

King George VI Park

Management Plan

June 2020



BC Parks

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*This management plan replaces the King George VI Park
February 2003 Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan.*

King George VI Park Management Plan

Approved by:



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September 3, 2020

Date



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August 31, 2020

Date

Vision Statement

King George VI Park functions as a small part of a larger, working landscape, providing important long-term protection for provincially red and blue listed plants and plant communities.

Recreationally, the park complements and supports outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities in the Rossland area. To prevent impacts to the park's sensitive flora, only low-impact recreation activities are allowed in the park outside of the designated trail corridors.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Management Plan Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to guide the management of King George VI Park. This management plan:

- articulates the key features and values of the park;
- identifies appropriate types and levels of management activities;
- determines appropriate levels of use and development;
- establishes a long-term vision and management objectives for the park; and,
- responds to current and predicted threats and opportunities by defining a set of management strategies to achieve the management vision and objectives.

1.2 Planning Area

King George VI Park (162 hectares) is located approximately 11 kilometres south of Rossland, near the community of Paterson along Highway 22 in the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (Figure 1). It is located less than 650 metres from the Canada-United States border and is accessed by King George Park Road.

King George VI Park was originally established to provide a day use rest stop and campground for people entering Canada from the United States along Highway 22. Key infrastructure (picnic tables, toilets, campground etc.) was removed several decades ago when the park was determined to be under-utilized. Since that time, except for the development of two popular trails that are part of the Rossland mountain biking system, the park has been left in a natural state with no improvements.

King George VI Park is adjacent to private agricultural land on the west and vacant Crown lands to the north, east and south. The road that accesses the park has been used for forestry purposes and several previously harvested forestry blocks exist on Crown land to the north and east of the park. Surrounding Crown lands are within a registered trapline area but there is no trapping currently authorized in the park and trapping is not considered a suitable use in King George VI Park.¹

¹ King George VI Park was established prior to a change to BC Parks policy in 1995 that recognized trapping as an appropriate activity in certain provincial parks established pursuant to land use plans where the land use plan recommended that trapping be allowed to continue.

