

**Skeena Region**

# **MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT**

**March 2003**



**for Lava Forks  
Provincial Park**



**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**  
Ministry of Water, Land  
and Air Protection  
Environmental Stewardshi  
Division



# Lava Forks Provincial Park Approvals Page

## Forward

This management direction statement for Lava Forks Provincial Park provides management direction until such time as it is revised. Ongoing consultation between Environmental Stewardship Division representatives and First Nations may result in revisions as appropriate. Aboriginal rights are honoured and respected within the park.

Implementation of strategies identified in the management direction statement (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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# **Lava Forks 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 established Lava Forks Provincial Park as a Class A park by Order in Council 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*. Lava Forks has been identified as a Goal 2, Special Feature protected area in recognition of its recent (early 1900s) lava flow with spectacular volcanic features. The park also protects an excellent example of ecological processes associated with primary succession. Designation followed the recommendations of the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP).

Lava Forks Provincial Park covers 7,384 hectares adjacent to the Alaskan border, between the Unuk River and Craig River valley, about 120 kilometres southwest of the community of Telegraph Creek. There is no road access to the remote area. The provincial park lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Tahltan First Nation.

Lava Forks is the most recent volcanic eruption in Canada, dating from the early 1900s. The provincial park consists of a valley filled with lava amid ice-capped peaks. Special landforms include two lava-dammed lakes, pot holes containing crystal clear pools, ash dunes and lava flows. Primary vegetation has established since the eruption.

Border Lake Provincial Park to the southeast and Craig Headwaters Protected Area to the northwest protect representative wetland and forested ecosystems. About 100 kilometres to the northeast, a complex of large protected areas dominates the landscape. These protected areas include Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Park, Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve, Mount Edziza Park and Stikine 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 four protected areas in the Southern Boundary Ranges Ecosection; this ecosection is poorly represented (2.11%) in the protected areas system; Lava Forks ranks

second in contributing to representation of this ecosection (46.71% of overall representation).

- CWHwm (wet maritime coastal western hemlock), MHun (mountain hemlock), AT (alpine tundra) biogeoclimatic subzones; Lava Forks is one of only four protected areas contributing to the poorly represented MHun (2.94%) thereby ranking second in contributing to the representation of this unit (27.53% of overall representation).
- Protects outstanding volcanic physical features including lava-dammed lakes, ash dunes, lava flows and pot holes.
- Conserves a large mineral spring on hillside; mineral deposits have completely encompassed some large trees.
- Provides an excellent example of ecological processes associated with primary succession<sup>1</sup>—mosses and lichens cover upper flow layer.

### **Recreation and Tourism**

- Presents spectacular scenery with outstanding volcanic features.
- Low visitor use because of the park's extremely remote location.

### **Commercial Business Opportunities**

- Provides limited commercial business opportunities for guided hunting activities. (See Appendix 1 for activities allowed in this park).
- Provides low commercial business opportunities for guided interpretation based tour groups focused on the special features of this park. This opportunity, however, will not be encouraged because of the fragility of the features and the remote location of the park.

### **Cultural Heritage**

- Cultural heritage values remain undocumented at this time. Environmental Stewardship Division is seeking Tahltan First Nations' contributions to resolve this lack of knowledge.

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

- Lava Forks ranks second out of four protected areas in contributing to representation of the Southern Boundary Ranges Ecosection.
- Protects outstanding volcanic features resulting from Canada's most recent volcanic eruption.
- Protects example of primary succession.

