

LOWER TSITIKA RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

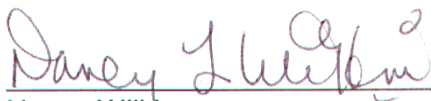
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Approved by:



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Date: August 8/03



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Date: Jan. 21/04

LOWER TSITIKA RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Primary Role

The **primary** role of Lower Tsitika River Provincial Park is to protect the lower part of the Tsitika River, which in term protects old growth forest, high wildlife, fish and biodiversity values. All five species of Pacific salmon, steelhead trout, cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden char, and possibly eulachon migrate to spawning grounds in the Tsitika River. The river is especially important for its summer run of steelhead trout, which is the only significant run remaining on the east coast of Vancouver Island. The river system and associated mature forests is also an important flyway for the provincial red-listed marbled murrelet and important breeding and foraging habitat for northern goshawks. The park provides winter range for ungulates, including Roosevelt elk (blue-listed species).

The park contributes to protecting mature forest remnants of the Northern Island Mountain Ecoregion, which is under represented in the protected areas system at 9.1%. It also makes small contributions to the representation of the Coastal Western Hemlock vm1 and vm2 biogeoclimatic variants, which are both under represented in the protected areas system.

Together with Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve, Mount Derby Ecological Reserve and Tsitika Mountain Ecological Reserve, much of the lower part of the Tsitika River watershed has been protected.

Secondary Role

The **secondary** role is to provide a buffer to the killer whale rubbing beaches and pristine estuary of Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve. The resident population of killer whales in this area is red-listed provincially and listed as threatened by COSEWIC¹. The park also provides a buffer to Tsitika Mountain and Mount Derby ecological reserves, and by doing so, it adds to the protection of the significant natural values contained in each of these ecological reserves.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue s	Response
Impact of adjacent forest harvesting on park values.	➤ Work with forest companies to ensure forest harvesting activity does not impact the park.
Impact of exotic species spawning in the river on native fish stocks, management of recreational sport fishery	➤ Work with the Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section of WLAP and DFO to monitor fishing pressure, fish populations and ensure their viability. ➤ Work with Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section of WLAP, DFO and MAFF to eliminate exotic species (Atlantic salmon).

¹ Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife In Canada.

Lack of understanding and awareness of complete natural and cultural values in the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement inventory plan in conjunction with ecological reserves. ➤ Undertake a cultural inventory and traditional use study in conjunction with First Nations. ➤ Increase offsite interpretation efforts. ➤ Install boundary signage to clearly mark park and ecological reserve boundaries.
First Nation relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop good working relationships with First Nations to develop an understanding and appreciation of protected area status and ER values

Zoning

Wilderness Recreation Zone – covers the entire park to reflect the wilderness character of the park while providing for limited recreation opportunities. The objective of this zone is to protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities depending on a pristine environment where air access may be permitted to designated sites. This zone is characterized by very low use with minimal facility development for user safety and convenience and the protection of the environment. This zoning complements the adjacent ecological reserves and aids in their protection.

Conservation

Representation
- ecosection

- Lower Tsitika River Provincial Park is the 5th largest contributor (6.8%) out of 18 protected areas that contribute to the representation of the Northern Island Mountains Ecosection (NIM), which is under represented in the protected areas system at 9.1%. Strathcona Provincial Park is the largest contributor with 48.7%.

When treated as a contiguous protected area in conjunction with Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) ER, Tsitika Mountain ER, and Mount Derby ER, its contribution to the representation of NIM increases to 10.1%.

- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant

- Lower Tsitika River Park makes a small contribution to the overall representation of 1.7% to CWH vm1, which is under represented in the protected areas system at 7%. When treated as a contiguous protected area, the contribution increases to 2.1%.

The park also makes a minimal contribution (0.8%) to the representation of CWHvm2, which is under represented provincially at 8.7%. Minimal contribution (0.2%) to MHmm1, which is well represented at 16%.

Special Features

- River, mature forests, old growth dependent species, salmon spawning and rearing habitat, winter ungulate range; possible eulachon run (unusual on Vancouver Island).

Rare/Endangered Values

- Red-listed* marbled murrelet; *red-listed* killer whale population, northern goshawk. *Blue-listed* Roosevelt elk, eulachon, Dolly Varden, cutthroat trout. *Yellow-listed species of conservation concern (S3-S4)*: coho, chinook, and sockeye salmon. Important for conservation of steelhead trout, especially the summer runs.

Scientific/Research Opportunities

- Fish, mammal, and bird species of conservation concern; forest growth studies.

