



Skihist Park

Management Plan

May 2018



BC Parks

Skihist Park Management Plan

Approved by:



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Date



April 10, 2018

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*This document replaces the Skihist Park
Management Plan (November 1996).*

Management Vision

This vision statement describes the future state and management that is desired for Skihist Park. The park vision provides long-term direction for park managers while aiding them in making decisions regarding current issues.

Skihist Park continues as a highway-oriented park providing camping and day-use recreation activities for the touring public who explore the Fraser River and Thompson River canyons. There are opportunities for visitors to learn about a fire-maintained forest ecosystem, wildlife, geology and climate, as well as First Nations' use of the area, the history of early roads and railways and the Thompson River. It is one of several provincial parks between Lytton and Kamloops that, together, present natural, cultural and historic themes associated with the Thompson River valley and area.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Management Plan Purpose

The purpose of this management plan is to guide the management of Skihist Park. This management plan:

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

1.2 Planning Area

Skihist Park is 386 hectares in size and situated along Highway 1 in the Thompson River canyon approximately 8 kilometres east of the Town of Lytton (Figure 1). Access is directly from the highway. The main feature of the park is the campground and day use area (Figure 2) with a scenic backdrop of the surrounding canyon mountains.

1.3 Legislative Framework

Skihist Park was originally established as a 33 hectare Class A park under the *Park Act* in March of 1956. It encompassed only the campground and day use area. On June 3, 2010, the park was significantly expanded as a follow-up to recommendations in the draft 2004 Lillooet Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). The park is presently named and described in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*.

Class A parks are Crown lands dedicated to the preservation of their natural environments for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public. Development in Class A parks is limited to that which is necessary to maintain the park's recreational values.

