

**Lower Mainland Region**

**MANAGEMENT DIRECTION  
STATEMENT**

April, 2002



**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**

Ministry of Water, Land and  
Air Protection  
Environmental Stewardship  
Division


**for Mehatl Creek Provincial Park**

# Mehatl Creek Provincial Park Approvals Page

## Forward


This management direction statement for **Mehatl Creek Provincial Park** provides management direction until such time as a more detailed management plan is prepared.

### Approvals:



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Manager  
Lower Mainland Region



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A/Assistant Deputy Minister  
Environmental Stewardship  
Division

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of individuals and organizations for their support and involvement in the development of this Management Direction Statement. Voluntary contributions are invaluable in the building of any plan and an indication of the care and concern that people have for the provincial park.

Special thanks to volunteers Gordon and Charlene Gram for their efforts in the research and preparation of this Management Direction Statement.

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# MEHATL CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

## Management Direction Statement

### Introduction

#### Purpose of the Management Direction Statement

Management Direction Statements (MDS) provide strategic management direction for all provincial parks and other protected areas that do not have a full management plan. MDS do not negate the need for future, more detailed management plans. Management Direction Statements also describe protected area values, management issues and concerns, management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies and directional statements from other planning processes. While strategies may be identified in the MDS, the completion of all these strategies is subject to funding and funding procedures. In addition, all development associated with these strategies within the park is subject to the BC Parks' Impact Assessment Policy. This Management Direction Statement is intended to provide direction and guidelines for managing Mehatl Creek Provincial Park for the foreseeable future.

#### Setting and Context

- Following recommendations of the Lower Mainland Protected Areas Strategy of 1996, Mehatl Creek was designated as a Class A park in 1997. The park is currently named and described in Schedule D of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*.
- Mehatl Creek Provincial Park, covering 23,860 hectares, protects the majority of the Mehatl Creek drainage, encompassing the pristine Mehatl and North Mehatl creeks, alpine lakes and meadows, cirque glaciers, and spectacular Mount Klakarpun, Mehatl Peak and Tiara Tower.
- The southern boundary of the park is located approximately 50 kilometers west of Boston Bar and may be accessed by car on the Nahatlatch River Forest Service Road (Figure 1).
- In association with Stein Valley Nlaka' pamux Heritage Park and Nahatlatch Provincial Park, the combination of protected areas form a valuable corridor system between three watersheds.

### Protected Area Attributes

#### Conservation

- Represents a transitional zone that exhibits both coastal and interior climatic and vegetative characteristics.
- Preserves old growth forests in the Coastal Western Hemlock and Mountain Hemlock biogeoclimatic zones, providing important habitat for old growth dependent species and important winter cover.
- Protects the essentially pristine waters of Mehatl Creek and its significant influence on the Nahatlatch River system.
- Protects chinook, bull trout and rainbow trout spawning and rearing habitat in the lower mainstem below Mehatl Falls.

- Preserves habitat for the spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*), a provincially red-listed<sup>1</sup> species, and blue-listed<sup>2</sup> species such as bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) and grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*).
- Mehatl Creek provides important breeding and nesting habitat for the harlequin duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*).

[Click here to view Figure 1 – Location Map](#)

## Recreation and Tourism

- Protects scenic alpine ridges and lakes, year round snowcapped mountains, subalpine meadows, and pristine old-growth forests as well as provides backcountry hiking and mountaineering opportunities for the experienced wilderness adventurer.
- Provides fishing opportunities in the lower mainstem of Mehatl Creek below Mehatl Falls as well as scenic walking and wildlife viewing.
- Provides rafting, kayaking, or canoeing on lower Mehatl Creek for the very experienced.



**Figure 2: Source Lake for North Mehatl Creek.**

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<sup>1</sup> *Red List*: Includes any indigenous species or subspecies that have, or are candidates for Extirpated, Endangered, or Threatened status in British Columbia. Extirpated taxa no longer exist in the wild in British Columbia, but do occur elsewhere. Endangered taxa are facing imminent extirpation or extinction. Threatened taxa are likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed.

<sup>2</sup> *Blue List*: Includes any indigenous species or subspecies considered to be Vulnerable in British Columbia. Vulnerable taxa are of special concern because of characteristics that make them particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events. Blue-listed taxa are at risk, but are not Extirpated, Endangered or Threatened.

