

Skeena Region

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

March 2003



**for Meziadin Lake
Provincial Park**



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

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

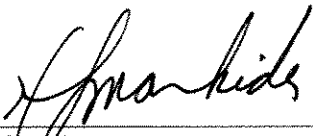
Meziadin Lake Provincial Park Approvals Page

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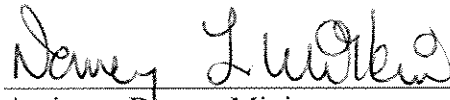
This management direction statement for Meziadin Lake Provincial Park provides management direction until such time as it is revised. Ongoing consultation between Environmental Stewardship Division representatives and First Nations may result in revisions as appropriate. Aboriginal rights are honoured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

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

Approvals



Regional Manager
Skeena Regional
Environmental Stewardship Division



Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

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Meziadin Lake 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 protected Meziadin Lake as a Class A provincial park on December 4, 1987. The park is presently named and described in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*. A large, full-facility campground next to the Stewart-Cassiar Highway, Meziadin Lake Provincial Park provides accommodation for highway travellers and outdoor recreation opportunities for regional residents.

Meziadin Lake Provincial Park covers 335 hectares in northern British Columbia between the Stewart-Cassiar Highway and Meziadin Lake, 155 kilometres north of Kitwanga, 75 kilometres east of Stewart, and just south of Meziadin Junction (Figure 1). The region's population is small (less than 1,000 people) and concentrated in Stewart. The park lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Gitanyow. The park is also within the Nass Area as defined by the Nisga'a Final Agreement. Under this agreement British Columbia must consult with the Nisga'a First Nation regarding planning and management of parks within the Nass Area.

The park is located on the north shore at the east end of Meziadin Lake. The construction of campground and picnicking facilities considerably changed the park's vegetation. The presence of an extensive range of destination, day use and boating opportunities and facilities and the park's location on a major travel corridor attracts high levels of recreational use during the summer months.

Several protected areas are located in the region surrounding Meziadin Lake Provincial Park. To the southeast about 60 kilometres lies Swan Lake Kispiox River Provincial Park, a significant wilderness lake and river protected area. Only 25 kilometres west along Highway 37A is Bear Glacier Provincial Park which presents a spectacular glacier scene easily viewed from the highway. Further north of Meziadin Lake Provincial Park, about 100 kilometres and west of Highway 37, lies Ningunsaw River Ecological Reserve and Provincial Park. The park and ecological reserve protect representative transitional ecosystems. Much further (200 kilometres) north along Highway 37, Kinaskan Lake Provincial Park provides campground, picnicking and boating opportunities.

Provincial Park Attributes

Conservation

- One of only four protected areas in the underrepresented Nass Basin Ecosection (6.21%) in the protected areas system. Meziadin Lake Provincial Park's contribution is minimal (0.56% of overall representation of the ecosection).
- One of only three provincial parks that provides representation of the ICHvc (very wet cold interior cedar hemlock biogeoclimatic subzone); the ICHvc is very poorly represented (0.9%) in the protected areas system. Although the park is small, it contributes 17% of the representation of this very poorly represented ecosystem. No protected area in the ICHvc biogeoclimatic subzone exceeds 1,000 hectares in size.
- The park contains high value grizzly bear habitat for much of its 335 hectares except for those areas now making up the campground and related facility development.
- The park is next to but does not include Meziadin Lake's shoreline which provides an important nursery habitat for spawning sockeye salmon.
- Protects significant sockeye spawning habitat in that portion of Hanna Creek within the park; resident populations of trout, char (possibly including blue-listed bull trout) and whitefish; used by coho, chinook and steelhead.

Recreation and Tourism

- Presents provincially significant destination outdoor recreation opportunities including camping, boating, water-skiing, canoeing, angling, wildlife viewing, photography and swimming activities.
- Attracts regional visitors from Stewart, Terrace, Kitimat, Smithers and Prince Rupert as well visitors from other locations in British Columbia.
- Located strategically along Highway 37 and the junction of Highway 37 and 37A thus attracting international travellers taking trips to Alaska and the Yukon Territory.
- Provides a 62 unit campground along with boat launching facilities.

