/A
Boating (power)	N	N/A
Boating (non-power)	Y	N/A
Camping - no trace	Y	Y
Camping - other	N	N
Commercial recreation (facility-based)	N	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility based)	Y	Y
Fishing	Y	Y
Hiking and Walking	Y	Y
Hiking (helicopter assisted)	M	N
Hunting	Y	Y
Natural and cultural values appreciation (birding, photography, wildlife viewing)	Y	Y
Recreational gold panning/rock hounding	N	N
Scientific research (manipulative activities)	M	N1
Scientific research (specimen collection)	M	N1
Skiing (downhill & cross-country track based)	N	N
Skiing (helicopter or snowcat assisted)	N	N2
Backcountry Skiing	Y	Y
Trapping	N	N2

Use		
Aboriginal traditional uses and activities	Y	Y
Aircraft access	M	M
Exotic insect/disease control	Y	Y
Filming (commercial)	N	N
Fire management (prescribed fire management)	M	M
Fire management (prevention)	N1	N1
Fire management (suppression)	N1	N1
Fish stocking and enhancement	N	N
Forest insect/disease control	N	Y
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N	N
Guide outfitting (fishing)	Y	M
Guide outfitting (hunting)	Y	N/A
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	Y	Y
Guide outfitting (river rafting)	Y	N/A
Horse use/pack animals (not exotic)	Y	M
Motorized Water access	N	N/A
Non-motorized water access	Y	Y
Noxious weed control	N1	N1
Off-road Access (non-mechanical – dog sleds, horse sleds)	M	N
Off-road Access (mechanical activities)	N	N
Off-road Access (motorized – not snowmobiles)	N	N
Off-road Access (snowmobiles)	N	N
Pack animals (exotic)	N	N
Facility		
Administrative buildings and compounds	N	N
Backcountry huts and shelters	M	N
Boat launches	N	N/A
Campgrounds and picnic areas (vehicle access and serviced))	N	N/A
Campgrounds (other)	M	Y
Communication sites	N	N
Interpretation and information buildings	N	N
Roads and parking lots	N	N
Ski hills and snowplay areas	N	N
Lodges and other serviced accommodation	M	N
Trails (hiking, cycling, cross-country skiing)	Y	Y
Utility corridors	N	N
Water control structures	N	N

Natural Environment Zone

Zone Objective

The objective of this zone is to protect and to provide for backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

Zone Description

The Natural Environment Zone covers approximately 0.8% (631 ha) of the park. The zone is applied to the lower reaches of Wilson Creek and the height of land above McKian Creek.

Zone Rationale

In Goat Range Provincial Park, the Natural Environment Zone encompasses the easy access areas that have higher use levels than what is normally associated with a wilderness experience. This designation is intended to ensure that the activities and facilities do not dominate the natural setting and reflect levels of use, including the number of hikers, anglers, cabins and campgrounds.

Zone Activity/Use/Facility Matrix

The following Activity/Use/Facility Matrix defines the activities, uses and facilities that will apply to the Natural Environment Zone in this park. The Allowable column indicates the generic status of such activity, use or facility in the protected areas system. The Applied column indicates if the activity, use or facility is applicable to the zone in this park. The symbols within the figures below are defined as follows: Y = allowed subject to conditions identified in the 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 (KBLUP-IS) but not normally allowed and N/A = not applicable.

Activity	Allowable in NE Zone	Applied in this Park's NE Zone
Beach activities (swimming, sunbathing, etc.)	Y	N/A
Boating (power)	Y	N/A
Boating (non-power)	Y	N/A
Camping - no trace	Y	Y
Camping - other	N	N
Commercial recreation (facility-based)	N	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility based)	Y	M
Fishing	Y	Y
Hiking and walking	Y	Y
Hiking (helicopter assisted)	Y	N/A
Hunting	Y	Y
Natural and cultural values appreciation (birding, photography, wildlife viewing)	Y	Y
Recreational gold panning/rock hounding	N	N
Scientific research (manipulative activities)	N1	N1
Scientific research (specimen collection)	M	N1

Skiing (downhill & cross-country track based)	N	N
Skiing (helicopter or snowcat-assisted)	N	N2
Backcountry Skiing	Y	Y
Trapping	N	N2
Use		
Aboriginal traditional uses and activities	Y	Y
Aircraft access	Y	N2
Exotic insect/disease control	N1	N1
Filming (commercial)	M	M
Fire management (prescribed fire management)	N	N
Fire management (prevention)	N1	N1
Fire management (suppression)	Y	Y
Fish stocking and enhancement	M	N/A
Forest insect/disease control	M	M
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N	N
Guide outfitting (fishing)	M	N/A
Guide outfitting (hunting)	Y	N
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	Y	N
Guide outfitting (river rafting)	Y	M
Horse use/pack animals (not exotic)	Y	M
Motorized Water access	Y	N/A
Non-motorized water access	Y	N/A
Noxious weed control	Y	Y
Off-road Access (non-mechanical – dog sleds, horse sleds)	Y	N
Off-road Access (mechanical activities)	Y	N
Off-road Access (motorized - not snowmobiles)	N	N
Off-road Access (snowmobiles)	Y	M
Pack animals (exotic)	N	N
Facility		
Administrative buildings and compounds	N	N
Backcountry huts and shelters	Y	N/A
Boat launches	Y	N/A
Campgrounds and picnic areas (vehicle access and serviced))	N	N
Campgrounds (other)	Y	Y
Communication sites	N1	N1
Interpretation and information buildings	N	N
Roads and parking lots	N	N
Ski hills and snowplay areas	N	N
Lodges and other serviced accommodation	Y	N
Trails (hiking, cycling, cross-country skiing)	Y	Y
Utility corridors	N	N
Water control structures	N	N

Special Feature Zone

Zone Objective

The objective of the Special Feature Zone is to protect and present significant natural or cultural values, features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage values.

Zone Description

The Special Feature Zone for known features covers about 0.4 % (311 ha) of the park. It applies to Wilson Creek Falls, Gerrard trout spawning area, Gerrard town site and the mountain goat habitat between Cascade Mountain and Mount Emmens.

Zone Rationale

These special natural and cultural features are vulnerable to being impacted by public uses. The zoning precludes camping and other forms of specific recreational development. Management emphasises a high level of protection and ongoing monitoring and limits facilities to those used for interpretation. There is no Activity/Use/Facility Matrix for this zone. Additional sensitive and special features sites will be managed under this zoning regime as they are identified.



Plate 3: Wilson Creek Falls special feature

Natural and Cultural Values Management

Introduction

Goat Range Provincial Park was established to help protect representative natural ecosystems of the Central Columbia Mountains Eco-section including old-growth forests, complete watersheds and habitat for a variety of species at risk. A diversity of special natural, cultural heritage and recreational features were also protected including Wilson Creek Falls, the Gerrard town site and Gerrard trout spawning grounds.

This section of the management plan addresses management of the principal natural and cultural values of the park such as vegetation, water and fish, which constitute the park's representative ecosystems and special features. Each section begins with a brief description of the values including the associated concerns and management needs. This is followed by the objectives and management strategies that are needed to implement the management vision for the park.

Ecosystem Management Approach

The Environmental Stewardship Division is moving toward a more science dependent ecosystem-based management approach for protected areas to enhance ecosystem values and processes. This requires:

- integration of available science-based information with management.
- understanding of the interrelationships of the ecosystem's biological and non-biological components;
- a focus on long-term/or large-scale issues;
- a holistic view of the environmental system and many environmental problems; and
- interagency co-operation given ecosystems extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries.

Much of this understanding, knowledge and the practices to implement an ecosystem management approach for protected areas are still in the formative stages and will be developed over time. In addition to this Environmental Stewardship Division initiative, the KBLUP-IS also emphasized the importance of an ecosystem-based approach to land and resource planning and management to maintain healthy functioning ecosystems and, in protected areas, to maintain ecosystem representation.

Since the home range of many wildlife species is much larger than the protected area, effective management of the ecosystems is a challenge. In Goat Range Provincial Park, adjacent forest development and mineral exploration adjacent to the park are ongoing and can affect wilderness values if not carried out in a considerate manner. Most of the adjacent area outside the park boundaries has been designated as Special Resource Management Zones (SRMZ) in the WKBLUP. The SRMZs adjacent to the park contain associated natural values (e.g. wildlife connectivity) and a wide range of uses and facilities from industry to tourism, recreation and community settlement. This land use designation is intended to maintain the integrity of the numerous special and sensitive regional biodiversity values, including underrepresented ecosystems in the region not in the protected areas system, while continuing with a range of land uses. Some stakeholders have, however, questioned the effectiveness of SRMZs to support park values.

Essential to understanding ecosystems is an understanding of the natural processes affecting them. While some processes like climate are very complex and unmanageable, other processes such as wildfire, disease and insect infestation are connected directly to the land and can be considered in the management of the park.

In Goat Range Provincial Park, the forests are generally considered to be rarely or infrequently disturbed by natural processes or events that largely terminate the existing forest stand and initiate secondary succession (Forest Practices Guidebook Biodiversity Guidebook, 1995). As these natural disturbances occur approximately every 200 to 350 years, the park's extensive old-growth forest ecosystem component is expected to generally remain undisturbed by catastrophic natural processes that result in successional changes. There have been, however, some snow slides⁷ in the Mobbs Creek drainage over the last few years that are believed to have affected fish spawning while not significantly affecting the watercourse or the forest land base.

There are large gaps in the available information and our understanding of the ecosystems in this park. To develop a strategy for an ecosystem management approach requires these gaps to be filled and management practices to be developed.

Objective:

To preserve unimpaired representative ecosystems, ecological values and natural ecological processes within the park while working with adjacent land managers to maintain the integrity of sensitive values in support of the park.

Strategies:

- Develop predictive ecosystem mapping for the representative ecosystems in the park including areas of the ecosystems outside the park boundary.
- Increase information and understanding of ecosystem values and processes in partnership with other agencies and jurisdictions through the sharing of inventory and research.
- Apply practices and principles, where appropriate, of the Environmental Stewardship Division's evolving ecosystem-based management approach as they are developed.
- Work co-operatively with other government agencies and land managers to ensure mountain caribou and grizzly bear habitats external to the park are maintained, including effective connectivity throughout the region's protected areas, SRMZs and wildlife management areas.
- Work co-operatively with other government agencies, community groups and the public to address key resource issues that affect the ecological integrity of Goat Range Provincial Park (e.g. road developments and deactivation, harvesting plans, cumulative effects of impacts).
- Monitor and provide input into Landscape Unit Planning, Forest Development Plans, mineral exploration projects, and Commercial Recreation Proposals.
- Co-ordinate the development of communication and educational resources with other agencies and private groups to enhance the overall effectiveness of activities that support ecosystem integrity.
- Provide input through provincial review processes for proposed major developments that may impact the park's ecosystem values (including fish and wildlife).
- Work with the Ministry of Forests to retain old growth (age class 8+) stands, riparian, wetlands, flora, fauna, and other values adjacent to the park in support of the KBLUP-IS Conservation Objectives and Strategies.
- Limit habitat fragmentation in the park when considering facilities or uses.

⁷ Likely caused by water and debris loading behind late melting snow slides

- Develop an ecosystem management strategy that incorporates principles of ecological integrity including the major ecosystem components of vegetation, fish and wildlife and natural processes like fires, insects, and diseases.

Land and Resource Tenures

Management of the land base in Goat Range Provincial Park primarily involves management of the tenured land uses. There are a number of pre-existing tenures and rights in the park including trapping, commercial heli-skiing and snowcat skiing. These activities occurred for many years prior to the establishment of Goat Range Provincial Park. The KBLUP-IS required that the legal rights of these pre-existing tenure holders be continued but the terms of the tenure could be modified through the management planning process for the park. This section of the management plan addresses non-recreational tenures, such as trapping, while recreational tenures are addressed separately in the management of recreation opportunities section.

There are six trapping licenses, which collectively cover nearly all the drainages in the park. A variety of species are trapped including mink, otter, beaver, marten, wolverine, coyote and lynx. The intensity of harvesting for fur-bearing animals can vary significantly depending on market demand. For many trappers the activity is more a traditional way of life with historic roots rather than a resource industry. As all species have a role in the ecosystem and are interdependent in many ways, the harvesting of fur-bearing animals may affect other aspects in the ecosystem. However, no studies have been done to assess the affects of trapping in the park.

Objective:

To manage pre-existing tenures in keeping with the conservation objectives of the park.

Strategies:

- Canvas trapline tenure holders periodically to determine their interest in selling their trapping rights.
- Monitor harvest volumes and encourage conservative targets.
- Ensure all trappers have acquired a Park Use Permit in accordance with the *Park and Recreation Area Regulation*.
- Include assessment of the impact on ecosystem health of harvesting fur-bearing animals when considering the ecosystem requirements for species at risk.
- Minimise impacts that may arise in the future on fur-bearing animals.
- In concert with First Nations, trappers and the Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section, discontinue the trapping of species at risk (e.g. wolverine).

Vegetation

Most of the forests in Goat Range Provincial Park lie within the wet interior rainforest, a globally important bioregion. The vegetation is representative of three biogeoclimatic zones ranging from valley bottom to mountaintop. Most of the park is comprised of high elevation biogeoclimatic subzones and a significant amount of low elevation subzones not well represented in other protected areas.

A significant proportion of the forest cover in Goat Range Provincial Park is classified as old age, age class 8 (141 – 250 years) or class 9 (251+ years). These old age stands, which offer the potential to provide old-growth attributes, are considered one of the most critical ecological components of the park. A report by the Valhalla Wilderness Society describes significant groves of old western red cedar in the Mobbs, Tenderfoot, McKian, main Wilson, and Kane Creek drainages. The report also notes that there are a range of old-growth forest types, such as in the Wilson Creek drainage where old growth stands range from old Douglas-fir and western larch on drier slopes to stands of large spruce and subalpine fir at higher elevations.

Riparian vegetation is ecologically significant and is found along the Lardeau River, and some of the major tributary channels including Tenderfoot, Mobbs Creeks, and upper Wilson Creek. The Lardeau River floodplain supports vegetation that includes stands of mature cottonwood, mixed forest, and old-growth stands of western red cedar and hemlock.

Except along the Lardeau River Valley and Poplar Creek, the park vegetation has been minimally disturbed by human activities. Timber harvesting in the past was limited due to the remote, rugged nature of the park, and extensive area of low forest productivity. Slopes above the Lardeau River received the heaviest timber harvesting, primarily during the early 1970s. The tributaries of upper Poplar Creek and the area near the Burkitt-Wilson Creek confluence also have old cutblocks mainly from the mid-1970s. Some of these cutblocks have not been replanted.

While a comprehensive plant inventory has not been completed, there is at least one known occurrence of a rare plant species. Saprophytic plants of the Indian pipe family (*Hemitomes congestum*) have been reported near Wilson Creek Falls but not confirmed by inventory. Three blue-listed plant associations⁸ are expected to occur in the park, but they also have not been confirmed by inventory. Given the data on red- and blue-listed species in the area, red- and blue-listed plants are likely to be found once vegetation inventories are completed.

Objective:

To restore previously harvested forest areas in the Poplar Creek, Mobbs Creek, Tenderfoot Creek, Rusty Creek and Rapid Creek drainages to a natural condition.

To protect rare, endangered and sensitive native plant communities and species at Wilson Falls and other areas of the park as they are identified.