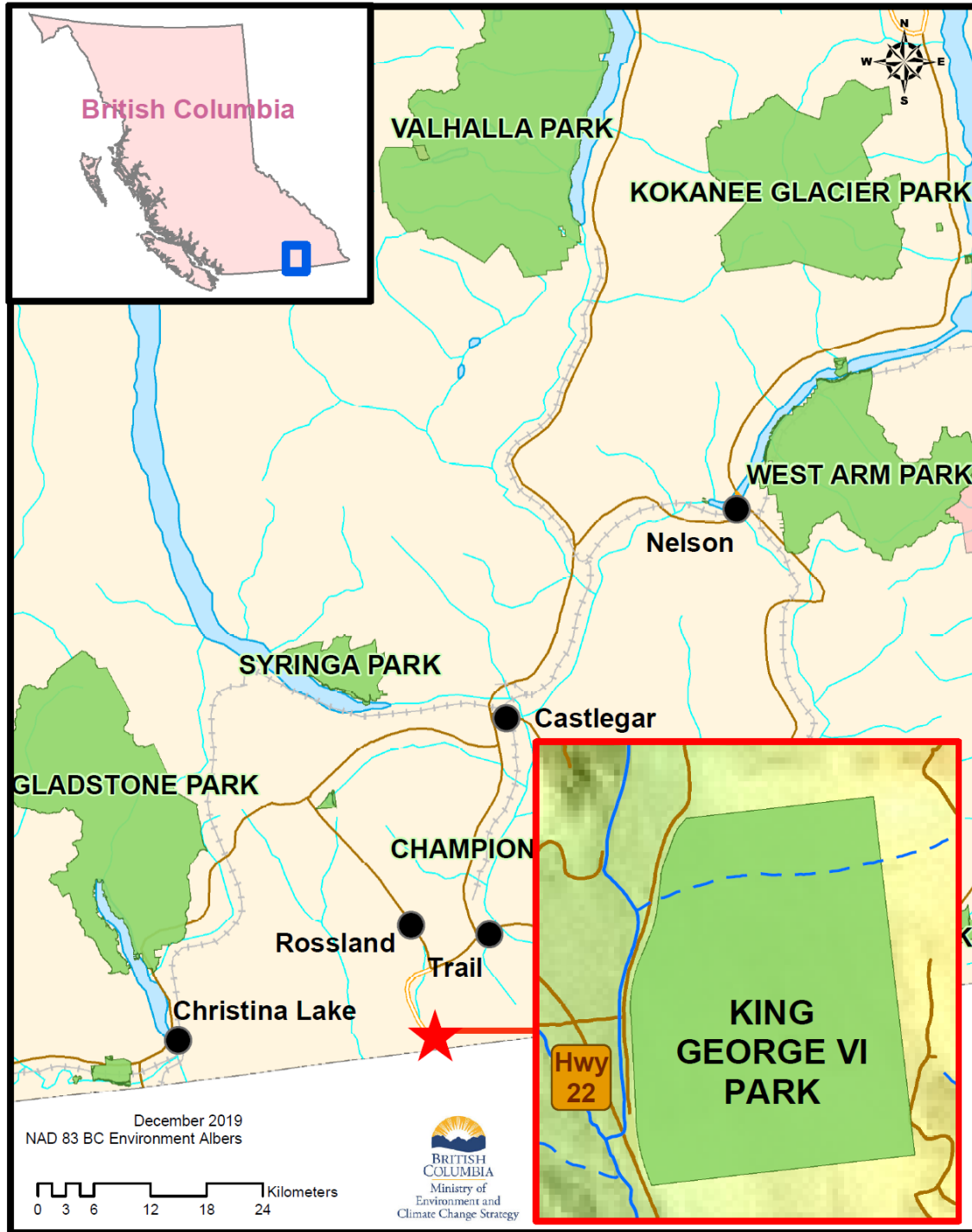


Figure 1: Context and Overview Map of King George VI Park

1.3 Legislative Framework

King George VI Park was established as a Class A park on May 3, 1937 through Order in Council 524/1937. It is currently included in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*.

Class A parks are Crown lands dedicated to the preservation of the natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public. Development in Class A parks is limited to that which is necessary to maintain the park's recreational values.

1.4 Management Planning Process

The development of this management plan included consultation and engagement with First Nation partners and key stakeholder groups. The Regional District of Kootenay Boundary and the cities of Trail and Rossland were provided with a draft version of the management plan for their review and to provide comments. The draft plan was posted on the BC Parks website for more than 30 days to seek broader public comment and input. Feedback and knowledge acquired during the draft management plan consultation and engagement period were used to inform the final management plan. A summary of the feedback received by BC Parks and our response to that feedback is included as an appendix.

1.5 Relationship with First Nations

As part of its work to create true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, the government of British Columbia is committed to adopting and implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. BC Parks will work closely with First Nations to protect Indigenous values and to integrate their vision and knowledge into the management of protected areas into the future.

Parks and protected areas are established without prejudice to aboriginal rights and title. Through their involvement in treaty negotiations, First Nations have the opportunity to define their aboriginal rights and title, as per section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. This management plan will not limit subsequent treaty negotiations.

All recorded and unrecorded archaeological resources in the park are protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act*. Archaeological assessments, which may include archaeological impact assessments, are required prior to any significant ground-related impacts to the park.

The land established as King George VI Park lies within the traditional territories of the Okanagan/Syilx, the Secwépemc and the Sinixt peoples.

The Okanagan Nation has indicated that their territory extends from the Okanagan Valley into the West Kootenays, as far north as the Wood River in the Rocky Mountains and south into the United States. Five member bands of the Okanagan Nation Alliance who reside in British Columbia (Lower Similkameen Indian Band, Okanagan Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Penticton Indian Band and Upper Nicola Indian Band) have identified that their traditional territories encompass the land established as King

George VI Park. BC Parks continues to engage with the Okanagan Nation Indigenous governments to strengthen working relationships and ensure their interests are encompassed in long-term park management.