Commercial Business Opportunities

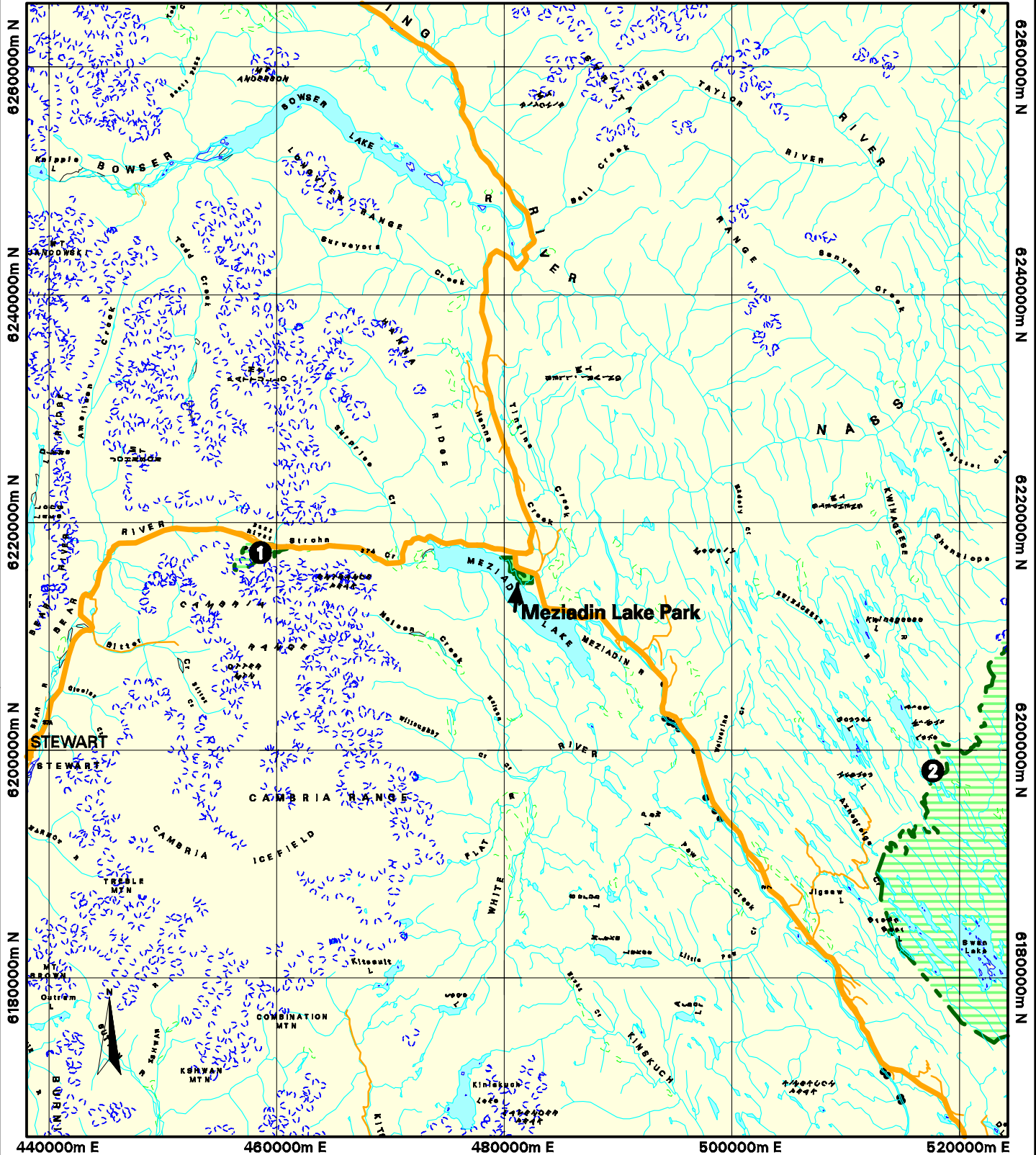
- Provides moderate commercial business opportunities for guided interpretation and education tour groups based on the special features and outdoor recreation opportunities of this park. This business opportunity is best developed as part of systems approach where several provincial parks, and protected areas and other Crown land areas along Highway 37 are included in the tour to give clients a broad and interesting program.