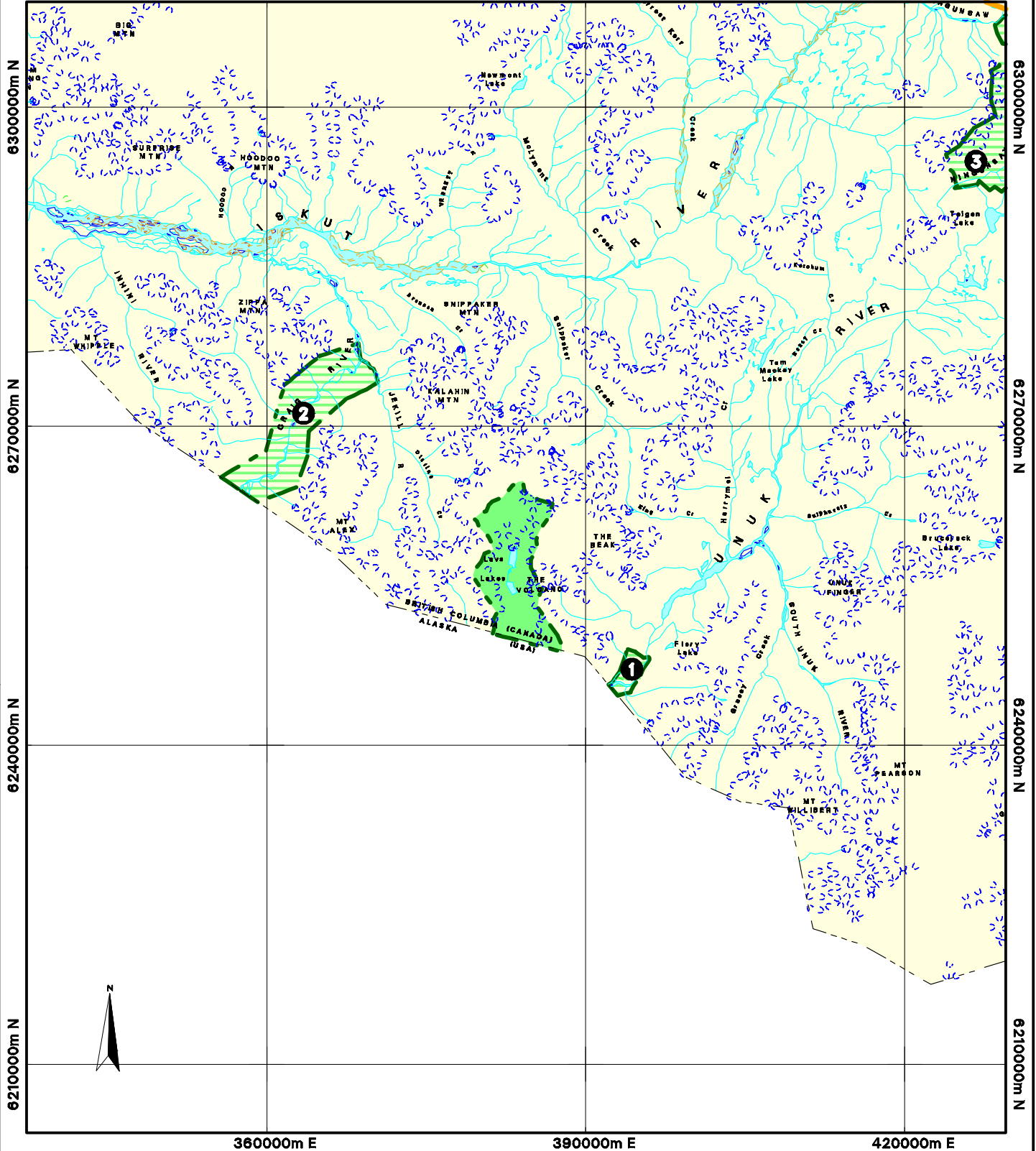
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<sup>1</sup> Primary succession: The development of an ecosystem in an area that has never had a community living occurs by a process that is called primary succession. Examples of areas in which a community has never lived before would be a new lava or rock from a volcano that makes a new island or a new landscape, or sand bar that arises from shifting sands in the ocean, from exposure of igneous rock surfaces by a land slide, or if a meteor makes a depression that fills with rainwater or fresh water from underground streams – Internet source - C. S. Dunn, Dept. of Biological Sciences, University of North Carolina at Wilmin gton.