The Secwépemc Nation has indicated that their territory extends from the Fraser River to the Rocky Mountains and from the upper Fraser River in the north to the Canada-US Border in the south. The two Secwépemc Nation members that have indicated their territories include the land established as King George VI Park are Shuswap Indian Band and Splots'in First Nation. Several of the bands that comprise the Secwépemc Nation are currently working with the Province of British Columbia on a renewed government-to-government relationship following the April 2018 expiry of a Reconciliation Framework Agreement that included both the Shuswap Indian Band and Splots'in First Nation. As a provincial agency, BC Parks will be signatory to the renewed agreement.

In the March 27, 2017, decision in *R. v. Desautel*, the BC Provincial Court found that Richard Desautel had made out an Aboriginal right to hunt for food, social and ceremonial purposes protected by section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, in the ancestral territory of the Sn̓ɬay̓ckstx (Sinixt or Arrow Lakes) people in British Columbia. The territory can generally be described as being in the Arrow Lakes region north to the Revelstoke area, and as far south as Kettle Falls in Washington State (which includes the area in and around Trail). The Court also found that the Lakes Tribe of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in Washington State was “a successor group to the Sinixt people living in British Columbia at the time of contact” and as a member of the Lakes Tribe, Mr. Desautel was entitled to conduct his hunt in British Columbia. Desautel is under appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada and a hearing date is likely to be scheduled in fall 2020. On a without prejudice basis, the Lakes Tribe and the Province of British Columbia, including BC Parks, have begun to develop a working government-to-government relationship that is subject to further legal direction.

2.0 Values and Roles of the Park

2.1 Significance in the Protected Areas System

Though first established as a traveller's way-stop, in the last few decades the park has become increasingly important from a conservation perspective with the growth in knowledge of the presence of rare and sensitive plants and ecosystems. Though small, the park provides protection for plants and wildlife habitats within the larger, working forested landscape. BC Parks also recognizes the trails within the park for their role in contributing to Rossland's mountain bike trail network.

2.2 Values

King George VI Park consists primarily of moderately steep west-facing mature coniferous forested slopes. Exceptions to the forested landscape include a small area that used to be a hayfield (approximately 1.25 hectares) and small areas dominated by black cottonwood trees (*Populus trichocarpa*) along the perimeter of the former hayfield and portions of King George VI Park Road. There are no permanent creeks or streams within the park.



Figure 2: Black cottonwood stands around the former hayfield.

King George VI Park is within the Selkirk Foothills Ecoregion and includes two variants of one biogeoclimatic zone: Interior Cedar–Hemlock, Dry Warm (ICHdw1) and Interior Cedar–Hemlock, Very Dry Warm (ICHxw). The Interior Cedar–Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone is 9.9% protected in the province, with this park accounting for a very minor amount of that protection.



Figure 3: Blue-listed woolly blue violet

At the time of establishment (1937), there was very little known about the conservation values within the park. Over the past decade BC Parks has encouraged and supported research surveys that have started to develop baseline information for the park’s wildlife, plants and ecosystems. Those research studies have determined that the park contains plant species and ecosystems that are considered provincially ‘at risk’. These are: blue-listed woolly blue violet (*Viola sororia*), blue-listed wild licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*) and the red-listed Douglas-fir/tall Oregon-grape/parsley fern (ICHdw/02) plant community.² Two previously blue-listed plant species that are now yellow-listed have also been documented in the park: narrow-leafed skullcap (*Scutellaria angustifolia* ssp. *angustifolia*) and Pink fairies (*Clarkia pulchella*). Showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciose*)

² Species and plant communities are assigned to provincial lists depending on their Provincial Conservation Status where red includes any native species or subspecies that have, or are candidates for, Extirpated, Endangered, or Threatened status in BC; blue includes any native species or subspecies considered to be of Special Concern in BC; and, yellow includes species that are apparently secure and not at risk of extinction.

was documented in the park in 2001 but has not been relocated.³ To BC Parks' knowledge, no rare or endangered wildlife have been recorded within the park.

The most popular recreational activity in King George VI Park is mountain biking. Two user-developed and maintained multi-use trails traverse the park: SMA and SMD.⁴ These two single-track trails are part of a larger mountain biking trail network which is connected to the nearby community of Rossland. The trails contain mid-range to steep technical terrain and have a few minor structures in place for riders (e.g., bridges over non-permanent creek beds). Rossland's mountain biking trail network is provincially recognized and is extensively used by both locals and by tourists. Other recreation uses of the park include hiking and nature appreciation (including birdwatching).



