



# Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy

## Management Plan

March 2019



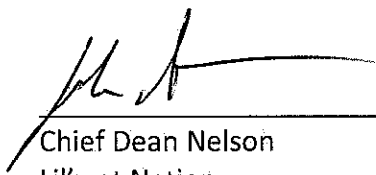
BC Parks

Cover Page Photo Credit: Scott Flavelle

# Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy

## Management Plan

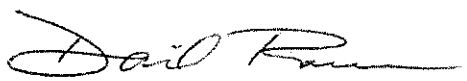
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April 3<sup>rd</sup>/2019  
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## Acknowledgements

Preparation of this management plan for Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy has been jointly undertaken by the Lil'wat Nation and BC Parks (hereafter referred to as the "Parties"). The management planning process was coordinated by Harriet VanWart, Director, Land and Resources Department of the Lil'wat Nation, and Vicki Haberl, Planning Section Head, South Coast Region, BC Parks. The planning team included Harriet, Vicki, Councillor Greg Bikadi of the Lil'wat Nation, and Chris Platz, BC Parks Area Supervisor. Liz Scroggins of Grey Owl Consulting prepared the management plan drafts for review by Lil'wat Nation and BC Parks, under contract to Lil'wat Nation.

The Parties acknowledge that Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy is in the shared territory of the N'Quatqua First Nation, Sekw'el'was (Cayoose Creek) First Nation, and T'it'q'et First Nation, and are grateful for their support and cooperation in developing this management plan, and for the shared St'at'imc value of *i tmícwsa i ucwalmícwa* (the people and the land are one) that has guided this planning process.

Julia Poetschke of the Lil'wat Nation Land and Resources Department created the digital conservancy maps. Photos provided courtesy of Scott Flavelle, Liz Scroggins, Vicki Haberl and Johnny Jones.

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## Vision Statement

Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy protects the cultural heritage values, backcountry recreational values and ecological features associated with this forested to high alpine area. First Nations people continue to use the area for harvesting plants and berries, hunting and ceremonial activities.

Backcountry recreational pursuits are accessible in both summer and winter, with visitation managed to ensure the protection of cultural values and a serene mountain experience.

## 1.0 Introduction

Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy (the conservancy) is in the traditional territories of the Lil'wat, N'Quatqua, Sekw'el'was and T'it'q'et First Nations. "Nlháxten" (pronounced "Nth-law-k-tin") is an Ucwalmícwts (traditional language)<sup>1</sup> place name. Legends, stories and archaeological sites in and around the conservancy demonstrate the First Nations historical connection to Nlháxten and their stewardship of the area for thousands of years. The area continues to be an important place for First Nations traditional plant and berry gathering, hunting, fishing and trapping, as well as ceremonial and spiritual values. The conservancy is also popular for winter ski touring and summer hiking.

### 1.1 Management Plan Purpose

The purpose of this management plan is to guide the management of Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy. This management plan:

- articulates the key features and values of the conservancy;
- 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 conservancy; and
- responds to current and predicted threats and opportunities by defining a set of management strategies to achieve the management vision and objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> Lil'wat Nation Website: [www.lilwat.ca](http://www.lilwat.ca)

## 1.2 Planning Area

Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy is located approximately 23 kilometres due south of D'Arcy (70 km by road), 30 kilometres northeast of Mount Currie/Pemberton, 70 kilometres northeast of Whistler and 65 kilometres southwest of Lillooet. The conservancy is 2,272 hectares in size and borders the eastern boundary of Joffre Lakes Park (Figure 1). The conservancy is located in the mountainous Joffre Group between the Pacific and Cayoosh ranges. The area encompasses mountain tarns within the Anniversary Glacier area, subalpine meadows, Engelmann spruce forest ecosystems and portions of Cerise Creek watershed. One of the many tall peaks, Mount Chief Pascal (2,204 m), rises prominently in the centre of the conservancy (Figure 2). Joffre Peak and Mount Matier are a few of the spectacular peaks that form the conservancy boundary and offer world class mountaineering experiences.

The conservancy is a well-known destination for mountaineering, winter ski touring and summer hiking. The conservancy can be accessed by a hiking trail that begins along the southern side of Highway 99 (Duffey Lake Road). Currently, visitors park on a widened shoulder along the edge of Highway 99. The trail through second and first growth forests travels through Crown land for approximately one kilometre before crossing into the conservancy at about 1,300 metres elevation. A summer trail leads up the mountain side into the sub-alpine area to a mountain hut at about 1,650 metres elevation (The Keith Flavelle Memorial Hut). Hiking further leads to the Anniversary Glacier and the northern slopes of Vantage Peak. Access to the conservancy can also be made by technical mountain travel from the upper Joffre Lakes area.

Historically, the conservancy and surrounding area were an important place for First Nations food gathering as well as a transportation route between Lillooet and Duffey Lake, Duffey Lake to Twin One Creek, and Blowdown Creek to the Stein Valley. The area is still referred to today by the Lil'wat as the "banquet place"<sup>2</sup> due to the abundance of berries and edible plants that can be found there.

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<sup>2</sup> Lil'wat Nation Land Use Plan: Phase 1. August 2006, p.61