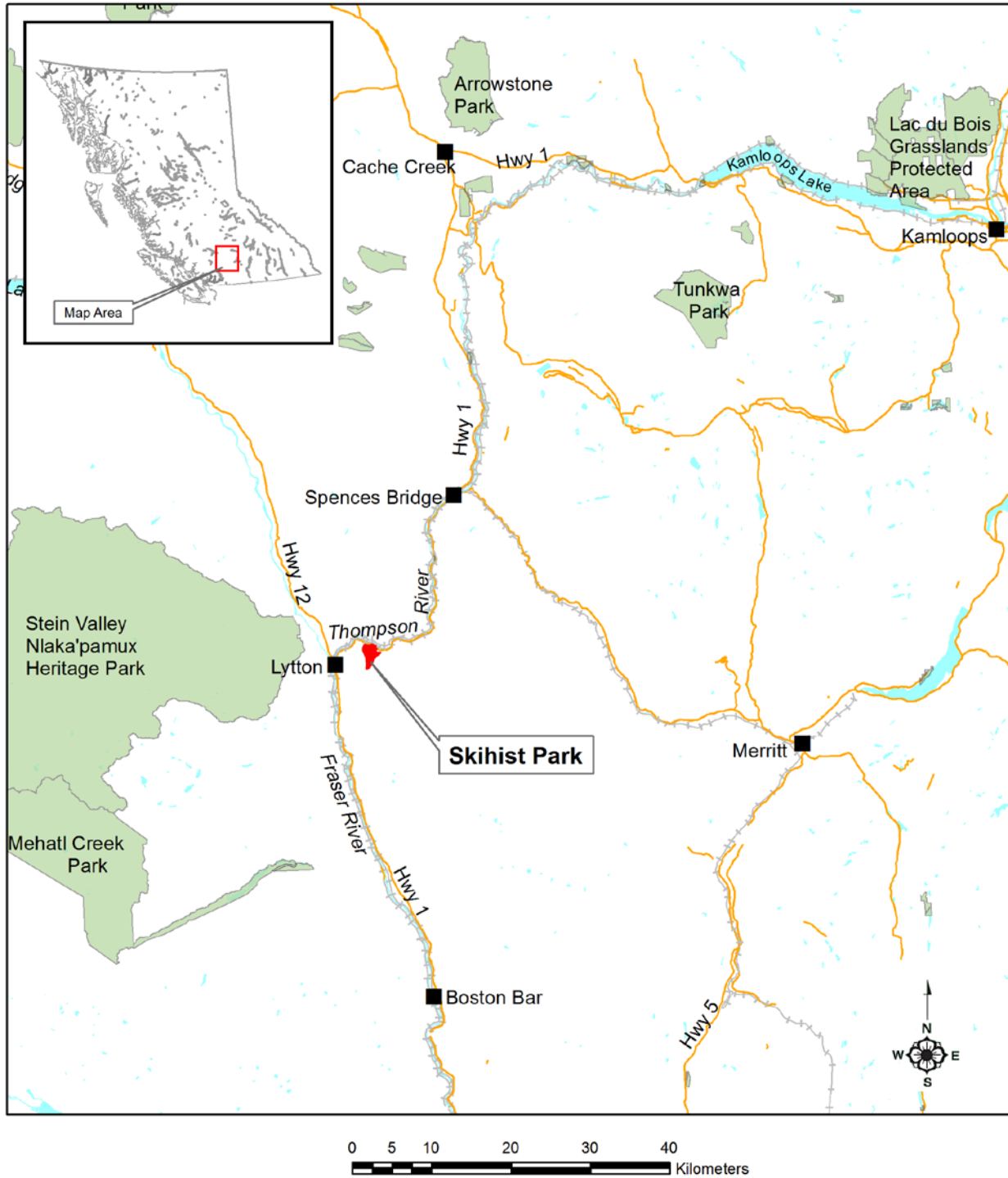


Figure 1: Context Map for Skihist Park

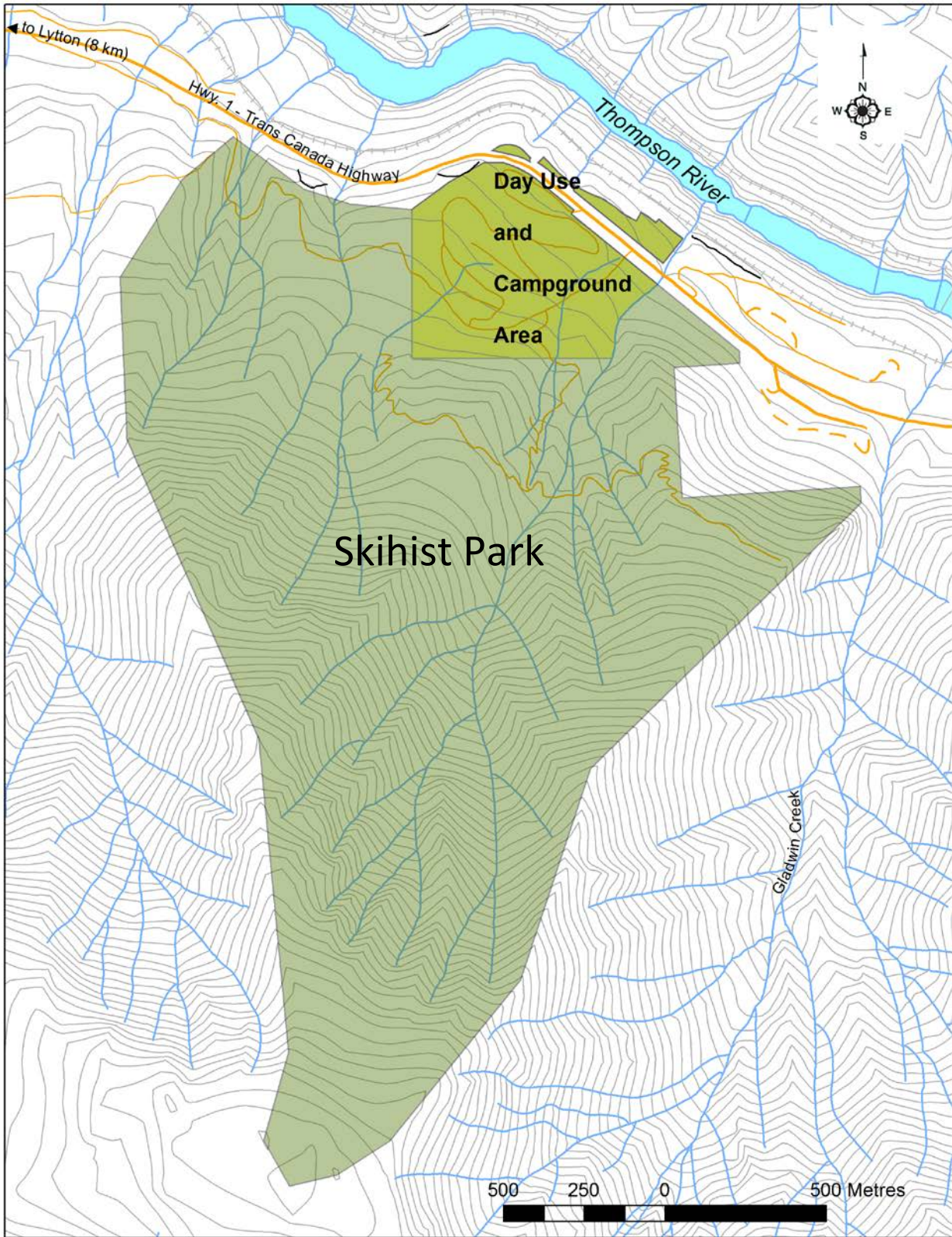


Figure 2: Map of Skihist Park showing day use and campground area.

1.4 Encumbrances

Under the authority of the *Wildlife Act*, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development administers a trapline that is situated within the park. This trapline must also be authorized by park use permit under the *Park Act*.

The day-use area of the park is divided by a portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway right-of-way. Visitors must park on and pass through the right-of-way to get to park facilities or scenic lookouts.

1.5 Management Planning Process

A new park management plan was needed due to the 2010 park expansion that added a considerable conservation component to the park as well as expanding potential for recreational activities.

BC Parks invited First Nations to participate in the management planning process for Skihist Park. The general public and public interest groups were informed of the management planning process through the BC Parks webpage and were invited to provide comments or contact the planning staff. Initial public consultations took place in 2010 as one of the eight parks presented for management planning as a result of the draft Lillooet Land and Resource Management Plan.

Through this consultation process, BC Parks obtained information on values, uses, present and future desired activities, the desired experience, issues and items needing management attention. Information in the 1996 management plan was also considered in order to provide consistent direction. Input received during the public review process has been taken into consideration in the development of this management plan.

1.6 Relationship with First Nations

Skihist Park is situated within the asserted traditional territory of the Nlaka'pamux Nation, including the Nicomen Indian Band, Boston Bar First Nation, Coldwater Indian Band, Cook's Ferry Indian Band, Siska Indian Band, Spuzzum First Nation, Shackan Indian Band, Lower Nicola Indian Band, Lytton First Nation and Oregon Jack Creek Indian Band.

First Nations have indicated that they use the park for the gathering of food and medicinal plants, periodically use the day use area, and have an active role and interest in ecosystem management within the park.