Cultural Heritage

- Lies within the asserted territory of Gitanyow First Nation.
- Falls within the Nass Area identified within the Nisga'a Final Agreement.
- First Nations' traditional use area.
- Site specific values largely unknown to the Environmental Stewardship Division

Figure 1: Context







Meziadin Lake Park



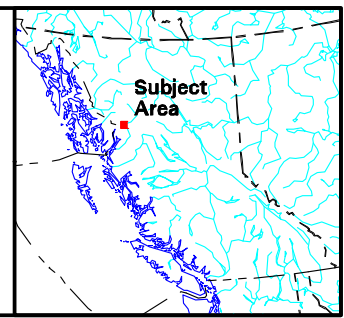
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	Subject Area		Bear Glacier
	Other Protected Areas		Swan Lake Kispiox River
	Highway		
	Road		

0 10
km



Significance in the Protected Areas System

- Contributes 17% of the representation of the very poorly represented ICHvc (very wet cold interior cedar hemlock) biogeoclimatic subzone despite its relatively small size.
- Protects outlet of Hanna Creek, a sockeye spawning stream; protects upland above the shore of Meziadin Lake, a nursery lake for sockeye salmon
- Provides provincially significant camping, water, fishing and lakeshore recreational opportunities for regional residents and Highway 37 travellers.
- Provides accommodation at a strategic location along Highway 37.
- Protects grizzly bear habitat and the Meziadin Lake shoreline which serves as a travel corridor for grizzly bear.

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

Meziadin Lake Provincial Park is situated on Highway 37 just south of Meziadin Junction. All the Meziadin Lake Provincial Park campsites are accessible by vehicle.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- Radio repeater site for telephone system exempt from park (Pl. 5197, Pl. 7035); powerline and service road within park is under Park Use Permit.
- Ministry of Transportation reserve lies alongside Highway 37 adjacent to the park.
- Trapping license 616T010 covers the park. The owner of this licence does not have a park use permit authorizing this activity within Meziadin Lake Provincial Park.
- No guided angling, guided hunting or commercial fishery affects the park.

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- Contains a 62 unit campground with standard facilities.
- Provides a boat launch for access to Meziadin Lake

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- Meziadin Lake forms the western boundary of the park.
- Highway 37 forms part of the park's eastern boundary
- District Lots 2463, 2462, 2464, 2465, 2470, 2478 border the park to the north, east and south. These district lots are largely for recreational lease purposes.

First Nations Interests

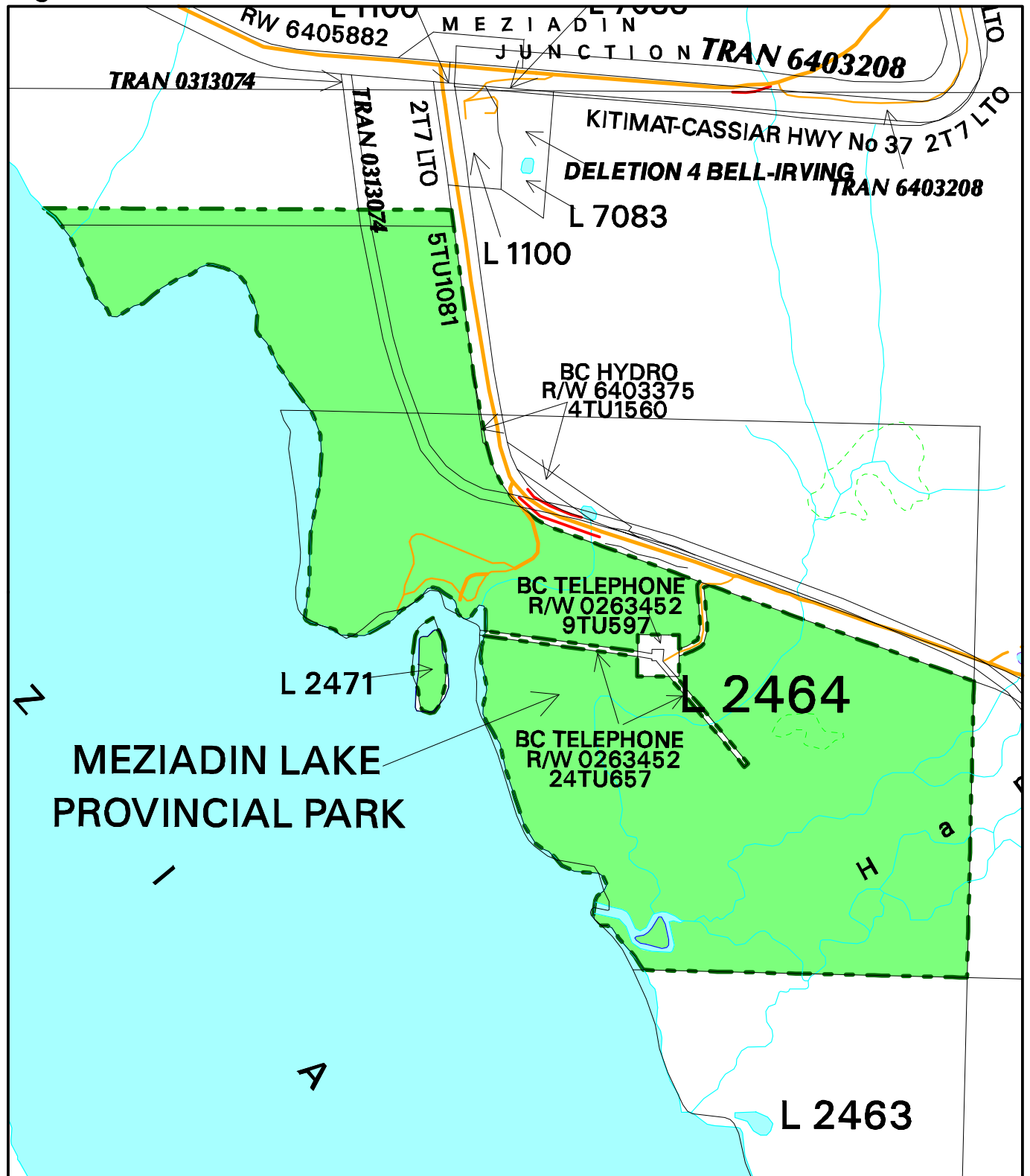
- Lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Gitanyow First Nation.
- Contained in part of the Nass Area as defined by the Nisga'a Final Agreement.
- The Gitanyow First Nation has an interest in maintaining their aboriginal traditional uses and activities in the park.