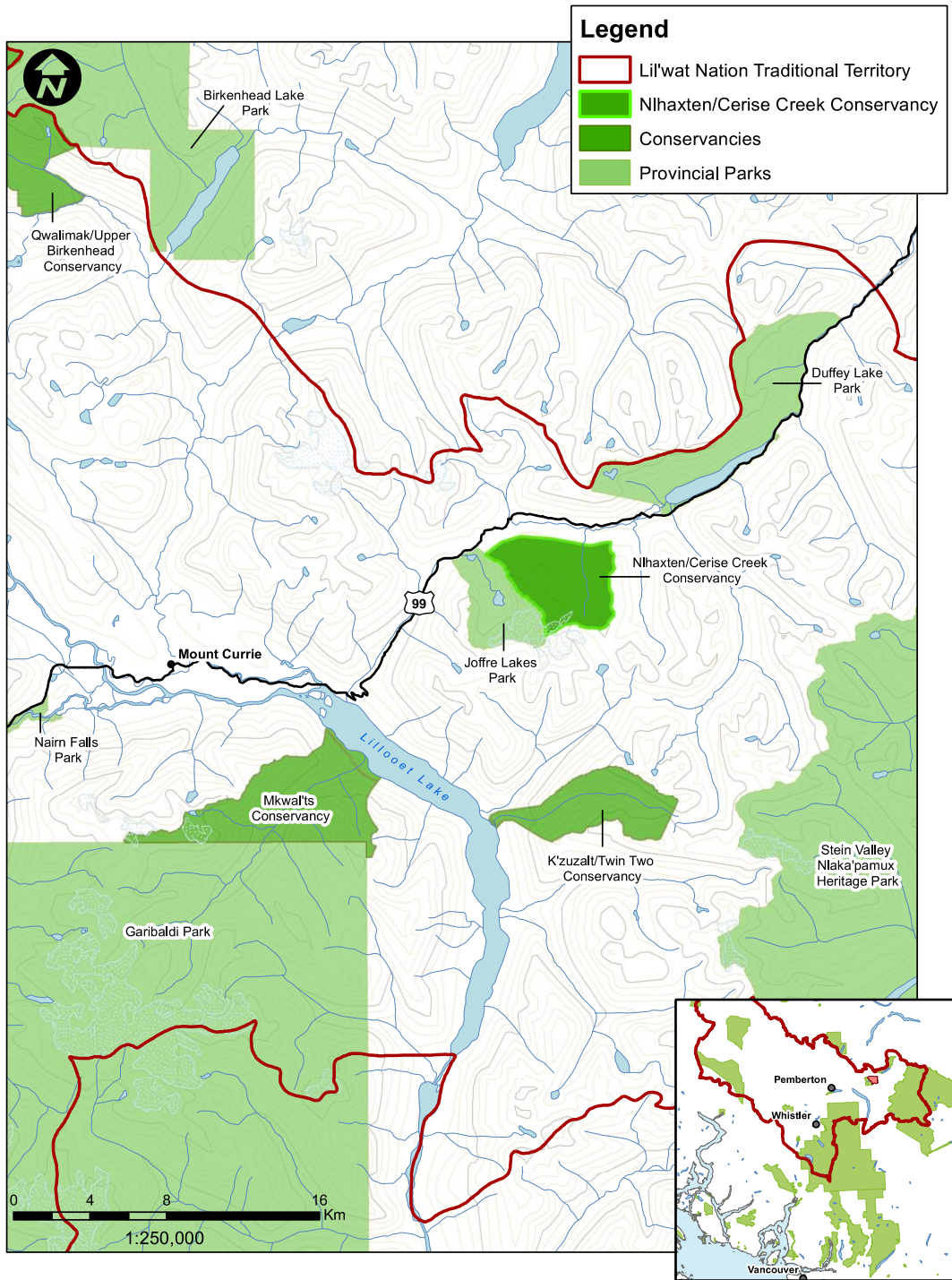


Figure 1: Context Map for Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy

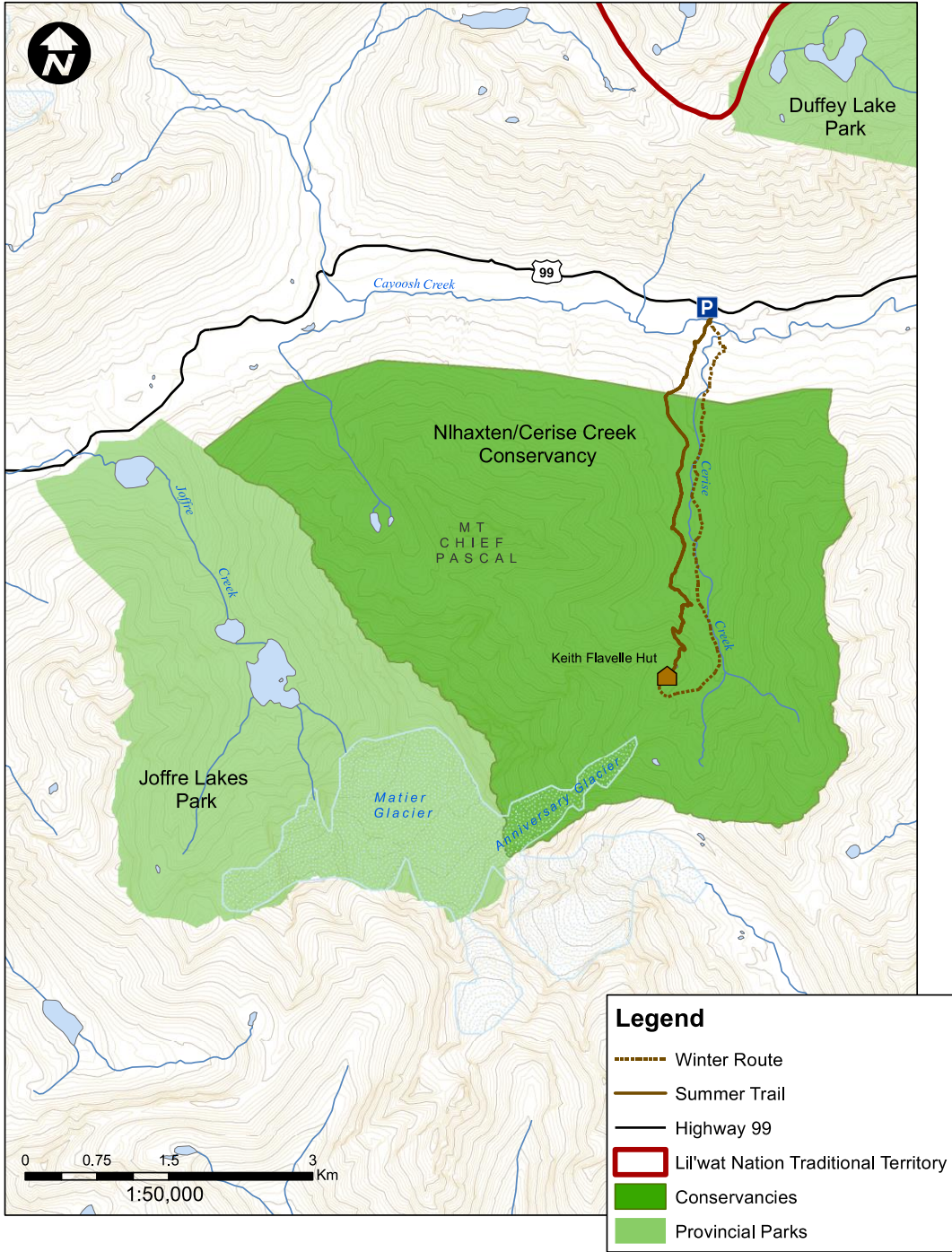


Figure 2: Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy

## 1.3 Legislative Framework

### Aboriginal Rights, Title and Land Use Plans

Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy, like many other protected areas in British Columbia, is subject to the constitutionally protected aboriginal rights and title interests of affected First Nations (Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*).

In 2006, the Lil'wat Nation prepared a Land Use Plan (LLUP), a vision and plan for the land and resources of Lil'wat Nation Traditional Territory. Areas of highest importance for cultural values and conservation of natural resources were identified as Nt'ákmen Areas. Nt'ákmen is the Ucwalmícwts word meaning "Our Way." The LLUP provides management direction for the Nt'ákmen Areas to be protected so that Lil'wat Nation members can continue to use them for traditional gathering, fishing, hunting, trapping and ceremonial practices. In the LLUP, Nlháxten is designated as a Nt'ákmen Area. The management goals for the Nlháxten Nt'ákmen are described in detail in Appendix A.

### Land Use Plans and Provincial Legislative Framework

In 2008, as part of the Sea to Sky Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) process, government-to-government negotiations between the Province of BC and the Lil'wat Nation led to the signing of the Land Use Planning Agreement Between the Lil'wat Nation and the Province of British Columbia (LUPA).

Recognizing the importance of the Nt'ákmen areas to the Lil'wat Nation, the Province designated conservancies, cultural wildlands and cultural management areas, with the intent of conserving the cultural and ecosystem values of these areas.<sup>3</sup> Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy was established by the *Protected Areas of British Columbia (Conservancies and Parks) Amendment Act, 2008*. The conservancy is named and described in Schedule E of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*, and its management and development are directed by the *Park Act*.

Conservancies are set aside:

- a) for the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and natural environments;
- b) for the preservation and maintenance of food, social, ceremonial and cultural uses of First Nations;
- c) for the protection and maintenance of recreational values; and

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<sup>3</sup> LUPA - Schedule C: Management Direction for Strategic Land Use Zones, p. 33

- d) to ensure that development or use of natural resources occurs in a sustainable manner consistent with the purposes outlined in paragraphs (a), (b) and (c).

Conservancies provide for a wider range of low impact economic development opportunities than Class A parks, but commercial logging, mining and hydroelectric power generation (other than local run-of-the-river projects) are prohibited in a conservancy.<sup>4</sup>

### **Land Use Planning Agreement (LUPA) and Sea to Sky Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) Zoning**

The LUPA and the Sea to Sky LRMP<sup>5</sup> created several new land use zones for protection of Lil'wat values within Lil'wat Traditional Territory (Figure 3).

There is a Cultural Management Area (CMA) adjacent to the north and southeast boundary of the conservancy. The management objectives for the CMA are to maintain opportunities for Lil'wat spiritual and sustenance-based activities and ecological values, while generating economic benefits for the Lil'wat Nation.

To the south of the conservancy is a Recreation Wildland Zone (#24 Twin One Headwaters). Management objectives for recreation wildlands are to retain the character of the zone and associated high quality of wilderness experience for First Nations cultural uses and commercial and non-commercial backcountry recreation.

There is a Cultural Wildland Zone to the north of the conservancy. This designation enables the continuation of Lil'wat cultural activities, and in addition, is for the benefit, education and enjoyment of present and future generations, and to support viable wildlife populations.

An All Resource Use Zone is adjacent to the northeast boundary of the conservancy. The range of resource uses include timber harvesting, mineral and energy development and public and commercial recreation.

In addition to these management zones, several Lil'wat Nation A7x7ulmecw (Spirited Ground) Areas have been identified within the Lil'wat Territory. These areas represent important spiritual, cultural and food gathering areas. Three categories (A, B and C) have been developed based on the specific nature of the area and the level of protection required for their specific values.<sup>6</sup> Site #47 ("Cayoosh"), located immediately adjacent

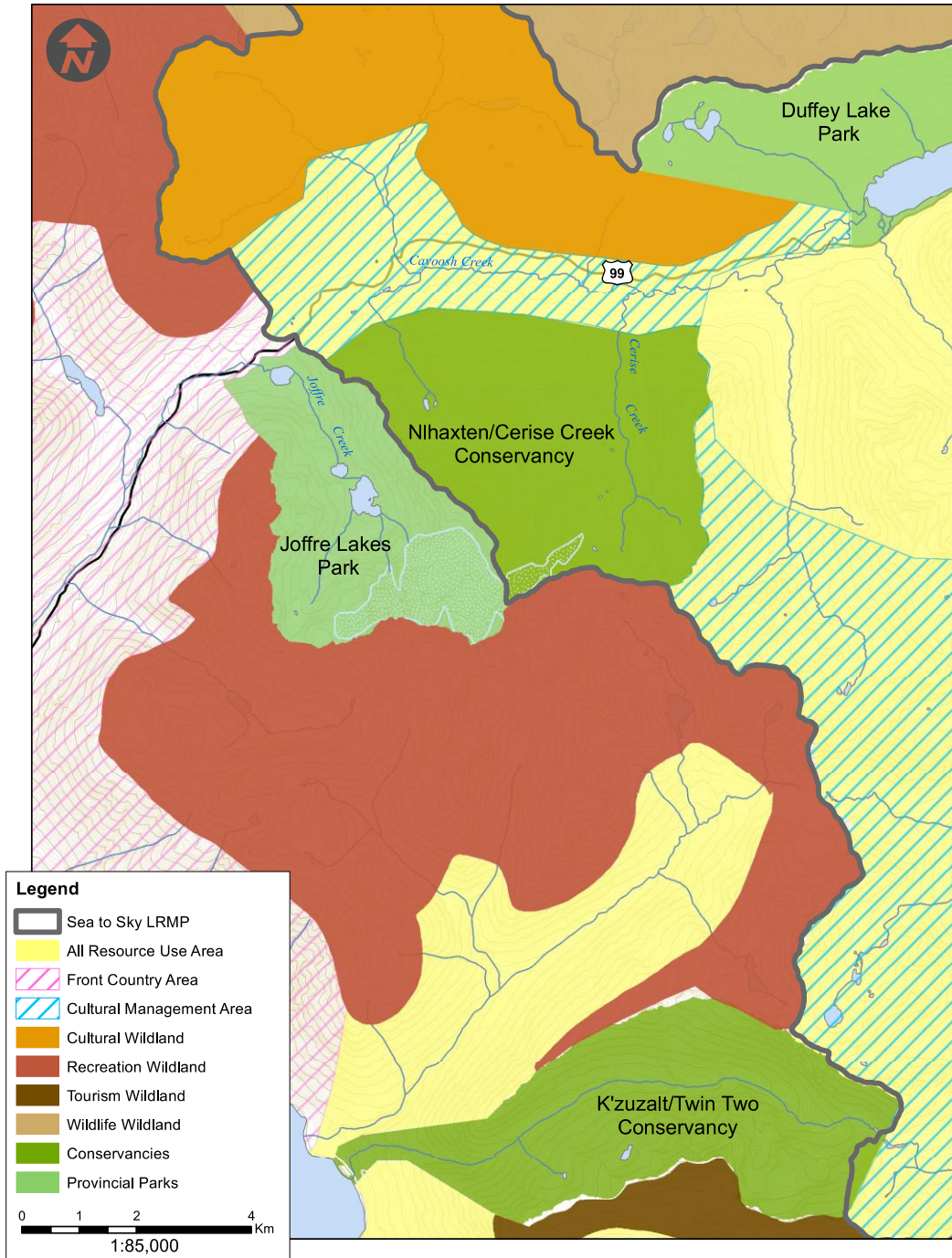
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<sup>4</sup> *Park Act* [RSBC 1996] CHAPTER 344, Section 5 (3.1)