2.0 Values and Roles of the Protected Area

2.1 Significance in the Protected Areas System

The primary role of Skihist Park is to provide a camping location or day stop for visitors travelling the Fraser River and Thompson River canyons area. The 2010 expansion of the park enhanced this role by protecting scenic values beyond the campground and providing opportunities for visitors to explore and observe the natural and historical features of the park.

2.2 Biodiversity and Natural Heritage Values

Biogeoclimatic ecosystem variants found within the park include:

- Ponderosa Pine variant (PPxh2) found at lower elevations in the vicinity of the campground and day use area (135 hectares);
- Two Interior Douglas-fir variants, including the IDFxh2 (154 hectares) and the IDFdk2 (69 hectares), at progressively higher elevations;
- Montane Spruce (MSdm2) found at the highest elevation (28 hectares).

All of these variants are under-represented in the provincial protected areas system, with only 2.1% to 3.4% protected within the province. Skihist Park accounts for only a minor component of this portion in protected areas, containing from 0.3 to 3.1 percent of the protected area component of these variants.

The park is located within the Pavilion Ranges Ecoregion, an area of mountainous upland area that is transitional with the Coast Ranges to the west and the Interior Plateau surface to the east. The Fraser and Thompson rivers have dissected the upland surface with deep, narrow valleys. Generally, for most of the year, this area lies in the rain shadow of the Coast Mountains to the west. While hot subtropical air invades this area in the summer months, cold Arctic air can invade from the north in the winter and early spring.

The dry conditions have created ecosystems and vegetation that are adapted to frequent fire, with many species dependent upon fire to maintain conditions for their growth and reproduction.

Wildlife that can be found in the park include Elk, Mule Deer, Mountain Goat, Black Bear, Cougar, Bobcat, Coyote, Blue Grouse, Chukar, Spruce Grouse, Woodchuck, squirrels, rabbits, weasels, rattlesnakes, Blue Racer and Bull Snake. Skihist Park contains Elk and Mule Deer winter range and other habitat features such as old-growth trees, a regenerating burn, cliffs, talus slopes and deep ravines.