⁸ ESSFwe4/00 Subalpine fir / Black Huckleberry / Beargrass, ICHwk1/06 Western red cedar / Devil's club / Common horsetail and ICHwk1/03 Western hemlock / Velvet-leaved blueberry / false-box

Strategies:

- Determine through rare ecosystem probability mapping if the two blue-listed plant associations known for the ICHwk1 biogeoclimatic variant still occur in the Poplar Creek drainage or if they have occurred in the harvested portions of this drainage.
- On a priority basis, pursue restoration options if the harvested areas in the ICHwk1 are found to belong to the blue-listed plant associations.
- Complete a vegetation inventory to locate, identify and map plant communities, rare species and threatened plant communities in the Special Features Zones, Natural Environment Zones and areas that could potentially be impacted by recreation.
- Prepare a vegetation management plan for the above-mentioned areas that will identify management strategies (excluding commercial logging) for specific issues such as insect infestation, disease and blowdown.
- Prepare a fire management plan that defines the role of these natural disturbances in the maintenance of natural ecosystem diversity. This plan will also consider fire history, natural fire regimes, effects of suppression, historical use of fire by humans, concerns of other agencies and values in need of protection.
- Until the fire management strategy is prepared, Ministry of Forests and the Environmental Stewardship Division will jointly undertake an initial assessment of all wildfire. The fire may be allowed to run its natural course as long as it meets landscape biodiversity objectives and visitors, adjacent commercial forests and park facilities are not in danger. The intent is to allow natural fires that occur under normal environmental (non-extreme) conditions to run their natural course. Use of heavy excavating machinery will not be permitted to fight fires in the park.
- Retain wildlife trees except where there is a hazard to visitors or facilities whereupon a Wildlife/Danger Tree Assessment will be conducted to determine the highest value and remedial action.

Objective:

To prevent the establishment of non-native plant species.

Strategies:

- Inventory and monitor the presence of non-native plants along access corridors and recreational use areas.
- Remove non-native plants as required using the most effective low-impact method available, excluding the use of herbicides.

Water

Goat Range Provincial Park encompasses the complete watersheds of Gerrard, Mobbs, Tenderfoot and Rapid creeks and the headwaters of Poplar, Cascade, Meadow, McKian, Cooper, Kane and Wilson creeks (above Wilson Falls). These tributaries drain northeast and east into the Lardeau River, and south through Wilson Creek into Slocan Lake, eventually draining into the Kootenay and Columbia River systems. The extreme south end of Trout Lake, and approximately 14 km of the Lardeau River below the lake, are also protected within the park. A number of small alpine lakes are found in the headwaters of Tenderfoot, Poplar and Wilson creeks. Waterfalls are found in upper tributary valleys.

None of the watersheds in the park are used for community water supplies either in or outside the park, although there may be some individual domestic water use. The main use of the park's water is for fish and riparian habitat.

There is very little information available on the creeks, rivers and lakes of the park. From observation there does not appear to be any concerns with respect to the long-term protection of water quantity or quality. However, the recent snow and debris slides in Mobbs Creek did initially affect water clarity. Although the problem appears to have corrected on its own, this may become a reoccurring event and a significant issue for fisheries values.

Objective:

To protect and maintain the natural quality and quantity of water in the park.

Strategies:

- Ensure recreational activities have minimal impact on erosion of surface materials and do not compromise water quality.
- Assess and manage use to ensure proper disposal of human waste.
- Ensure sanitary facilities are properly designed and located.
- Prohibit water impoundment, diversions or new domestic use projects in accordance with the *Park Act*.
- Monitor water quality periodically in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Division (EPD).

Fish Values

Goat Range Provincial Park plays an important role in protecting critical fish spawning grounds, rearing habitat and water supplies, especially for the internationally significant Gerrard rainbow trout. The Gerrard rainbow trout is the largest rainbow trout in the world. Fishing records indicate the largest Gerrard trout caught in the province weighed 24 kg. A 300-metre stretch of the Lardeau River below the Trout Lake outlet is the only known indigenous spawning area for Gerrard rainbow trout in the world. This area provides ideal spawning habitat, partly because Trout Lake acts as a huge settling basin for sedimentation and stabilises flow. These fish also use the Meadow Creek artificial spawning channel outside of the park.

Based on an average peak count of 275 fish, biologists estimate the Gerrard rainbow trout spawning population at about 1,100. Spawning occurs from May 1 - 15, and the sight of close to 300 giant trout attracts many visitors. Park boundaries fully enclose watersheds draining into this section of the Lardeau River. The Lardeau River also supports a regionally important run of Kootenay Lake kokanee, which spawn up to Trout Lake and in the Meadow Creek watershed. Whitefish use the Lardeau River as well in the spring.

Bull trout spawn in the Lardeau River and in the lower section of tributaries with resident populations in Mobbs, Rapid and Rusty creeks. To protect this provincially significant species and to protect spawning and young Gerrard trout, the Lardeau River and tributaries are closed to fishing. Resident rainbow trout can also be found in all tributaries; some in the headwaters represent pure genetic stocks of rainbow trout. Although the Lardeau River is closed to fishing, the development of the railway and highway had a significant impact on fish rearing and spawning habitat resulting in a need to restore some of the side channels. Natural debris flows down tributaries are also a potential threat to the spawning habitat.

Objective:

To maintain/restore natural fish habitat and conserve all natural fish populations.

Strategies:

- Preserve and/or restore Gerrard rainbow trout, rainbow trout, bull trout and kokanee habitats in the Lardeau River, and other park creeks, rivers and lakes.
- Undertake appropriate scientific research to determine the health of the Gerrard trout, rainbow trout, bull trout, kokanee and other fish populations in the park.
- Develop and implement a fish inventory strategy with other agencies and First Nations to address needs both inside and adjacent to the park.
- Work with the Ministry of Forests and other agencies to protect the park's aquatic resources, especially the Trout Lake, Lardeau River, Healy Creek and Lake Creek areas.
- Ensure adequate water supply and quality for Gerrard rainbow trout and other resident fish stock.
- Inventory and maintain pure genetic stocks of rainbow trout (in headwaters) and resident bull trout in all creeks with priority on the upper Wilson Creek and Burkitt Creek drainages.
- Conduct inventories of indigenous and resident fish populations as required.
- Ensure sanitary facilities in the park are non-polluting.
- Maintain the fishing closure on the Lardeau River.

Wildlife

Possibly the greatest value of Goat Range Provincial Park is its role in conserving wildlife habitat and representative ecosystems. This park, together with nearby large parks (Valhalla, Purcell Wilderness Conservancy and Kokanee Glacier), the Hamling Lakes Wildlife Management Area, and Special Resource Management Zones surrounding these designated areas, protect habitat for a diversity of resident and wide-ranging transient species. This includes a number of red- and blue-listed species at risk (there is a known potential for 10 red-listed species and 31 blue-listed species).

One of the known red-listed species found in the park is mountain caribou. The Kootenay Region supports populations of mountain caribou of national significance. Far south of the northern boreal forests typically associated with caribou habitat, the herds of the Columbia Mountains are an oddity, and depend on tree-growing lichens of mature western red-cedar, hemlock, Engelmann Spruce and subalpine fir forests as the winter food source. Caribou use the northern portions of Goat Range Provincial Park in early winter, spring and summer, although telemetry studies indicate low caribou numbers in the park in comparison to the surrounding area. In the winter, more caribou are found in areas west of the park, especially the Hamling Lakes area. The overall population in the Central Selkirk Mountains is estimated to be 213 – 263.⁹ A Provincial Mountain Caribou Recovery Plan (PMCRP) is being developed in British Columbia to address the threats to caribou and their habitat. The PMCRP includes encouraging research and the development of recommendations on reducing the impact of recreation on this species.

Grizzly bear and black bear are other prominent wildlife species that can be found in the park. The park contains prime bear habitat including:

- alpine-subalpine glacier lily digging areas
- avalanche chutes for early summer habitat
- huckleberry areas for late summer use
- riparian areas for salmon in the fall
- denning areas and other critical habitats
- mid-high elevation habitat areas

A unique feature of this area is the “white grizzly” (namesake of the original wilderness area proposal). The white grizzly is believed to be a sub-population in which an estimated 5% of bears are nearly all white, although some biologists dispute this claim. The minimum estimated population of grizzly bears in the Central Selkirk Mountains is 164¹⁰, whereas another study covering a slightly larger area estimated the population to be about 224 - 313 grizzly bears.¹¹ Their large range, sensitivity to disturbance and the low reproductive rate of these animals make them particularly vulnerable to human impacts and high mortality.

⁹ Mountain caribou habitat use and population characteristics for the Central Selkirks Inventory Project. Ministry of Environment/FRBC report, BC, Canada. Hamilton, D., Wilson, S., and Smith G. 2000.

¹⁰ Hamilton, A. N. and M. A. Austin. 2002. Grizzly bear harvest management in British Columbia; background report. Prepared for the information of the British Columbia Grizzly Bear Scientific Panel. Biodiversity Branch, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Victoria, British Columbia. 97 pp.

¹¹ Estimating Population Size of Grizzly Bears Using Hair Capture and DNA Fingerprinting in the Central Selkirk Mountains of BC by Garth Mowat and Curtis Strobeck.

The British Columbia Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy, released in 1995, included the commitment to establish a network of Grizzly Bear Management Areas (GBMA) across the province. Subsequent work to the strategy has identified 3 categories of GBMAs: benchmarks (the largest areas with the intent to establish one in each of the ecoprovinces with substantial grizzly bear populations); core areas (smaller than benchmark areas and represent refugia within grizzly bear population units); and linkages (the smallest and span current or potential human-caused fractures or barriers to grizzly bear movement and dispersal). One of the objectives for protected areas of the KBLUP-IS is to establish grizzly bear benchmarks¹² for scientific study. The selected GBMA benchmark in the Southern Interior Mountains Ecoprovince is likely to be elsewhere than Goat Range Provincial Park. Goat Range Provincial Park will be investigated for its potential as a core GBMA or linkage GBMA (e.g. with respect to the threatened Valhalla population).

This park and mountain range is aptly named for the high density of mountain goats, which could number close to 180¹³. Mule and white-tailed deer are found throughout the area and small numbers of Rocky Mountain elk use the park for spring, summer and fall range. Elk heavily use the Wilson Creek area in the summer, providing good opportunities for wildlife viewing. Other species found in the park include cougar, wolverine (blue-listed), marten and numerous birds.

With the increase in heli-skiing in the park, concerns have been raised about the impacts that may be occurring on wildlife active or sensitive during winter such as mountain caribou, wolverine and mountain goats. Managing wildlife values is one of the most difficult challenges for wilderness areas. In addition to the demands for hunting, wildlife viewing, impacts from helicopter and other uses, effective management is limited by lack of scientific information on the well-being of species and their complex ecological relationships. Combined with the natural dynamics of wildlife movement in and out of parks over a large area, these diverse elements necessitate shared and co-ordinated management between a number of agencies. There are some agreements in place between government agencies to co-ordinate the management of wildlife, including sharing information and working together to collect inventory data.

Objective:

To sustain the natural diversity of wildlife species and habitat, with priority given to rare, endangered or threatened species.

Strategies:

- Develop a wildlife inventory with priority on red- and blue-listed species, including grizzly bear and mountain caribou.
- Contribute to the maintenance of opportunities at the regional level for genetic interchange between populations inside and outside the park.
- Increase the knowledge and understanding of wildlife and their habitat requirements both inside and outside the park.
- Encourage research aimed at better understanding mountain caribou, mountain goats, wolverine, elk and grizzly bears.
- Manage wildlife values as a higher priority over recreational activities.

¹² A stable population of bears used to compare and measure changes to other populations and the environment

¹³ Estimated by Valhalla Wilderness Society

- Develop a co-ordinated long-term approach to wildlife management with other government agencies, including the Ministry of Forests, and First Nations, with emphasis on species at risk, including:
 - maintaining ecosystem representation, conservation and use, management of biodiversity;
 - access, connectivity and range management; and
 - co-ordinating wildlife management objectives.
- Investigate opportunities to establish Goat Range Provincial Park as a GBMA core or linkage area.
- Encourage the assistance of volunteers and others to collect wildlife data with BC Parks Observation Cards (e.g. bird watching clubs, anglers, heli-skiing operators, etc.)
- Manage bear/human conflict in accordance with the BC Parks Bear-People Conflict Prevention Plan.

Cultural Heritage Values

Goat Range Provincial Park lies within the traditional territory of two First Nation groups: Shuswap and Ktunaxa Kinbasket. Although much of the early First Nations use was concentrated in the valleys between the rugged mountain ranges, it is believed that a trade corridor over Cooper Pass was used for transportation between Nakusp and Earl Grey Pass.

In the early 1880s, completion of the main line of the CPR together with the discovery of silver, lead and gold quartz led to a mining boom that lured men into these steep rugged mountains, resulting in the first major use of the area. By 1902, the Kootenay and Arrowhead Line of the CPR, one of the unusual narrow gauge rail lines, had reached Gerrard at the south end of Trout Lake. There it would pick up ore that had been barged down Trout Lake.

In contrast to some of the roaring mining towns of the area, Gerrard had a population of about 1,000. Buildings included only a few houses, a post office, a newspaper office, a steam boat dock, a sawmill, the railway roadhouses, and a fish hatchery and egg collecting station which operated periodically between 1912 and 1952. Today all that is left of the Gerrard town site is a few building remains. Poplar Creek, another small town site along the Lardeau River (outside of the park), ran the newspaper “The Poplar Nugget”.

Information is available on some of the old mine sites within the park. “Topsy”, “Rapid Creek” and “Mobbs Mine” above the Lardeau River were mined between 1907 and 1939. Mining of the “White Eagle” mine in the headwaters of Cascade Creek near the park boundary took place around 1928.

Logging started up in the area initially to provide timber for growing mining towns. The sawmill at Gerrard was originally moved from Trout Lake City and was reportedly the most modern facility in British Columbia during the 1940s.¹⁴

The first recreational hiking use of the area began in the early 1900s as settlers were attracted from England to the Kootenays by opportunities for agriculture combined with mountain adventure. Mountaineering clubs were established, and by 1922 the first park in the area was established – Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park.

Objectives:

To gain a better understanding of the pre- and post-contact history associated with the park.

¹⁴ from “Where the Lardeau River Flows” by Peter Chapman

To locate important cultural heritage sites and ensure their protection.

To work with First Nations and other government agencies to ensure First Nation access to important cultural heritage sites.

Strategies:

- Protect 'in situ' important features, sacred sites and archaeological sites. Such sites will not be identified on any public park literature in order to protect them from damage.
- Implement the BC Archaeological Assessment Guidelines whenever development plans have the potential to disturb archaeological sites.
- In concert with First Nations, inventory pre-contact cultural and archaeological features that may be found in the park.
- Work with First Nations and the Archaeology Planning and Assessment Section, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, in managing the archaeological and heritage resources in the park, including adherence to research standards and protocols.
- Research, document and interpret the structural remains of the Gerrard town site.

Palaeontological Values (Fossils)

Fossil deposits have been identified near Mount Cooper in geological records covering Goat Range Provincial Park. Little information exists about their nature and specific location.

Objectives:

To determine the significance of the Mount Cooper fossils.

To encourage a better understanding of the geological history of the area through research.

To protect and maintain the fossil deposits in a natural condition.

Strategies:

- Inventory the main fossil features in the park and assess their significance.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the location of fossils for their protection.
- Assess the threat to the fossil features by natural forces such as erosion or disturbance by park visitors.
- Develop preventative measures (e.g. monitoring, education and enforcement) to address the threat of extraction or impacts.