<sup>5</sup> Sea to Sky LRMP, 2008

<sup>6</sup> LUPA - Schedule H: Management Direction for Lil'wat Nation A7x7ulmecw (Spirited Ground) Areas

to the conservancy, is a Category B Site and is an important botanical/traditional plant gathering harvesting area.



**Figure 3: Adjacent Land Use Zones**

## 1.4 Management Commitments/Agreements

The LUPA<sup>7</sup> states the following management objectives for conservancies:

- To maintain opportunities for Lil'wat social, ceremonial and cultural uses.
- To protect and enhance the integrity of the Lil'wat Nation's cultural and heritage resources, including sacred sites.
- To protect the biological diversity and natural environments within the zone, including wildlife habitat values and low elevation riparian ecosystems.
- To maintain, where appropriate, current levels of low intensity backcountry recreational and tourism use.
- To increase opportunities for Lil'wat Nation participation in commercial recreation and tourism enterprises.

The LUPA further describes planning for the conservancies:

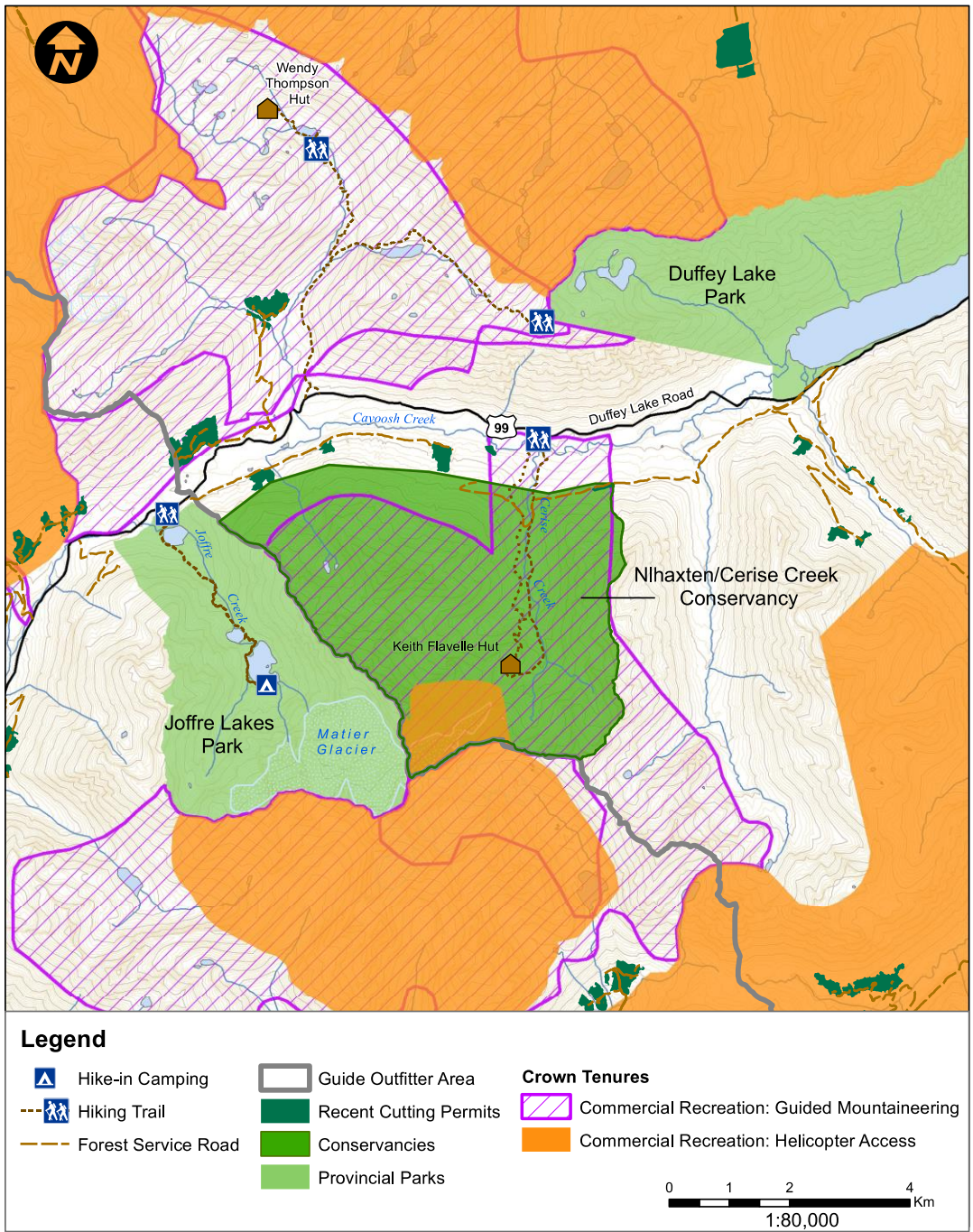
- New commercial lodges and facilities are not permitted except for cultural purposes. Existing commercial lodges and facilities will be reviewed and considered during a tenure review process.
- Recreation tenures will be reviewed and considered during a tenure review process.
- Recreational use will be monitored and steps taken to manage the type, amount and location of activities where values are being negatively impacted.
- Existing self-propelled (non-motorized) commercial recreation tenures will be retained, subject to tenure review.
- Non-motorized commercial recreation activities are permitted. Any conflicts between recreation and cultural uses will be addressed through a management planning process.
- Motorized access and use is not permitted except for pre-existing uses.
- Other existing land tenures will be retained, subject to the tenure review process. Unless otherwise agreed, the tenures will not be expanded.
- Guidance will be provided during the Management Planning process regarding the level and nature of other uses not specified in the LUPA.

## 1.5 Adjacent Protected Areas, Land Uses and Tenures

Recreation and forestry are the predominant uses within the region. There are several protected areas adjacent to or nearby the conservancy and several Crown land tenures adjacent to and overlapping the conservancy (Figure 4).

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<sup>7</sup> LUPA Schedule C: Management Direction for Strategic Land Use Zones, C-4-5



**Figure 4: Adjacent Land Use and Tenures**

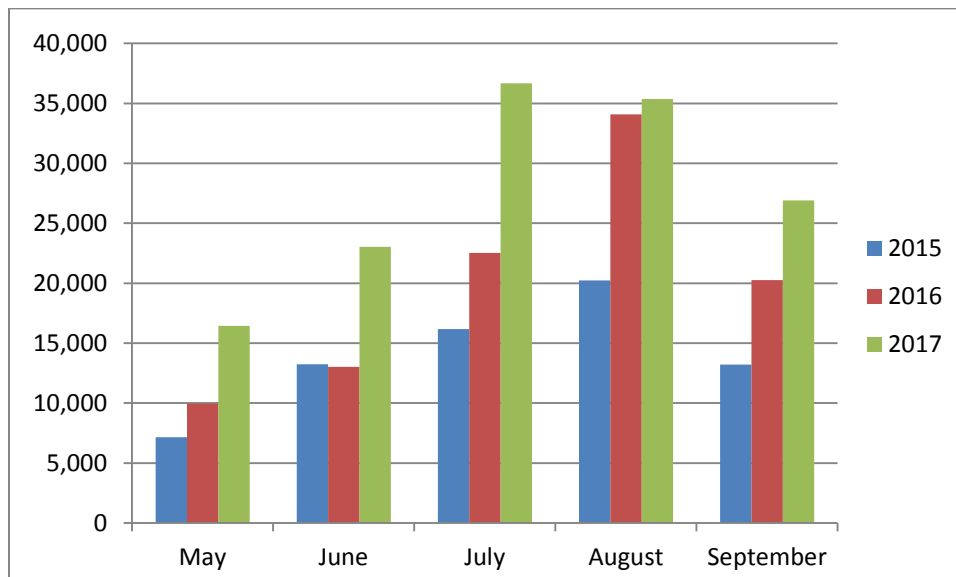
## Protected Areas

There are five provincial parks and three conservancies within a 20-kilometre radius of the conservancy (Figure 1). Two of the five parks are of particular significance to the conservancy and are described in detail below.

### Joffre Lakes Park:

The western boundary of the conservancy is bordered by Joffre Lakes Park. The park was established to conserve and protect an area that lies within the climatic and physiographic transition between the Coast Mountains and Interior Plateau, and to provide a variety of destination alpine recreation opportunities to serve the recreational needs of the travelling public.<sup>8</sup> The majority of the protected area is managed as a Nature Recreation Zone.<sup>9</sup>

Joffre Lakes Park is a well-known summer destination for hikers and mountaineers, with limited winter use due to potentially hazardous avalanche terrain. There has been a dramatic increase in summer use in recent years (Figure 5). The number of days with over 1,000 visitors has increased from 2 days in 2015 to 47 days in 2017<sup>10</sup>. With visitor attendance reaching over 150,000 people in 2017, Joffre Lakes Park is one of the busiest parks in the South Coast Region.