2.3 Cultural Values

The park contains trails used by First Nations for gathering activities and travel within their territories. Although there have not been any archaeological artifacts located in the park, there is potential for artifacts to be discovered in the future. A portion of the historical Cariboo Wagon Road, built between 1862 and 1865, passes through the centre of the park campground. This is important as a remnant of a well-documented and provincially significant historic transportation route.

2.4 Recreation Values

The park is used to provide travel corridor opportunities related to the Highway 1 corridor and scenic views of the lower Thompson River canyon that stretches from the Fraser River at the Town of Lytton to the outflow from Kamloops Lake just west of the City of Kamloops. It is a scenic stop along the highway that provides dramatic views of the Thompson River canyon and Scarp Ranges, as well as railway tracks along the steep river shoreline. The 58 unit campground provides a place to stay while traveling or as a base while exploring the canyon area. The park was visited by an average of 6,800 campers and 136,000 day users each year over the 3 years from 2014 to 2016.



2.5 Climate Change


In British Columbia, climate change effects vary by region. Skihist Park falls within the southwestern area of Thompson-Nicola Regional District for which predictive¹ modelling indicates that, from 2040 to 2069, mean annual temperature, annual precipitation, frost-free days, and annual growing degree days will likely increase. These climatic changes will likely result in changes to ecosystem composition and function across the landscape.

Along with other possible ramifications, these projected climatic changes may result in changes in water availability and susceptibility to fire, which could in turn affect the flora and fauna of Skihist Park. However, no research specific to the area is available to support this assertion.

¹ Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium. Plan2Adapt. Web based analysis tool accessed in 2015. URL at: <http://www.pacificclimate.org/analysis-tools/plan2adapt>.

