

**Skeena Region**

**MANAGEMENT DIRECTION  
STATEMENT**

**March 2003**

**for Great Glacier  
Provincial Park**



**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**

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



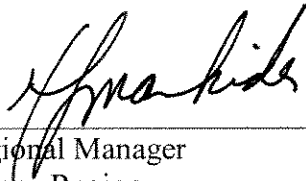
# Great Glacier Provincial Park Approvals Page

## Forward

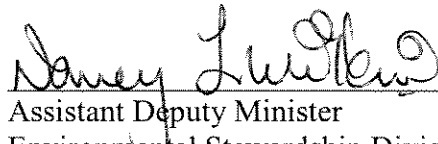
This management direction statement for Great Glacier Provincial Park provides management direction until such time as the plan is revised. Ongoing consultation between Environmental Stewardship Division and First Nations may require changes to this management direction statement. Aboriginal rights are honoured and respected within the park.

Implementation of the strategies identified in the MDS will be dependent on available funding and Environmental Stewardship Division priorities.

## Approvals



\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Manager  
Skeena Region  
Environmental Stewardship Division



\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Environmental Stewardship Division

**This management direction statement was developed through direction received from the  
Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan**

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# Great Glacier Provincial Park

## Management Direction Statement

### Introduction

#### Purpose of the Management Direction Statement

Management direction statements (MDS) provide strategic management direction for protected areas that do not have an approved management plan. Management direction statements also describe protected area values, management issues and concerns; a management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies; and direction from other planning processes. While strategies may be identified in the MDS, the completion of all these strategies is dependent on funding and funding procedures. All development associated with these strategies is subject to the Parks and Protected Areas Branch's Impact Assessment Policy.

#### Context

The provincial government designated Great Glacier Provincial Park under the *Park Act* on January 25, 2001. The park is presently named and described in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*. Great Glacier has been identified as a Goal 2, special feature, protected area in recognition of its scenic river-level glacier and glacial outwash lake. Designation followed the recommendations of the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP).

Great Glacier Provincial Park covers 9, 313 hectares about 120 kilometres southwest of the community of Telegraph Creek. The park's southerly border coincides with the Canada and United States of America international boundary. Directly across the Stikine River from Great Glacier Provincial Park lies Choquette Hot Springs Provincial Park. No road access is available to this remote area.

The park lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Tahltan First Nation. The Tahltan and Tlingit First Nations consider Great Glacier an important legend site. According to these legends, Great Glacier once spanned the entire width of the lower Stikine River. The glacier's terminus met the end of the Choquette Glacier from the east side. Apparently Great Glacier became the site for the last great battle between the Tahltan and Tlingit many generations ago<sup>1</sup>.

Great Glacier is a large ice tongue projecting into a glacial outwash lake just west of the lower Stikine River. The beautiful coloured outwash lake offers outstanding views to the glacier. Great Glacier Provincial Park receives moderate levels of recreational use in the summer by people boating along the Stikine River.

Choquette Hot Springs Provincial Park, directly across the Stikine River, protects a hot springs and associated wetlands. About 100 kilometres to the northeast, a complex of large protected areas dominates the landscape. These protected areas include Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park, Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve, Mount Edziza Provincial Park and Stikine

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<sup>1</sup> Voss, Jennifer *Stikine River A Guide to Paddling the Great River* Rocky Mountain Books, Calgary Alberta, 1998, Pp 113 – 114.

River Provincial Park. These protected areas conserve entire ecosystems and offer a wide variety of outstanding backcountry outdoor recreation opportunities.

## **Provincial Park Attributes**

### **Conservation**

- One of only two parks in the Central Boundary Ranges Ecosection; this ecosection is very poorly represented (1.11%) in the protected areas system. Great Glacier Provincial Park accounts for almost all the representation (99.43%) of this ecosection in the protected areas system.
- Contributes to the representation of the CWHwm (wet maritime coastal western hemlock), MHun (mountain hemlock) and AT (alpine tundra) biogeoclimatic subzones; 7.46% of the CWHwm is represented in the protected areas system. Great Glacier Provincial Park contributes 8.3% of the overall representation of this ecosystem. Great Glacier Provincial Park is one of only four protected areas contributing to the poorly represented MHun (2.94%). Great Glacier Provincial Park also contributes 21.42% of the overall representation of this ecosystem.
- Conserves a variety of low elevation glacier-influenced ecosystems that contain uncommon plant species and old-growth forest.
- Conserves a diversity of landforms created by the effects of a retreating glacier including an outwash lake and terminal moraines.