Figure 4: Two of the trail features located within King George VI Park.

There are no known archaeological or cultural features located in King George VI Park.

3.0 Management Direction

3.1 Management Objectives and Strategies

3.1.1. Natural Resource Values Management

The following issues and opportunities informed the development of the Natural Resource Value management objectives and strategies for King George VI Park:

- This park is easily accessible to researchers; however, gaps remain in the park's natural and cultural values baseline data.

³ Milkweed species are of special interest in BC because the provincially blue-listed monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) relies exclusively on milkweed species.

⁴ The trails are known locally by their initials SMA and SMD, which is how the trails are referenced in this plan. Those initials stand for Super Mega Awesome and Super Mega Death.

- Prior to establishment, areas of the park were used for agriculture and the park once had day use and camping facilities.
- Fire, as a natural disturbance regime, has historically played a variable role in forest succession in the ICHdw1 and ICHxw biogeoclimatic variants.
- BC Parks, with support from the BC Wildlife Federation and other local conservationists, are working towards restoring the former hayfield to a functional wetland. The site restoration work was completed in 2019, with monitoring, invasive species management and additional native plant restoration required as ongoing work. The goal is a self-sustaining wetland, which will increase water retention for longer periods of the year, increase groundwater recharging, re-establish wetland vegetation and increase habitat for wetland species (e.g., amphibians, turtles, insects).
- A 2001 research study identified that King George VI Park contains over 40 species of invasive plants. Two of the introduced plants found in the park are regulated provincial noxious weeds: Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and spotted knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*). Orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*), a regulated regionally noxious plant in the central and east Kootenays, has also been found in the park.

Management Objective	Management Strategies
Gain and maintain a full understanding of the park’s animal populations, plants, ecosystems and cultural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to encourage and support researchers interested in conducting surveys to increase BC Parks’ knowledge of the park’s natural and cultural values. • Implement ongoing monitoring for known locations of at-risk plants and ecological communities.
Prevent invasive plant species from displacing native plants and ecosystems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On an ongoing basis, monitor known invasive plant populations for change (i.e., spread or reduction). Ensure monitoring incorporates techniques that will record new infestations. • Target specific areas for invasive plant management based on locations of rare and sensitive plants and ecosystems.
Restore areas impacted by agriculture and day-use facilities and re-establish displaced native plants and natural ecosystem processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to re-establish natural ecosystem processes (e.g., maintaining the wetland project, re-introducing fire through prescribed burning). • Target previously disturbed areas for ecosystem restoration actions (including augmenting or re-establishing populations of at-risk or priority native plants (e.g., showy

Management Objective	Management Strategies
	milkweed)) based on need assessments and available resources.
Increase visitor education and awareness of natural values in the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional educational information on park values to visitors (e.g., onsite or online interpretive signage).

3.1.2. Recreation Values Management

The park includes two multi-use trails that are predominantly used by mountain bikers.

The two multi-use trails were constructed by users at least a decade ago and provide added social value to the local and tourist public; however, the trails navigate through park lands which contain high conservation values and species at risk habitat.

BC Parks conducted an impact assessment to identify the preferred way to manage these trails. Closure of the trails was not supported by the local community and would create enforcement challenges. Relocation of the trails would increase adverse impacts on plant species at risk. As an outcome of the impact assessment and public engagement process, it was determined that formalization of the two existing trails, with the intent to enter into a partnership agreement to monitor and maintain the current trail network, would be the best option moving forward; however, trail network expansion is not supported.

Management Objective	Management Strategies
Recognize mountain biking ⁵ as an allowable park use for existing designated multi-use trails only (SMD and SMA trails) and promote shared stewardship of the trails.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all trail use and maintenance to occur within the linear 6-metre Nature Recreation Zone corridor (please refer to section 3.1). Should amendment of the location (beyond the 6-metre trail corridor) be considered for either trail to address operational issues (e.g., erosion/drainage issues) or as a response to new information related to the location of 'at risk' plant communities that are vulnerable to impact or another conservation concern, then rerouting or discontinuing use of the trail will be determined using the BC Parks Impact Assessment process. If a new trail

⁵ mountain biking includes Class 1 e-bikes.