Visual Values

In the mountainous terrain of the Goat Range, visual features and spectacular views are everywhere. A major visual feature of the park is Mount Cooper, the highest mountain in the south Selkirk Range located in the headwaters of Wilson Creek (easterly tributary). One of the best views of Mount Cooper is from Meadow Mountain just outside of the park. Poplar Lakes are also notable as a visual feature. The WKBLUP describes the slopes above Trout Lake and portions of the slopes above Lardeau River as regionally significant visual areas.

Objectives:

To minimise human-caused changes to the views in and out of the park so that the visual qualities and wilderness nature is protected.

To design and situate park facilities in a manner that preserves the visual integrity of the park.

Strategies:

- Locate and design all park facilities in harmony with the visual setting and in accordance with park zoning objectives.
- Encourage the Ministry of Forests and forest licensees to help ensure, through the Forest Development Plan Review Process, that areas outside the park boundary are managed in accordance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* to protect views.
- Work with the Ministry of Forests and other agencies to protect the visual integrity of the park from impacts of adjacent uses.

Scientific Research and Education

The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection's knowledge of the park is limited to general information on park values and uses. Detailed knowledge of the natural and cultural values is critical to meaningful management.

Objectives:

To encourage appropriate scholarly research relating to the natural and cultural history of the park.

To encourage multi-agency co-operation in the field of protected areas scientific research and education.

To promote education and conservation through increasing understanding of the natural and cultural values of the park.

To encourage positioning of the park as a comparative benchmark for monitoring ecological change.

Strategies:

- Encourage colleges, universities, other agencies and corporate sponsors to establish funding for and to undertake appropriate and timely research studies, including inventory and monitoring of values at risk.
- Limit scientific research that involves collecting specimens.
- Ensure that any material that is collected for scientific research will remain the property of the Province of British Columbia, regardless of where it is stored.



Plate 4: Poplar Lakes

Outdoor Recreation Opportunities Management

Introduction

Goat Range Provincial Park provides a variety of wilderness recreational activities. These activities must be carefully managed so that they are compatible with the park's zoning; are not detrimental to the natural and cultural values; are consistent with visitors' expectations; and respect the Vision Statement of this management plan.

As a backcountry park, Goat Range fulfills wilderness seekers' backcountry expectations in a relatively undisturbed wilderness setting. The sense of solitude and pristine mountain scenery are integral parts of the attraction of this area. The natural, undisturbed character of the park's backcountry is important to maintain and a high priority will be placed on ensuring that recreation activities have minimal effect on the landscape. As well, minimizing interactions between visitors and wildlife, particularly grizzly bears, will be a priority.

In maintaining a quality wilderness experience, values must be assessed and recreational use monitored and managed to ensure that neither the ecological integrity of the park nor the recreational experience itself are negatively affected. The Environmental Stewardship Division must assess the impact of recreational activity in the park in co-operation with local residents, conservationists, First Nations and recreational users.

Both public and commercial recreation activities are well-established uses in Goat Range Provincial Park. Early settlers engaged in recreational guiding, and guiding continues to provide a safe commercial recreation experience that enhances many visitors' enjoyment of the park. It is important for the Environmental Stewardship Division to balance public and commercial recreation use both to ensure fairness of access to the park and to protect the natural values that contribute to the recreation experience.

This section of the management plan describes the strategies for managing outdoor recreation, park visitation and for providing park information. It will consider:

- 1) Providing opportunities for people to experience the park in ways that are compatible with park features/values;
- 2) Providing outdoor recreation activities in such a way that there are minimal conflicts between user groups;
- 3) Providing the tools for creating public awareness of and respect for the natural and cultural values in the park; and
- 4) Using the tools of science and research to guide recreational use decisions.

Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Facilities

Hiking, Camping and Backpacking

Generally, the hiking and backpacking opportunities are primitive with few support facilities. The only formally maintained trail in the park is the 1-km trail to Wilson Creek Falls. There were up to 30 km of old mining trails and hiking trails in the past, but most have been taken over by nature and no longer exist.

The Wilson Creek Valley has the potential to offer one of the easiest and most pleasant walks in the region as well as providing hiking access into the backcountry of Goat Range Provincial Park. This route is visually diverse with settings of old growth forest, young forest and slide paths, which allow for views of the alpine. With western red cedars up to 1.5 m in diameter, this trail could be one of the best hiking opportunities through old growth forests in the Kootenays. Some user groups have reported that there was an historic First Nations route up the Keene Creek tributary of Wilson Creek that connected to the Cooper Creek drainage ultimately providing access to Earl Grey Pass that joins the East and West Kootenays. However, the location and condition of the route are unknown and its existence unproven to date.

Poplar Lakes is one of the most significant backcountry recreation features in the park. This group of three alpine lakes, with their distinctive blue color and set at different levels on gently rolling alpine, provides a stark contrast to the rugged rock peaks and steep forested valley slopes in the remainder of the park. This area is used for wilderness backpacking.

Southeast of Poplar Lakes is Marion Lakes: a group of four smaller lakes in a rocky setting below Mount Marion. Other small alpine lakes are found in the park but are either more remote or are not particularly well suited as a backcountry recreation destination. Both Marion and Poplar lakes show signs of being impacted from camping and use along the shoreline, although use levels appear to be very low.

Mobbs Creek has a short easy grade 2 km trail from the Gerrard campsite to the narrow canyon of the creek. It is believed to be the remains of an old mine trail that once provided access up the valley but has mostly disappeared due to slides on the difficult terrain. The Gerrard campsite is a small six-unit campground that has been overgrown with vegetation. Only very primitive facilities are provided.

Mountaintops along the southern park boundary (Mount Marten, Whitewater Mountain and Mount Brennan) have been traditionally used by hikers. Moderately accessible trails provide opportunities for hiking, scrambling, mountaineering, ski touring, wildlife viewing and mountain scenery appreciation. Commercial recreation operators use the basins leading to these peaks for guided hiking and wildlife viewing.

Objectives:

To provide a variety of backcountry and wilderness camping opportunities dependent on a wilderness environment.

To assess and monitor the impact of backcountry visitors on natural and cultural values.

Strategies:

- Designate a small wilderness hike-in campsite at Poplar Lakes away from areas frequented by grizzly bears.
- Develop a valley trail in the lower Wilson Creek drainage.
- Maintain the Mobbs Creek Canyon trail (2 km).
- Encourage the continuation of Whitewater, Alps Alturus and Mount Brennan trail accesses to the southern boundary of the park.
- Develop a short loop trail from the end of the Whitewater Creek trail.
- Designate the east ridge of McKian Creek (Meadow Mountain) to a proposed viewpoint of Mount Cooper for multi-use including hiking, mountain biking and snowmobiling.
- Investigate and assess the use and interpretation potential of the First Nation historic route from Cooper Creek to Wilson Creek.
- Close, relocate or improve trails as required if bear and visitor safety problems arise.
- Use BC Parks' Impact Assessment processes prior to developments to assess and mitigate impacts.
- Assess conditions and monitor backcountry visitor numbers and destinations to protect natural values in accordance with the Backcountry Recreation Impact Monitoring (BRIM) Policies.
- Educate visitors about minimum impact camping at all sites in the park to avoid site degradation and minimise human-bear conflicts.
- Encourage the use of portable camp stoves instead of open campfires to reduce the potential of forest fires and the use of wood for campfires.

Mechanized Activities

Although some mechanized activities such as helicopters, ATV's, snowmobiles and mountain bikes are accommodated in some provincial parks in British Columbia, these activities are generally not compatible with the wilderness nature and land use intent of many protected areas. Mechanized recreation is more suitable in areas that are less environmentally vulnerable and supported by appropriate infrastructure such as a road/trail network.

Mechanized use is growing in popularity and its impact on park values is the subject of debate. Snowmobile proponents, for example, claim impacts are non-existent or negligible given winter conditions, however, snowmobiles and other forms of mechanized recreation are known to have impacts on wildlife values in other areas.¹⁵

Snowmobiles have not been seen in Goat Range Provincial Park.¹⁶ There are, however, a number of adjacent areas that are being used for snowmobiling including: the Lake Creek drainage on the north side of the Lardeau River; the Kuskanax Creek drainage on the west side of the park; the Kaslo River headwaters south of the park; and Meadow Mountain. Snowmobiling on Meadow Mountain likely spills over into the park, but terrain and treeline limit use to a narrow area along the park boundary. All terrain vehicles and mountain bikes also use Meadow Mountain and the Silver Cup Ridge area above Trout Lake.

Helicopter use is addressed separately under Commercial Recreation (p.43) and in other sections of the plan.

¹⁵ Impacts of Backcountry Recreation Activities on Mountain Caribou by K. Simpson and E. Terry

¹⁶ Based on observations from heliskiing operator that frequent the park.

Objective:

To maintain wilderness recreation values free from mechanized recreation impacts.

Strategies:

- Prohibit all forms of mechanized recreation in all areas of the park except as provided for elsewhere in this management plan.
- Encourage, through inter-agency planning processes, mechanized recreation outside the park in areas unlikely to impact wildlife connectivity.
- Additional related actions can be found in the Access Management Section (p.46).

Hunting

The park is open to hunting for mule deer, whitetail deer and elk (northeast part of the park MU 30) in the fall, and black bear, wolf, coyote, wolverine, lynx, cougar, bobcat and other species in appropriate seasons. The Poplar Creek area is used for grizzly hunting in the spring and limited entry goat hunting in the fall. The area around Mount Brennan is also popular for goat hunting.

Those First Nations who have an aboriginal or treaty right to hunt for sustenance or ceremonial purposes may do so in all provincial parks, subject to conservation requirements and public safety concerns.

The Environmental Stewardship Division must manage hunting in a sustainable manner to ensure conservation objectives are not compromised. There is a spectrum of management techniques that are used such as open seasons, limited entry permits and hunting closures. Harvest levels are adjusted according to fluctuations in wildlife populations, including natural predators.

Objective:

To allow wilderness hunting opportunities that do not compromise conservation objectives.

Strategies:

- Assess, monitor, and regulate hunting in co-operation with First Nations, hunters, and special interest groups to ensure conservation objectives are met.
- Obtain updated wildlife data in order to manage for sustainable wildlife populations and appropriate hunting levels.
- Review proposed changes with First Nations and recreational hunters.
- In concert with First Nations, hunters and the Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section, seek to discontinue the hunting of grizzly bears in the park. Closure of the park to grizzly bear harvest would necessitate an adjustment to the allowable annual harvest in the Central Selkirks Grizzly Bear Population Unit, in accordance with the Harvest Management Procedure for Grizzly Bears.

Backcountry Horse Use

Although the rugged nature and extreme steepness of much of the park's terrain precludes recreational use by horseback, some backcountry horseman from local communities report they have used southern areas of the park. Given the low levels of traditional use and the inherent natural restrictions of terrain, limited opportunities to non-sensitive areas of the park could be accommodated under good weather conditions. Routes would need to be carefully documented and monitored for impacts. Formal trails may need to be considered should this use become more popular.

Objective:

To provide low impact backcountry horseback riding opportunities in the park

Strategy:

- Allow backcountry horseback riding by permit on a dispersed basis to non-environmentally sensitive areas. Access to sensitive alpine meadow areas and wetland areas will not be permitted.

Commercial Recreation Opportunities

Ecotourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the province. With the aging of the baby boomer generation having a major influence on this growth with respect to increases in disposable income and leisure time, the demand for ecotourism is expected to continue to increase. Many rural communities see this as an opportunity to improve and diversify their local economies. Over the next few years new initiatives in tourism planning for the Kootenay Region will be developed by the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, including tourism and recreation inventories, trends analysis and identification of market opportunities. It is expected that land managers, including the Environmental Stewardship Division, will be able to use this information in planning for existing and future ecotourism opportunities.

Through a wide range of commercial recreation/ecotourism opportunities ranging from guiding to campgrounds to ski resorts, the Environmental Stewardship Division's protected areas system contributes significantly to the economy of the province. Recent studies estimate that provincially the parks system contributes about \$521 million to the provincial GDP with the West Kootenay parks contributing about \$22 million annually.¹⁷

For ecotourism to work successfully in provincial parks, great care must be taken to ensure sustainability of important ecological values and avoid user conflicts. In its final report released in 1999, the Legacy Panel¹⁸ identified a greater public demand to have ecological integrity as the paramount consideration in park management. This is also supported at the regional level by the KBLUP-IS, which recommended a tourism management strategy that considered the opportunities for tourism subject to the prime goal of protecting park values. Major tourism developments are excluded from parks. Infrastructure needs that support tourism, such as roads, lodgings and staging areas, are to be located outside park boundaries.

¹⁷ Economic Benefits of British Columbia Parks by Coopers and Lybrand Consulting, 2001

¹⁸ Panel of non-government individuals appointed by the Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks in 1997 to study various protected area issues. After extensive public consultation throughout the province, the panel made a number of recommendations in their final report published in February 1999.

With wilderness protection being one of the main reasons for establishing the park, commercial activities that compromise the solitude and natural qualities of wilderness such as heli-hiking or snowmobiling would not be compatible. They could be appropriate in adjacent areas with the park providing the scenic setting.

In Goat Range Provincial Park, there are no existing major tourism facilities or infrastructure. There are three types of commercial recreation uses in the park: heli-skiing, snowcat skiing and recreational guiding.

The snowcat skiing operates out of a lodge located on Meadow Mountain adjacent to the park overlooking Mount Cooper. A small portion of the tenure (150 ha) that includes an old fire protection road is located in the park. Another lodge about 5 km to the south of the park along the Kaslo River also provides snowcat skiing and hiking opportunities in view of the peaks on the park boundary.

Heli-skiing is the most significant of the three commercial recreation uses in the park as it involves the greatest number of people and amount of terrain. The overall heli-skiing operating area covers 1,053 square kilometres with one-third located in Goat Range Provincial Park. This represents about 40% of the park area. In terms of skier use, the park accounts for 3,200 skier-runs (1997-98) or about 12% of the overall annual heli-skiing operating area use. This heli-skiing operation is a significant recreation/tourism attraction in the West Kootenays. Based out of a lodge located in the Village of Nakusp, the heli-skiing company earns about 3.5 to 4 million dollars in gross revenues annually and provides 30 person-years of employment. Given that most people who heli-ski (90%) are tourists from outside the country, other associated goods and services providers also benefit from this activity.

The heli-skiing tenure is a License of Occupation (LOC) issued under the *Land Act* with the park portion authorised by Park Use Permit (PUP) under the *Park Act*. The LOC is for a 20-year period and expires in 2012. Included with the tenure is a management plan, which considers recreation, hazards, and public access and wildlife issues.

The heli-skiing operator currently limits impacts on wildlife by avoiding known habitat used by wildlife and by not using an area when there are animals present. Heli-skiing use is also dispersed over the entire tenure including the 60% outside the park to reduce impacts on people and wildlife. The tenure also requires the recording of wildlife sightings and recreational use data, which helps in managing wildlife and recreation.

Unlike some forms of mechanized recreation, heli-skiing is considered by some to be of low impact given that few people use the park in winter, heli-skiers are under the control of a guide, deep snow packs cover the land and that most wildlife are in hibernation. However, Goat Range Provincial Park has some wildlife species that are active in winter and are known to be vulnerable to the impacts associated with the noise of helicopters or the presence of skiers. The winter season is a critical time for mountain goats and mountain caribou as it is the most challenging time for them to survive. Although mountain goats occupy a relatively limited winter habitat, caribou range over a very large area and use the same area as heli-skiers. Winter is also a vulnerable time for wolverines. Denning females with young are also known to use the same areas as heli-skiers and may abandon their dens when approached by people. Scientific studies on the impacts by heli-skiing on these species are rather limited but more research is being done.