### **Recreation and Tourism**

- Presents a spectacular, readily accessible glacier close to the Stikine River, an internationally significant river that attracts international visitors for canoeing, kayaking, rafting and jet-boating experiences. Great Glacier is often one of the chief highlights of such a trip.
- Provides a short hiking trail with excellent views passing through a variety of landscapes ranging from forest to glacial ice.
- Presents hiking trails with views of a beautiful glacial outwash lake often 30% to 40% covered with icebergs.
- Provides a rustic campground with space for about 20 people near the Stikine River.

### **Commercial Business Opportunities**

- Presents moderate commercial business opportunities for guided river rafting, canoeing and fishing tour groups based on the special features of this park. This business opportunity is best developed as part of a systems approach where several provincial parks, protected areas and Crown land areas along the lower Stikine River are included in the tour to give clients a broad and interesting program.

### **Cultural Heritage**

- Great Glacier Provincial Park is the location of Tahltan and Tlingit First Nations legends.
- Subsistence fishing occurs on lower Stikine River.

### **Significance in the Protected Areas System**

- Provides essentially the only representation (99.43%) of the Central Boundary Ranges Ecosection in the protected areas system
- Conserves provincially significant low elevation glacier-influenced ecosystems.



[Click here for Figure 1: Regional Context Map - 1,230 kb pdf](#)

- Provides outstanding backcountry recreation opportunities, including glacier viewing, camping, hiking and canoeing in the outwash lake at the terminus of Great Glacier.
- Presents provincially significant special features in Great Glacier and the glacier landforms resulting from glacier retreat and erosion processes.

## **Land Uses, Tenures and Interests**

### **Access**

Great Glacier Provincial Park is remote. Highway 37 runs 100 kilometres to the east. Visitors reach the provincial park by travelling along the lower Stikine River by kayak, canoe, raft or jet-boat.

### **Existing Tenures**

- Trapping licenses 621T017 and 621T012 cover the park. These licenses are not covered by valid park use permits.
- Guide-outfitter 621G003 contains the park. The owner does not have a valid park use permit to operate in the park.

### **Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities**

- Presents an existing campground near the Stikine River that the BC Forest Service previously managed as a recreation site. The campground provides space for about 20 people in two sections. Campground facilities include fire rings, picnic tables, a cable ridge pole, an outhouse and information signs.
- Provides a short (about one kilometre) hiking trail to the glacial outwash lake. This trail is a highly popular day-use trip.
- Attracts many people travelling up and down the lower Stikine River.
  - Commercial rafting trips stop on gravel bars rather than in the park because of shade and the presence of biting insects.
  - Use of the site that is now Great Glacier Provincial Park has increased over the past decade.