**Figure 5: Joffre Lakes Park Visitor Data 2015-2017**

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<sup>8</sup> Joffre Lakes Recreation Area Master Plan, 1989

<sup>9</sup> Formerly called the Natural Environment Zone

<sup>10</sup> BC Parks statistics



## Duffey Lake Park

Duffey Lake Park is located 3 km northeast of the conservancy along Highway 99 on the north side of Duffey Lake. This area is an important food gathering and cultural use area for First Nations. The park was established in 1993 and expanded in 2008, extending from the picturesque Duffey Lake to the alpine ridges around it. This is a popular spot for canoeing, kayaking and wildlife viewing. There is a rough gravel boat launch at the east end of the lake.

Duffey Lake Park is contiguous with a Cultural Management Area identified in the LUPA between the Lil'wat Nation and the Province, increasing protection of the cultural and ecosystem values within the area.

### **Forestry**

The northern boundary of the conservancy is bordered by the Lillooet Timber Supply Area of the Cascade Forest District. Timber harvesting has occurred to the north of the conservancy but some pockets of old growth forest still exist. Deactivated forestry roads exist and some are used for access by foot into the conservancy.

### **Recreation**

There are three Licence of Occupation tenures for commercial recreation overlapping the conservancy which require authorization by park use permit. They include heli-hiking, guided mountaineering and rock climbing. One park use permit (PUP) exists for mountaineering training (see Appendix B). There is a guide outfitter tenure that covers most of the area. Non-commercial backcountry skiing, snowshoeing and hiking are popular in the area around the conservancy. Several hiking trails and camping areas are nearby. The Wendy Thompson Hut, which is managed by the Alpine Club of Canada, is situated several kilometres to the north of the conservancy.

## **1.6 Management Planning Process**

Building on the success of the completion of management plans that were developed collaboratively for the Mkwalt's, K'zuzalt/Twin Two, and Qwalimak/Upper Birkenhead conservancies, Lil'wat Nation and BC Parks embarked on the planning process for Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy. In the spring of 2017 Lil'wat Nation provided funding to initiate this management planning process. Although Lil'wat Nation was instrumental in the development of this management plan, neighbouring First Nations and key stakeholders also played an active role and provided input.

A Project Plan was completed in late May 2017 and approved by the Lil'wat Nation Chiefs and Council and BC Parks. The Project Plan was then presented to the Lil'wat community in late June 2017. The Project Plan was also provided to the N'Quatqua, Sekw'el'was, T'it'q'et and St'at'imc Governance Services for their review, comments and

opportunity to engage in the process for the shared traditional territories. Subsequent meetings were held in late 2017/early 2018 with the First Nations communities to obtain input on the development of this management plan.

An initial site visit with Lil'wat Nation elders and resource management specialists was undertaken in late July 2017.

An inter-governmental meeting was held at the end of August 2017 as the first part of consultation with key stakeholders.

Key stakeholders and First Nations were provided a preliminary draft plan for review in mid-February 2018. A Draft Conservancy Management Plan was developed for public review and posted to the BC Parks and Lil'wat Nation websites for 30 days. An open house was held with Lil'wat Nation in Mount Currie on May 28, 2018 and a public open house was held in Pemberton on July 18, 2018.

## **1.7 Relationship with First Nations**

The Province and First Nations are working towards a relationship based on mutual respect, recognition and accommodation of Aboriginal title and rights. This management plan proposes to develop strong working relationships with Lil'wat, N'Quatqua, Sekw'el'was and T'it'q'et First Nations to ensure that management of the conservancy is consistent with their cultural values, interests and uses in the conservancy area. The St'at'imc Governance Services may also participate in management activities at the request of the N'Quatqua, Sekw'el'was or T'it'q'et First Nations.

## **1.8 Relationship with Communities**

Many residents from the surrounding communities of Mount Currie, Pemberton, Whistler and Lillooet, as well as outdoor enthusiasts from the Metro Vancouver area, share an interest in the management of this area. Recreational activities in and around the conservancy are a tourism driver for the area.

Ongoing engagement and outreach with local communities will be required to ensure that residents are aware of, and supportive of, the Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy. This will include continued dialogue with the First Nations and any provincial or local government officials and residents as well as local mountaineering clubs/groups, who have expressed interest in the use and management of the conservancy.

## 2.0 Values and Roles of the Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy

### 2.1 Significance in the Protected Areas System

Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy is significant to the protected areas system because it:

- protects First Nations' ceremonial and spiritual use areas and traditional food and plant gathering areas;
- protects stands of whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) which is a provincially blue-listed species and federally endangered species;
- protects important foraging habitat for Grizzly Bears (*Ursus arctos horribilis*);
- provides exceptional backcountry recreational opportunities; and
- is one of several connecting protected areas between the large Garibaldi protected area complex and the Stein Valley complex.

### 2.2 Biodiversity and Natural Heritage Values

#### Ecosystem Representation

Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy is located entirely within the Leeward Pacific Ranges Ecoregion and contains portions of the Coastal Western Hemlock, Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir, Interior Mountain-heather Alpine and Mountain Hemlock biogeoclimatic zones.<sup>11</sup> The largest biogeoclimatic (BEC) zone in the conservancy is made up of three Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir variants (ESSFmw2, ESSFmwp and ESSFmww). All of these BEC variants are well-represented in the protected areas system. The next largest zone is the Interior Mountain-heather Alpine.

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<sup>11</sup> Source: Protected Area System Overview (PASO)

Biogeoclimatic (BEC) Zone in the conservancy (ha)	BEC variant	Area of BEC variant in the conservancy (ha)	Total area of BEC variant protected in province (ha)	% of BEC variant protected in the province that is contributed by conservancy	Total % BEC variant protected in the province
Coastal Western Hemlock (35)	CWH ms1	35	174,892	< 1%	29%
Engelmann Spruce – Subalpine Fir (1,736)	ESSF mw2	753	10,361	7%	24%
	ESSF mwp	412	23,397	2%	36%
	ESSF mww	571	12,523	5%	30%
Interior Mountain-heather Alpine (504)	IMA un	504	340,820	<1%	28%

Source: PASO (Protected Area System Overview)

### Sensitive Ecosystems

Sensitive plant communities and habitats, such as alpine and subalpine meadows, can be affected by recreational activity. The majority of the conservancy, as noted above, is located in subalpine and alpine environments, which are typically found above 1,650 metres. These areas are treeless or nearly so, and the flora is mainly shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants, mosses, and lichens. Soil is often thin or nonexistent, and easily damaged. Natural processes work slowly in this environment and damage to habitat may take a long time to be naturally repaired.<sup>12</sup>

Cerise Creek is the main water source in the conservancy, and the small tarn near Keith's Hut is the water supply for summer season visitors to the hut. Water quality in the creek and small tarns is vulnerable to impact from humans and domestic animals.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/twg/species/plants.html#first>

## Important Wildlife Values

Large mammal species found in this region include Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*), Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*), Cougar (*Felis concolor*), Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), Black-tailed Deer (Mule Deer subspecies *Odocoileus hemionus*), Mountain Goat (*Orsamnos americanus*) and Moose (*Alces alces*).

The conservancy is within the Stein-Nahatlatch Grizzly Bear Population Unit, which has a “threatened” population status, based on data available in 2012. A total of 24 Grizzly Bears was estimated for this Population Unit in 2012.<sup>13</sup> A Grizzly Bear habitat study<sup>14</sup> identified spring foraging habitat, summer/fall berry habitat and whitebark pine foraging habitat polygons within the conservancy. These habitat types are relevant to Grizzly Bear management at the landscape scale (Hobbs, et al., 2013). Due to the high variability in black huckleberry, important areas for black huckleberry production are mainly identified by Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) units and a number of known black huckleberry sites have been mapped. Some of the known sites are shown in Figure 6. The ESSF mw BEC units that are found within the conservancy are known to be important for black huckleberry production.