Glading ¹⁹ is a common practice in the heli-skiing industry that can have significant impacts on many park values. Unlike minor pruning of vegetation to ensure safe landing of helicopters, glading can cover the much larger area of a ski run and can involve the removal of trees and shrubs. It has not been included in the heli-skiing management plan of the tenure and is contrary to park objectives.

Objectives:

To plan for ecologically sustainable ecotourism opportunities in support of adjacent communities

To continue to permit commercial guiding services, heli-skiing and snowcat skiing, within acceptable limits of impact.

To encourage stewardship of park values by all commercial operators and users.

Strategies:

- Monitor and review the development of the regional tourism strategy.
- Review and assess ecotourism opportunities associated with Goat Range Provincial Park from the Tourism Opportunity Studies.
- Limit new commercial recreation services to low impact proposals that do not require infrastructure to be located in the park.
- Encourage any proposed ecotourism infrastructure to be located in nearby communities.
- Work with existing tenure holders to collect data, develop a stewardship program and a code of conduct consistent with the objectives of the management plan.
- Conduct BC Parks' Impact Assessment Process for new recreation services with specific concerns for the impact on mountain caribou, grizzly bears, mountain goats and wolverines. Quotas may be set for commercial operators and a limit set on public visitation when monitoring shows the environmental and/or wilderness carrying capacities are close to being exceeded.
- Establish limits of change and ecological integrity standards in consultation with other government agencies, the community, First Nations and stakeholders.
- Establish a verifiable monitoring program of recreational use impacts.
- Prohibit further glading of heli-ski runs through the terms of the park use permit.
- Monitor and undertake research, with associated agencies and tenure holders, on the impact of heli-skiing on wildlife and develop improved operational procedures, practices or other management options to minimise impacts on wildlife.

¹⁹ Pruning and or removing of trees and shrubs in ski runs

Access Strategy

The opportunity for a wilderness experience largely depends on how access is managed. Access management helps define the type, impact, distribution and amount of use. It is also important to maintain the wilderness qualities of the park.

Access to this park is available primarily from the south (off Highway 6 and 31A) and from the east (Highway 31) via forestry roads and trails in most of the valleys. There is reportedly over 120 km of abandoned forest and mineral exploration roads within the park. Some of these roads have provided traditional recreational access to remote areas of the park, for which there is still a demand. The standards of maintenance for some of these roads outside the park depend on current resource activities, especially logging. Some roads will deteriorate while others will be improved. Additional roads or road spurs may be developed for logging and create new routes of access to the park. Some roads and trails under the Ministry of Forests road maintenance and recreation program reduction strategies may eventually not be maintained if they no longer serve the interests of the Ministry. Forest Service trails (i.e. Alps Alturas) that provide access to the southern boundary of the park also may eventually not be maintained.

Extensive road networks are found in the park on the slopes above the Lardeau River and leading into some of the tributary valleys. Deterioration of these roads could threaten water quality and fishery values while motorized use may affect wildlife. Prescriptions for road deactivation were prepared in 1996 by the Ministry of Forests. Some roads were partially deactivated prior to park status but funding has prevented the completion of this work.

Much of the access into the southern portions of the park is along short trails originating from Forest Service roads outside of the park. Use of these trails will be affected by use and maintenance of resource roads leading to trailheads, as described in the previous section.

The Poplar Creek Road, which provides traditional access to the centre of the park and within a few kilometres of one of the main recreation features (Poplar Lakes), may become unusable in the near future. According to the Ministry of Forests, this road is no longer required to access timber resources and washes out in places most years. Because of steep slopes and slides, this road is expensive to maintain and too dangerous to leave open to washouts and landslides. This area is also considered of high habitat value and high use by grizzly bears.

The KBLUP-IS indicated that the natural diversity of previously harvested sites and affected habitats will be restored and that some existing access and trails within protected areas could be closed or decommissioned to support primitive wilderness recreation. Given the extensive system of old industrial roads along the west side of the Lardeau River by Mobbs and Tenderfoot creeks, deactivation of these roads could prevent environmental deterioration. This would help ensure the quality of important spawning beds, improve wilderness and visual quality while supporting protection of sensitive alpine areas from high use impacts.

Objectives:

To manage public accesses to the park appropriate for the conservation management intent.

To restore to a natural condition roads not needed for public access and/or important to wilderness values.

To retain public hiking access.

Strategies:

- Develop an agreement between the Ministry of Forests and the Environmental Stewardship Division concerning the management of roads, trails and trailheads on Crown lands that provide access to the park.
- Continue vehicle access to Poplar Lakes trailhead. Should the Ministry of Forests close and permanently deactivate the road to the park boundary, mountain bike access will be encouraged to the Poplar Lakes trailhead as an alternative.
- Allow motorized access to the park boundary at Wilson Creek, Kane Creek, McKian Creek (Meadow Mountain) and along the Highway 31 corridor.
- Close and fully deactivate roads in Mobbs and Tenderfoot creeks area in support of fisheries and wilderness values.
- Prohibit all forms of motorized access into the park except for management purposes and as provided for in this management plan.
- Discourage the development of any further access points into the park other than what has already been proposed.
- Use registration boxes and visitor surveys at access points to monitor users' experiences and social conditions regarding access issues.

Management Services

Goat Range Provincial Park is administered from the Environmental Stewardship Division, Kootenay Regional Office, located in Cranbrook, and the Area Office located in Nelson. Staff ensure that management responsibilities are carried out according to the *Park Act*, the *Park and Recreation Area Regulation* and the established policy and procedures of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. Responsibilities include such priorities as:

- regulating public use to ensure safe and appropriate use of the park;
- maintaining trails and facilities;
- managing permits for commercial uses and research within the park;
- minimizing effects from visitor use;
- conducting environmental rehabilitation and management projects;
- continuation of First Nation traditional uses and collecting data on the park's natural and cultural values; and;
- managing the park's cultural and natural values to ensure their sustainability.

Objectives:

To carry out management responsibilities according to the *Park Act, Park and Recreation Area Regulation* and the guidelines of this management plan.

To develop a close working relationship with other agencies.

Strategies:

- Liaise on a regular basis with groups representing park users and commercial operators to ensure that park management benefits from their broad input.
- Consult with First Nations on the strategies that affect their traditional use.
- Continue to provide seasonal ranger patrols as funding allows.
- Use volunteers where possible to enhance park management.
- Continue to prepare Park Annual Operating Plans to determine the annual management requirements of the park including the management strategies to be implemented.
- Consult with the Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation and the Ecosystem sections of the Regional Operations Branch, Environmental Stewardship Division, on the management of plant and animal species.

Communications

Introduction

Providing current information about provincial parks is an important aspect of visitor service management. Information about Goat Range Provincial Park will serve a number of functions. Firstly, it will assist visitors in planning their visit so they will know what to expect. Secondly, this information will promote outdoor etiquette, respect for the natural environment and careful appreciation of the variety of values found within the park. Thirdly, it will foster an awareness of the cultural and conservation values and features of this area.

Goat Range is primarily a wilderness park, which provides opportunities for recreation in a primitive setting. It offers challenges to the backcountry enthusiast who enjoys an experience in a rugged and remote area. The information provided on the park will reflect its uses and conservation emphasis.

Marketing and Promotion

Promotion of a park can affect the level of use and the type of visitors it attracts. Consequently, promotion strategies must be consistent with the management intent of the park.

The conservation significance and wilderness values of the park must be incorporated into strategies for marketing. There are concerns that promoting backcountry recreation can lead to significant increases in visitors, which in turn can affect park resources and wilderness qualities. Therefore, care must be taken in the type of promotion and marketing programs undertaken. An aggressive marketing campaign is not appropriate for this park.

In addition to the Environmental Stewardship Division, tourism and recreational interests and tourism agencies promote parks in general. Co-ordination is needed to ensure that promotional information is consistent, accurate and in keeping with park objectives, and that marketing is consistent with the role of the park and objectives of the management plan.

Objectives:

To ensure that the promotion and marketing are consistent and appropriate for the park.

To portray the park's role in conserving important habitats and biodiversity.

To provide accurate and appropriate information for low impact backcountry recreational opportunities.

Strategies:

- Work with commercial operators, tourism associations and the media to portray the park in an appropriate manner and create expectations appropriate to a wilderness park.
- Use an informal approach to promoting and advertising the park.
- Create an information strategy that will focus on maintaining use levels consistent with park zoning.
- Use park information shelters at designated access points to provide information to visitors.
- Research and communicate the latest information on low impact use practices.

Pre-trip Planning

Awareness and pre-trip planning information can help to set expectations, enhance the recreational experience, and influence attitudes and behaviours. As an example, although the park is mainly a wilderness area, it is also a major heli-skiing destination in winter, which may periodically affect winter wilderness qualities such as solitude for backcountry skiers. Knowing where heli-skiing will take place ahead of time will help avoid conflicts among users and prevent a compromised recreational experience.

Backcountry visitors using remote and difficult areas need to be independent, self-sufficient and self-reliant. They need to be fully aware of the potential hazards. For example, interactions between park visitors and grizzly bears can result in harm to both the visitor and the bear. Backpackers should be aware of appropriate bear avoidance behaviour and identification of prime grizzly habitat to reduce the chances of encountering a grizzly bear. As backcountry visits increase, public safety, search and rescue, and the impact of use will be growing concerns.

Specific information on pre-trip planning and expectations can be found at the Environmental Stewardship Division's Kootenay Regional Office in Cranbrook, the Area Office in Nelson and on the BC Parks website. Due to the variable climate, rugged nature and remoteness of this park, visitors are urged to be especially vigilant in their pre-trip preparations. They are encouraged to seek out weather reports and maps and to provide their trip itinerary to relatives or friends with departure/return times. Communications from within the park are limited to satellite phones and rescue services are not readily available.

Objectives:

To provide consistent, current and accurate information to visitors.

To clearly indicate to visitors and other tourism outlets that the rugged and remote nature of this park requires special pre-trip planning considerations.

To enhance the backcountry visitors' awareness of the natural features, wilderness etiquette, cultural setting and techniques for respecting bear habitat and avoiding bear encounters.

Strategies:

- Work with local communities and tourism associations in providing appropriate pre-trip planning information.
- Ensure any publications on Goat Range Provincial Park are current and accurate.
- Maintain the natural character of the park by limiting any signage to where it is necessary for visitor safety or the protection of sensitive sites.
- Prepare information for backcountry visitors which describes the natural and cultural features of the park, wilderness recreation etiquette and safety, low impact camping, wildlife viewing techniques, and ways of avoiding bear encounters. The focus will be on pre-trip planning as much as possible.
- Develop with the heli-skiing company an information strategy for backcountry skiers.

Natural and Cultural Heritage Education

The park represents wilderness that protects significant recreation, cultural and natural values. It plays an important role in sharing information about the natural processes and features and cultural history that is unique to this area. The park also represents several unique themes that could be explored in an education or research program. These include:

Natural Heritage: regional landscapes, role of the park in the Central Columbia Mountains Ecosystem, conservation biology.

Cultural Heritage: cultural heritage significance of specific sites in the park, role in First Nation culture, early explorers, and travellers, role in guide outfitting history.

Wilderness Recreation: opportunities available in the park, outdoor safety, wilderness and conservation ethics, human waste disposal, and horseback riding etiquette.

The local community is also interested in having a locally known feature (John Fenger old growth cedar forest) continue to be recognized as a point of interest to visitors. The site is adjacent to Highway 31 near Gerrard and is marked by an old wooden sign.

Objectives:

To share information about the natural, recreational and cultural features and values in the park in order to foster and maintain appreciation of and understanding for its significance and the importance of protecting these features and values.

To interpret the cultural heritage of the park for the public's appreciation and education.

Strategies:

- Ensure that research relating to the role of First Nations in the park involves First Nations peoples and the Archaeology Planning and Assessment Section, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management. Research activities will require a Park Use Permit.
- Produce education and information on the themes described above and make it available on the BC Parks website.
- In concert with First Nations, develop and present information on aboriginal cultural heritage features and themes of the park.
- Continue to provide interpretation information on the Gerrard rainbow trout.
- Develop interpretation signage for the John Fenger old growth cedar site.
- Develop interpretation signage for the Gerrard town site.

Plan Implementation

The plan implementation section provides information about the types of strategies that the Environmental Stewardship Division will implement as funding and resources permit.

High Priority Strategies

- Ensure all trappers have acquired a Park Use Permit in accordance with the *Park and Recreation Area Regulation*.
- Determine through rare ecosystem probability mapping if the two blue-listed plant associations known for the ICHwk1 biogeoclimatic variant still occur in the Poplar Creek drainage or if they occurred in the harvested portions of this drainage.
- On a priority basis, pursue restoration options if the harvested areas in the ICHwk1 are found to contain blue-listed plant associations.
- Apply for funding to implement the recommended prescriptions(s).
- Inventory and monitor the presence of non-native plants along access corridors and recreational use areas. Remove non-native plants as required using the most effective low-impact method available.
- Develop a wildlife inventory with priority on red- and blue-listed species including grizzly bear, mountain caribou and wolverine.

Task or Project Strategies

- Develop predictive ecosystem mapping for the representative ecosystems in the park including areas of the ecosystems outside the park boundary.
- Increase information and understanding of ecosystem values and processes in partnership with other agencies and jurisdictions through the sharing of inventory and research.
- Apply practices and principles, where appropriate, of the Environmental Stewardship Division's evolving ecosystem-based management approach as they are developed.
- Work co-operatively with other government agencies and land managers to ensure mountain caribou and grizzly bear habitats external to the park are maintained, including effective connectivity throughout the region's protected areas, SRMZs and wildlife management areas.
- Work co-operatively with other government agencies, community groups and the public to address key resource issues that affect the ecological integrity of Goat Range Provincial Park (e.g. road developments and deactivation, harvesting plans, cumulative effects of impacts).
- Co-ordinate the development of communication and educational resources with other agencies and private groups to enhance the overall effectiveness of activities that support ecosystem integrity.
- Provide input through provincial review processes for proposed major developments that may impact the park's ecosystem values (including fish and wildlife).
- Work with the Ministry of Forests to retain old growth (age class 8+) stands, riparian, wetlands, flora, fauna, and other values adjacent to the park in support of the KBLUP-IS Conservation Objectives and Strategies.
- Limit habitat fragmentation in the park when considering facilities or uses.