### **Adjacent Patterns of Land Use**

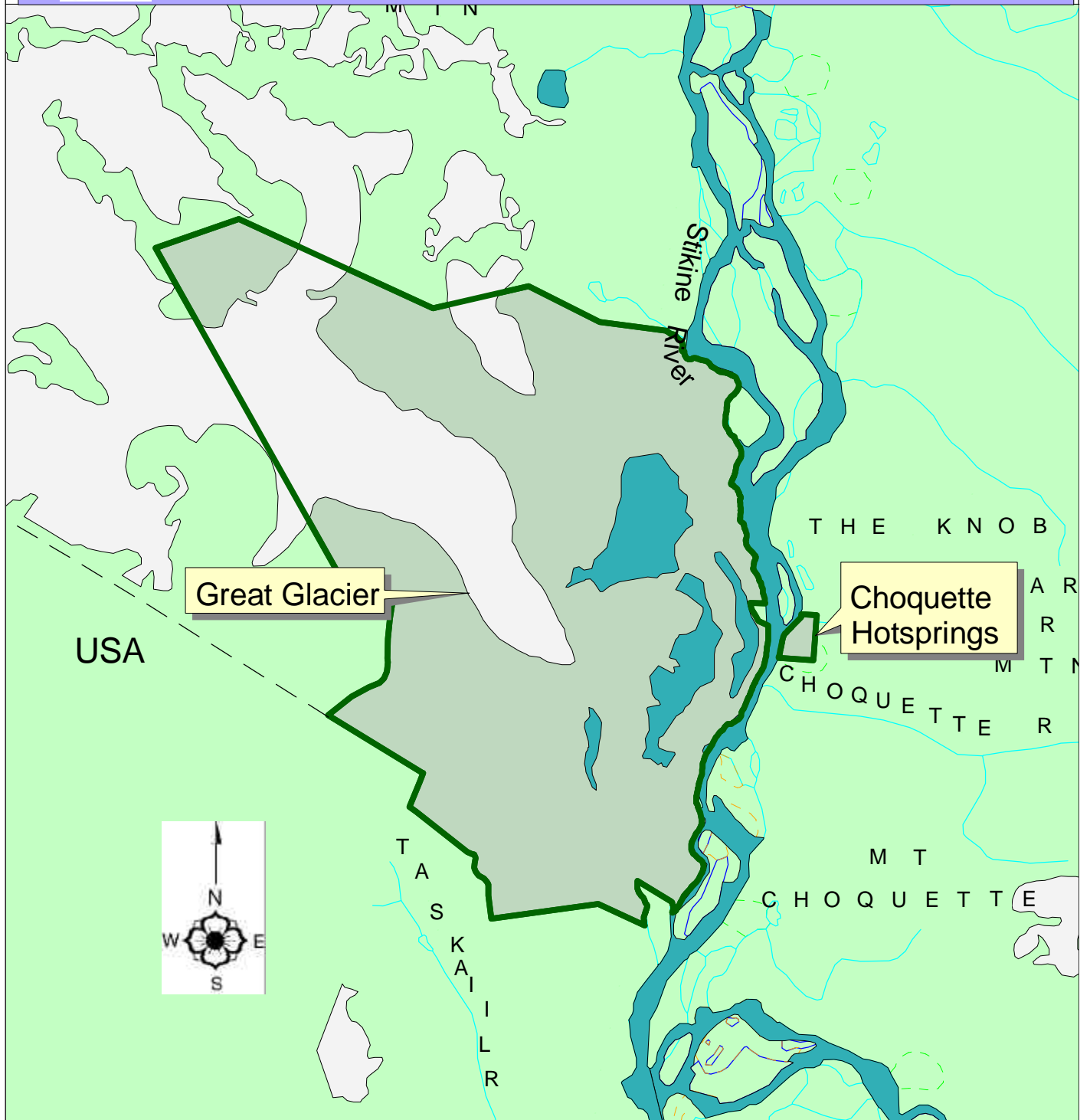
- The park's eastern boundary is the Stikine River which supports commercial, sport and subsistence fisheries.
- Land in British Columbia to the south and east is contained within the Lower Stikine-Iskut Coastal Grizzly/Salmon Resource Management Zone which allows mineral exploration, but not commercial forest harvesting.
- Choquette Hot Springs Provincial Park lies across the Stikine River to the east.
- The park's southerly border coincides with the international boundary of Canada and the United States of America.
- The land in British Columbia to the west and north lies within a general resource management zone.
- A commercial fish processing plant, including a licence for occupation, operates south of the park below the mouth of the Iskut River.

### **First Nations Interests**

- Lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Tahltan First Nation.



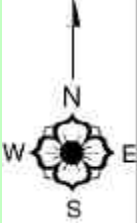
# Great Glacier & Choquette Hotspots Provincial Parks



Great Glacier

Choquette Hotspots

USA



Legend	
Lup104b.shp	freshWater
glaciersAndSnow	glaciersAndSnow
Wtr1104b.shp	River/Stream - Definite
River/Stream - Indefinite	River/Stream - Indefinite
River/Stream - Left Bank	River/Stream - Left Bank
River/Stream - Right Bank	River/Stream - Right Bank
Lake - Definite	Lake - Definite
Lake - Indefinite	Lake - Indefinite
Marsh	Marsh
Island - Definite	Island - Definite
Sand/Gravel Bar	Sand/Gravel Bar
Protected Area	Protected Area



1:112955

- Tahltan First Nation has an interest in maintaining their aboriginal traditional uses and activities in the park.