Recreation

Representation

backcountry
destination

- Not Applicable
- Fishing destination for steelhead trout, heli fishing

travel corridor
local recreation

- Not Applicable
- River fishing

- Special Opportunities Not Applicable
- Education/Interpretation Opportunities Significant offsite interpretation opportunities at Telegraph Cove for all parks in the area

Cultural Heritage

- Representation Long history of First Nation occupation
- Special Feature Post-contact telegraph trail, FN spiritual values/trail, village site

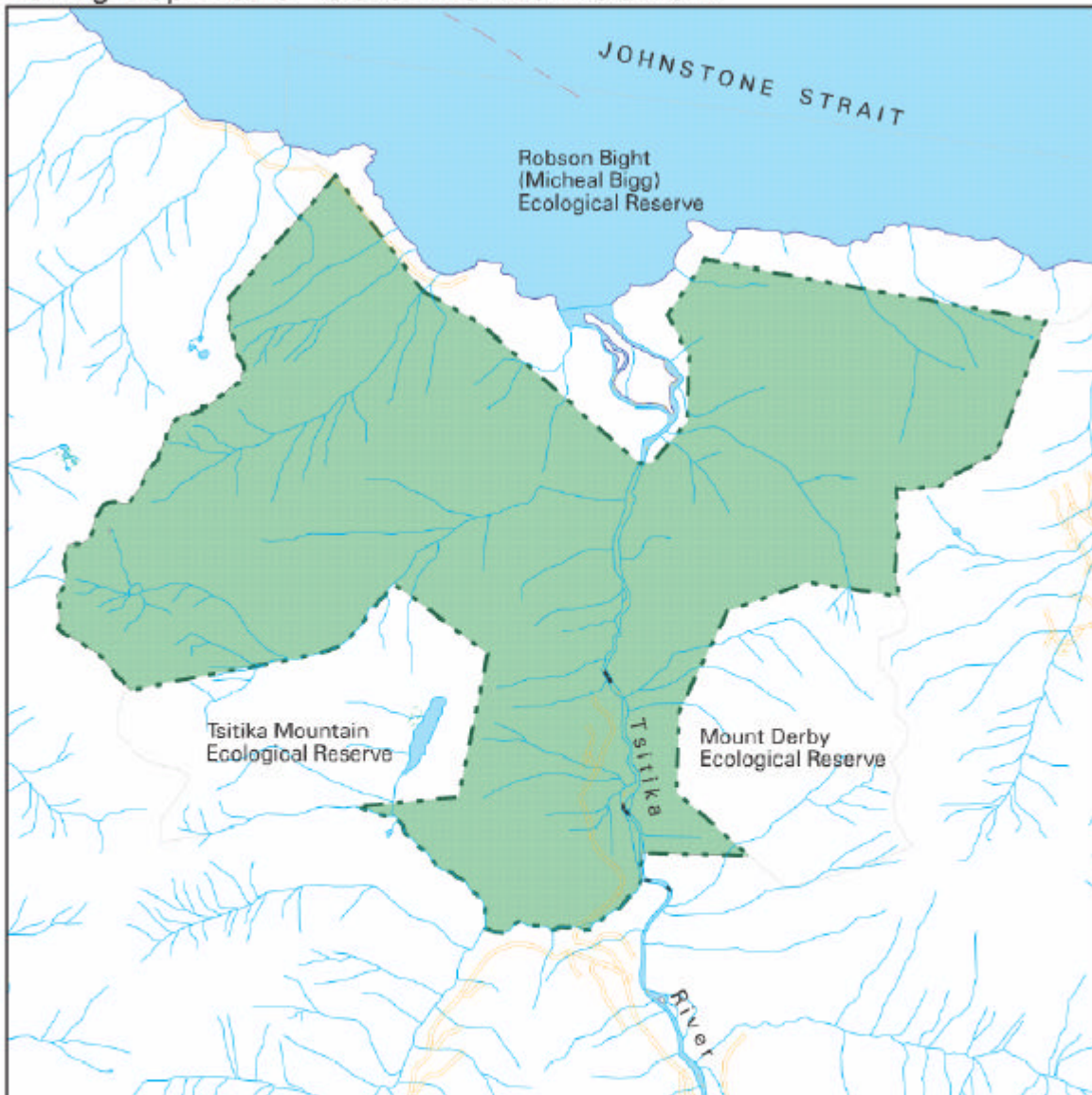
Other Management Considerations

- Other Designations Not Applicable
- Relationship to other PAs Part of a system of protected areas in the north end of Vancouver Island
- Co-operative Management Arrangements Not Applicable
- Partnerships Not Applicable
- Vulnerability Natural values are vulnerable to adjacent forest harvesting, aquaculture and commercial fishing. Native fish species are threatened by the presence of spawning Atlantic salmon (First recorded occurrence of this happening in BC). Cultural values are vulnerable to adjacent forest harvesting.
- Relationship to other Strategies This site is one of six identified in the Tsitika River drainage by the Tsitika Planning Team in the 1970s. Designated as a result of recommendations in the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan.

Area: 3,745 hectares

Date of establishment: July 12, 1995

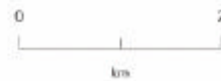
Zoning Map - Lower Tsitika River Provincial Park



Projection: Albers Equal Areas
Datum: NADB3



 Wilderness Recreation
 Protected Area Boundary



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