Figure 1: Context





Lava Forks Park



Projection: UTM Zone 9  
Datum: NAD83

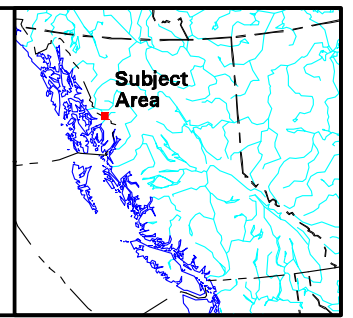
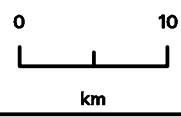
This is a visual representation only and should not be used for legal purposes.

Produced in Jan 2003  
for Ministry of Water,  
Land and Air Protection

-  Subject Area
-  Other Protected Areas
-  Highway
-  Road

Other Provincial Protected Areas

-  1 Border Lake
-  2 Craig Headwaters
-  3 Ningunsaw



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

### **Access**

Lava Forks Provincial Park is remote and accessible only by helicopter. Floatplane access is not considered feasible. Highway 37 runs 100 kilometres to the east. No water access exists to the park. Foot access requires many days of hiking.

### **Existing Tenures**

- Traplines 621T001 and 621T002 cover the park but this resource use activity is not authorized under valid park use permits if they are operating in the park.
- Guide-outfitter 621G002 includes the park and is authorized under park use permit SK9710016.

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

- None identified.

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

- The park's south boundary coincides with the international boundary between Canada and the United States of America (Alaska). This area in the State of Alaska is designated a Special Interest Area within the Tongass National Forest, with the purpose of inventorying and protecting special features.
- Lava Forks Provincial Park is surrounded by a General Resource Development Zone (GRDZ) as defined under the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan. A GRDZ means lands inside this zone are to be managed for a variety of uses, such as forestry, mining, grazing, tourism, guide outfitting and recreation<sup>2</sup>.

### **First Nations Interests**

- Lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Tahltan First Nation.
- Tahltan First Nation has an interest in maintaining their aboriginal traditional uses and activities in the provincial park.

### **Other Agency Interests**

- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section has an interest in wildlife and fish species, particularly grizzly bears.
- Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (British Columbia Conservation Data Centre (CDC)) has an interest in rare species and species at risk in the park.