- Develop an ecosystem management strategy that incorporates principles of ecological integrity including the major ecosystem components of vegetation, fish and wildlife and natural processes like fires, insects, and diseases.
- Canvas trapline tenure holders periodically to determine their interest in selling their trapping rights.
- In concert with First Nations, trappers and the Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section, discontinue the trapping of species at risk (e.g. wolverine).
- Complete a vegetation inventory to locate, identify and map plant communities, rare species and threatened plant communities in the Special Features Zones, Natural Environment Zones and areas that could potentially be impacted by recreation.
- Prepare a fire management plan that defines the role of these natural disturbances in the maintenance of natural ecosystem diversity. Until the fire management strategy is prepared, Ministry of Forests and the Environmental Stewardship Division will jointly undertake an initial assessment of all wildfire.
- Prepare a vegetation management plan for the above-mentioned areas that will identify management strategies (excluding commercial logging) for specific issues such as insect infestation, disease and blowdown.
- Undertake appropriate scientific research to determine the health of the Gerrard trout, rainbow trout, bull trout, kokanee and other fish populations in the park's creeks, rivers and lakes.
- Preserve and/or restore Gerrard rainbow trout, rainbow trout, bull trout and kokanee habitats in the Lardeau River and other park creeks, rivers and lakes.
- Develop and implement a fish inventory strategy with other agencies and First Nations to address needs both inside and adjacent to the park.
- Inventory and maintain pure genetic stocks of headwater rainbow trout and resident bull trout in all creeks with priority on the upper Wilson Creek and Burkitt Creek drainages.
- Conduct inventories of indigenous and resident fish populations as required.
- Develop a co-ordinated long-term approach to wildlife management with other government agencies, including Ministry of Forests, and First Nations, with emphasis on species at risk.
- Investigate opportunities to establish Goat Range Provincial Park as a GBMA core or linkage area.
- In concert with First Nations, inventory pre-contact cultural and archaeological features that may be found in the park.
- Research, document and interpret the structural remains of the Gerrard town site.
- Inventory the main fossil features in the park and assess their significance.
- Assess the threat to the fossil features by natural forces such as erosion or disturbance by park visitors.
- Develop preventative measures (e.g. monitoring, education and enforcement) to address the threat of extraction or impacts on fossils.
- Designate a small wilderness hike-in campsite at Poplar Lakes away from areas frequented by grizzly bears.
- Develop a valley trail in the lower Wilson Creek drainage.
- Develop a short loop trail from the end of the Whitewater Creek trail.
- Designate the east ridge of McKian Creek (Meadow Mountain) to a proposed view point of Mountain Cooper for multi-use including hiking, mountain biking and snowmobiling.
- In concert with First Nations, hunters and the Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section, seek to discontinue the hunting of grizzly bears in the park. Closure of the park to grizzly bear harvest would necessitate an adjustment to the allowable annual harvest in the Central Selkirks Grizzly Bear Population Unit, in accordance with the Harvest Management Procedure for Grizzly Bears.
- Investigate and assess the use and interpretation potential of the First Nation historic route from Cooper Creek to Wilson Creek.
- Prohibit all forms of mechanized recreation in all areas of the park except as provided for elsewhere in this management plan.

- Encourage, through inter-agency planning processes, mechanized recreation outside the park in areas unlikely to impact wildlife connectivity.
- Upgrade to provincial standards the 6-site vehicle accessible campsite at Trout Lake.
- Allow backcountry horseback riding by permit on a dispersed basis to non-environmentally sensitive areas. Access to sensitive alpine meadow areas and wetland areas will not be permitted.
- Review and assess ecotourism opportunities associated with Goat Range Provincial Park from the Tourism Opportunity Studies.
- Establish limits of change and ecological integrity standards in consultation with other government agencies, the community, First Nations and stakeholders.
- Establish a verifiable monitoring program of recreational use impacts.
- Prohibit further glading of heli-ski runs through the terms of the park use permit.
- Develop an agreement between the Ministry of Forests and the Environmental Stewardship Division concerning the management of roads, trails and trailheads on Crown lands that provide access to the park.
- Continue vehicle access to Poplar Lakes trailhead. Should the Ministry of Forests close and permanently deactivate the road to the park boundary, mountain bike access will be encouraged to the Poplar Lakes trailhead as an alternative.
- Discourage the development of any further access points into the park other than what has already been proposed.
- Use registration boxes and visitor surveys at access points to monitor users' experiences and social conditions regarding access issues.
- Allow motorized access to the park boundary at Wilson Creek, Kane Creek, McKian Creek (Meadow Mountain) and along the Highway 31 corridor.
- Close and fully deactivate roads in Mobbs and Tenderfoot creeks area in support of fisheries and wilderness values.
- Prohibit all forms of motorized access into the park except for management purposes and as provided for in this management plan.
- Work with commercial operators to develop a co-ordinated approach to promoting the park.
- Consult with the Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation and the Ecosystem sections of the Regional Operations Branch, Environmental Stewardship Division, on the management of plant and animal species.
- Create an information strategy that will focus on maintaining use levels consistent with park zoning.
- Research and communicate the latest information on low impact use practices.
- Use park information shelters at designated access points to provide information to visitors.
- Work with local communities and tourism associations in providing appropriate pre-trip planning information.
- Prepare information for backcountry visitors which describes the natural and cultural features of the park, wilderness recreation etiquette and safety, low impact camping, wildlife viewing techniques, and ways of avoiding bear encounters.
- Develop with the heli-skiing company an information strategy for backcountry skiers.
- Produce education and information brochures on the themes described above and make them available on the BC Parks website.
- In concert with First Nations, develop and present information on aboriginal cultural heritage features and themes of the park.
- Develop interpretation signage for the John Fenger old growth cedar site.
- Develop interpretation signage for the Gerrard town site.

Ongoing or Monitoring Strategies

- Monitor and provide input into Landscape Unit Planning, Forest Development Plans, mineral exploration projects, and Commercial Recreation Proposals.
- Monitor harvest volumes and encourage conservative targets for hunting and trapping.
- Include assessment of the impact on ecosystem health of harvesting fur-bearing animals when considering the ecosystem requirements for species at risk.
- Minimise impacts that may arise in the future on fur-bearing animals.
- Retain wildlife trees except where there is a hazard to visitors or facilities whereupon a Wildlife/Danger Tree Assessment will be conducted to determine the highest value and any remedial action.
- Ensure recreational activities have minimal impact on erosion of surface materials and do not compromise water quality.
- Assess and manage use to ensure proper disposal of human waste.
- Ensure sanitary facilities are properly designed and located.
- Prohibit water impoundment, diversions, or new domestic use projects in accordance with the *Park Act*.
- Monitor water quality periodically in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Division.
- Work with the Ministry of Forests and other agencies to protect the park's aquatic resources, especially the Trout Lake, Lardeau River, Healy Creek and Lake Creek areas.
- Ensure adequate water supply and quality for Gerrard rainbow trout and other resident fish stocks.
- Maintain the fishing closure on the Lardeau River.
- Ensure sanitary facilities in the park are non-polluting.
- Contribute to the maintenance of opportunities at the regional level for genetic interchange between populations inside and outside the park.
- Increase the knowledge and understanding of wildlife and their habitat requirements both inside and outside the park.
- Encourage research aimed at achieving a better understanding of mountain caribou, mountain goats, grizzly bears and wolverines.
- Manage wildlife values as a higher priority over recreational activities.
- Encourage the assistance of volunteers and others to collect wildlife data with BC Parks Observation Cards (e.g. bird watching clubs, anglers, heli-skiing operators, etc.).
- Manage bear/human conflict in accordance with the BC Parks Bear-People Conflict Prevention Plan.
- Protect 'in situ' important features, sacred sites and archaeological sites. Such sites will not be identified on any public park literature in order to protect them from damage.
- Implement the BC Archaeological Assessment Guidelines whenever development plans for other resources have the potential to disturb archaeological sites.
- Work with First Nations and the Archaeology Planning and Assessment Section, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, in managing the archaeological and heritage resources in the park.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the location of fossils.
- Locate and design all park facilities in harmony with the visual setting and in accordance with park zoning objectives.
- Encourage the Ministry of Forests and forest licensees to help ensure, through the Forest Development Plan Review Process, that areas outside the park boundary are managed in accordance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* to protect viewscales.
- Work with the Ministry of Forests and other agencies to protect the visual integrity of the park from impacts of adjacent uses.

- Encourage colleges, universities, other agencies and corporate sponsors to establish funding for and to undertake appropriate and timely research studies, including inventory and monitoring of values at risk.
- Limit scientific research that involves collecting specimens.
- Ensure that any material that is collected for scientific research will remain the property of the Province of British Columbia, regardless of where it is stored.
- Maintain the Mobbs Creek Canyon trail.
- Encourage the continuation of Whitewater, Alps Alturus and Mount Brennan trail accesses to the southern boundary of the park.
- Close, relocate or improve trails as required if bear and visitor safety problems arise.
- Assess conditions and monitor backcountry visitor numbers and destinations to protect natural values in accordance with the Backcountry Recreation Impact Monitoring (BRIM) policies.
- Educate visitors about minimum impact camping at all sites in the park to avoid site degradation and minimise human-bear conflicts.
- Encourage the use of portable campstoves instead of open campfires to reduce the potential of forest fires and the use of wood for campfires.
- Assess, monitor, and regulate hunting in co-operation with First Nations, hunters, and special interest groups to ensure conservation objectives are met.
- Obtain updated wildlife data in order to manage for sustainable wildlife populations and appropriate hunting levels.
- Review proposed changes with First Nations and recreational hunters.
- Monitor and review the development of the regional tourism strategy.
- Limit new commercial recreation services to low impact proposals that do not require infrastructure to be located in the park, in accordance with the KBLUP-IS.
- Encourage any proposed ecotourism infrastructure to be located in nearby communities.
- Work with existing tenure holders to collect data, and develop a stewardship program and a code of conduct consistent with the objectives of the management plan.
- Conduct BC Parks' Impact Assessment Process for new recreation services with specific concerns for the impact on mountain caribou, grizzly bears, mountain goats and wolverine.
- Monitor and undertake research, with associated agencies and tenure holders, on the impact of heli-skiing on wildlife and develop improved operational procedures, practices or other management options to minimise impacts that may threaten wildlife.
- Liaise on a regular basis with groups representing park users and commercial operators to ensure that the park benefits from the greatest possible input.
- Consult with First Nations on the strategies that affect their traditional use.
- Continue to provide seasonal ranger patrols as funding allows.
- Use volunteers where possible to enhance park management.
- Continue to prepare Park Annual Operating Plans to determine the annual management requirements of the park including the management strategies to be implemented.
- Work with commercial operators, tourism associations and the media to portray the park in an appropriate manner and create expectations fitting of a wilderness park.
- Use an informal approach to promoting and advertising the park.
- Ensure any publications on Goat Range Provincial Park is current and accurate.
- Maintain the natural character of the park by limiting any signage to where it is necessary for visitor safety and/or the protection of sensitive sites.
- Ensure that research relating to the role of First Nations in the park involves First Nations peoples and the Archaeology Planning and Assessment Section, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management.

- Continue to provide interpretation information on the Gerrard rainbow trout.
- Develop interpretation signage for the Gerrard town site.

Appendix A – KBLUP-IS: Chapter 4 Protected Areas

4.1 Introduction

One of the purposes of regional and sub-regional land use planning processes, including the West Kootenay-Boundary Land-Use Plan, has been to implement the provincial government's Protected Areas Strategy (PAS). The PAS has two goals:

Goal 1 – Representation: To protect viable examples of the natural diversity of the province, representative of the major terrestrial, marine, and freshwater ecosystems, the characteristic habitats, hydrology and landforms, and the characteristic backcountry recreational and cultural heritage values of each ecosection.

Goal 2 - Special Features Protection: To protect the special natural, cultural heritage and recreational features of the province, including rare and endangered species and critical habitats, outstanding or unique botanical, zoological, geological, and paleontological features, outstanding or fragile cultural heritage features, and outstanding outdoor recreational features.

The Kootenay-Boundary Regional Land-Use regional planning process dealt primarily with the PAS Goal 1. Further work is required to complete the Goal 2 process.

As a result of the West Kootenay-Boundary Land Use regional planning process, the provincial government, in July 1995, established nine new protected areas. Through designation under the *Park Act*, all new protected areas have become Class A provincial parks. Consequently, the terms 'provincial parks' and 'protected areas' are used interchangeably in the KBLUP Implementation Strategy.

The establishment of the new protected areas plays an essential role in the realisation of the plan's environmental conservation objectives, particularly through contribution towards general biodiversity maintenance and the protection of essential habitat areas for maintenance of species health. The parks also contribute significantly to regional recreational and cultural heritage objectives, as well as to long-term economic objectives.

The following section identifies general management objectives and strategies for the region's new protected areas. A description of each new park and an indication of further planning priorities are included in Table 4.1.

**4.2 General Management Objectives and Strategies for New Parks
in the Kootenay/Boundary Region**

PROTECTED AREA OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
<p>Park Planning</p>	
<p>1. To develop comprehensive park master plans, over time, for each new protected area in order to ensure the maintenance of the conservation, recreation and cultural heritage values within the new protected areas.</p>	<p>1.1 Park master plans will be developed for each new protected area in accordance with the availability of budget resources and the general park planning priorities identified in the overview of new protected areas within Appendices 1-7.</p> <p>1.2 Park master plans will be developed with the benefit of extensive public and inter-agency participation. Among other things, the plans will define park-specific management objectives, acceptable levels of use, accepted uses, zoning, and other strategies that will minimise conflicts, help ensure the integrity of important park values.</p> <p>1.3 Park master planning processes will consider existing uses and management objectives and strategies (as identified in this regional plan and in operational level plans) for lands that are adjacent to the protected areas.</p> <p>1.5 Provincial park master planning processes will include consultation with tourism industry representatives in order to examine potential commercial opportunities within provincial park land, subject to the prime goal to protect the conservation, recreation, and cultural heritage values within the parks. Commercial opportunities will be assessed with a view towards limiting / locating the development of physical commercial infrastructure (e.g., roads, lodgings, staging areas, etc.) on the periphery of park boundaries in order to minimise park impacts.</p> <p>1.6 Pending the development of comprehensive park master plans for each new protected area, the management guidance that is provided in BC Parks’ “<i>Management Direction Statements</i>” would be used to direct park management and operations.</p> <p>1.7 Upon completion of Goal 2, management direction statements will be prepared for those new protected areas.</p> <p>1.8 Resource issues adjacent to park boundaries will be identified and the responsible government agencies will work together to address them.</p>

Pre-Existing Tenures and In-Holdings	
<p>2. To recognize the legal rights of pre-existing tenure holders and landowners within newly established parks in the region, and to deal fairly with those interests.</p>	<p>2.1 Pre-existing mineral and timber tenures and other tenures / encumbrances associated with commodity extraction (e.g., gravel reserves) will be discontinued within new protected areas. The terms of discontinuance will be negotiated with owners of pre-existing tenure interests, in accordance with provincial policy respecting resource rights compensation. Tenure discontinuance negotiations will also consider ongoing silviculture obligations (e.g., free-to-grow requirements), and rehabilitation of harvested areas and roads in key locations.</p> <p>2.2 Pre-existing tenures within new protected areas for utility rights-of-way, communication sites, grazing, commercial backcountry recreation, commercial heli-skiing or hiking, guide-outfitting, trapping, water works and use, etc., will be permitted to continue, in accordance with the existing management conditions attached to those tenures. In the future, the management conditions attached to those tenures may be amended to comply with the requirements of park master plans that are developed for individual protected areas.</p> <p>2.3 Existing grazing authorisations issued under the Range Act within new (1995) protected areas will continue to be managed according to the Range Act are fully transferable. Where pre-existing tenures other than Range Act tenures lapse or are voluntarily surrendered by a tenure holder, the province is under no obligation to re-issue the tenure rights to a new party. Whether or not tenure rights are to be re-issued should be resolved through the protected areas management planning process.</p> <p>2.4 Existing owners of private land in-holdings within new parks will continue to exercise their property rights, and existing opportunities for access to those properties will be addressed.</p>