Management Objective	Management Strategies
	<p>alignment is authorized, the Nature Recreation Zone (6-metre corridor) will apply to the new location. Any surface area that is no longer required for trail use will be restored to a natural state and Special Feature zoning will be applied.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorized use of either of the trails will not be permitted, except for the use of Class 1 e-bikes. Horses will not be permitted. • Enter into an agreement with a stewardship group to provide trail maintenance and monitoring. If unsuccessful, explore hazard downgrading or decommission options for trails and/or trail features.

3.2 Zoning Plan

In general terms, a zoning plan divides a protected area into logical management units within which certain activities or uses are permitted and to which a particular set of management objectives apply. Zoning is often used to physically separate incompatible activities or uses within the park and provides visitors and managers with a quick visual representation and appreciation of how a particular park is managed. Zones are designed to reflect the physical environment, existing patterns of use and the desired level of management and development in a given management unit.

3.2.1 Nature Recreation Zone

The Nature Recreation Zone, consisting of 2.07 hectares (1.4%), is a linear, 6-metre-wide corridor centred on the existing SMD and SMA trails.

The establishment of a Nature Recreation Zone formalizes mountain biking as a sanctioned and acceptable activity in this section of the park. The trails are identified as multi-use, allowing for shared use by mountain biking, hiking and other forms of compatible recreation use (e.g., backcountry skiing, trail running). Horse use of the trails is not considered to be compatible due to potential user conflict. The trails are not open to motorized use. For the trails to function successfully, BC Parks requires continued good stewardship of the trail by its users.

The linear characteristics of the Nature Recreation Zone within the park ensure that sensitive ecosystems, which the trail network passes through, are not adversely impacted by trail use.

3.2.2 Special Feature Zone

The Special Feature Zone, consisting of 159.8 hectares (98.6%), includes all areas of the park not encompassed in the Nature Recreation Zone.

The objective of this zone is to protect the sensitive ecosystems and plants within King George VI Park. Public access to this area is not recommended in order to protect sensitive plants and plant communities from further disturbance. Management of this zone will be largely passive, however; active management to support the re-establishment or maintenance of rare plants or ecosystems or to remove invasive species may occur.