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

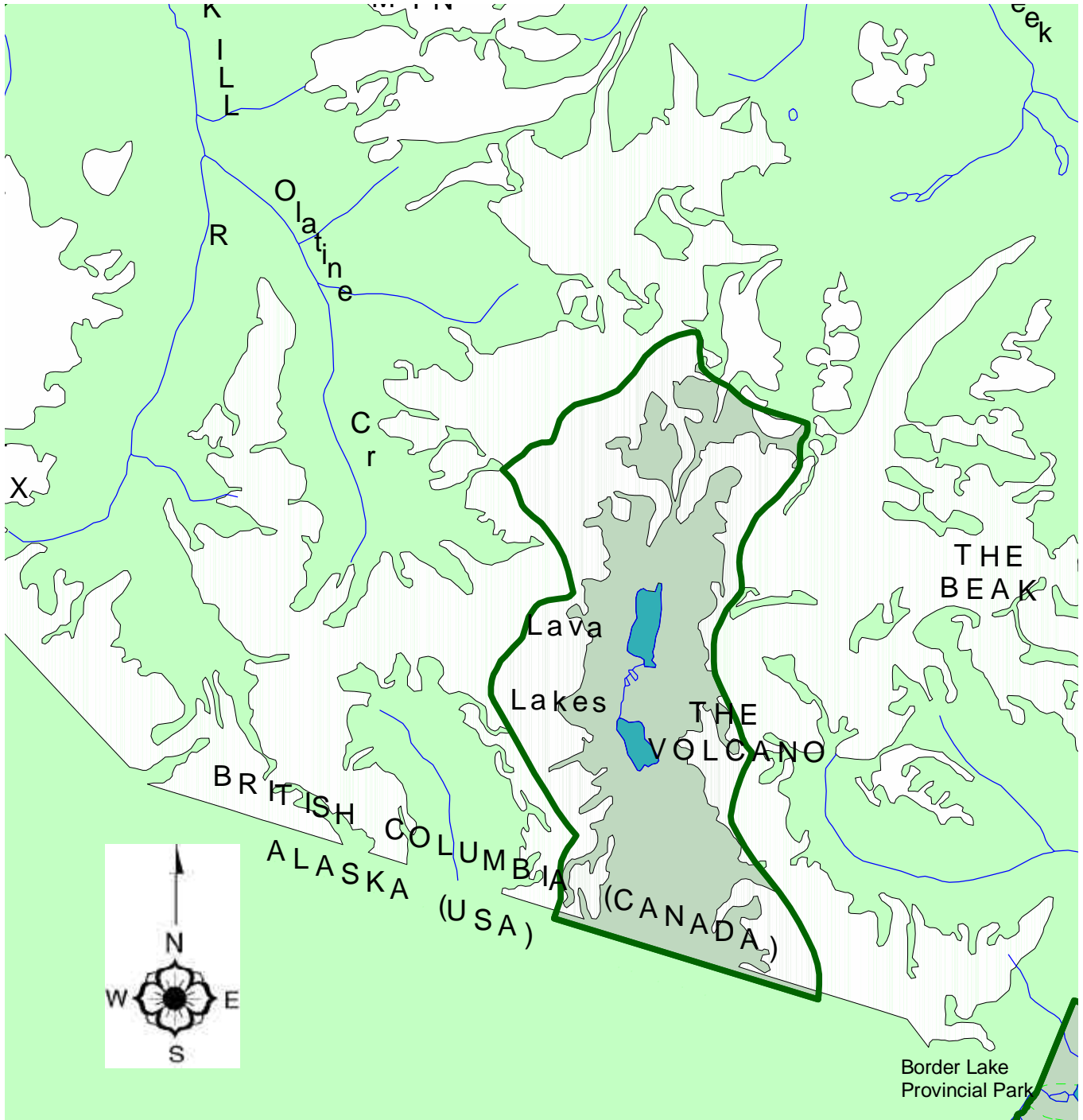
- Naturalists, ecologists and volcanologists have a high interest in the park because of its recent volcanic landforms and interesting plant succession.
- Backcountry outdoor recreation enthusiasts are interested in the park as a place to enjoy an undisturbed natural environment.

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<sup>2</sup> Source is the Internet at <http://www.em.gov.bc.ca/Mining/Landuse/BCLandUseFramework/StrategicLandUsePlanning/default.htm>



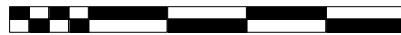
# Lava Forks Provincial Park



## Legend

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Natural Features</b>   | River/Stream - Right Bank |
| freshWater                | Lake - Definite           |
| glaciersAndSnow           | Lake - Indefinite         |
| <b>Rivers and Streams</b> | Marsh                     |
| River/Stream - Definite   | Island - Definite         |
| River/Stream - Indefinite | Sand/Gravel Bar           |
| River/Stream - Left Bank  | BC Parks Protected Area   |

2.5 0 2.5 5 7.5 10 Kilometers



1 : 109,556 1 inch = 2.78 kilometers

- The trapline holders are interested in the park because provincial park regulations may place limits on their trapping of fur-bearing animal species in the park.
- The guide outfitter is interested in the park because provincial park regulations may place limits on hunting activities within Lava Forks Provincial Park.

## Lava Forks Provincial Park Role Statement

The primary role of Lava Forks Provincial Park is to conserve Canada’s most recent lava flow in a spectacular mountain setting. The special landforms associated with this lava flow will be of particular interest to scientists because of their rarity and youth.

The park plays a secondary outdoor recreation role by providing the public with wilderness recreation opportunities in a highly scenic mountain environment.