## **Cultural Heritage**

- Mehatl Creek Park lies within the traditional territory of the Nlaka' pamux Nation.
- A Traditional Use Study of the Nahatlatch River and Mehatl Creek area has been initiated by the Boothroyd Band.
- Heritage inventories by Albright and Zacharias recorded oral accounts of occupation suggesting that the Mehatl Valley may have been used as a route for contact and trade with the Mt. Currie Band. A heritage inventory for the Mehatl Creek drainage has not been initiated.
- There are no archaeological sites currently recorded within the park.

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

Mehatl Creek Provincial Park represents the majority of the largely undisturbed Mehatl Creek drainage. The park offers an environment with a high degree of naturalness, featuring snow-covered mountains year round, alpine meadows, old growth forests, and special features such as Mehatl Falls and Canyon.



**Figure 3: Mehatl Creek Valley, looking north towards Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park.**

- Connects the Stein Valley Nlaka' pamux Heritage Park and Nahatlatch Park, creating a large protected wilderness area and valuable corridor between three watersheds.
- Protects the natural environment and cultural heritage while providing formal wilderness opportunities through park zoning.
- Contributes to Provincial Government's Spotted Owl Management Plan.
- Contributes to Provincial Government's Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy.

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

### **Access**

The park lies west of the communities of Boston Bar and North Bend, off the Trans Canada Highway. Accessible by car, the park is located at approximately 48 km on the Nahatlatch Forest Service Road, before crossing the Nahatlatch River. Although the road offers spectacular views, some sections are narrow, hilly, rough and can be very dusty. Four-wheel drive is not necessary but caution should be exercised on this active logging road.

The road that accesses Mehatl Creek Park is divided into three administrative sections; the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Forests, and the road permit holder, Cattermole Timber. A road users committee, comprised of the industrial users, is responsible for general road maintenance.

Traversing spectacular alpine ridges, hikers may access northern alpine portions of the park on foot, approaching the park from the west via Lillooet Lake and Lizzie Creek, north from Stein Valley Nlaka pamux Heritage Park, or from the east via Kwoiek or Log creeks. Logging roads along Lizzie, Kwoiek and Log creeks may provide access part way. Hiking routes are not marked.

### **Existing Tenures**

The *Park Act* and *Park and Recreation Area Regulation* will direct the planning and management of Mehatl Creek Provincial Park. All existing liens, charges and encumbrances, other than those applying to commercial logging, mining or energy exploration and development, will continue to be authorized through issuance of park use permits. Permits may be renewed or amended as they expire. This policy recognizes all existing *Land Act* tenures, water rights, grazing rights, trapping licenses and other legal tenures and rights.

- Park Use Permit LM0010262 to Reo Rafting Adventures Ltd.
- Existing trap line within a small portion of the park may or may not be in use.

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

- Land adjacent to the park is part of the Dewdney Provincial Forest and is subject to further harvesting and future forest development plans.
- Cattermole Timber holds Forest License A19202 for areas adjacent to the park on the east, west and south.
- Mehatl Creek Park shares its northern boundary with the Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park, and its southern boundary with Nahatlatch Provincial Park.

### **First Nations Interests**

- The Boothroyd Band has reported sustenance activities occurring within the park, including hunting, trapping, fishing and the gathering of food and medicinal plants.



## **Other Agency Interests**

The park will be managed in close coordination with various resource agencies, particularly the Fish and Wildlife Recreation and Allocation Branch of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Ministry of Forests.

## **Private and Public Stakeholder Interests**

- Reo Rafting Adventures Ltd. holds Park Use Permit LM0010262 to conduct escorted hikes to Mehatl Falls.
- Cattermole Timber controls road access west of the 48 km bridge (Road Permit R03662), and is responsible for road maintenance on the Nahatlatch Forest Service Road that includes but is not limited to, dust abatement, ditch and culvert maintenance, periodic grading, and danger tree removal. Cattermole Timber has interest in future forest harvesting on adjacent lands.