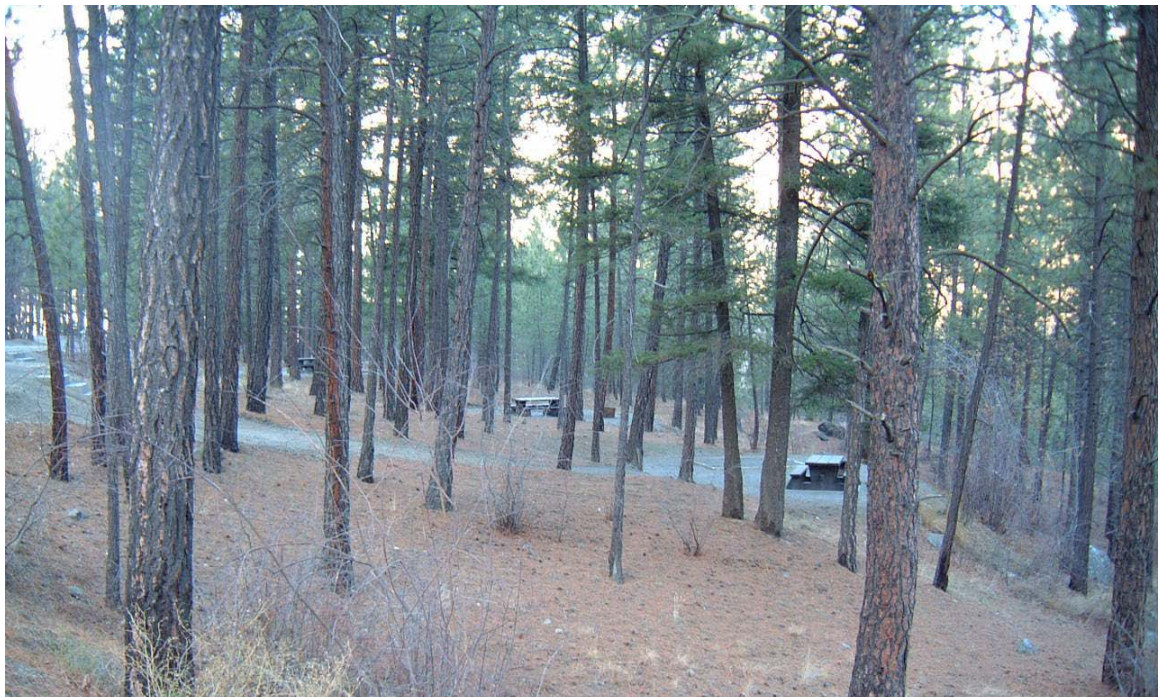
3.0 Management Direction

3.1 Management Objectives and Strategies

Management Context	Management Objectives and Strategies
<p>The forest within the park is a fire-maintained ecosystem. Fire suppression has eliminated the frequency of natural fires, with potential changes in vegetation.</p> <p>Pine needles and branches build up on the forest floor over time and create a safety concern with potential wildfire in a heavily used campground, although prescribed burning in the campground area has helped keep this under control.</p> <p>Introduction of invasive plants as a result of vehicle traffic and prescribed burns is a concern.</p>	<p>Management objective: Maintain the characteristics of a fire-maintained forest ecosystem while ensuring a safe environment for visitors.</p> <p>Management strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor accumulation of pine needles and other fuels, with the intent of periodic removal of combustible material. • Continue periodic prescribed fires to reduce forest fuel loading within the campground area. • Consider expanding prescribed burning to higher elevations of the park to mimic a natural fire frequency and resulting forest characteristics. • Monitor for invasive species and respond with appropriate eradication or control measures where needed. • Work with First Nations to obtain input on maintaining or creating conditions suitable for medicinal and food plants. 
<p>Many wildlife species use the park habitats, but the diversity of species and areas of importance are relatively unknown.</p> <p>Species at risk are in the general area but have not been recorded within the park to date.</p>	<p>Management Objective: Maintain or increase the value of park habitats for local wildlife populations that presently utilize park habitats.</p> <p>Management Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory the park to identify wildlife species that use the park and their critical habitats, with a priority on inventory of species at risk. • Periodically monitor areas used for recreation to ensure use does not interfere with critical habitats or seasonal movement patterns and connectivity for wildlife.

Management Context	Management Objectives and Strategies
<p>Although the park's location lends itself to exploration of the surrounding area, there is little to attract destination campers. The park provides a narrow variety of recreation activities.</p>	<p>Management Objective: Provide a range of camping and day use experiences for both the travelling public and campers who may choose to use Skihist Park as a destination.</p> <p>Management Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide camping, day-use and highway rest stop recreation opportunities. • Evaluate the potential for providing a greater variety of activities within the park, such as a more developed trail system or interpretive opportunities.
<p>There are unrealized opportunities to provide interpretation of the natural and cultural history of the area.</p> <p>There are several themes on natural history, First Nations, development of transportation systems, the fur trade, gold rush and pioneer settlement that could be developed in relation to nearby parks in the Fraser River and Thompson River canyons.</p> <p>The Cariboo Wagon Road is valued as a rare segment of the original road.</p>	<p>Management Objective: Inform visitors on the natural and cultural history of the park and surrounding area.</p> <p>Management Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and provide interpretive materials for visitors on natural and cultural history. There are a number of themes that could also complement interpretation and education with other parks in the canyon, such as Alexandra Bridge, Goldpan, Juniper Beach and Steelhead parks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider opportunities to provide interpretive material on First Nation history, settlements, hunting and fishing in the canyon, and other uses of the area. ○ Consider the construction, use and display of First Nations historical structures, such as a pit house, cache pit, and gathering area with related educational material ○ The role of fire in the environment. ○ Natural history subjects, such as ponderosa pine ecosystems, wildlife and their habitats, geology and the local climate. ○ The development of transportation in the canyon associated with the Cariboo Wagon Road, construction of the railways and the Fraser River Highway. ○ The development of settlement in the area, including the fur trade, gold rush and start of pioneer settlement. • Maintain and protect the segment of the historical Cariboo Wagon Road to safeguard its heritage values. Provide recreational, cultural and educational opportunities related to the road by providing interpretive signage and continued use as a trail.

Management Context	Management Objectives and Strategies
<p>Visitors using the day-use area of the park unavoidably enter onto the Canadian Pacific Railway right-of-way due to a portion of the parking lot and scenic lookouts located there.</p>	<p>Management Objective: Legitimate and authorized access to the day-use area and associated viewpoints.</p> <p>Management Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate acquisition or a mutual agreement with the CPR for park visitors to continue to utilize the day-use area and adjacent viewpoints.
<p>First Nations have an interest in using the park for gathering and social events and being involved in ongoing management of the park.</p> <p>Park use and development may impact unidentified First Nation's and other historical values.</p>	<p>Management Objective: Ensure a collaborative relationship with First Nations on park management and increase public awareness that First Nations are able to continue to practice traditional activities within the park.</p> <p>Management Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all activities within the park are sensitive to the potential presence of archaeological values. • Invite First Nations to provide input into information gathering within the park and on any planned developments that could impact archaeological values and First Nations activities. • Invite First Nations to be involved in ecosystem restoration planning and management, such as prescribed fires. • Traditional First Nation gathering and cultural activities will continue.