Some small polygons of Mountain Goat habitat have been mapped and winter range has been identified in the conservancy. An aerial survey conducted on July 22, 2008 counted 58 Mountain Goats within a survey polygon that includes the conservancy. The potential for Moose habitat occurs along Cerise Creek, and at the northern edge of the conservancy (Figure 6). The conservancy also falls within watersheds that are occupied by Coastal Tailed Frogs (*Ascaphus truei*). This species is provincially blue-listed (species of special concern) and is typically found on the windward side of the Coast Mountains in and around cold, fast-moving streams.<sup>15</sup>

## Old Growth Forests

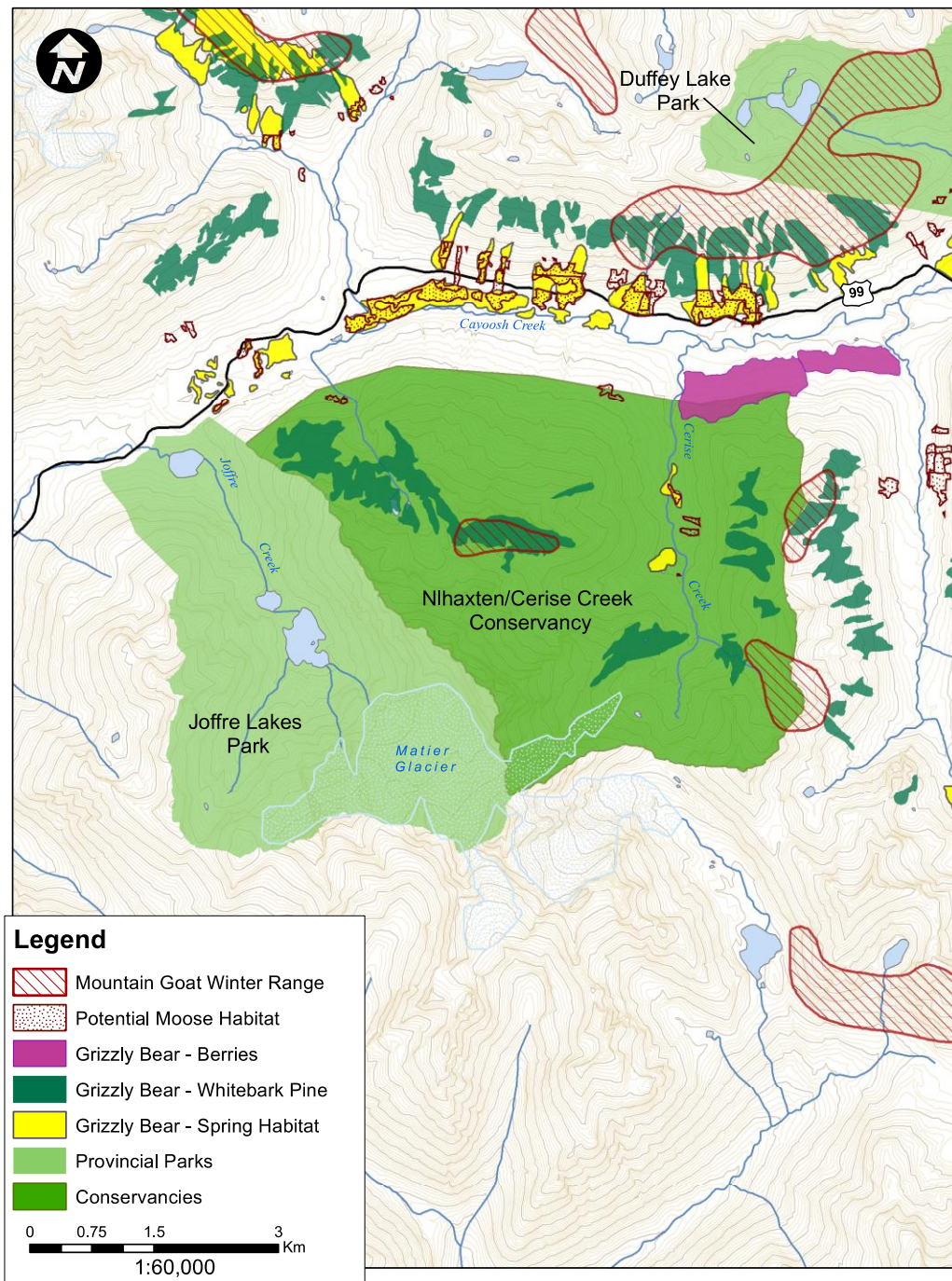
Portions of the Cerise Creek watershed have not been logged and old growth forests are present and remain intact in the upper forested area of the conservancy. Existing old growth areas in the conservancy are afforded protection under the *Park Act*.

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<sup>13</sup> British Columbia Grizzly Bear Population Estimate for 2012, MFLRNO, April 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Hobbs et al., Grizzly Bear habitat management in the Bridge River Restoration Area, 2013.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.sccp.ca/species-habitat/coastal-tailed-frog>



**Figure 6: Wildlife Habitat**

## 2.3 Cultural Values

First Nations in the region value the Nlháxten/Cerise Creek area and surrounding environment for food gathering, social and ceremonial purposes. The area was also an important transportation route between Lil'wat (Mount Currie) and the northern St'at'imc communities, and to the Stein Valley. Prior to the construction of Highway 99, travel was by foot or horse between the present-day communities of Lillooet and Mount Currie.

First Nations have several place names, habitation sites, traditional food gathering sites, legends and spiritual areas located in and around the Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy.<sup>16</sup> The south end of Duffey Lake is known to the Lil'wat as "Meknamen" (meaning sand fleas) which are commonly seen on the beach. Cayoosh Creek was known locally as 'Wallace Creek' or "Makwam".<sup>17</sup>

Hunting, trapping, fishing and plant gathering were traditionally practiced in this area. Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, trapping was done by snare. Metal traps were first used around 1905 according to Lil'wat Elder Charlie Seymour. A trapper named Charlie Wallace is known to have had a cabin in the area but the exact location is not known. The trapline was registered to "Indians of the Pemberton Band" on October 28, 1930 and is today held by Chief Leonard Andrew of the Lil'wat Nation.

Lil'wat Elder Morgan Wells applied the term "my garden" to an area just outside the conservancy, known as "Sqlaw". Historically, western spring beauty/Indian potatoes or "skwenkwin" (*Claytonia lanceolata*) were often harvested by the women while the men were hunting. Other plants traditionally gathered here include false azalea or "pasten" (*Menziesia ferruginea*), yellow glacier lily or "skamts" (*Erythronium grandiflorum*), cow parsnip or "hakwa7" (*Heraclium maximum*) and stonecrop or "kwenkwekwna7" (*Sedum divergens*).<sup>18</sup> Today, plant gathering continues to be conducted by the Lil'wat, the Sekw'el'was, N'Quatqua, and T'it'q'et who gather the plants noted above as well as huckleberries or "úsa7" (*Vaccinium membranaceum*), red currants (*Ribes rubrum*), red raspberries (*Rubus idaeus*), blueberries (*Vaccinium ovalifolium*), blackcap or "tsets7úsa7" (*Rubus leucodermis*) and pine mushrooms or "qemsám" (*Tricholoma magnivelare*). Plant harvesting occurs from the spring through to the fall.

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<sup>16</sup> Ucwalmícwts place and plant names are in quotation marks.

<sup>17</sup> Lex Joseph, Cerise Creek Report. Lil'wat Land and Resources Department, May 2017

<sup>18</sup> Johnny Jones, Lil'wat Use of the Duffy Area. Lil'wat Land and Resources Department, May 2017



Lil'wat Elder Jeannie Wells explaining traditional plant uses

A Lil'wat legend about magical beings, known as Transformers, talks about how these magical beings left a footprint on a rock west of Duffey Lake. An historical account from Sapper James Duffey, a surveyor who led the Expedition of 1860, which set out to explore the route between "Cayoosh" (present day Lillooet) and Lillooet Lake, provided many accounts of indigenous knowledge and use of the area and about the Transformer footprint.

"The Indian guide pointed out this footprint in the rock - and accounted for it thus - Indian tradition says that the Saughala Tighee ('God' in Chinook jargon) once stepped from a rock near Summit Lake (Gates Lake, at Birken) over the mountains and rested on this rock - there is a footprint on a rock 2 miles from the Halfway House and near Summit Lake - I saw it myself (Duffey, 1860)."

Sapper Duffey also noted that they located an "Indian place for drying roots" in the vicinity of the footprint and the adjacent "Indian" camp.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Stl'atl'imx Use of the Duffey Lake/Melvin Creek Area, Kennedy, D and Randy Bouchard, BC Indian Language Project, Victoria BC, 2000. p. 35-36



These features are located close to the northern boundary of the conservancy.



Transformer Footprint



Drying rack for food gathering

## 2.4 Recreation Values

Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy has become a popular destination for backcountry recreation in both summer and winter. Originally a remote mountaineering destination in the mid-1970s, before the road to Lillooet was paved, only a few committed

mountaineers and hikers would make the effort to access the area. Today the winter months track the highest use for backcountry skiing and snowshoeing.

One of the main recreational features of the conservancy is the Keith Flavelle Memorial Hut (Keith's Hut), built in 1988 in honour of a local man who passed away in a mountaineering accident. Located in an alpine meadow at approximately 1,650 metres elevation, the hut is ideally situated to support climbing and ski touring (see Figure 2).



The hut is maintained by the Keith Flavelle Memorial Hut Society. Annual work parties are led by the Flavelle family and a team of volunteers who do a deep cleaning of the cabin and general maintenance in and around the hut. Trail work is also done by volunteers throughout the summer months. Donations from visitors help fund the winter supply of firewood that is flown in by helicopter.

The annual number of hut users has risen from approximately 1,450 visitors in 1988 to 3,572 visitors in 2017.<sup>20</sup> Winter visitors are almost double that of summer visitors but both summer and winter use is trending upwards. Ski touring has been the predominant winter activity, although there seems to be an increase in snowshoeing activity in the area in recent years. The hut is designed for 14 people to sleep in the loft area and operates on a first come, first served basis. This capacity is often exceeded on busy weekends.

Dispersed camping occurs around the mountain tarns near the hut, especially when the hut is at capacity. Dispersed camping also takes place at the toe of Anniversary Glacier, adjacent to the glacial moraine. Additionally, some mountaineers camp at treeline at a site nicknamed "Motel 66", because of its 6,600-foot elevation (approximately 2,010 metres).

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<sup>20</sup> Data provided by Scott Flavelle, August 29, 2017



Planning Team at Keith's Hut, July 20, 2017



Mountain tarn in front of Keith's Hut, looking towards Mt. Matier



Dispersed camp site near Keith's Hut



Dispersed camp sites near moraine

An electronic counter installed by BC Parks along a section of the trail near the conservancy boundary measures daily visitor attendance. Visitation is almost double in the winter, with January and February being the busiest months (Figure 7). The data also show that over 50% of visitor use is on Saturdays and Sundays (Figure 8).