Other Agency Interests

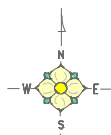
- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section has an interest in the park's wildlife, particularly grizzly bear.
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans has an interest in the anadromous fish, particularly sockeye salmon, using the park.

Figure 2: Tenure

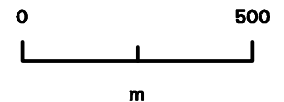
Meziadin Lake Park



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Subject Area
Cadastral Boundary
(from CDMS)



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- Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (British Columbia Conservation Data Centre (CDC)) has an interest in the species at risk in this park.

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Northern British Columbia Tourism Association is interested in this park because of its value to the touring public using Highway 37 and its contribution to the tourist facilities of northwestern British Columbia.
- Travellers through the region have an interest in the park because of its strategic location along Highway 37.
- Regional residents and communities have an interest in the park as a local outdoor recreation and conservation area.
- Regional tourism operators have an interest in the park because of its special features and strategic location along Highway 37.
- Angling guide has an interest in the park because the guide holds days for Hanna Creek, but does not operate within the park.
- The trapline holder is interested in the park because park regulations may place limits on the trapping of fur-bearing animal species within the park.

Meziadin Lake Provincial Park Role Statement

The primary role for Meziadin Lake Provincial Park is to provide provincially significant outdoor recreation opportunities for destination, transient and day use recreation activities. Meziadin Lake Provincial Park, along with Kinaskan Lake Provincial Park at the central portion of Highway 37 and Boya Lake Provincial Park near the Yukon Territory border, serve as the three major provincial park destinations along Highway 37. Meziadin Lake Provincial Park provides the public with the most significant destination and day use provincial park along the south portion of Highway 37. The park fulfils several Environmental Stewardship Division recreation goals, on both a regional and provincial basis, by providing facilities and services for:

- Lakeside destination camping for visitors to the Meziadin Lake and Stewart - Portland Canal areas;
- Lake shore access and a boat launch facility to allow access to Meziadin Lake;
- Provincially significant wildlife viewing especially salmon and grizzly bear;
- Panoramic views west up the length of Meziadin Lake; and,
- Potential for outstanding interpretation opportunities based on wildlife, vegetation and landform features in the park, the surrounding upland and Meziadin Lake.

Meziadin Lake Provincial Park serves a secondary conservation role by protecting part of a salmon spawning creek and grizzly bear habitat. The park is not large enough to protect representative ecosystems of the Nass Basin Ecosection.