Natural Occurrences	
<p>3. To protect key park values and adjacent private property, as appropriate, from natural occurrences in protected areas.</p>	<p>3.1 Where appropriate, natural occurrences in new parks, such as fires, insects, forest diseases, will be managed as in other provincial parks, through consultation and joint action by BC Parks, BC Environment and the Ministry of Forests at the District level.</p> <p>3.2 Fire management plans will be developed for areas within new parks that are proximate to residential settlement, and where traditional land management includes burning for winter range enhancement.</p>
Park Management	
<p>4. To maintain ecosystem representation and ensure protection of key representative features.</p>	<p>4.1 Park management emphasis will be placed on maintaining the ecosystems and features for which these areas were established.</p> <p>4.2 Parks will be managed to compliment biodiversity objectives across landscape units, where appropriate.</p> <p>4.3 Where existing grazing tenures occur, alpine and subalpine grassland meadows will be maintained in conjunction with MOF through application of high elevation grassland guidelines.</p> <p>4.4 Sound park management relies on good resource information. BC Parks, BC Environment and the Ministry of Forests will work together to collect resource inventory for the new parks.</p> <p>4.5 The natural diversity of previously harvested sites and affected habitats will be restored through negotiation of silvicultural obligations.</p> <p>4.6 Previously open forests and grasslands have become ingrown because of fire suppression. Where appropriate, vegetation management will be undertaken primarily using fire to restore natural grasslands.</p>

<p>5. To ensure protection of key species and their habitats.</p>	<p>5.1 BC Parks will work with other agencies to ensure connectivity of wildlife habitat between the park and surrounding area.</p> <p>5.2 Opportunities to establish grizzly bear benchmarks for scientific study and management will be investigated.</p> <p>5.3 Rare, endangered and at risk species and their habitats will be protected.</p> <p>5.4 Ungulate habitat and cover and site-specific features will be considered in management processes.</p>
<p>6. To maintain backcountry recreation opportunities.</p>	<p>6.1 While BC Parks will continue to manage parks to provide a wide range of recreational experiences, protected areas will provide the primary opportunities for primitive and wilderness recreation. Where appropriate, existing access and trails within protected areas may be closed or decommissioned to support primitive recreational experiences. Similarly, recreational access to some areas may be limited to maintain the quality of recreational experience.</p> <p>6.2 Levels of recreational use and associated impacts will be monitored and management applied where necessary to maintain the wilderness qualities, where appropriate.</p> <p>6.3 BC Parks will work with MOF to promote good visual design of logging and appropriate access management in areas adjacent to parks.</p>
<p>7. To plan and manage parks in a manner which reflects the cultural heritage.</p>	<p>7.1 Local First Nations will be consulted to establish traditional use in the area.</p> <p>7.2 Options to work in co-operation with First Nations in the management of area will be identified in the treaty process.</p> <p>7.3 European history will be considered in the management strategies.</p>

Table 4.1

**New Protected Areas (Class A Provincial Parks)
Established as a Result of the Regional Land Use Plans**

Park Name	Approx. Area (ha)	Priority for Development of Park Master Plan
<i>East Kootenay LUP</i>		
Akamina – Kishinena	10,921	Moderate
Bugaboo	13,646	High
Upper Cummins	6,1081	Low
East Purcells	36,938	Moderate
Elk Lakes	17,245	High
Gilnockie	2,822	Low
Height of the Rockies	53,964	High
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>141,717</i>	
<i>West Kootenay/BLUP</i>		
Gladstone	39,361	High
Goat Range	78,936	High
Granby	40,845	High
Kianuko	11,677	Moderate
Lockhart Creek	3,751	Moderate
West Arm	25,254	High
Syringa	4,191	Low
Kokanee Glacier Extension	6,203	Moderate
West Purcells	32,662	Low
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>242,880</i>	
<i>Total Area</i>	<i>383,182</i>	

Note: the Findlay corridor within the East Purcells is protected under the *Environment and Land Use Act*.

Appendix B - BC Parks System Goals

Conservation

BC Parks has two conservation goals:

- Goal 1** Protection of Representative Landscapes - To conserve British Columbia's natural diversity by protecting viable, representative examples of our different landscapes.
- Goal 2** Protection of Special Features - To protect British Columbia's key natural and cultural features, includes outstanding examples of our wildlife, old-growth forests, waterfalls, and cultural artifacts.

Recreation

BC Parks has four recreation goals:

- Goal 1** Tourism Travel Routes - To provide park attractions and services, which enhance tourism travel routes.
- Goal 2** Outdoor Recreation Holiday Destinations - To provide park attractions which serve as or improve key destinations for outdoor recreation holidays.
- Goal 3** Backcountry - To provide outstanding backcountry recreation opportunities throughout the province. Some sites may feature adventure tourism, while in other areas the wilderness would remain untouched.
- Goal 4** Local Recreation - To ensure access to local outdoor recreation opportunities for all residents of this province.

Appendix C – Species at Risk

Potential Use of Goat Range Provincial Park by Species at Risk and of Management Interest to Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection

Seasonal abundance and distribution of species at risk potentially occurring in the biogeoclimatic zones of Goat Range Provincial Park (from Ministry of Forests “Wildlife Diversity in BC”)

X = Species of management interest potentially occurring in biogeoclimatic zones of Central Columbia Mountains (from Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection)

Status: R = Red-listed; B = Blue-listed; X = management interest by Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection for species of CCM

Seasonal abundance: Lower case = uncommon, scarce, or rare; Upper case = common or abundant.

- P = spring (March-May)
- S = summer (June-August)
- A = autumn (September – November)
- W = winter (December – February)
- M = migratory (spring and autumn)
- Y = yearlong

Common name	Status	Seasonal abundance and distribution			
		ICHmw	ICHwk	ESSFwc	AT
Large Carnivores					
Grizzly bear	B	Y	Y	SAW	psa
Black bear		X	X		
Ungulates					
Caribou	B	SW	Y	Y	S
Mountain goat	X	X	X	X	X
Moose	X	X	X		
Mule deer	X	X	X	X	
White tailed deer	X	X			
Small Carnivores					
Fisher	B	Y	y	Y	
Marten	X	X	X	X	X
Wolverine	B	Y	Y	y	S
Small Mammals					
Common pika					X
Hoary marmot	X	X			X
Red-tailed chipmunk	R	Y		Y	
Least chipmunk	B			Y	
Northern pocket gopher	R	Y		y	

Common name	Status	Seasonal abundance and distribution			
		ICHmw	ICHwk	ESSFwc	AT
Long-tailed weasel	R				y
Northern flying squirrel	X	X	X		
Cascade mantled ground squirrel	B				y
Beaver	X	X	X		
Muskrat	X	X	X		
Northern long-eared myotis	R	S	s	S	
Townsend's big-eared bat	B	Y			
Reptiles and Amphibians					
Leopard frog	R	Y	y		
Painted turtle	B	Y	y		
Rubber boa	B	Y			
Water Birds					
Western grebe	R	Sm	sm		
Harlequin duck	X	X	X	X	
American white pelican	R	Sm			
Trumpeter swan	B	Wm			
Long-tailed duck	B	M	m	m	m
Surf scoter	B	M	m	m	m
Northern pintail	X	X			
Common loon	X	X		X	
Horned grebe	X	X			
Barrow's goldeneye	X	X			
Mallard	X	X		X	
Canada goose	X	X			
American wigeon	X	X			
Green-winged teal	X	X			
Common Golden eye	X	X			
Greater scaup	X	X			
Lesser scaup	X	X			
Bufflehead	X	X			
Black tern	X	X			
Raptors and Owls					
Peregrine falcon	R	Sm	ps	ps	
Prairie falcon	R	S			
Turkey vulture	B	Ps	s		
Bald eagle	B	SwM	Psa	ps	
Swainson's hawk	B	M		ps	
Gyrfalcon	B	Ps	s		
Barn owl	B	Psw			
Short-eared owl	B	Wm	p		
Northern Hawk-owl	X			X	
Barred owl	X	X	X	X	

Common name	Status	Seasonal abundance and distribution			
		ICHmw	ICHwk	ESSFwc	AT
Northern goshawk	X	X	X	X	
Golden eagle	X			X	X
Cooper's hawk	X	X	X	X	
Shorebirds, Cranes and Herons					
Upland sandpiper	R		s		
Double-crested cormorant	B	S	a		
American bittern	B	Sm	sa		
Great blue heron	B	SwM	sa		
Sandhill crane	B	M			
American Avocet	B	X			
Lesser golden-plover	B	A			
Short-billed dowitcher	B	S			
Red-necked phalarope	B	Ps	s	s	s
Common Snipe	X	X			
Killdeer	X	X			
Spotted sandpiper	X	X	X	X	X
Western sandpiper	X	X			
Gallinaceous Birds					
California gull	B	Psaw	sa		
White-tailed ptarmigan	X				X
Blue grouse	X			X	
Ruffed grouse	X	X	X		
Black-chinned hummingbird	B	Ps			
Woodpeckers					
Lewis' woodpecker	B	Sm	a		
Pileated woodpecker	X	X	X		
Downy woodpecker	X	X	X		
Three-toed woodpecker	X			X	
Passerines, Swifts and Goatsuckers					
Vaux' swift	X	X			
Western kingbird	X	X			
Eastern kingbird	X	X	X		
Willow flycatcher	X	X	X		
Olive-sided flycatcher	X	X	X	X	
Horned lark	X	X			X
Tree swallow	X	X	X		X
Bank swallow	X	X	X		
Northern Rough-winged swallow	X	X	X		
Violet-green swallow	X	X	X		X
Cliff swallow	X	X	X		X
Clark's nutcracker	X	X			
Gray jay	X		X	X	

Common name	Status	Seasonal abundance and distribution			
		ICHmw	ICHwk	ESSFwc	AT
Boreal chickadee	X			X	
Mountain chickadee	X	X	X	X	
Red-breasted nuthatch	X	X	X		
Winter wren	X	X	X		
Marsh wren	X	X			
American dipper	X	X	X	X	
Western bluebird	X	X			
Veery	X	X	X		
Water pipit	X	X	X	X	X
Northern shrike	X	X	X		
Lark sparrow	B	Ps			
Nashville warbler	X	X	X		
Western meadowlark	X	X			
Lazuli bunting	X	X	X		
Red-winged blackbird	X	X			
Yellow-headed blackbird	X	X			
Vesper sparrow	X	X			
Golden-crowned sparrow	X	X			X
Yellow-rumped warbler	X	X	X	X	
MacGillivray's warbler	X	X	X		
Pine grosbeak	X	X	X	X	
Rosy finch	X	X	X	X	X
American goldfinch	X	X			
Bobolink	B	Ps			

Appendix D – Management Planning Zoning Descriptions

BC PARKS MANAGEMENT PLANNING ZONING SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

	Intensive Recreation	Natural Environment
OBJECTIVE	To provide for a variety of readily accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.	To protect scenic values and to provide for backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.
USE LEVEL	Relatively high density and long duration types of use.	Relatively low use but higher levels in association with nodes of activity or access.
MEANS OF ACCESS	All-weather public roads or other types of access where use levels are high (see "Impacts" below).	Mechanized (powerboats, snowmobiles, all terrain vehicles), non-mechanized (foot, horse, canoe, bicycle). Aircraft and motorboat access to drop-off and pickup points will be permitted.
LOCATION	Contiguous with all-weather roads and covering immediate areas modified landscapes or other high-use areas.	Removed from all-weather roads but easily accessible on a day-use basis. Accessible by mechanized means such as boat or plane.
SIZE OF ZONE	Small; usually less than 2,000 ha.	Can range from small to large.
BOUNDARY DEFINITION	Includes areas of high facility development in concentrated areas.	Boundaries should consider limits of activity/facility areas relative to ecosystem characteristics and features.
RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES	Vehicle camping, picnicking, beach activities, power-boating, canoeing, kayaking, strolling, historic and nature appreciation, fishing, snow play, downhill and cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, specialised activities.	Walk-in/boat-in camping, power-boating, hunting, canoeing, kayaking, backpacking, historic and nature appreciation, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, river rafting, horseback riding, heli-skiing, heli-hiking, and specialised activities.

Special Feature	Wilderness Recreation	Wilderness Conservation
To protect and present significant natural or cultural resources, features, or processes because of their special character, fragility, and heritage values.	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.	To protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide unassisted backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment where no motorized activities will be allowed.
Generally low.	Very low use, to provide solitary experiences and a wilderness atmosphere. Use may be controlled to protect the environment.	Very low use, to provide solitary experiences and a wilderness atmosphere. Use may be controlled to protect the environment.
Various; may require special access permit.	Non-mechanized; except may permit low frequency air access to designated sites; foot, canoe (horses may be permitted).	Non-mechanized (no air access); foot, canoe (horses may be permitted).
Determined by location of special resources; may be surrounded by or next to any of the other zones.	Remote; not easily visited on a day-use basis.	Remote; not easily visited on a day-use basis.
Small; usually less than 2000 hectares.	Large; greater than 5,000 hectares.	Large; greater than 5,000 hectares.
Area defined by biophysical characteristics or the nature and extent of cultural resources (adequate to afford protection).	Defined by ecosystem limits and geographic features. Boundaries will encompass areas of visitor interest for specific activities supported by air access. Will be designated under the Park Act.	Defined by ecosystem limits and geographic features. Will be designated under the Park Act.
Sightseeing, historic and nature appreciation. May be subject to temporary closures or permanently restricted access.	Backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, river rafting, nature and historic appreciation, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, specialised activities (e.g. caving, climbing).	Backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, river rafting, nature and historic appreciation, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, specialised activities (e.g. caving, climbing).

	Intensive Recreation	Natural Environment
FACILITIES	May be intensely developed for user convenience. Roads, trails, campgrounds, picnic/play areas, boat launches, visitor and administrative buildings, service compounds, gravel pits, disposal sites, parking lots, etc.	Moderately developed for user convenience. Trails, walk-in/boat-in campsites, shelters, service buildings may be permitted; facilities for motorized access e.g. docks, landing strips, fuel storage, etc.
IMPACTS ON NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	Includes natural resource features and phenomena in a primarily natural state but where human presence may be readily visible both through the existence of recreation facilities and of people using the zone. Includes areas of high facility development with significant impact on concentrated areas.	Area where human presence on the land is not normally visible, facility development limited to relatively small areas. Facilities are visually compatible with natural setting.
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES	Intensive management of natural values and/or control of visitor activities. Landscape changes may occur to increase carrying capacity of the area. Direct management intervention may occur to protect natural values and enhance recreation opportunities. Compatible scientific research and monitoring encouraged.	Management oriented to maintaining a natural environment where visitor access may be restricted to preserve the recreation experience or to limit impacts. Direct management intervention may occur to protect natural values or enhance recreation opportunities. Compatible scientific research and monitoring is encouraged.
RECREATION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES	Management oriented toward maintaining a high quality recreation experience. Requires careful management and upkeep of intensive use outdoor recreation facilities. Facilities designed for efficient operation while remaining unobtrusive to the park visitor.	Management oriented to presenting high quality recreation experiences in a natural setting. Separation of less compatible recreational activities and methods of transportation may be necessary to avoid potential conflicts (e.g. horse trails, cycle paths, hiking trails).
EXAMPLES OF ZONING	Campground in Rath Trevor Beach Park; Gibson Pass ski area in E.C. Manning Park.	Core area in Cathedral Park; North beach in Naikoon Park.