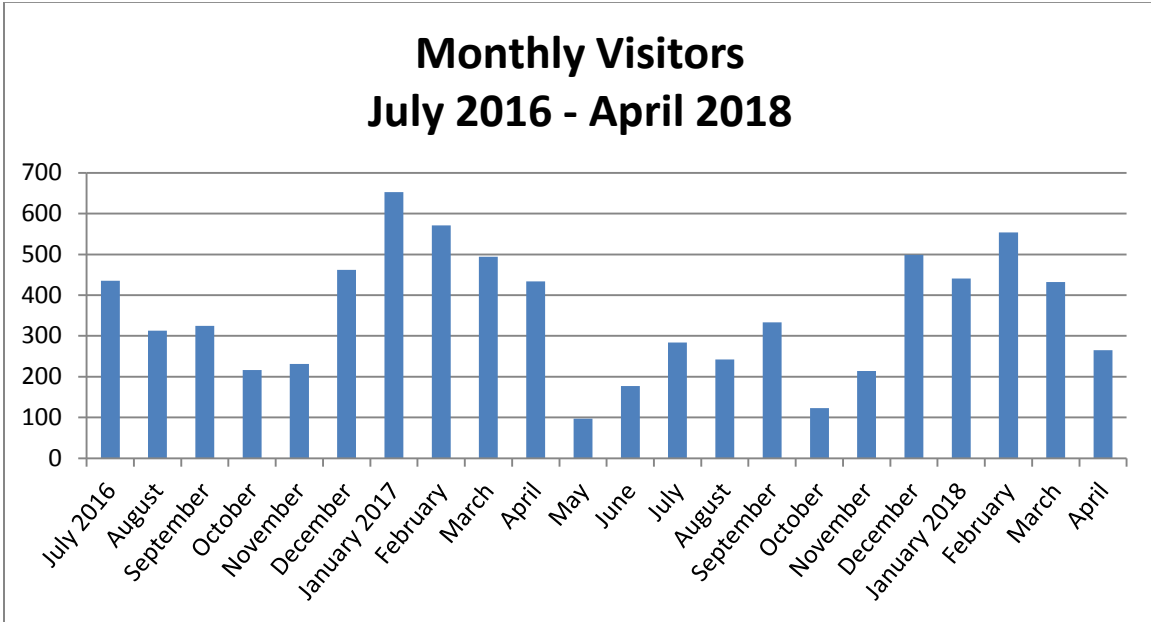


Figure 7: Monthly visitors to conservancy 2016-2018

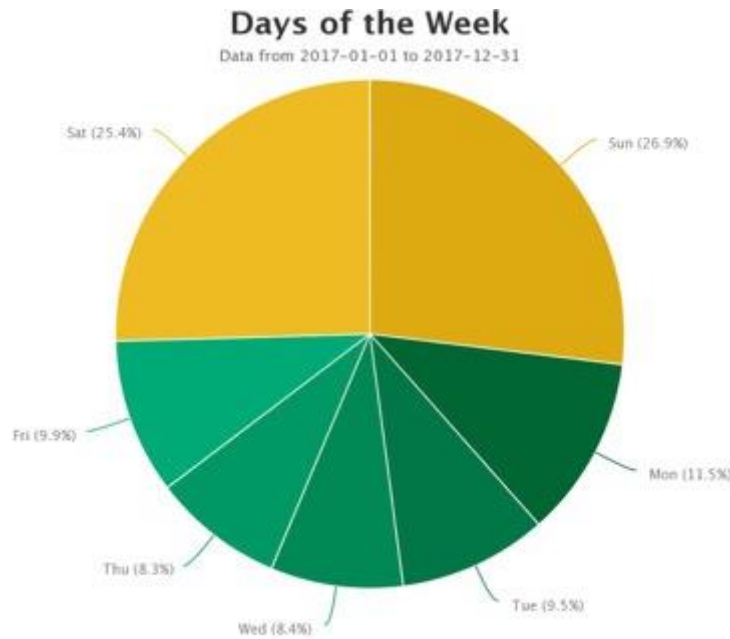


Figure 8: Daily visitors to conservancy 2017

## 3.0 Management Direction

### 3.1 Management Objectives and Strategies

The following management objectives and strategies have been developed to protect First Nations uses and interests as well as biological diversity and sensitive habitats within the conservancy. Access and recreational use will be managed to acceptable levels to ensure protection of First Nations interests and to support a sustainable backcountry experience.

#### 3.1.1 Protect cultural, ceremonial and spiritual values, uses and interests of First Nations

- First Nations have identified several cultural uses within the conservancy including vision questing, plant and berry gathering, hunting and trapping.

Management Objective	Management Strategies
Maintain and protect the cultural, ceremonial and spiritual values, uses and interests of First Nations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor recreational use (commercial and non-commercial) and implement strategies to mitigate impacts to First Nations values.</li> <li>• Ensure levels of recreational use do not have a negative impact on First Nations ability to practice cultural activities.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for First Nations exclusive use of the hut and campsites to conduct traditional use activities (e.g. a limited number of nights reserved for First Nations use).</li> </ul>
Protect the integrity of First Nations cultural and heritage resources, including sacred sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize site specific measures to protect potential presence of cultural sites, such as rock art and culturally modified trees (CMTs) (e.g. re-routing a trail to avoid a site, installing barriers to limit access, etc.)</li> <li>• Conduct a Preliminary Field Reconnaissance around existing areas of visitor use and facilities (e.g. trail, cabin, and camping areas).</li> <li>• Conduct an Archaeological Overview Assessment prior to any planned site disturbance and if necessary an Archaeological Impact Assessment will be completed.</li> </ul>
Support First Nations botanical harvesting and hunting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure existing harvesting areas are protected. Apply appropriate measures to protect harvesting areas (e.g. restrict recreational use and facility development in identified harvesting areas and wildfire management</li> </ul>

Management Objective	Management Strategies
	<p>planning).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize Lil'wat Nation's <i>Botanical Resource Strategy</i><sup>21</sup> where applicable to minimize impacts on culturally important plants.</li> <li>Support Lil'wat efforts to secure establishment of a land designation to protect the botanically significant area adjacent to the conservancy.</li> </ul>
Enhance visitor knowledge and understanding of First Nations interests in Nlháxten/Cerise Creek.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use interpretive signage to highlight cultural significance of the area.</li> <li>Include Ucwalmícwts language and place names on signs where appropriate.</li> <li>Offer non-motorized tours to share First Nations cultural knowledge of the area.</li> </ul>

### 3.1.2 Protect biological diversity and natural environment

- The current trend of increasing recreational activity in the conservancy, including overnight camping, may cause negative impacts to sensitive ecosystems.

Management Objective	Management Strategies
Ensure conservation of ecologically sensitive habitats and Threatened Species (such as Grizzly Bear, Mountain Goat, Coastal Tailed Frog and whitebark pine) are not impacted by increased recreational use of the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify ecologically sensitive habitats.</li> <li>Monitor identified ecologically sensitive habitats to limit impacts from increased recreational use.</li> <li>Conduct baseline studies and/or environmental impact assessments to determine if impacts can be avoided or mitigated before developing any new infrastructure (e.g. pit toilets, campsites, trails, new parking and trailhead).</li> </ul>

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<sup>21</sup> The *Botanical Resource Strategy* is a policy document prepared by the Lil'wat Land and Resources Department (2015). It can be made available upon request.

Management Objective	Management Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend changes to aircraft regulations to limit aircraft access to the existing helicopter tenure.</li> <li>• Ensure helicopters operating in the conservancy follow the guidelines in the Management Plan for the Mountain Goat.<sup>22</sup></li> <li>• Prohibit use of UAV's (drones).</li> <li>• Prohibit camp fires in all areas.</li> <li>• Provide appropriate signage at trailhead and hut to educate visitors about impacts.</li> </ul>
Prevent human-wildlife conflicts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide bear-proof food caches at designated campsites.</li> <li>• Reduce natural wildlife attractants around designated campsites.</li> <li>• Improve sight lines on trails for safety.</li> <li>• Install appropriate bear signage and information.</li> <li>• Implement trail or campsite closures if required to accommodate Grizzly Bear use in the area.</li> </ul>

### 3.1.3 Secure access to the conservancy

- Access into the conservancy is via a trail through land that is not included in the conservancy. The trail is not legally established and may be subject to impacts from future forestry operations.

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<sup>22</sup> Management Plan for the Mountain Goat (*Oreamnos americanus*) in British Columbia, prepared by the Mountain Goat Management Team, Ministry of Environment, May 2010 p. 64-66  
[http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/recovery/management\\_plans/MtGoat\\_MP\\_Final\\_28May2010.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/recovery/management_plans/MtGoat_MP_Final_28May2010.pdf)



Management Objective	Management Strategies
Ensure safe and adequate parking for visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore options for a future parking area located off of Highway 99 (Duffey Lake Road) with the responsible ministries and First Nations.</li> <li>• Identify avalanche paths so that future parking, trailhead or trails avoid slide zones.</li> </ul>
Secure and maintain access to the conservancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore options to legally establish a parking lot, trailhead and trail to the conservancy from Highway 99 using Section 56 under <i>Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA)</i><sup>23</sup>, or addition of land to the conservancy, or other appropriate land designation tool.</li> <li>• Pursue partnership agreements for maintenance of the trail, both inside the conservancy and on adjacent lands.</li> <li>• Maintain communication with forest tenure holders to ensure future harvesting or silviculture plans do not negatively impact the trail.</li> </ul>

### 3.1.4 Manage backcountry recreation opportunities

- The Sea to Sky area is experiencing a large increase in visitor use, especially at nearby Joffre Lakes Park. The conservancy is also experiencing an increase in visitors, and overnight capacity of Keith’s Hut is often exceeded. Strategies to manage visitor use to levels compatible with protecting conservancy values will be implemented.