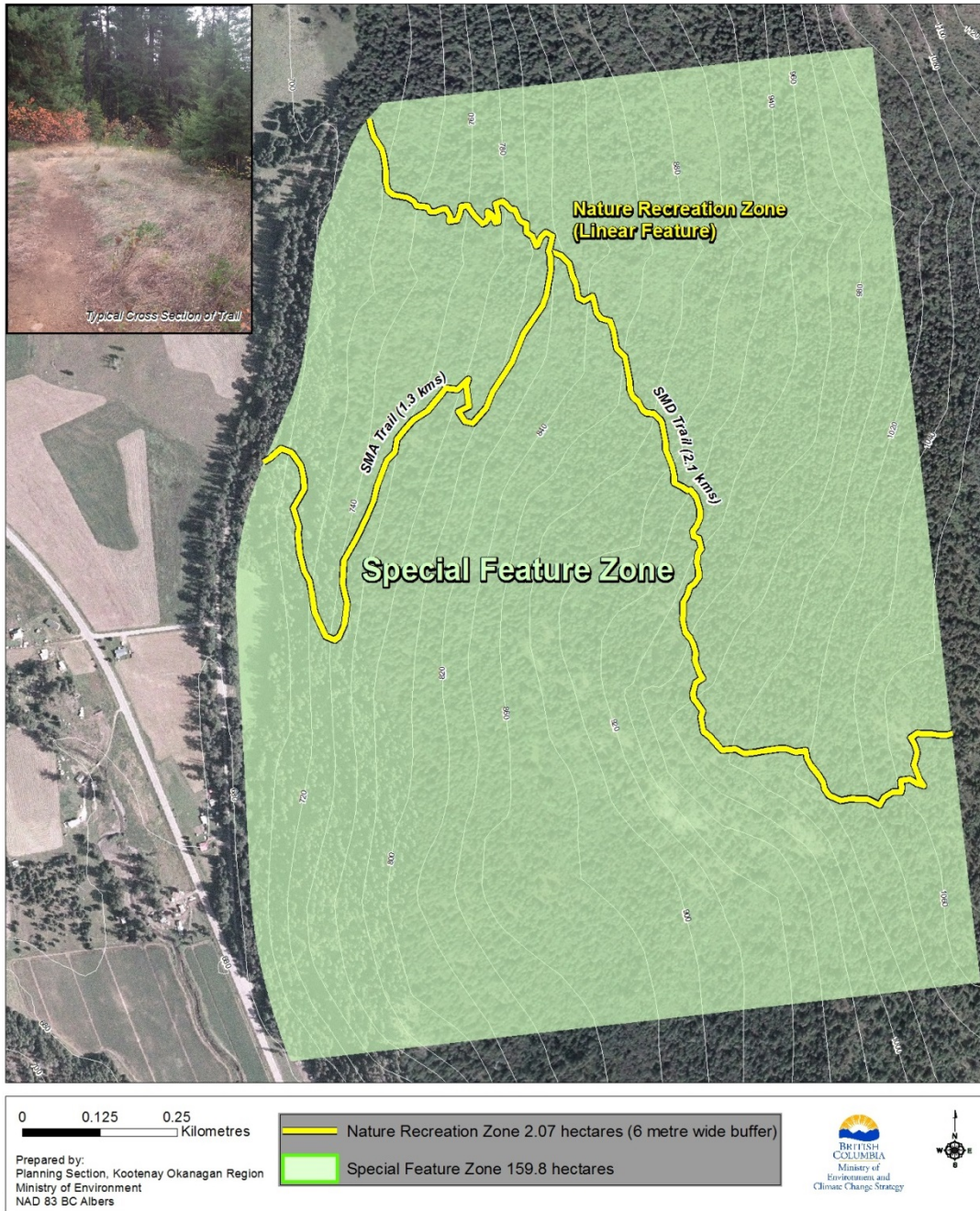


Figure 5: Zoning Map

4.0 Plan Implementation

4.1 Implementation Plan

Specific projects will be evaluated for priority within the context of the overall protected areas system. Where needed, BC Parks will seek project-specific funding and partners to implement management strategies.

4.2 High Priority Strategies

The following strategies have been identified as high priorities for implementation:

- Enter into an agreement with a stewardship group to provide trail maintenance and monitoring. If unsuccessful, explore hazard downgrading or decommission options for trails and/or technical terrain features.
- Work to re-establish natural ecosystem processes (e.g., maintaining the wetland project, re-introducing fire through prescribed burning).

4.3 Plan Assessment

In order to ensure that the management direction for King George VI Park remains relevant and effective, BC Parks staff will ensure that the management plan is assessed for validity by BC Parks staff on a regular basis (i.e., at least every 5 years). Minor administrative updates may be identified and completed at any time (e.g., correct spelling errors, update protected area details where needed), and will be documented according to BC Parks guidelines.

If the validity assessment reveals that the management plan requires more significant updating or substantial new management direction is needed, a formal review by BC Parks may be initiated to determine whether the management plan requires an amendment or if a new management plan is required.

The management plan amendment process or development of a new management plan includes an opportunity for public input.

5.0 References

Cameron, E. 2018. King George VI Provincial Park Amphibian Baseline.

Cameron, E and Huff, V. November 30, 2017. King George VI Provincial Park Listed Flora and Wetland Assessment.

Cameron, E and Huff, V. September 2018. Wild Licorice and Silver-spotted Skipper Survey: King George VI Provincial Park and Syringa Provincial Park.

Huff, V. and Cameron, E. September 2018. King George VI Provincial Park Rare Plant Survey 2018.

Dulisse, J and Page, H. November 2001. King George VI Provincial Park Rare and Endangered Wildlife and Plant Survey.

Brayshaw, D. (Statlu Environmental Consulting Ltd.). October 23, 2018. Hydrological Assessment King George VI Provincial Park Proposed Wetland Restoration.

Appendix 1: Appropriate Use Table

The following table summarizes existing and potential future uses in King George VI Park that are and are not appropriate in each zone. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all uses that may be considered in this protected area in the future.