### **Other Agency Interests**

- Department of Fisheries and Oceans has an interest in the fisheries values of the Stikine River; no fish sampling done in Great Glacier's outwash lake or its tributaries.

### **Private and Public Stakeholder Interests**

- Naturalists have an interest in this park because of the diversity of glacier features and wildlife values.
- Fishers and hunters have an interest in the park because of its angling and hunting recreation opportunities.
- Public and commercial river recreationists are interested in the park because of its strategic location as a river raft, kayak, canoe and jet-boat pullout or stop over location.
- The trapline and guide outfitter holders are interested in the park because park regulations may place limits on the trapping of fur-bearing animal species and the hunting of wildlife species within Great Glacier Provincial Park.

## **Great Glacier Provincial Park Role Statement**

The primary role of Great Glacier Provincial Park is to conserve a spectacular glacier and mountain landscape. Great Glacier is the largest glacier found along the entire length of the internationally significant Stikine River. The park protects a variety of glacial landforms ranging from a large outwash lake to terminal moraines. In addition, the park includes a diversity of forested and non-forested ecosystems, many which resulted from the retreat of Great Glacier over the centuries. This park also protects the best representation of the Central Boundary Ranges Ecoregion in the British Columbia protected areas system.

Great Glacier Provincial Park performs a secondary but highly important outdoor recreation role. The park provides a special opportunity to enjoy an awe-inspiring, readily accessible vast glacier and its beautiful outwash lake just west of the Stikine River. The park offers wilderness camping opportunities to those outdoor enthusiasts travelling on the Stikine River. Great Glacier Provincial Park provides one of the foremost highlights among many internationally significant outdoor recreation opportunities the Stikine River corridor offers to visitors.

Great Glacier Provincial Park also performs a significant cultural heritage role as a First Nations legend site.

## **Management Commitments and Issues**

### **Direction from Previous Planning**

The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP recommended Great Glacier for protection in 2000 and gave management direction to

- Allow hunting; address public safety (e.g. seasonal hunting restrictions) as part of detailed planning.
- Maintain opportunities for public camping.

## Management Issues

The following management issues require attention:

Theme	Issue
Protecting the park's ecological values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The park's natural features remain relatively unknown because an accurate inventory is incomplete.</li> <li>The trapline owners do not have valid park use permits authorizing this resource activity in the park.</li> <li>The guide-outfitter territory owner does not have a valid park use permit authorizing this resource activity in the park.</li> </ul>
Protecting the park's outdoor recreation values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The wilderness recreation experience may be reduced as the popularity of this park increases.</li> <li>Park facilities may deteriorate rapidly because of extreme weather conditions and lack of maintenance.</li> </ul>
Ensuring park visitor safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitors to this park may be at risk because of the extreme weather conditions and the park's remote location.</li> <li>Visitors may be at risk because of the discharge of firearms in the park during hunting season.</li> <li>Visitors may be at risk when entering and leaving the park because of the presence of few river channels available for travel and the swift current and cold water.</li> </ul>
Protecting the park's cultural heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great Glacier Provincial Park's cultural heritage features may be at risk because an inventory of such values is incomplete.</li> </ul>

## Management Direction

The vision for Great Glacier Provincial Park comprises the retention and protection of intact glacier-influenced ecosystems available to visitors travelling along the Stikine River.

### Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

The following table describes priority management objectives and strategies to resolve identified management issues. In addition, Appendix 1 contains a list of acceptable activities, uses and facilities for this provincial park.