Management Objective	Management Strategies
Manage visitor use to acceptable level of capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work collaboratively with First Nations and engage key stakeholders to determine acceptable level of capacity, considering seasonal differences.</li> <li>• Complete an assessment to determine the appropriate number and location of campsites to support a viable and</li> </ul>

<sup>23</sup> [Forest and Range Practices Act](#)

S. 56 (1) The minister may order (a) the establishment of Crown land as an interpretive forest site, a recreation site or a recreation trail, except Crown land that is subject to another enactment and is being administered by another minister, branch or agency of government.

Management Objective	Management Strategies
	<p>sustainable backcountry experience in the conservancy. Consider that winter and summer campsites may differ due to avalanche hazards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and maintain trails (existing and new) as “Type III” trail standard<sup>24</sup> (wilderness trails that are designed for backcountry use).</li> <li>• Implement appropriate visitor management systems to maintain acceptable capacity. This might include registration or reservations for the cabin, camping, and possibly day use.</li> <li>• Design, develop and locate parking area for acceptable capacity (e.g. consider locating it not within view of Highway 99).</li> </ul>
<p>Manage recreation opportunities to minimize negative impacts to conservancy values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete tenure review process to determine whether or not any tenure amendments are required to meet the management intent of the conservancy. Licence of occupation tenures will be converted to park use permits, and will reflect any necessary amendments.</li> <li>• Establish a maximum number of low impact campsites close to Keith’s Hut. Install designated campsites, pit toilets and appropriate facilities (e.g. food caches, grey water disposal, etc.)</li> <li>• Monitor levels of use and potential impacts associated with high-elevation camping for mountaineering purposes.</li> <li>• Prohibit snow machines (e.g. snowmobiles, snow bikes and snow cats), land-based vehicles (e.g. ATV’s, dirt bikes) and mountain bikes in the conservancy.</li> <li>• Prohibit domestic animals to help protect sensitive ecosystems and important wildlife values.</li> </ul>
<p>Ensure public safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct avalanche terrain assessment.</li> <li>• Provide signage about avalanche terrain and hazards. State that winter travel is not recommended for those without</li> </ul>

<sup>24</sup> <http://sitesandtrailsbc.ca> Section 10.3.5 Guidelines for Specific Trail Classes, p.25

Management Objective	Management Strategies
	<p>proper avalanche training and equipment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide signage at the trailhead about proper food management techniques, no fires, and no domestic animals.</li> </ul>
<p>Increase awareness and respect for First Nations' territories among recreational users.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a First Nations Guardianship Program to assist in the management of the conservancy.</li> <li>• Explore funding opportunities to implement the program.</li> </ul>

### 3.2 Zoning Plan

The entire conservancy is zoned as a Nature Recreation Zone (see Figure 9) with the intent to protect First Nations uses (such as traditional plant and berry gathering, hunting, fishing and trapping), as well as ceremonial and spiritual values. The conservancy will also protect scenic and ecological values and allow for backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment. Land-based motorized activity will not be permitted. Aircraft access to drop-off and pick-up points will be limited to the pre-existing heli-hiking tenure and for operational requirements.

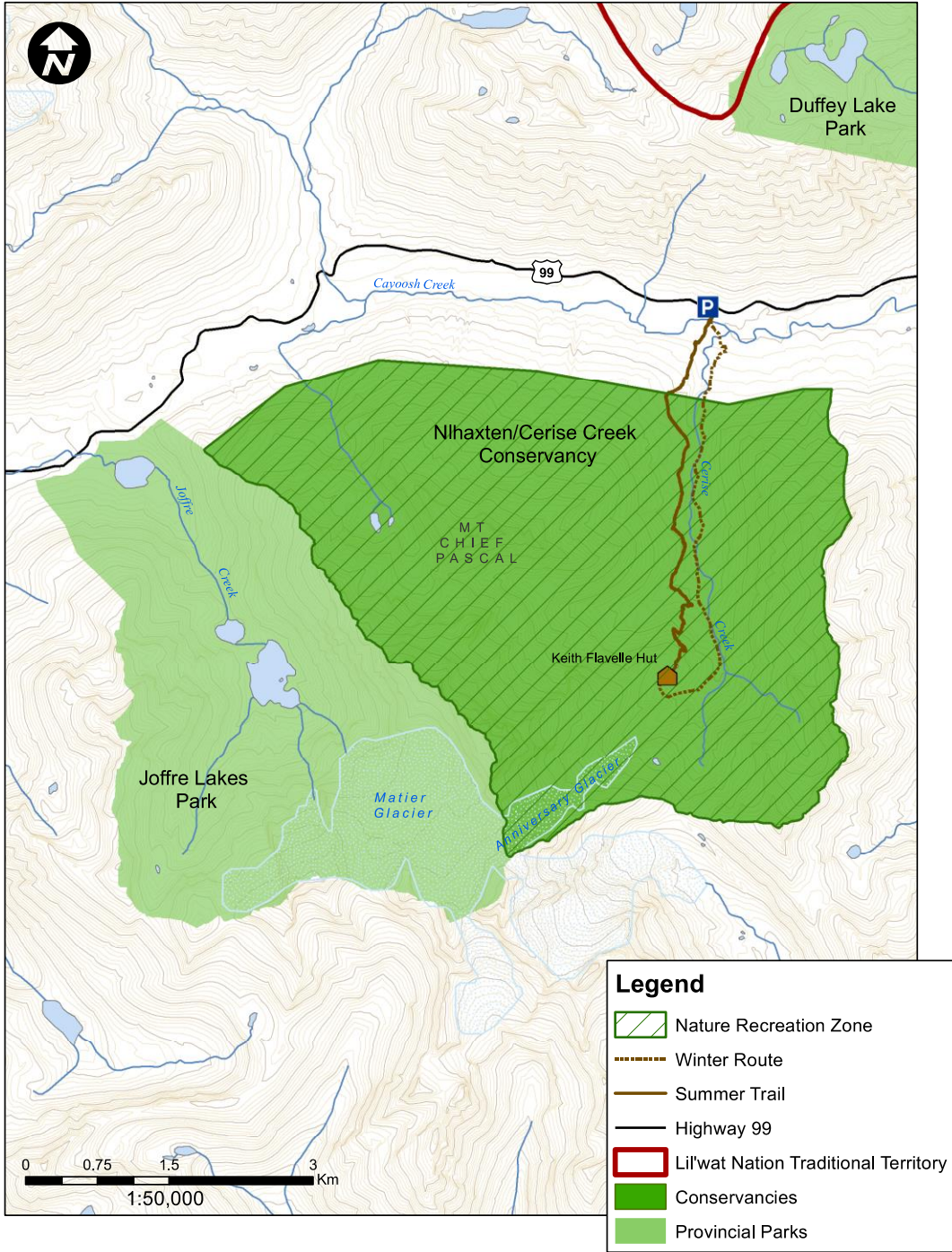


Figure 9: Conservancy Zoning Map

## 4.0 Plan Implementation

### 4.1 Implementation Plan

A collaborative approach between BC Parks and Lil'wat Nation will be taken to implement the management strategies in this management plan, subject to available funding and staff resources. Where possible, partnerships will be developed with First Nations, stakeholders and local communities to achieve specific strategies.

### 4.2 High Priority Strategies

The following strategies have been identified as high priorities for implementation for Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy.

1. Complete tenure review process to determine whether or not any tenure amendments are required to meet the management intent of the conservancy. Licence of occupation tenures will be converted to park use permits, and will reflect any necessary amendments.
2. Conduct preliminary/reconnaissance field studies around high use areas such as the trail, Keith's Hut, and/or other future areas of potential site disturbance to identify archaeological values and ecologically sensitive habitats.
3. Monitor levels of use and determine acceptable carrying capacity of the area prior to developing any new facilities.
4. Implement an appropriate visitor management system to maintain acceptable capacity.
5. Explore options for a future parking area located off of Highway 99 (Duffey Lake Road) with the responsible ministries and First Nations.
6. Explore options to legally establish a parking lot, trailhead and trail to the conservancy from Highway 99 using Section 56 under *Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA)*<sup>25</sup>, or addition of land to the conservancy, or other appropriate land designation tool.

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<sup>25</sup> [Forest and Range Practices Act](#)

S. 56 (1) The minister may order (a) the establishment of Crown land as an interpretive forest site, a recreation site or a recreation trail, except Crown land that is subject to another enactment and is being administered by another minister, branch or agency of government.

### **4.3 Plan Assessment**

To ensure that the management direction for Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy remains relevant and effective, BC Parks and Lil'wat Nation staff will assess the management plan when required. 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. BC Parks and Lil'wat Nation will notify each other of proposed minor administrative changes with an opportunity for review and comments prior to finalization.

If an assessment determines that the management plan requires a more significant update or substantial new management direction, BC Parks and Lil'wat Nation will work collaboratively to complete a management plan amendment or a new management plan.

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

## 5.0 References

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Province of British Columbia Ministry of Environment Ecosystems Branch: Plant Communities and Habitats Affected by Recreation.

<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/twg/species/plants.html>

South Coast Conservation Program: Coastal Tailed Frog: <http://www.sccp.ca/species-habitat/coastal-tailed-frog>



## Appendix A: Lil'wat Land Use Plan

The Lil'wat Nation prepared the "Lil'wat Land Use Plan: Phase 1 (2006)." In the Land Use Plan, Nt'ákmen (Our Way) Areas are identified by the Lil'wat people as important intact natural and cultural areas that enable Lil'wat people to participate in traditional activities and express their connection to the land. They provide certainty and long-term security for Lil'wat people to harvest traditional resources and practice their culture.