Management Commitments and Issues

Direction from Previous Planning

Meziadin Lake Provincial Park has not been considered in any Land and Resource Management Plan. Environmental Stewardship Division annual management plans provide year-to-year direction for the park.

Management Issues

Environmental Stewardship Division identifies the following management issues.

Theme	Issue
Protecting and managing park ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The park's flora and fauna may be at risk because an inventory of these values remains incomplete. The potential for conflicts between humans and bears is high because the park is located in high quality bear habitat and next to major salmon spawning waterways. The park's natural plant species may be at risk because of noxious weed (St. John's Wort) introduction in the campground area. Spawning salmon may be at risk because Meziadin Lake's shoreline where the fish spawn lies outside the park boundary. The trapline holder does not have a valid park use permit authorizing this resource activity.
Protecting the park's cultural heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural heritage features may be at risk because no complete inventory of these features exists.
Providing high quality outdoor recreation experiences and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The visitor's intention of having a quiet camping experience is reduced because of noise from the Telus communications inholding.
Public Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors to Meziadin Lake Park may be unaware of the park's location in prime bear habitat and nearby salmon spawning waters because of inadequate information.

Management Direction

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

The following priority management objectives and strategies deal with the identified management issues. In addition, Appendix 1 contains a list of acceptable activities, uses and facilities for Meziadin Lake Park.

Objectives	Strategies
To identify and protect the park's ecological values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a fauna and flora inventory with priority focused native plant species. Evaluate the concept for an expanded park boundary that protects foreshore spawning areas and riparian habitats now outside the park. Continue to implement the bear management plan and monitor its success. Remove noxious weeds (St. John's Wort), using manual or mechanical methods, from the campground area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monitor the removal program to ensure success.
To identify and protect the park's cultural heritage values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and collate, in cooperation with First Nations and local history groups, existing information on the park and surrounding area's cultural heritage values.
To provide and sustain the park's high quality outdoor recreation opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain open nature of site to minimize bear-human interactions Determine all potential impacts the Telus inholding has on the park. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with Telus to reduce noise pollution in the park.

Objectives	Strategies
To provide accurate and current information to the public about Meziadin Lake Provincial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the bear awareness program so the public understands safety issues and their responsibility in protecting the park’s wildlife, especially grizzly bear. • Design and implement an information package that educates the public about the superb park and outdoor recreation opportunities in this region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Explain to the public why such facilities as hiking trails are not provided in the park – dangers posed by human and bear conflicts. ➢ Explain to the public why noxious weeds are such a threat to native vegetation. • Develop an updated description of Meziadin Lake Park on the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection web site.

Consultation and Future Planning

The Environmental Stewardship Division will consult with the Gitanyow and Nisga’a to discuss cultural heritage interests. In addition, the Environmental Stewardship Division will consult with the Nisga’a First Nation in relation to planning and management as required in the Nisga’a Final Agreement. The Environmental Stewardship Division will consult with First Nations and local stakeholders and resource users as issues arise.

This park is considered low priority for the development of a management plan with full public involvement.

Zoning Plan

This management direction statement applies the following management planning zone scheme to Meziadin Lake Provincial Park.

Intensive Recreation Zone

Objective: To provide for a variety of readily accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.

Description: Covers six hectares and contains the campground and access road.

Management Guidelines: Oriented toward maintaining a high quality recreation experience. Intensive management of resource and/or control of visitor activities. Operational facilities designed for efficient operation while remaining unobtrusive to the park visitor.