Management Objectives	Strategies
To protect the park's ecological values and natural features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake an inventory of fauna and flora in the provincial park.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Focus the highest priority on old-growth forest and rare and threatened plant species;</li> <li>➤ Second priority should be an inventory of fish values and habitat in the Great Glacier outwash lake.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Document the glacial features characterizing the park.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ As part of this research, set up a program to monitor the rate of retreat Great Glacier is experiencing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Contact the trapline owners and guide-outfitter operating in the park so these consumptive resource uses are placed under valid park use permits.</li> </ul>
To protect the park's recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a regular maintenance program to adequately sustain the existing trail and rustic campground facilities.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Link this program with one for Choquette Hot Springs Provincial Park.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Management Objectives	Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Pursue potential for volunteer maintenance partnership with local groups.</li> <li>• Monitor visitor use and the amount of site degradation that may be occurring.</li> <li>➤ Identify use problems and implement a practical management response.</li> </ul>
To protect the park's cultural heritage values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate and collate, in cooperation with the Tahltan First Nation, existing information on cultural heritage values within Great Glacier Provincial Park. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Place a high priority on documenting the legends that focus on Great Glacier.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Meet with the Tahltan First Nation to discuss issues that affect the protection and management of Great Glacier Provincial Park.</li> <li>• Document the non-aboriginal history associated with Great Glacier Provincial Park (e.g. the John Muir expedition to this area in the 1870s).</li> </ul>
To ensure park visitor safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection web site that advises the public on adequate trip preparation to this park.</li> <li>• Evaluate the need to restrict the discharge of firearms in the park during hunting (e.g. seasonally and/or in specific areas such as the camping area) to ensure public safety.</li> <li>• Identify and monitor river safety issues and implement proper management actions to resolve any issues.</li> </ul>
To provide practical information to the public about Great Glacier Provincial Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure information about Great Glacier Provincial Park on the official Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection web site is accurate and current.</li> <li>• Work with the Ministry of Forests to ensure their recreation map and brochure for the lower Stikine River is available to park visitors.</li> </ul>

## Consultation and Future Planning

Environmental Stewardship Division will continue to consult with the Tahltan First Nation through the Tahltan - Environmental Stewardship Division Protected Areas Committee, and will meet with local stakeholders and resource users as issues arise. Environmental Stewardship Division will collect local knowledge on levels of use and potential safety concerns related to hunting.

The priority for preparing a management plan for Great Glacier Provincial Park with full public involvement is ranked as low.