The management goals for Nt'ákmen Areas are:

- Maintain areas of intact wilderness
- Provide wilderness areas to offer opportunities for solitude and spiritual healing
- Prevent industrial extraction (either by Lil'wat or non-Lil'wat)
- Provide Lil'wat economic opportunities centred on low impact tourism and recreation and commercial botanical harvesting, where deemed appropriate by the Lil'wat
- Provide opportunities for Lil'wat people to continue cultural and traditional uses, including:
  - Gathering traditional Lil'wat food resources
  - Collecting plants for medicinal and ceremonial activities
  - Hunting, trapping and fishing
  - Harvesting trees for cultural purposes
  - Constructing structures that support Lil'wat spiritual and cultural activities such as shelters and camps

Nlháxten was identified as one of the Nt'ákmen Areas (see map below). Nlháxten is described as a rugged place that was once a cultural focal point for the Lil'wat. The Duffey Lake area provided many resources for the Lil'wat people and it was known as a "banquet place" where plants were harvested and animals hunted and trapped.<sup>26</sup>

Management direction from the Lil'wat LLUP includes;

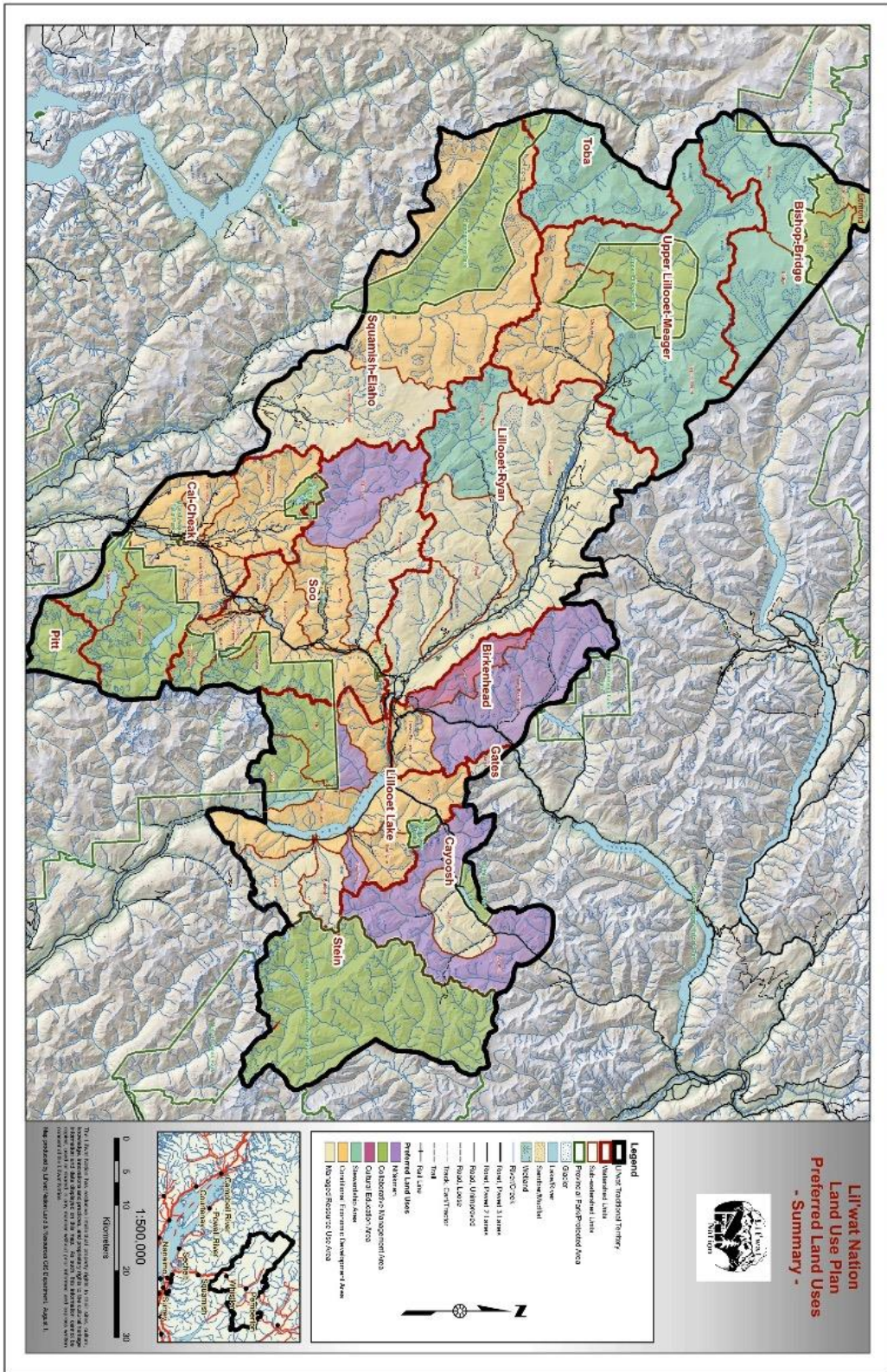
- No expansion of the Duffey Lake Road to limit environmental and cultural impacts
- Maintain pockets of old growth
- No Industrial development
- Potential to offer low impact tours to share Lil'wat culture and provide benefits to the community

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<sup>26</sup> Lil'wat Land Use Plan, p.61

The Nlháxten Nt'ákmen zone identified in Lil'wat Land Use Plan has been divided into the following Lil'wat Management Zones (Figure 6).

- Cerise Creek Conservancy (now called the Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy)
- Cultural Wildland
- Cultural Management Area
- Duffey Lake Park Extension (now part of Duffey Lake Park)



Lil'wat Nation Land Use Plan: Preferred Land Uses (Lil'wat Land and Resources Dept.)

## Appendix B: Land Use Tenures

The following table lists tenures that overlap the conservancy:

	Tenure Type	Purpose	Tenure Holder Name	Tenure Term (years)	Expiry Date
1	Licence of Occupation	Heli-skiing and heli-hiking as set out in their Management Plan.	Blackcomb Helicopters Limited Partnership	30	2037-09-15
2	Licence of Occupation	Guided mountaineering and rock climbing	Whistler Alpine Guides Bureau Ltd	20	2024-04-01
3	Licence of Occupation	Guided mountaineering and rock climbing	Canada West Mountain School	10	2019-06-20
4	Park Use Permit	Climbing, mountaineering, backcountry skiing, educational and training	American Mountain Guides Association (Colorado, USA)	10	2023-03-21
5	Registered Trap line	Trapping	Leonard Andrew on behalf of the Lil'wat Nation.	No Term	N/A
6	Guiding Territory Certificate	Guided hunting	John Sievers		2035-02-22
7	Special Use Permit	Backcountry cabin, firewood shed, pit toilet. Original purpose was for Emergency/Warm-up Shelter for backcountry skiers and mountaineers.	Keith Flavelle Memorial Hut Society		Expired 2008

## Appendix C: Appropriate Use Table

The following table summarizes existing and potential future uses in Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy 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 conservancy in the future and does not restrict the exercise of First Nations aboriginal rights.

Please note that appropriate uses may be geographically restricted (i.e., only allowed in certain areas of Nlháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy) 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		
<b>N</b>	<b>Not an appropriate use</b>	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 conservancy, the management plan will include strategies for ending the activity (e.g. phasing out, closing).
<b>Y</b>	<b>May be an appropriate use</b>	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.
<b>N/A</b>	<b>Not an applicable use in this zone</b>	It is not feasible for the use to take place in this zone (e.g. mooring buoys in a terrestrial zone).

Activity/Facility	Nature Recreation Zone	Comments
<b>Recreational Activities/Uses</b>		
Aircraft Landing/Takeoff	Y	Limited to existing helicopter tenure, facility maintenance (e.g. firewood delivery to Keith's Hut), and other operational needs.
Camping (designated sites)	Y	
Camping (wilderness style-undesigned sites)	Y	Restricted to mountaineering access.
Drones (UAV's)	N	A letter of authorization is required for any exceptions.
Fishing	Y	
Horse and Pack Animal Use	N	
Hiking	Y	

<b>Activity/Facility</b>	<b>Nature Recreation Zone</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Hunting	Y	
Land-based Motorized Activity (e.g. 4x4, dirt bikes, ATV's)	N	
Mountain Biking	N	
Paragliding Launching	Y	
Skiing (backcountry)	Y	
Skiing (downhill and cross-country track based)	N	
Snowmachines (e.g. snowmobile, snow bike, snowcat)	N	
<b>Recreation Facilities/Infrastructure</b>		
Cabins, Huts and Shelters (as defined in the Fixed Roof Accommodation Policy)	Y	Restricted to Keith's Hut that pre-existed the establishment of the conservancy
Campgrounds (vehicle accessed)	N	No roads in the conservancy
Parking Lots	N	Located outside the conservancy
Picnic Areas (vehicle accessed)	N	No roads in the conservancy
Lodges (as defined in the Fixed Roof Accommodation Policy)	N	
Roads	N	
Ski Facilities (vehicle accessed and serviced)	N	
Trails	Y	
Visitor Information Buildings	N	
<b>Other Activities/Infrastructure</b>		
Botanical Forest Product Harvest	N	
Commercial Filming	Y	
Communication Sites and Towers	N	
Grazing	N	
Hydro Electric Projects (local run of river)	N	
Log Storage and Dump Sites	N	
Trapping	Y	Restricted to existing trap line tenure
Utility Corridors	N	