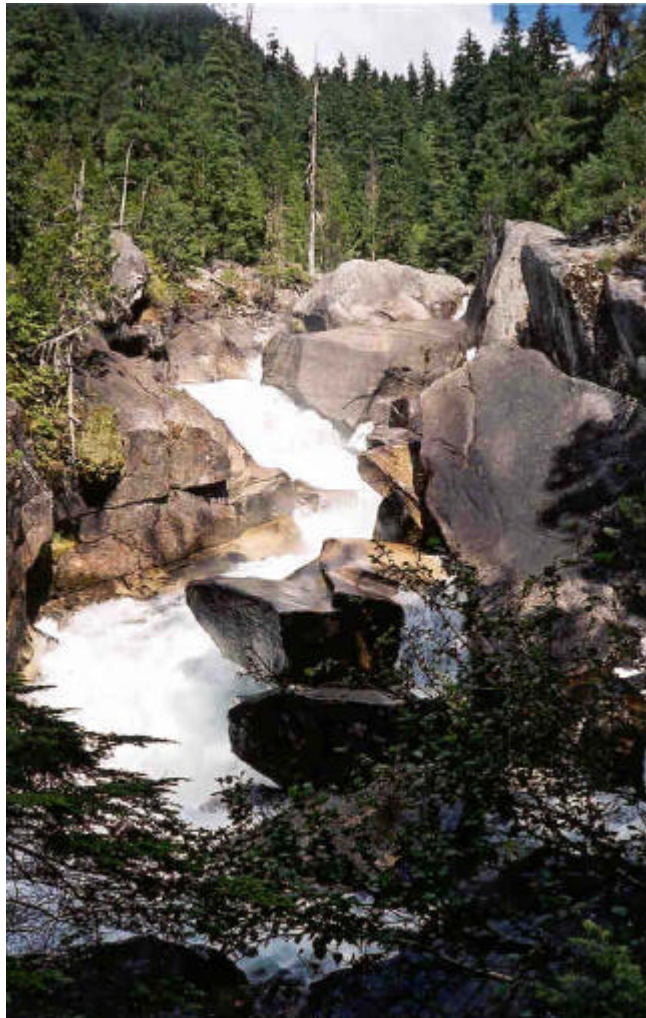


Figure 4: Mehatl Creek Falls.

## **Role of the Park**

Mehatl Creek Provincial Park is one of three provincial parks (Nahatlatch Park and Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park) within the Lillooet Range. Complementing the conservation and recreation features found in the Nahatlatch and Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage parks, Mehatl Creek Park completes an undisturbed, remote, and invaluable corridor system between the three watersheds. Featuring old growth forests in both low and high elevation ecosystems, pristine alpine lakes and streams, and spectacular mountain scenery, the park protects important habitat for a variety of terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species as well as providing wilderness opportunities. There is also opportunity for further research and study of park resources.

## **Management Commitments and Issues**

### **Integration with Other Land Use Planning Processes**

The Mehatl Creek drainage was included within the Nahatlatch Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) with specific reference to timber and wildlife values. The Nahatlatch IRMP was initiated in August 1992 as a result of discussion between the Ministry of Forests, the Boothroyd Indian Band, and the Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council regarding the need for a cooperative approach to resource planning within the Nahatlatch watershed. The Nahatlatch IRMP, considering the views and interests of all stakeholders and interested parties, will be used to help guide future resource development and other activities within the Dewdney Provincial Forest. The IRMP planning team has established a process to review and monitor the plan, and to make adjustments where necessary. Upon completion of the Nahatlatch IRMP, the IRMP committee is requesting that the plan be declared as a Higher Level Plan under the Forest Practices Code.

With the establishment of Mehatl Creek Provincial Park and Nahatlatch Provincial Park within the IRMP study area, Regional Operations, Environmental Stewardship Division has become involved with the Nahatlatch IRMP as a member of the Recreation Sub Committee. Regional Operations will continue to support the IRMP process while focusing on the interests of the newly designated parks through the completion of the Management Direction Statement and implementation of future management plans.

### **Longer Term Issues and Concerns**

Specific issues that will be considered in the longer term can be highlighted under the following topics:

#### ***Conservation***

- Effects and pressures of resource development in adjacent watersheds on the park's wildlife, its wildlife habitat, and visual quality.
- Park boundary does not include the height of land.
- Pine mushroom picking and staging operations occurring within or near the park.
- Lack of information on park vegetation, wildlife, fish species, and cultural heritage, including critical harlequin duck, spotted owl and grizzly bear habitat.
- Wilderness protection from east and west access routes.