Special Feature	Wilderness Recreation	Wilderness Conservation
Interpretive facilities only, resources are to be protected.	Minimal facility development for user convenience and safety, and protection of the environment e.g. trails, primitive campsites, etc. Some basic facilities at access points, e.g. dock, primitive shelter, etc.	None.
Natural values are to be protected. Interpretation facilities to be limited to small areas.	Natural area generally free of evidence of modern human beings. Evidence of human presence is confined to specific facility sites. Facilities are visually compatible with natural setting.	Natural area generally free of evidence of modern human beings.
High level of management protection with ongoing monitoring. Natural processes will normally be allowed to continue unhindered; in some instances, protection of rare, unique, outstanding, threatened and endangered natural values may require specific management intervention. Visitor access may be restricted to preserve the recreation experience and limit impacts. Any scientific study must be clearly justified and carried out under permit.	High level of management protection for pristine wildland. Active resource management programs may be allowed if essential for protection of significant natural values. Visitor access may be restricted to protect the natural environment and visitor experience.	Highest level of management protection for pristine wildland. Natural processes will be allowed to continue unhindered. Specific management intervention will not be permitted unless essential to protection or survival of significant natural values. Visitor access may be restricted to protect the natural environment and visitor experience.
Management dedicated to educating visitors through interpretation of features. Visitor access may be restricted to limit damage to features. Facility development and visitor use will be determined by the area's carrying capacity.	Management dedicated to maintaining a visitor recreation experience of solitude, freedom, and physical challenge in a primitive natural setting. Facility development and visitor use will be determined by the area's carrying capacity.	Management dedicated to maintaining a visitor recreation experience of solitude, freedom, and physical challenge in a primitive natural setting. Visitor use will be determined by the area's carrying capacity.
Tidepools in Botanical Beach Park; Sunshine Meadows in Mount Assiniboine Park.	Quanchus Mountains Wilderness in Tweedsmuir Park; Moose River Valley in Mount Robson Park.	Central Valhallas Wilderness in Valhalla Park; Garibaldi Park Nature Conservancy area.

Appendix E - Summary of Public Comments: Draft Goat Range Park Management Plan

Introduction:

A series of public open houses were held in West Kootenay communities including Nelson, Castlegar, Nakusp, New Denver, Kaslo and Meadow Creek at the end of November 2000 to review the Draft Management Plan for Goat Range Provincial Park. About 150 people attended and about 78 written submissions were received. The submissions varied from simple hand written notes to 20 page reports. This summary is intended to provide an indication of what people said about the draft plan, provide some response from the Ministry of water, Land and Air Protection on those ideas, and to indicate how the various parts of the draft plan will be revised or retained.

The number in brackets after each of the recorded comments indicates the number of identical or similar comments received. Some of the questions or comments may be answered in sections other than the ones they have been recorded in. Also, some questions or comments were unclear and have not been addressed. The numerous editorial comments are also not included but the changes were made to the plan.

Most noted concerns for Goat Range: (representing 78 people in total)

In addition to supporting the preservation of the park, cultural values, wildlife management, and access management are the main issues. Various individual comments that reported on heli-skiing including comment from the ski operator himself or herself. The people in support of horse use were quite vocal and although there were several individual comments, there were no negative comments on horse use.

52% support the preservation of the park (likely more as noted above), and 33% say that preservation of wilderness values is important.

There were a significant number of people (40%) who would like a Wilderness Conservation Zone in the park. In addition, a few comments mention a buffer zone around the park to protect wildlife and corridors.

- 66% are against logging for insect outbreaks or for any other reason.
- 42% urge the government to buy out all trapping licenses.
- 41% oppose hunting of blue-listed species.
- Over 20% said there should be no hunting at all.
- 46% insist that the Environmental Stewardship Division consult with and involve the Sinixt aboriginal people on the management of the park.
- 53% of respondents oppose expansion of air access in the park.
- 65% support the ban on ground-based motorized recreation vehicles.
- 27% want a study done to see if wildlife is being affected by heli-ski operations.

Issue: Roles of Park / Vision Statement

Public Comments:

- Support the preservation of Goat Range PP. (41)
- The preservation of wilderness values is a requirement. (26)
- Do not allow Spirit Bear's habitat to be disturbed. (1)
- Cut the size back to 50,000 ha as proposed by the MOF. (1)
- I look forward to seeing revisions done to your fundamentally good plan that takes a much stronger protective role and does not leave the loose holes in the wall for vested interests to continue to erode the high protected values of the Goat Range Park. (1)
- The role is more than protection but preservation of wilderness (1)
- Restoration of clear cuts should not be in the vision but the responsibility of MOF (1)
- Commercial recreation should not be part of the vision(1)
- Little mention is made of the qualities of wilderness such as solitude and scenery (1)
- Private and public interests should not be a factor in ecosystem based management (1)

Commentary:

The majority of people support that the preservation of wilderness in Goat Range Provincial Park be the focus of the role and vision for management of the park. This is consistent with the management direction from the Kootenay-Boundary Land-Use Plan for the park to be conserved for wilderness.

Restoring clear cuts to a natural state is an important goal that needs to be included in the vision regardless of who or how it is achieved.

Commercial recreation has been a very significant factor for many years and affects many aspects of park management. It is a major management issue that needs to be included in the management vision for the park.

Plan Recommendation:

The management vision and role of the park has the protection of wilderness as its central focus. Some clarification of the qualities of wilderness and the application of ecosystem-based management will be made.

Issue: Zoning

Public Comments:

- I would like to see that more emphasis is given on wilderness conservation than recreation and urge that a much larger part of the park be put in this category. (1)
- The overall concern that I have is that the Goat Range and West Arm Provincial Parks be preserved and that all endeavours to trade off areas of these parks (for watersheds, as some have proposed) be refused. (1)
- The current zonation as wilderness recreation leaves the park very vulnerable to expanded heli-skiing, heli-hiking, lodges and other developments. If the current zoning can't meet the requirements for absolute further preservation then a zone must be created that does. (1)
- Support a large Wilderness Conservation Zone designated in the Goat Range PP. (29)
- Heli-skiing operations should not prevent the park from being zoned Wilderness Conservation Area if it is carefully controlled to minimise impact on wildlife. (1)
- Need a buffer zone around parks to include wildlife corridors. (2)
- Cancel all activities that prevent changing the wilderness recreation zone to wilderness conservation (1)

Commentary:

Given the significant values and size of the park as well as the wilderness emphasis in the vision and role, it would be expected that park zoning with the highest level of wilderness conservation (Wilderness Conservation Zone) would be used for a significant area of the park. However, the limiting factors to using this tool are the tenured uses in the park such as heli-skiing and trapping that were required to be retained as a result of the KBLUP (Kootenay-Boundary Land-Use Plan). Hunting is also an associated limiting factor not included in Wilderness Conservation Zones. While concerns for the development of lodges and expanded heli-skiing could be addressed with the wilderness conservation zone these issues can also be addressed by other means. Provision has been made in the plan to address these factors with the hope that over time resolution of these issues will permit some portions of the park to be established as Wilderness Conservation Zone(s).

Plan Recommendation:

The zoning plan remains the same but appropriate and inappropriate activities, facilities and management actions are specifically defined for each zone to provide a greater understanding of the management implications. In terms of the other issues identified above, heli-hiking and lodges are prohibited.

Issue: Ecosystem Management

Public Comments:

- Doesn't explain any model or how ecosystem-based management will be applied (1)
- Concerned that MOF view of ecosystem management in the park is being considered (1)
- Ecosystem management and ecosystem-based management are not explained very well (1)

Commentary:

Managing ecosystems is a very new and evolving concept for the Environmental Stewardship Division. The application of these ecological concepts in forestry management is very different when applied to protected areas given the different management purposes. We generally agree with these comments and will make changes to clarify this management strategy. However, given the newness to the Environmental Stewardship Division of this ecosystem approach to managing parks and protected areas, it will take time for specific practices and management models to be adopted that are appropriate for our mandate and objectives.

Plan Recommendation:

Clarification of the terms, refinement of objectives, strategies and explanation of their application

Issue: Vegetation Management

Public Comments:

- There should be no logging in parks for insect outbreaks or any other reason. (52)
- No chemical spraying (1)
- Logged areas should be rehabilitated. (1)
- MOF should be responsible to restore logged areas not BC Parks (1)
- The Lardeau River riparian zone is very special, as few of these lowland ecosystems are protected in parks. It can be a good focus for interpretation. (1)
- Any vegetation management plan should be done with public consultation. (1)
- Plan should address role of natural disturbances in maintaining biodiversity (1)
- The timber industry has always wanted us to believe that the watersheds can't be protected because too much forest is in parks. Another chief problem lies in the fact that there is no legislation or even policy in place to protect a watershed at all. (1)
- What is really going on here is an attempt to log both the watersheds and the parks. (1)

- As a taxpayer living in BC, I strongly urge the government to disallow the logging of watersheds and to keep logging out of our parks. (1)

Commentary:

Natural ecosystem processes such as fire, disease, or insect infestation are recognized by the Environmental Stewardship Division as natural occurrences shaping vegetation. It is important to not interfere with these processes by using artificial manipulation such as chemicals or logging and equally important is the restoration of previously impacted natural areas.

Although Goat Range Provincial Park is protected from logging and mining by legislation, there have been some comments linking the park to the regional issue of logging in community watersheds. These issues are beyond the scope of this management plan other than within the context of potential conflicts at the park boundary or wildlife connectivity to the park.

Plan Recommendation:

Preparing a vegetation inventory, a vegetation management plan, and a fire management plan, as well as restoring impacted natural areas, are the main vegetation management initiatives. Some re-writing will be done to clarify this section. Not using herbicide and commercial logging to manage vegetation will be included.

Issue: Fish Management

Public Comments:

- More emphasis needs to be placed on the value of small genetic stocks of isolated headwater fisheries (Rainbow trout above Wilson Creek Falls and Burkitt Creek). Their conservation value is significant. (1)
- I agree with the desired goal of protecting Gerrard rainbow spawning and other fish species. (1)
- Restrictions are already in place for the Gerrard trout. Leave it alone. (1)
- Research inventories for genetic stocks of headwater rainbow and bull trout should be done in all streams. (1)
- Protect the spawning habitat of the Gerrard rainbow trout. (1)

Commentary:

These comments support the draft plan proposals with some additional specific references to where they should be applied.

Plan Recommendation:

Will add specific geographic references

Issue: Wildlife Management

Public Comments:

- Urge the government to buy out trapping licenses. (33)
- Trapping licenses should be moved outside the parks. (1)
- I would highly recommend an analysis of wolverine habitats, travel corridors etc., including winter natal dens, which are very vulnerable to abandonment and losses of young incurred by even winter skiing activities. (1)
- I would highly recommend an analysis of caribou winter range in and out of the park, linkage zones, fragmentation, etc. done by independent scientists. (1)
- I would highly recommend an ecosystem analysis of grizzly bears as an indicator species be done including habitats, core security areas, road densities, recreational impacts, linkage zones, etc. (1)
- More research and scientific study is needed on elk populations in the Wilson Creek and Dennis Creek corridors and their connection between Goat Range PP and Valhalla Park. (1)

- None of these areas are currently managed in any way that protects linkages and species that require them; in fact areas such as the Meadow Creek area appear to now be population sinks for Goat Range Park's grizzlies travelling cross-valley to the Purcell Ranges. (1)
- Plan expresses considerable overconfidence that large interconnected areas will help conserve biodiversity and ensures long term viability of protected areas. (1)
- SMZ do not work; huge clear cuts and roads will destroy connecting ecosystems. (1)
- The Wilson Creek, Martin Creek and Dennis Creek drainages are under particular threat for more logging, possibly destroying the last connectivity corridor between Goat Range PP and Valhalla PP. (1)
- There needs to be a balance between wildlife enhancement and human needs for recreation, sustenance, economic returns, etc. (1)

Commentary:

Comments on trapping support the draft plan proposal. The suggested research on specific species provides some good direction on the deficiencies.

The effectiveness of connectivity corridors and special management zones established by the KBLUP has not been assessed. Should they prove ineffective, clearly alternatives will be needed to achieve connectivity objectives.

Plan Recommendation:

The plan recommends development of a comprehensive long-term management plan for all species at risk not only the few mentioned in the public comments. A greater emphasis on the assessment of these species will be added.

Issue: Water Management

Public Comments:

- Fresh clean water must be protected; water is the most important resource and should be kept in pristine care. (1)
- The issue of logging in watersheds is of extreme importance. Peoples' water supply cannot be jeopardised for the sake of short-sighted and short-term profit gains. (1)

Commentary:

Both comments support the draft plan objective to protect and maintain natural qualities of water.

Plan Recommendation:

Unchanged from draft plan

Issue: Cultural Values Conservation

Public Comments:

- Insist that BC Parks consult with and involve Sinixt aboriginal people in the management of the Park. (36)
- Restore proper recognition to the Sinixt people. (7)
- How about appointing a First Nations warden to protect these sites. (1)
- One aspect that is missing in terms of recognized natural "values" that needs to be corrected is the long-term traditional values of the Sinixt First Nations who have proven existence in the area since time immemorial and who actually helped save the new park. (1)
- The Goat Range and other parks can benefit by Sinixt being part of management, leaving them out of the park plan is disgraceful. (1)
- I deeply regret that the Sinixt aboriginal people have not been consulted with by BC Parks and I feel that to do so is critical to the integrity of the Plan and its management. (1)

Commentary:

From these and other comments at open houses and meetings, many people have recognized the significant role and interests of the Sinixt people in Goat Range Provincial Park. We have received comments on the draft plan from the Sinixt People during workshops and the plan review. Unfortunately it is not possible for the Environmental Stewardship Division to recognize the Sinixt People as we are legally required to do with the other First Nations. While we respect the recognition by the participants in the planning process of the Sinixt People, it is beyond the Environmental Stewardship Division's authority to determine the current legal status of any group by recognising them as suggested. Although the assertions of the other First Nations groups will be considered when it comes to traditional use issues, the Sinixt will be recognized as a contributing stakeholder group.

Plan Recommendation:

The draft plan will recognize the Sinixts People as a contributing stakeholder group.

Issue: Access Management/Motorized Recreation

Public Comments:

- Oppose expansion of air access in the Goat Range PP. (41)
- Support the ban on ground-based motorized recreation. (51)
- Mechanized activities (including helicopter and snow-cat skiing) may not be compatible with some people's subjective perceptions of the wilderness, nature and land use intent of many protected areas; they can – with careful management and appropriate placement – play a role in allowing people to access and enjoy these parks. (1)
- Make trails for horses to cover the whole park leaving the existing roads for ATVs and have user fees. (1)
- Public support for our parks requires some kind of public access. (1)
- Deactivation of existing roads is expensive, but necessary. Co-ordination with MOF is critical since they control many of the main access points to the park. (1)
- Opposed to any air access in any park except if someone is critically hurt, in trouble or being rescued. (1)
- I wish all motorized vehicles totally banned in parks except for emergencies and minimal management. (1)
- Access to park should be improved, trails built, interpretation provided. (1)
- All roads inside park should be decommissioned to prevent erosion and to make for better hiking. (1)
- Provide areas for 2 wheel drive vehicles so an ageing population can enjoy the beauty of the park and view wildlife. (1)
- There is too little access for the public. (2)
- Roads to the park that have been deactivated are major barriers to any access by people. (1)
- Regarding access to the park by horses, ATV's or snowmobiles, if demand is such that limited areas are designated for mechanized vehicle use, or horses, so be it. (1)
- No heli-hiking! (1)
- Snowmobiles are being excluded from the park system without other opportunities being provided (3)
- Most of the access to the peaks on the southern edge of the park is through private land. Since access to the rest of the park is to be so limited, especially with closure of the Poplar Creek road, retention of traditional southern admittance points is important. Thus, we would encourage BC Parks to liaise with MOF, private landowners, commercial operators, and recreational user groups to ensure maintenance of good access.(1)
- During the open house and other meetings many people verbally commented that access needs to be increased for a variety of recreational pursuits including motorized forms of recreation (1)

Commentary:

Given that the perception of what wilderness is varies greatly between individuals, it is understandable that views on access to wilderness would be equally varied. Wilderness qualities in provincial parks are defined by zoning. Motorized ground access is allowable to boundaries of wilderness areas but generally not through the park, although a small portion of Goat Range has motorized access through it via highway #3 and nearby Kokanee Glacier Park has motorized access to the centre of the park. The Kootenay Region is one of the most extensively roaded regions in the province and already has significant opportunities for motorized recreation.