## Management Commitments and Issues

### Direction from Previous Planning

- The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP recommended Lava Forks for protection in 2000 and gave management direction to allow hunting.

### Management Issues

The following management issues require attention:

Theme	Issue
Protecting the park’s volcanic landforms and the ecological values and processes associated with volcanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provincial park’s volcanic and natural features remain relatively unknown because an accurate inventory is incomplete.</li> <li>• Volcanic landforms are at risk because of their fragile composition and susceptibility to damage by human foot traffic.</li> <li>• The trapline owners may be operating in the park without a valid park use permit.</li> </ul>
Protecting cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provincial park’s cultural heritage features remain unknown because an accurate inventory is incomplete.</li> </ul>

## Management Direction

The vision for Lava Forks Provincial Park includes the retention of intact and undisturbed volcanic features and primary plant succession processes. The park will attract relatively few visitors who fly in to study the park’s volcanic landscape and ecology and enjoy its spectacular wild land scenery.

## Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

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

Objective	Strategy
To protect the park's natural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake an inventory of the volcanic landforms and processes in the park as the highest priority strategy for park management.</li> <li>• Undertake an inventory of the park's fauna and flora. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Place the highest priority in this inventory on compiling data on the plant succession processes and the rare plant species found in the park.</li> <li>➢ Second priority is compiling data on mammal and fish species, with highest priority on grizzly and black bear populations and their habitats.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Monitor visitor use of the park to determine the level of activity, purpose of trip and where people are going.</li> <li>• Contact the trapline owners to place this resource use under a valid park use permit if they are operating in the park.</li> <li>• Discuss ecosystem management of this cross-border special feature with US National Forest Service.</li> </ul>
To protect the park's outdoor recreation values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage recreational use to ensure compatibility with the park's ecological values, particularly fragile volcanic features and plant communities.</li> <li>• Manage helicopter access to the park; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Develop a relationship with helicopter companies in the region in British Columbia and in Wrangell Alaska to alert them to the special management issues affecting this park.</li> <li>➢ Implement a cooperative management program should helicopter access and visitor safety issues arise.</li> <li>➢ Include access restrictions in <i>Park Act</i> regulations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
To protect the park's cultural heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake an inventory of existing information about the park's cultural heritage values.</li> <li>• Meet with the Tahltan First Nation to discuss issues that affect the protection and management of Lava Forks Provincial Park.</li> </ul>
To provide and enhance information to the public about the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure information about Lava Forks Provincial Park on the official Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection web site is accurate and current.</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 ranks the need to develop a full management plan for this provincial park as low.