## ***Cultural History***

- Lack of information on archaeological and heritage sites in the Mehatl Creek Park area.
- Consultation with Boothroyd Band with respect to management of possible sites with significance to the Nlaka'pamux First Nation.
- Future involvement of the Boothroyd Band on behalf of the Nlaka'pamux Nation regarding direction and management of the park.

## ***Recreation***

- Managing the park for wilderness experiences and protection of park conservation values.

## **Shorter Term Issues and Concerns**

Specific issues that will be considered in the short term are as follows:

- Inventory of natural and cultural resources and protection of cultural heritage.
- Protection of park wildlife and wildlife habitat.
- Protection of wilderness experience.
- Integration of park planning and management with Nahatlatch and Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage parks and the Nahatlatch IRMP to address the significance of the corridor within the protected areas system.
- Resource development of adjacent land.

## **Management Direction**

### **Management Objectives and Strategies**

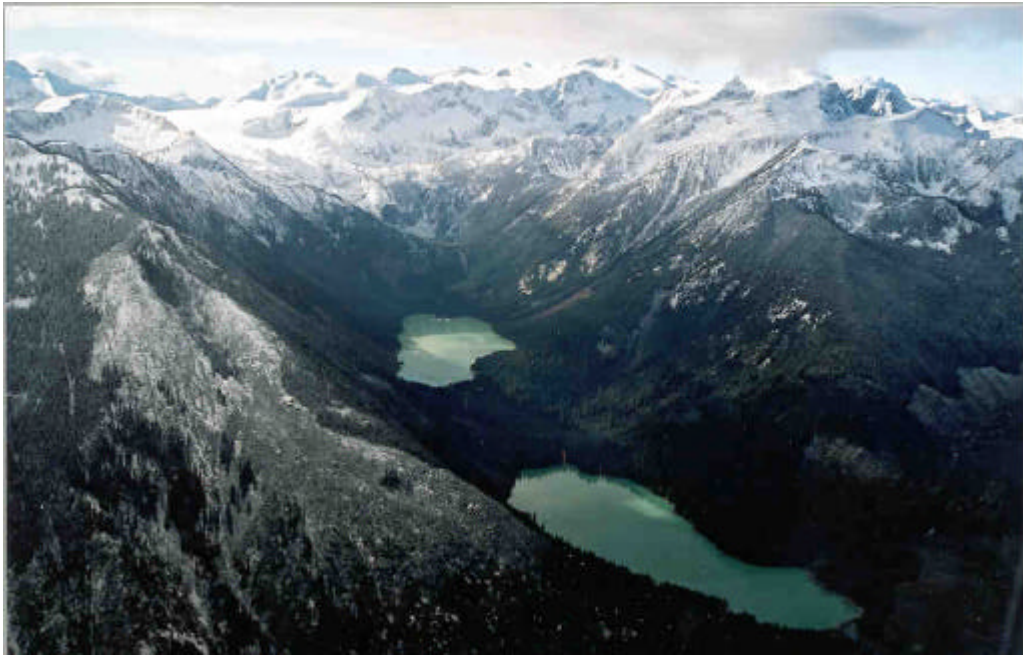
Park management will be directed towards conserving the natural and cultural values found within the park, while providing a wilderness experience. As such, management objectives for Mehatl Creek Provincial Park will have a strong emphasis on conservation and will endeavour to prevent or minimize the impacts of recreation on the park's valuable natural resources and any cultural features.

The following objectives will direct the short and long-term management of the park:

- To protect and maintain the diversity of wildlife species and habitats.
- To conserve the forest and alpine ecosystems.
- To protect the landscape aesthetics and visual quality available from within the park.
- To maintain the natural conditions and quality of Mehatl Creek for aquatic species, habitat, landscape aesthetics, health considerations, and the positive influence on the Nahatlatch River system.
- To develop wilderness use to levels compatible with conservation objectives.
- To conserve any identified cultural features.
- To encourage non-consumptive research of natural and cultural park resources as to better understand and manage the park.