## Zoning Plan

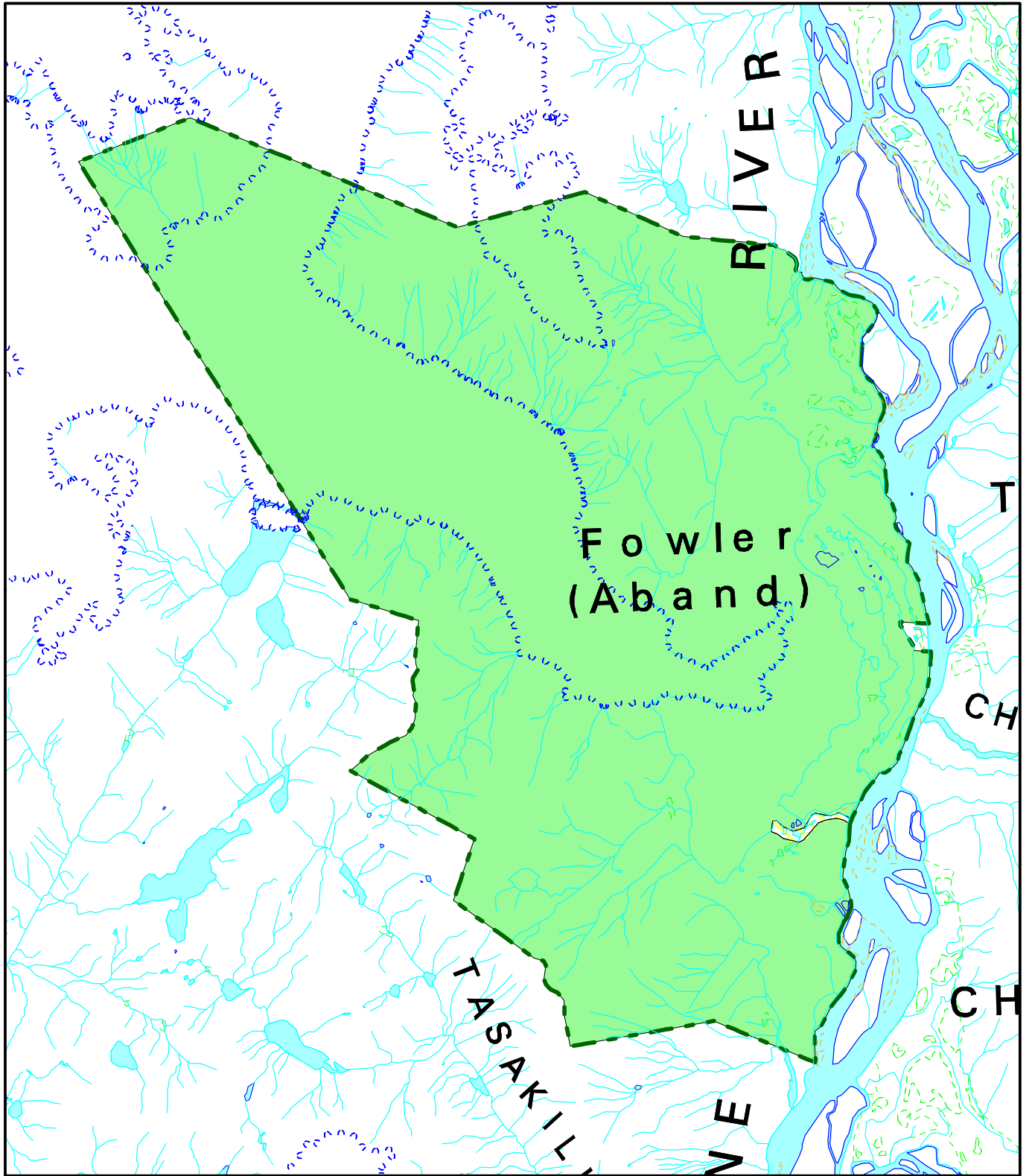
All of Great Glacier Provincial Park is placed within a Wilderness Recreation Zone which entails the following:

**Objective:** To protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment where air and motorboat access may be permitted to designated sites.

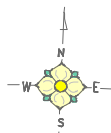
**Zone Description:** Covers the entire provincial park (9, 313 hectares).

**Management Guidelines:** Oriented to protecting a pristine environment. Management actions are minimal and not evident. Managed to ensure low visitor use levels. Visitor access may be restricted to protect the natural environment and visitor experience.

Figure 3: Zoning



Projection: UTM Zone 9  
Datum: NAD83



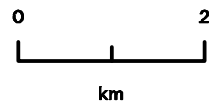
Natural Environment



Wilderness Recreation



Protected Area Boundary





**Appendix 1. Great Glacier Provincial Park  
Table of Acceptable Activities, Uses and Facilities**

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptability
Aboriginal traditional uses and activities	Y
Hunting – subject to seasonal closure	Y
Fishing	Y
Trapping	Y
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational gold panning/rock hounding	N
Utility corridors	N
Communication sites	N
Horse use/pack animals	N
Guide outfitting (hunting) – subject to seasonal closure	Y
Guide outfitting (fishing)	N
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Guide outfitting (river rafting)	Y
Cat-assisted skiing	N
Ski hills	N
Commercial recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility-based)	N
Backcountry huts	M
Water control structures	N
Fish stocking and enhancement	N
Road access	N
Off-road access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road access (motorised)	N
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorised water access – via Stikine River only	Y
Aircraft access – floatplane via Stikine River only/helicopter access may be restricted	M
Fire management (suppression)	N
Fire management (prescribed fire management)	N
Fire management (prevention)	N
Forest insect/disease control	N1
Noxious weed control	N1
Exotic insect/disease control	N1
Commercial filming	M
Scientific research (specimen collection)	M
Scientific research (manipulative activities)	M

Y = allowed subject to conditions identified in the management direction statement or management plan

M = may be permitted if compatible with protected area objectives

N = not allowed

N1 = allowed for expressed management purposes only

N2 = present and allowed to continue, but not normally allowed