3.2 Zoning Plan

In general terms, a zoning plan divides a park into logical management units within which certain activities/uses are permitted and a particular set of management objectives apply. Zoning is often used to physically separate incompatible activities or uses within the park and provides visitors and managers with a quick visual representation and appreciation of how a particular park is managed. Zones are designed to reflect the physical environment, existing patterns of use and the desired level of management and development in a given management unit.

Skihist Park is divided into two zones (Figure 3) that reflect the highest use area associated with the campground and day use area, and the remainder of the park that allows recreational activities while protecting wildlife from disturbance and allowing natural processes to occur.

3.3.1 Intensive Recreation Zone

The objective of this zone is to provide for a variety of readily-accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities. In Skihist Park, this is to provide vehicle-accessed camping opportunities and day use activities, such as picnicking, hiking, viewing and experiencing the surrounding landscape. The Intensive Recreation Zone comprises approximately 34 hectares, or 8.8% of the park.

3.3.2 Nature Recreation Zone

The objective for this zone is to protect scenic values and to provide for backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment. Maintaining the value of the area for wildlife habitat is a priority while accommodating recreational use. Opportunities are available for visitors to explore and observe the natural and historical features of the park. This zone comprises approximately 352 hectares, or 91.2% of the park.

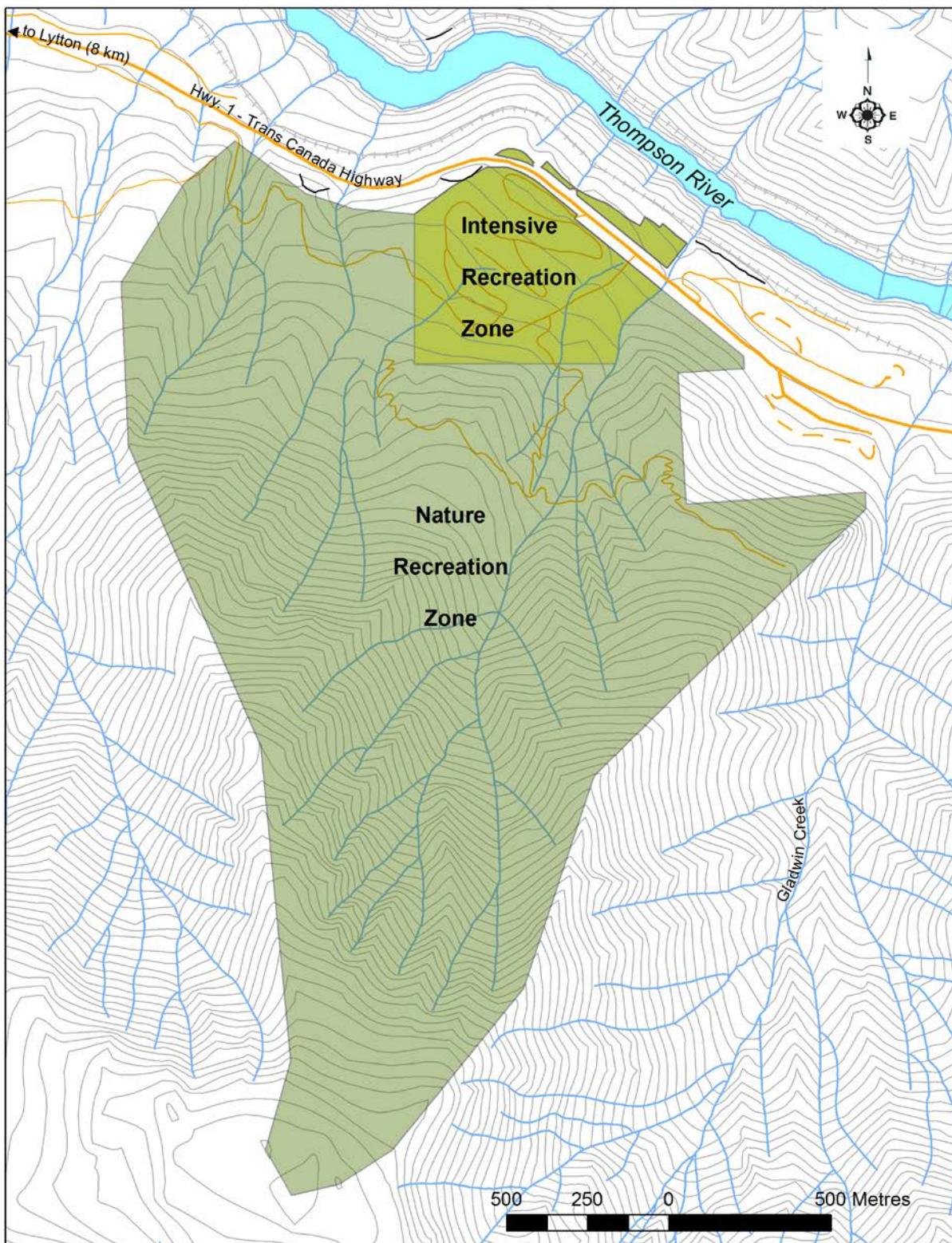


Figure 3: Zoning Map

4.0 Plan Implementation

4.1 Implementation Plan

Specific projects will be evaluated for priority in relation to the overall protected areas system. BC Parks will have a collaborative relationship with First Nations on park management. Where needed, BC Parks will seek project-specific funding and partners to implement management strategies.

4.2 High Priority Strategies

The following strategies have been identified as high priorities for implementation:

1. Invite First Nations to provide input to information gathering within the park and on any planned developments that could impact archaeological values and First Nations activities.
2. Consider opportunities to provide interpretive material on First Nation history, settlements, hunting and fishing in the canyon, and other uses of the area.
3. Continue periodic prescribed fires to reduce forest fuel loading within the campground area.
4. Inventory the park to identify wildlife species that use the park and their critical habitats, with a priority on an inventory of species at risk.