Specific objectives and strategies to address short-term issues are as follows (also see Figure 6):

Objectives	Strategies
Address lack of park awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the park at ground level through signing and an information center on Mehatl Creek Trail, incorporate with signing in Nahatlatch Park</li> </ul>
Address implementation of MDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in conjunction with the Nahatlatch IRMP regarding management and direction of Mehatl and Nahatlatch parks</li> </ul>
Recognize and manage for wilderness experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Mehatl Falls Trail to the natural viewpoint of the third falls as a type III trail, integrate with development in Nahatlatch Park</li> <li>• Limit park facilities on Mehatl Falls Trail</li> <li>• Research impacts of recreation on the Harlequin duck</li> </ul>
Protect natural resources, wildlife and wildlife habitat within the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify sensitive natural resources and wildlife habitats</li> <li>• Protect identified sensitive spotted owl and harlequin duck habitat</li> <li>• Initiate conservation studies for wildlife inventories</li> <li>• Determine extent of pine mushroom picking within the park, post park regulations, determine trap line status.</li> </ul>
Protect cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventory of cultural heritage within the Mehatl Creek drainage</li> <li>• Involve the Nlaka'pamux Nation and Boothroyd Band in park management</li> </ul>
Address adjacent land use concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish protocol agreement with Ministry of Forests and Land and Water BC concerning visual quality of areas outside of park boundary but within the watershed</li> <li>• Liaise with the Ministry of Forests and Cattermole Timber regarding harvesting plans</li> <li>• Study possibility of extending park boundary to height of land, and study Kwoiek, Ruteledge and Chochiwa glaciers and upper Kwoiek and Chochiwa creeks as a possible park additions in order to improve ecological viability and integrity of the park.</li> </ul>



**Figure 5: Kokwaskey and Chochiwa Lakes, Chochiwa Creek Valley**

[Click here to view Figure 6 – Short Term Issues Map](#)

### **Consultation and Future Planning**

Planning and management of the park will conform to the intent and directions as set forth in the *Park Act* and its accompanying *Park and Recreation Area Regulations*. Following the completion of resource inventories (e.g. spotted owl; grizzly bears) identified in this management plan, the Regional Operations of the Environmental Stewardship Division will coordinate with government agencies, public planning groups, the Boothroyd Band, and other local stakeholders in developing a future management plan for Mehatl Creek Provincial Park.

### **Zoning Plan**

[Click here to view Figure 7 – Zoning Map](#)

The main purpose of Mehatl Creek Provincial Park is to preserve its atmosphere, environment, and ecology. Figure 7 shows the preliminary zoning plan for Mehatl Creek Provincial Park. This plan is intended to complement zoning plans of the adjacent Nahatlatch and Stein Valley Nlaka' pamux parks.

The Special Features Zone, comprising approximately 75 hectares, contains significant natural features such as geological formations, river systems or important wildlife habitats. Management of this zone is oriented towards providing limited recreational and interpretive use that will sufficiently protect or preserve the high quality of the identified features. This zone tentatively includes the three falls and canyon of the lower Mehatl Creek and the trail area on the east bank. As more research is completed, recreational access to sensitive areas such as spotted owl habitat or harlequin duck nesting sites may be limited to specific seasons.

The Wilderness Conservation Zone protects a remote, undisturbed natural landscape while providing unassisted wilderness opportunities dependent on a pristine environment where no motorized activities will be allowed. This zone contains the remaining 23,785 hectares of the park.

**Appendix I - Table of Acceptable Activities, Uses  
and Facilities for Mehatl Creek Provincial Park**

Activity/Use Facility	Mehatl Creek Park
Hunting	N
Fishing	Y
Trapping	N <sup>2</sup>
Grazing	N/A
Recreational Gold Panning/Rock Hounding	N
Utility Corridors	N/A
Communication Sites	N
Horse Use/Pack Animals	N
Guide Outfitting (hunting)	N
Guide Outfitting (fishing)	N
Guide Outfitting (nature tours)	Y <sup>2</sup>
Guide Outfitting (river rafting)	N
Cat-assisted Skiing	N
Ski Hills	N
Heli-skiing	N
Heli-hiking	N
Tourist Infrastructure- Resorts	N
Backcountry Huts/Lodes/Cabins/Guest Ranches	N
Water control Structures	N1
Fish Stocking	N1
Enhancement	N1
Road Access	N
Off-Road Access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-Road Access (motorized)	N
Off-Road Access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorized Water Access	N
Aircraft Access	N
Fire Management (prescribed) Wildlife Management Prevention and Preparedness Prescribed Fire Management	N1
Fire Management (suppression)	N1
Forest Insect/Disease Control	N1
Noxious Weed Control	N1
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	N1
Scientific Research (specimen collection)	N1
Scientific Research (manipulative activities)	N1