Please note that appropriate uses may be geographically restricted (i.e., only allowed in certain areas of King George VI Park) or are only appropriate at certain times of the year. Please ensure that you are well informed of any use restrictions as indicated in the table. It is important to review relevant sections of the management plan when interpreting the table.

Appropriate Use Table Legend		
N	Not an appropriate use	The use is not appropriate in the indicated zone. If the use currently exists but the management planning process has determined that the use is no longer appropriate in all or part of the protected area, the management plan will include strategies for ending the activity (e.g., phasing out, closing).
Y	May be an appropriate use	Some level or extent of this use may be appropriate in the zone indicated. The management plan may provide guidance on the appropriate level of use and may address specific restrictions or planned enhancements (e.g., capacity, designated areas for a particular activity, party size, time of year, etc.). For new or expanded uses, this symbol indicates that the use <u>may be considered</u> for further evaluation. The appropriateness of some activities may not be confirmed until a further assessment (e.g., BC Parks Impact Assessment process) or evaluation process (e.g., park use permit adjudication) is completed.

Activity/Facility	Special Feature Zone	Nature Recreation Zone	Comments
Camping / Overnight Use	N	N	
Hiking	N	Y	Designated trails only (SMD and SMA).
Hunting	N	N	
Land-based Mechanized Activity (e.g., mountain biking, e-biking)	N	Y	Designated trails only (SMD and SMA).
Land-based Motorized Activity (e.g., 4x4, motorcycles, ATV, snowmobiles, snowcats)	N	N	
Horse and Pack Animal Use	N	N	Horse use of either the SMD or SMA trail is not allowed due to safety concerns.
Skiing (cross-country (non-track based) and backcountry)	Y	Y	
Skiing (cross-country (track based) and downhill)	N	N	
Picnic Areas (vehicle accessed)	N	N	
Parking Lots	N	N	
Roads	N	N	
Ski Facilities (vehicle accessed and serviced)	N	N	
Trails	N	Y	Existing SMD and SMA trails only.
Visitor Information Buildings	N	N	
Commercial Filming	Y	Y	With a valid park use permit only. Equipment and access restricted to Nature Recreation Zone.
Communication Sites and Towers	N	N	
Grazing	N	N	
Trapping	N	N	Not considered to be an appropriate use.
Utility Corridors	N	N	

Appendix 2: Summary of Draft Management Plan Feedback

During the review processes for the draft management plan, BC Parks heard from five members of the public and received four submissions on behalf of groups (governments, societies).

Four of the submissions supported the management direction in the draft plan with two of the submissions requesting small changes consistent with the proposed management direction. Changes to the plan stemming from those submissions include adding the activity of birdwatching in the recreation section and reworking elements of the Relationship with First Nations section.

Four submissions recommended changes to the management plan that focussed on increasing the recreation opportunities in the park:

Two submissions recommended that BC Parks include a mechanism in the final management plan that would allow for new recreation trails to be developed. The other two recreation-based suggestions were for restrooms and/or day-use facilities.

BC Parks respects the interests of recreationists and the trail riding community and considered the request to allow for additional trail development carefully but did not make changes to the management plan to accommodate this request. This decision was made because: (1) the at-risk ecological community is situated in areas that are desirable places to locate trails (i.e., the red-listed plant community occurs on rocky outcrops). Additional trails would impact the park's most sensitive features and could result in biodiversity losses in the park; (2) the two existing trails already provide recreation opportunities in King George VI Park; (3) the Rossland area, including the area around King George VI Park, contains significant opportunities for riders of all experience levels and ride types.

BC Parks did not accommodate the facility development request as facility development has not proven feasible in King George VI Park in the past and the conservation values in the park preclude developing facilities in the park now and into the future.

BC Parks also received two requests to terminate the wetland restoration project. One of which wanted the hayfield restored as it had become a community gathering place.

BC Parks recognizes that the wetland restoration project was not at the most attractive stage at the time that the public provided input to the planning process; however, improvements are expected to be noticeable in the area in the near future. Park users should be aware that the long-term biodiversity and

watershed gains will increase park conservation values and provide benefits to the local community.