4.3 Plan Assessment

In order to ensure that the management direction for Skihist Park remains relevant and effective, BC Parks will ensure that the management plan is assessed by BC Parks staff on a regular basis (i.e., at least every 5 years). 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.

If an internal assessment reveals that the management plan requires updating or substantial new management direction is needed, a formal review by BC Parks may be initiated to determine whether the management plan requires an amendment or if a new management plan is required.

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

Appendix 1: Appropriate Use Table

The following table summarizes existing and potential future uses in Skihist Park 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 protected area in the future.

Please note that many appropriate uses are geographically restricted (i.e., only allowed in certain areas of Skihist Park) 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 a good idea to review relevant sections of the management plan where indicated in the table.

Appropriate Use Table Legend		
N	Not an appropriate use	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 protected area, the management plan will include strategies for ending the activity (e.g., phasing out, closing).
Y	May be an appropriate use	Some level or extent of this use may be appropriate in the zone(s) indicated. If the activity/use already exists, the management plan provides 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 and approval. 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.
N/A	Not an applicable use in this zone	Indicates where it is not feasible for the use to take place in this zone (e.g., mooring buoys in a terrestrial zone).

Activity/Facility	Intensive Recreation Zone	Nature Recreation Zone	Comments
Recreational Activities/Uses			
Camping (designated sites)	Y	N	
Camping (wilderness style-undesignated sites)	N	N	
Hang Gliding and Para Gliding Launching	N/A	N	
Hiking	Y	Y	
Hunting	N	Y	
Land-based Mechanized Activity (e.g., mountain biking)	Y	Y	On designated trails only
Land-based Motorized Activity (e.g., 4x4, motorcycles, ATV-not including snowmobiles, snowcats or aircraft landings)	N	N	
Horse and Pack Animal Use	N	N	
Recreation Facilities/Infrastructure			
Cabins, Huts and Shelters (as defined in the Fixed Roof Accommodation Policy)	N	N	
Lodges (as defined in the Fixed Roof Accommodation Policy)	N	N	
Campgrounds (vehicle accessed)	Y	N	
Picnic Areas (vehicle accessed)	Y	N	
Designated Camping Sites (not vehicle accessed)	N	N	
Parking Lots	Y	N	Campground and day-use
Roads	Y	N	Campground and day-use
Trails	Y	Y	
Visitor Information Buildings	Y	N	
Other Activities/Infrastructure			
Commercial Filming	Y	Y	
Communication Sites and Towers	N	N	
Grazing	N	N	
Trapping	N	Y	
Utility Corridors	N	N	