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

N= not allowed

N1= allowed for expressed management purposes only

N2= not normally allowed, but if present at time of PA establishment, will normally be allowed to continue

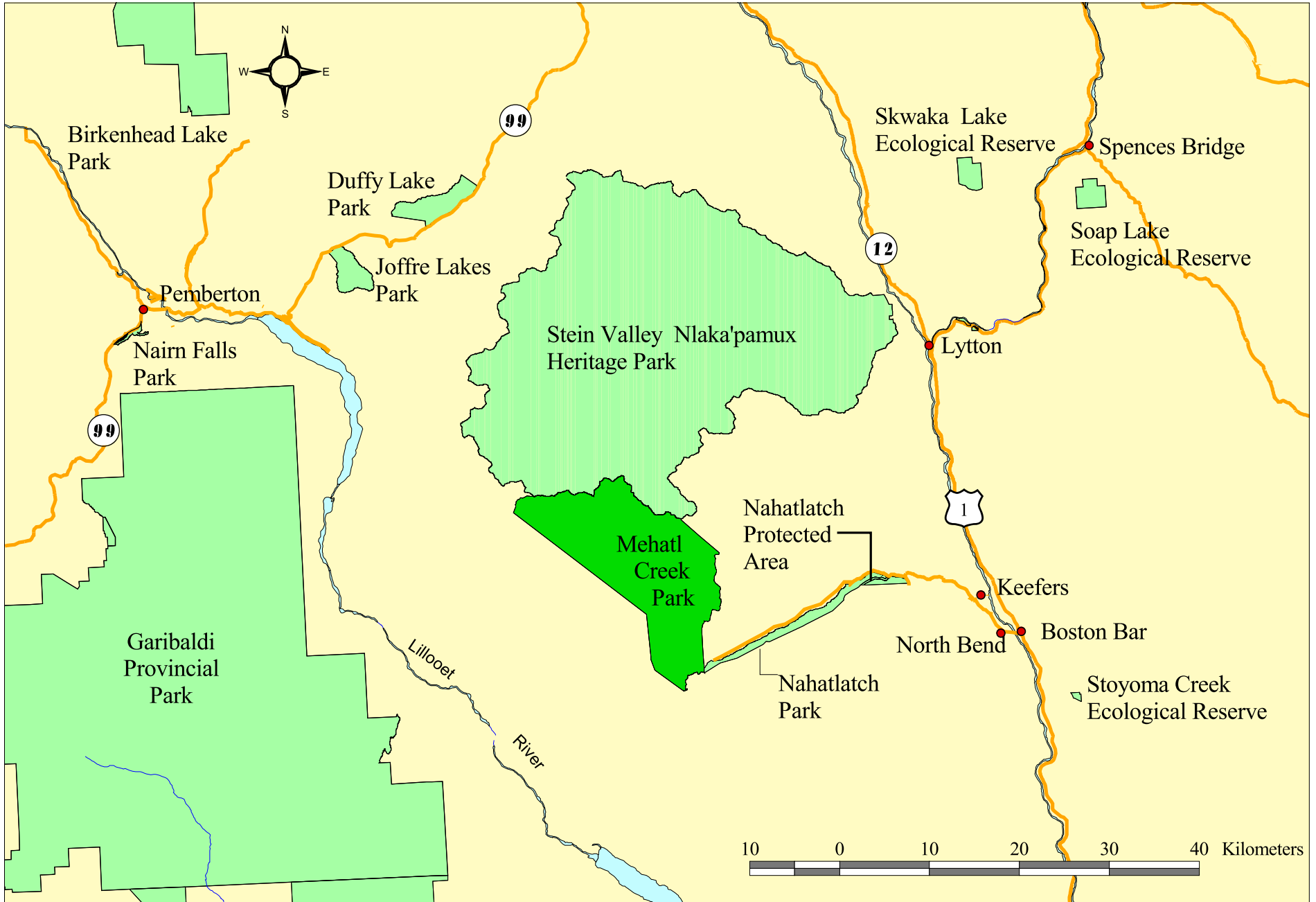
<sup>1</sup> Road access plan for this area designates open and closed roads