## Zoning Plan

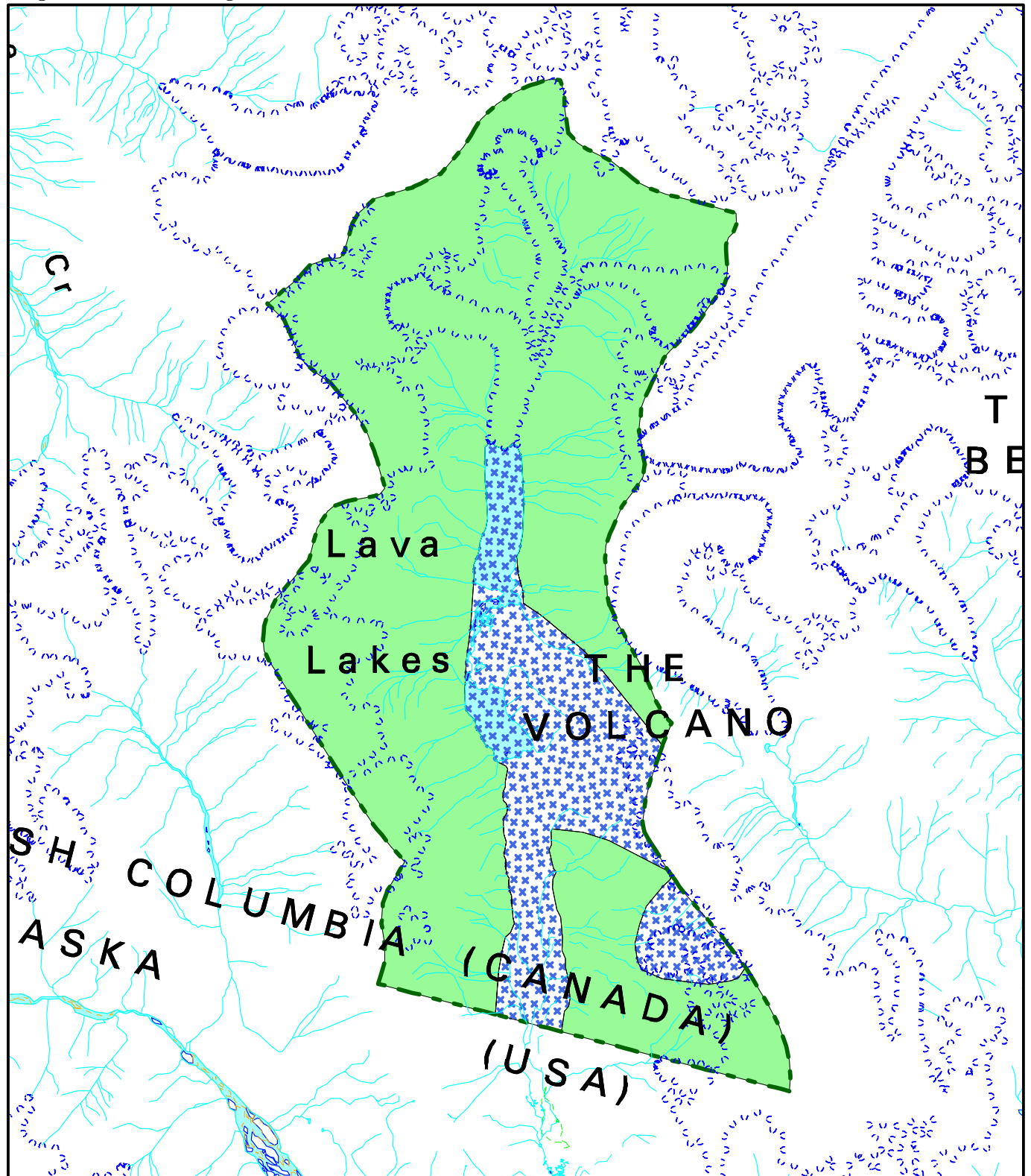
All of Lava Forks Provincial Park is placed within a Special Feature Zone which entails the following:

**Objective:** To protect and present significant natural or cultural resources, features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage values.

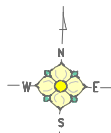
**Zone Description:** Covers the entire park (7,384 hectares).

**Management Guidelines:** High level of management protection with ongoing monitoring. Oriented to maintaining resources and, where appropriate, a high quality recreational and interpretative experience. Active or passive management depending on the size, location, and nature of the resource. Visitor access may be restricted to preserve the recreation experience and to limit impacts.

Figure 3: Zoning



Projection: UTM Zone 9  
Datum: NAD83



Special Feature



Wilderness Recreation



Protected Area Boundary



km

**Appendix 1. Lava Forks Provincial Park  
Table of Acceptable Activities, Uses and Facilities**

<b>Activity/Use/Facility</b>	<b>Acceptability</b>
Aboriginal traditional uses and activities	Y
Hunting	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)	Y
Guide outfitting (fishing)	N
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	M
Guide outfitting (river rafting)	N
Cat-assisted skiing	N
Ski hills	N
Commercial recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility-based)	M
Backcountry huts	N
Water control structures	N
Fish stocking and enhancement	N
Road access	N
Off-road access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road access (motorised)	N
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorised water access	N
Aircraft access – subject to prior approval	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