Zoning for wilderness areas also restricts air access to specific points for drop-off on a limited basis. These air and land access limitations of zoning provide some balance between the need to have access and the need for wilderness to have qualities of remoteness and solitude. Notwithstanding the guidance from zoning, decisions on access can not be without considering existing access points and modes as well.

Most of the public comments support the draft plan's proposal to limit air access to current obligations of the heli-skiing permit but opinions on ground access reflect the wide spectrum of individual's needs and perceptions. Restricting easy access to the centre of the park is critical to wilderness protection, while access along the outside edges of the park is less critical. For the most part, the draft plan accommodates the currently used access points.

Plan Recommendation:

The main recommendations are to continue with access to Wilson Creek, Kane Creek, McKian Creek, and Poplar Creek while roads slated for reclamation include Mobbs and Tenderfoot creeks. (See below for trails). As was mentioned the zoning plan has been augmented with an appropriate/inappropriate activities matrix including the restrictions on motorized recreation with the exceptions (i.e. heli-skiing noted and the limited snowmobiling along the park boundary in the Meadow Mountain cat-skiing area).

Issue: Hiking/Backpacking

Public Comments:

- Do not "harden" backcountry campsites, especially in the alpine. Insist on "no trace" camping. (1)
- ...a park zone called wilderness conservation, which allows hiking and backpacking but not heli-skiing and heli-hiking. (1)
- I do not feel that hikers and cross-country skiers are intrusive so there should be areas of the parks that can be assessed by small groups on foot. (1)
- We should have a trail system and in addition to camping facilities, there should be a number of strategically placed overnight cabins with wood stoves. (1)
- Prior to any new trails being built, a full feasibility study needs to be done to consider the present road access: who maintains it, cost of maintaining it, at what level of standard it will be maintained, wildlife values that will be impacted, wildlife movement corridors, and grizzly bear hazard areas. (1)
- No cabins please. (1)
- Although hiking is low impact compared to hunting, trapping, heli-skiing, there won't be much hiking as long as there are no trails, no facilities, and very little access. (1)
- The most popular hiking areas (Whitewater, Brennan, and Alps Alturus) were cut out and have poor access. With the exception of low elevation Wilson Creek area, there are no trails or facilities. (1)

Commentary:

Goat Range Provincial Park is inherently difficult to traverse given the rugged terrain. Most of the more popular hiking areas, such as along the southern boundary, were excluded from the park. It is a challenge to provide hiking opportunities in the remaining areas. Although wilderness areas do not necessarily need developed facilities to be enjoyed for most people, the park can only be used with some support facilities. While no major trails or designated

campsites were proposed in the draft plan, we are investigating the feasibility of a number of routes this summer and anticipate including them in the draft plan.

Plan Recommendation:

The general strategies in the draft plan will be retained as well as added to with specific trail and campsite recommendations.

Issue: Backcountry Skiing:

Public Comment:

No policy was outlined in the Draft Plan. (1)

Commentary:

Dispersed backcountry skiing is an acceptable use and requires little specific management. General references in the draft plan to the management of all recreational uses (i.e. pre-trip planning) also applies to backcountry skiing.

Plan Recommendation:

The plan will note the acceptability of this activity in the park and make specific reference to the application of wilderness etiquette and safe use practices information.

Issue: Heli-Skiing

Public Comments:

- There should be a study to determine whether the existing heli-skiing operation is disturbing wildlife; if so, its permit should be amended to protect the animals. (21)
- There are many more mountains to ski outside the park (1)
- Feeding patterns and movement of animals are affected by aircraft, especially low flying and landing and taking off. (1)
- The threat to the parks from those anxious to promote air-access skiing is deeply worrying. (1)
- Limit heli-skiing operations as it disturbs wildlife. (1)
- Heli-skiing conflicts with the Wilderness Recreation Zone (99.8% of Goat Range Park) (1)
- What does low frequency access mean – how many flights per day, week, month, and season are CMH allowed to make within the park boundaries? (1)
- Parks should develop some sort of standard for and collect and store data on number of flights. (1)
- Research should continue and that steps taken by Parks to ensure these species such as mountain goat and wolverine are not disturbed. (1)
- Heli-skiing may take place only where it does not disturb the mountain goat or mountain caribou. (1)
- I would highly recommend a full environmental impact study be done of heli-skiing in the park by individual scientists. This would include impacts on mountain goats, grizzly bear denning habits, wolverine nursery dens, and so on. (1)
- We thank park planners for recognising that some very significant wildlife species may be impacted by the noise of helicopters and the presence of skiers. But what about studying the impacts of the existing heli-operation? (1)
- Heli-skiing should be totally banned from the park. (4)
- Many studies have shown that heli-skiing and other winter sports are disastrous on alpine areas (1)
- I am concerned about the degree of access already allowed for helicopter recreational use within the park. This use and the affect on wildlife should be closely monitored, with the priority given to the long-term health of the wildlife. (1)

- The current heli-skiing operation should be moved out of Goat Range. (1)
- We request that the presence of and benefits that flow from our helicopter skiing operation in the park be presented in an accurate and fair manner. (1)
- It is true that about 40% of the park is used for heli-skiing; this activity has been occurring in the area for 20 years. This activity has not only resulted in Nakusp becoming an internationally significant winter destination, but the activity remains as a significant contributor to the economy of the area. (1)
- ...but the fact that this is now a park does not suddenly put some of these animals at risk. It would certainly be fair to say that these animals could be at risk if we were to change our approach away from what we've done, but to suggest that they are "at risk of being impacted by the noise of helicopters or the presence of skiers" is not accurate. (1)
- Very important to keep skiers away from goat wintering areas. (1)
- Should be phased out. (1)
- I was amazed that you continue to allow air access in Goat Range PP without a detailed assessment of the impact on the mountain goats. (1)

Commentary:

Heli-skiing presents significant challenges to the protection of wilderness values and opportunities. Through the process of getting the park protected, the importance of recreation, tourism, the economy and related community interests were recognized by requiring the continuation of this activity. However, as with all human uses in the park, they are secondary to the well being of natural values especially species at risk.

Many comments supported gathering information to monitor and assess the impact of heli-skiing. Some feel the activity should be discontinued now. While our ideas and values may vary, the one area that everyone seems to agree on is that protecting species that are in danger of becoming extinct is a higher priority than recreational use. Given the significant values involved, it would be prudent to base any long-term decisions on good scientific data.

Plan Recommendation:

Will add monitoring and assessment of the impact of heli-skiing on wildlife and develop operational practices that minimise impact.

Tenure map and information will be corrected.

Issue: Horse Use

Public Comments:

- Horses should be allowed to access the park in areas that were used in the past, based on historical precedence. Please respect all horse users' wishes...once the native land claims have been settled, we will have no Crown land to ride in. (1)
- We have worked with parks in the past in cutting out trails in the Kootenays and packing garbage out and would like to keep this relationship ongoing. (1)
- We are willing as a group to help in any way when it comes to maintaining and preserving our parks for horse people and others. (1)
- The plan states, "horse use could damage trails" – as could any use of trails or is not a trail damage to the environment! (1)
- The plan states "conflict with other users such as hikers" – or do hikers conflict with horse users by causing conflictive restriction of access? (1)
- Horse use should be allowed because horses have been traditionally used in this area and have as much right to continue as hikers. (1)
- Parks Canada uses horses to access/ patrol parks because of their light step on the land. (1)

- The trails were developed during the early mining days as pack horse trails and it would be a shame if the heritage of these trails is lost. (1)
- I am very concerned that present and future equestrians may be excluded from yet another park. (1)
- There are those horsemen/women who, because of age or other limiting physical conditions, are not able to hike long distance, but can and do enjoy visiting remote areas on horseback. (1)
- Make it like our national parks with trails for horses. The park is too big to walk in a lifetime. (1)

Commentary:

While there has been some historic horse use in the park, the majority of the terrain in the park precludes horse use. Known areas used in the past by horses are being field assessed this summer and may result in a route designated for backcountry horse use.

Plan Recommendation:

Still open

Issue: Commercial Recreation:

Public Comments:

- I fear that ecotourism in our parks will move toward a scenario of large corporations providing expensive holidays for non-local visitors, with a significant portion of the public unable to access its own parks. (1)
- Is there to be commercial heli-hiking in Goat Range Park? If so, will private individuals and clubs be able to helicopter into the park for not-for-profit purposes such as camping? (1)
- Conflicts may occur between commercial snow-cat operators and heli-ski operators and the general public. Commercial operators need to understand that the public has rights to this area too. (1)
- BC Parks should never be givers to relentless corporate interest. (1)
- It is important to incorporate the expertise, resources, interest and commitment of commercial tourism operators and other users in developing inventories of “species at risk” (and other wildlife and ecological data), in research and monitoring, and in developing co-operative approaches to management. (1)
- The last thing we need here is a huge “secret” park. (1)
- It appears that the decision has been made to make this a high use area. (1)
- Commercial use must be limited from the beginning. Reduction of commercial use when public use becomes high and threatening to the park is not a practical alternative. (1)
- There should be no commercial use of the park except for existing tenures. (3)

Commentary:

We share many of the concerns reflected in these comments with respect to the potential negative impacts of commercial recreation. Most of these comments reflect concerns for problems that may arise in the future. As much as planning tries to project into the future, it can be difficult to address issues that may or may not occur. However, as one person has mentioned, tools such as data gathering research and the early warning indicators through monitoring can be implemented to address the emerging issues of the future. For commercial tourism to be viable in a wilderness park in the long term, it needs to be ecologically sustainable and socially compatible. It is the intent of the management plan to permit some forms of commercial recreation that are appropriate with safeguards in place to minimise impacts and identify acceptable/unacceptable types and levels of use.

Plan Recommendation:

As previously noted the zoning plan has been augmented with an appropriate activities matrix and the safeguards for monitoring, research, impact assessment and determining limits of acceptable change are retained in the draft plan.

Issue: Wildlife Viewing/Nature Appreciation

Public Comments:

- Preserve the existence of fauna and flora (1)
- Were there any management strategies outlined in the Plan? (1)
- The international significance of the Gerrard rainbow trout should emphasise the need for wildlife viewing facilities at Gerrard (campground and day-use facilities) to be developed.

Commentary:

The draft plan does propose a number of strategies to preserve fauna and flora.

Plan Recommendation:

Will add the continuation of on-site interpretation displays at the spawning channel to enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of the Gerrard rainbow trout. Improvements to the day use and campsite will also be added making note that capacity will remain about the same.

Interpretation information for the John Fenger old growth forest has been added.

The plan will also add a strategy for managing other wildlife viewing opportunities in the park (i.e. upper Wilson Creek).

Issue: Hunting/Fishing

Public Comments:

- Strongly oppose the hunting of blue-listed species in all parks. (32)
- There should be a moratorium on the hunting of grizzly bears and other blue-listed species until comprehensive studies are complete. (1)
- All hunting should be banned. (18)
- Oppose hunting of grizzly bears. (7)
- No trapping at all. (8)
- If we can't stop hunting Grizzlies in our parks, where can we stop it? (1)
- I oppose all trophy hunting and hunting period in Class A parks. (1)
- Fishing should be limited. (1)

Commentary:

Significant support for discontinuing the hunting of listed species supports the plan recommendations. Banning hunting of all species in large areas of the park was unsuccessfully proposed with the Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section. The hunting of grizzly bears is being addressed by the provincial strategy of the government.

Trapping is a grandfather tenured use. It can be extinguished by purchasing the trapline from a willing seller as proposed in the draft plan

Fishing is currently significantly limited by regulation.

Plan Recommendations:

Remain unchanged.

Issue: Mountain Biking

Public Comments:

- Plans to turn the Poplar Creek mainline and the road up the first S. Fork to Poplar Lakes into mountain biking trails may result in an impossible access situation if the Poplar Creek mainline E. of the park boundary sloughs extensively. (1)
- Mountain bikes must not be permitted off trails. (1)

Commentary:

The plan to use the Poplar Creek access for mountain bikes is a strategy in the event that the road is no longer vehicle accessible. Public education and signage will promote good ethics for mountain biking.

Plan Recommendation:

Public education information and signage is proposed to promote wilderness recreation etiquette and safety. The only area where mountain biking is permitted is along the park boundary at Meadow Mountain.

Issue: Local Government Concerns

Public Comments:

- The park designation impacted jobs and the economy of local communities.
- The draft plan reduces commercial backcountry recreation and economic opportunities.
- Not enough access and facilities are proposed.

Commentary:

The economic impact of park designation is outside the terms of reference for this management plan but some consideration was made in the KBLUP-IS. The KBLUP-IS directed that existing tenures, including commercial recreation, be retained subject to conditions that may be developed through a park management plan process.

Although motorized commercial backcountry recreation is normally inconsistent with the management of wilderness, the draft plan confirms the continuation of heli-skiing and snow cat skiing opportunities given their economic importance to local communities and the absence of any specific information indicating that these activities are not ecologically sustainable in the park. Monitoring and research are used to alert on developing issues and ensure impacts are minimal. Commercial recreation in support of local communities is also included in the management vision for the park as well as the recreation/tourism role of the park. Future commercial recreation opportunities are possible with due process of impact assessment and consistency with the management objectives of the park.

A number of people wanted more motorized access. Access and facilities will be enhanced with some additional trail developments. Although vehicle access is being reduced in low use areas, it is necessary to protect wilderness values (consistent with KBLUP-IS), protect fish values of the Lardeau River and reflects government's objectives to reduce Forest Service Road maintenance requirements.

Plan Recommendations:

The additional trail developments will be added to the plan.

Issue: Other Comments

Public Comment:

- Protest the deadline of December 30th for feedback. (2)

Commentary:

We regret the timing of the deadline for written comments made it difficult for some people to review the draft plan during the busy month of December and we will endeavour to avoid this scenario in future processes.

Public Comment:

- The open-house does not provide an objective or scientific process for evaluating public opinion since park personnel were not tabulating opinions of supporters or opponents. (1)

Commentary:

Although not all the verbal comments of each open house attendee were recorded, issues or concerns that were new got noted during staff debriefing after the open house. Issues or comments that had already been identified or discussed were not recorded again other than what was provided in writing through the comment forms or letters. Public involvement for the management plan is intended to determine what the public thought of the draft plan. Given the large number of people at the open houses, complexity of the issues and the wide variation in the expression of opinions, it is difficult to tabulate verbal comments. Unlike a public opinion poll where the quantity of agreement or disagreement is the objective, the planning process is intended to look at the substance of all issues or comments, not necessarily just those that a number of people collectively hold.

Public Comments:

- How can we trust the public participation process when those hostile to the park's creation are invited to participate; decision to protect was against their opposition and interests. (1)
- Forestry jobs have been lost in this area, and future economic growth of surrounding communities will be increasingly dependent on a developing tourism industry. (1)

Commentary:

Public participation is open to all. While opponents were also invited to contribute to the management plan, all suggestions must be consistent with Provincial Park legislation, policies and guidelines established by government. From our experience, the open house was also an opportunity to foster greater appreciation and understanding with opponents for the values that were protected.

Public Comment:

- The use of volunteers in a wilderness park to enhance management is ill conceived and possibly dangerous. (1)

Commentary:

Volunteers are a highly valued key group in the management of protected areas. They have been used successfully in the Environmental Stewardship Division's parks system for many decades including involvement in roles that enhance our ability to manage wilderness areas.