<sup>2</sup> By permit only

<sup>3</sup> On designated trails only

<sup>4</sup> On designated lakes only

# Figure 1: Location Map





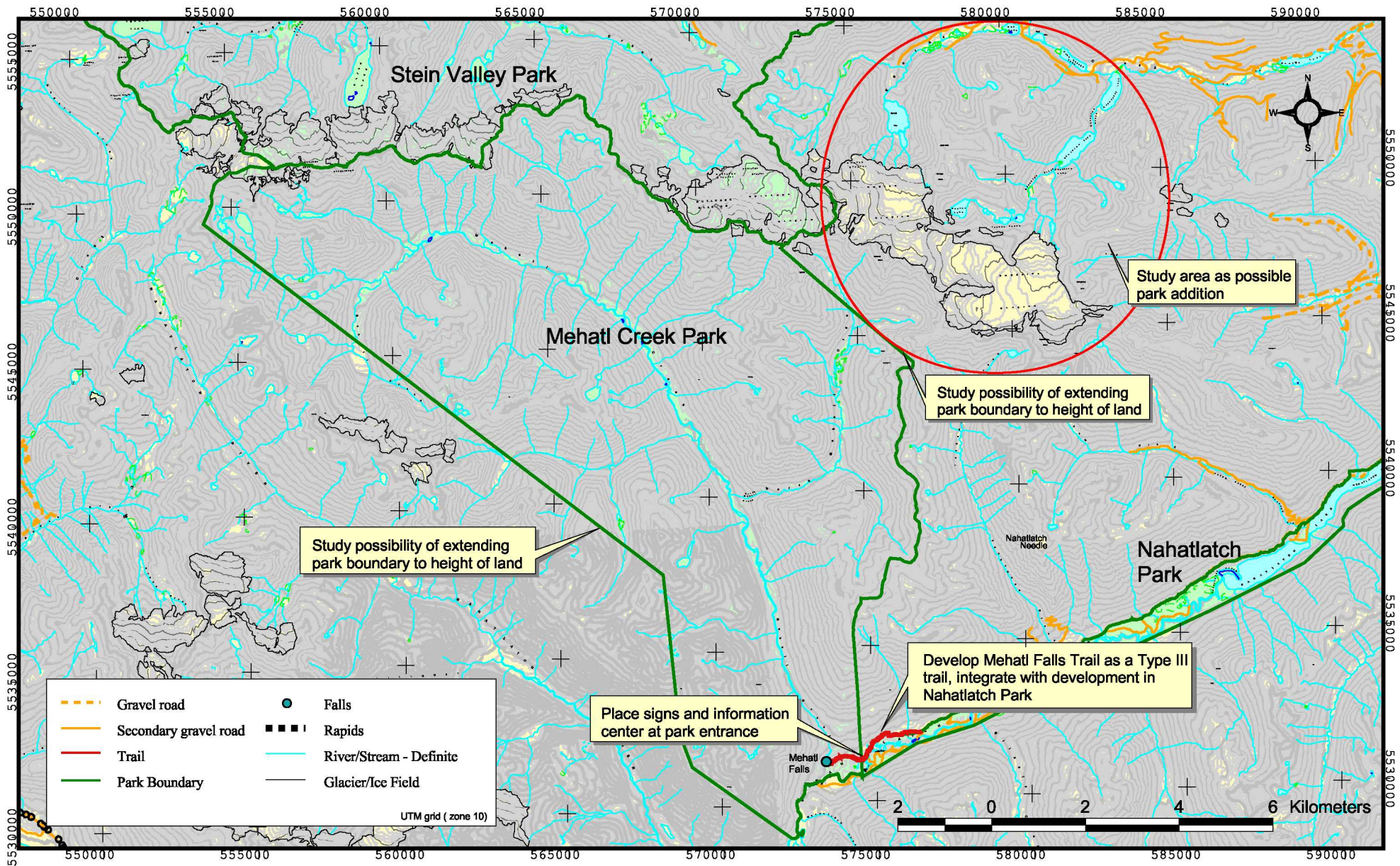


Figure 6: Short Term Issues

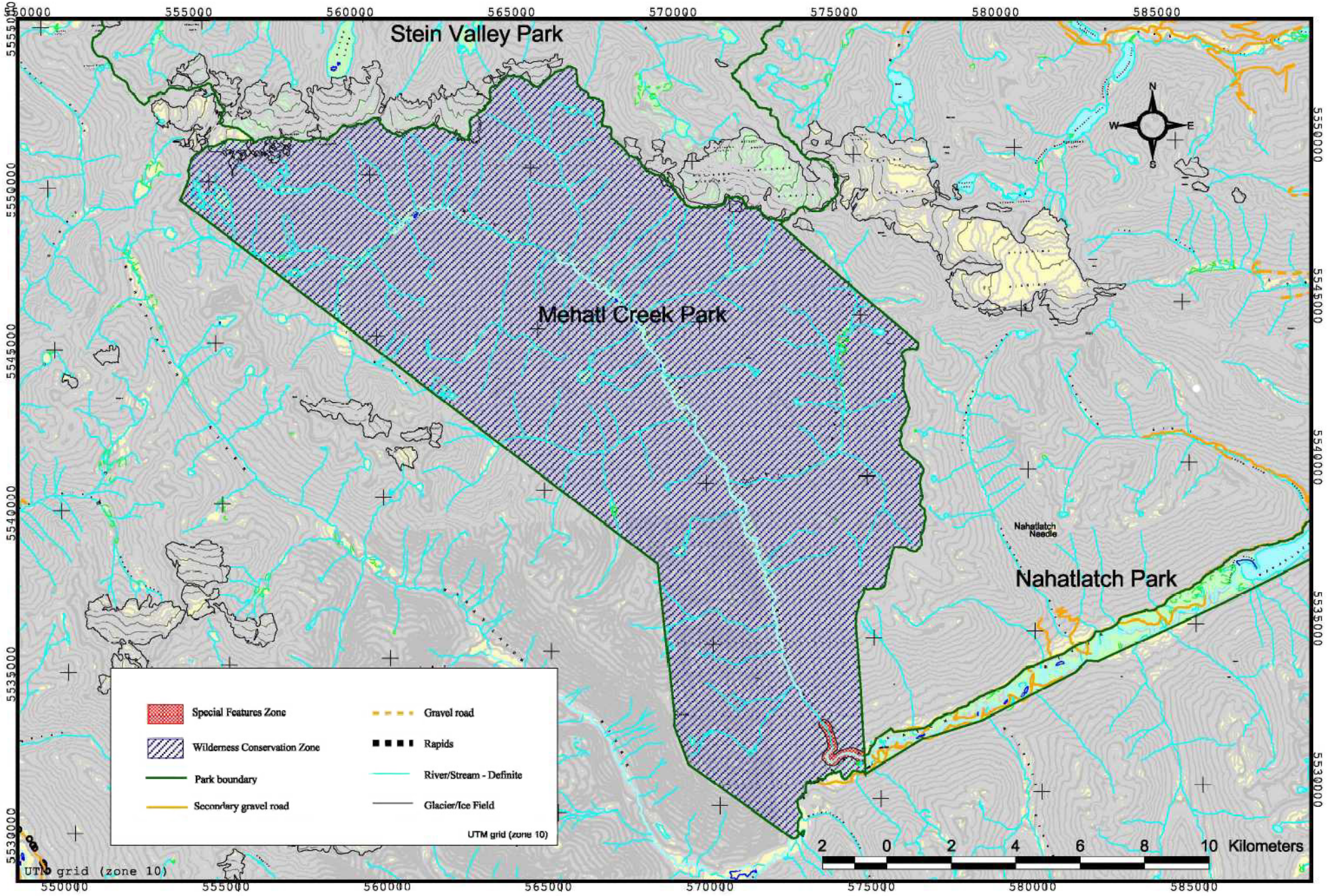


Figure 7: Zoning Map