Natural Environment Zone

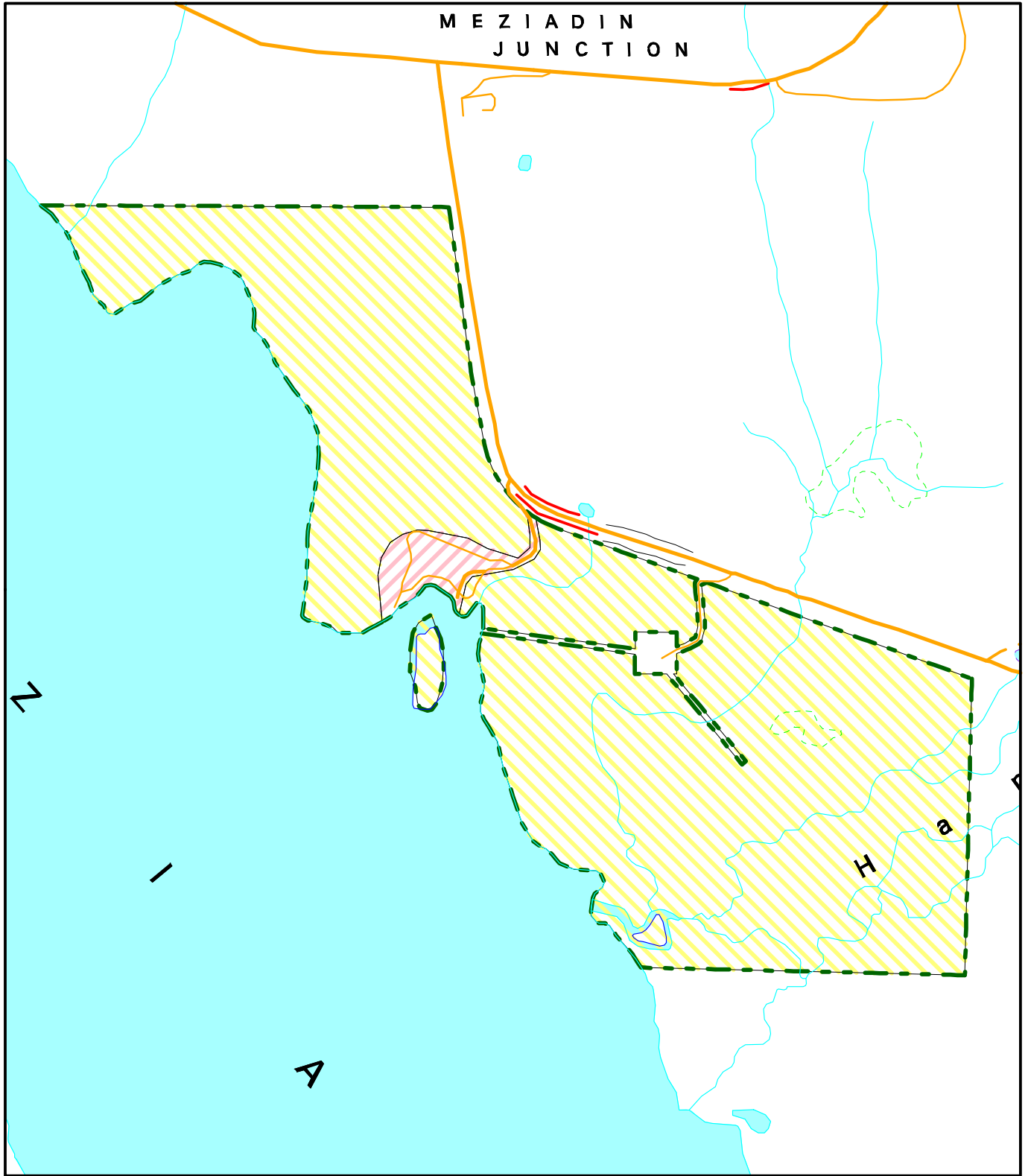
Objective: To protect scenic values and to provide for backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

Description: Contains 329 hectares of the park outside the Intensive Recreation Zone

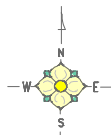
Management Guidelines: Oriented to maintaining a natural environment and a high quality recreation experience. Designation of access methods and limits on use may be necessary to avoid potential conflicts or minimize impacts (e.g. horse trails, cycle paths, hiking trails).


Figure 3: Zoning

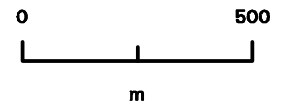
Meziadin Lake Park



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-  Intensive Recreation
-  Natural Environment
-  Protected Area Boundary



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**Appendix 1. Meziadin Lake Provincial Park
Table of Acceptable Activities, Uses and Facilities**

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptability
Aboriginal traditional activities and uses	Y
Hunting	N
Fishing	Y
Trapping	Y
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational gold panning/rock hounding	N
Utility corridors	Y
Communication sites	Y (Telus inholding exempt)
Horse use/pack animals	N
Guide outfitting (hunting)	N
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 – to campground and Telus site	Y
Off-road access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road access (motorised)	N
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorised water access	Y
Aircraft access - restriction adjacent to occupied campsite area due to safety and noise concerns	Y
Fire management (suppression)	Y
Fire management (prescribed fire management)	N
Fire management (prevention)	N
Forest insect/disease control	N1
Noxious weed control	Y
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