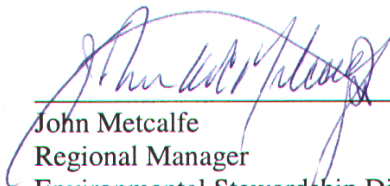


# SMALL RIVER CAVES PROVINCIAL PARK


## PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

July 2003

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Metcalfe  
Regional Manager  
Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: July 17, 2003

  
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Nancy Wilkin  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: Jan 15/04

## **Small River Caves Provincial Park Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan**

Small River Caves Provincial Park is situated on the west side of Small River near its headwaters, high above the valley bottom. Small River is a tributary to the Fraser River in the Robson Valley.

The 1,818 ha park protects a provincially important karst/cave system. The park contains a complex of caves with multiple openings over a wide area. The “Small Glacier” overlies two units of karstified limestone. Much of the meltwater from the glacier drains through the limestone into caves which feed springs lower down the valley. The park has been the site of ongoing research by the University of Toronto and others over the past few decades and has been proposed by the researchers as an ecological reserve because of this feature.

The park is remote and difficult to access. There is an old logging road in the valley below the park, and foot access trail to the park.

Small amounts of Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir forest (ESSF mm1) occur within the park. About one half of the park is alpine tundra and the remaining high elevation is occupied by glacier.

Habitat values are rated high for mountain goat and low for grizzly bear.

### **Primary Role**

The primary role of the park is to protect the Small River Caves complex.

<b>Known Management Issues</b>	<b>Response</b>
Public Safety	The caves are considered very dangerous and should only be visited by highly experienced cavers.
Existing Uses	Recreational use will not be encouraged. Honour existing heliski licence, trapping and guiding tenures.
Impacts on Park Values	Use natural openings for heli-pads where possible and permit minimal tree falling for safe helicopter landing. Any clearing will be subject to an Impact Assessment.

### **Zoning:**

Small River Caves will be zoned Special Feature in its entirety (1,818 ha) to highlight the conservation significance of the cave system.

## CONSERVATION

### Representation

- ecosection
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant

Very minor representation of the well represented Northern Park Ranges Ecosection (32.1% ) Small River Caves Park contributes only 0.78% of the overall protected area system representation of this ecosection.

Very minor contribution to the AT and ESSFmm1: (only 0.04% and 0.38% of overall protected areas system representation respectively).

### Special Feature

Provincially important karst/cave system

### Rare/Endangered Values

Unknown at this time

### Scientific/Research Opportunities

On-going research on glacial subterranean drainage in a limestone environment by University of Toronto and others

## RECREATION

### Representation

- backcountry
- destination
- travel corridor
- local recreation

Discourage access to cave system

### Special Opportunities

Cave research; only appropriate for experienced cavers.

### Education/Interpretation Opportunities

Cave and karst formation

## CULTURAL HERITAGE

### Representation

Unknown at this time

### Special Feature

## OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

### Other Designations

### Relationship to Other PAs

Located close to Mount Robson Provincial Park. Complements other local cave-oriented parks including Close to the Edge, and Evanoff provincial parks.

### Co-operative Management Arrangements

### Partnerships

**Vulnerability**

The Conservation Risk Assessment Process identified 2 risk factors (the shape, and the size of the park) for the park and rated them as moderately significant. Only one stressor/threat was identified for the park: Caving/climbing which was rated as low significance.

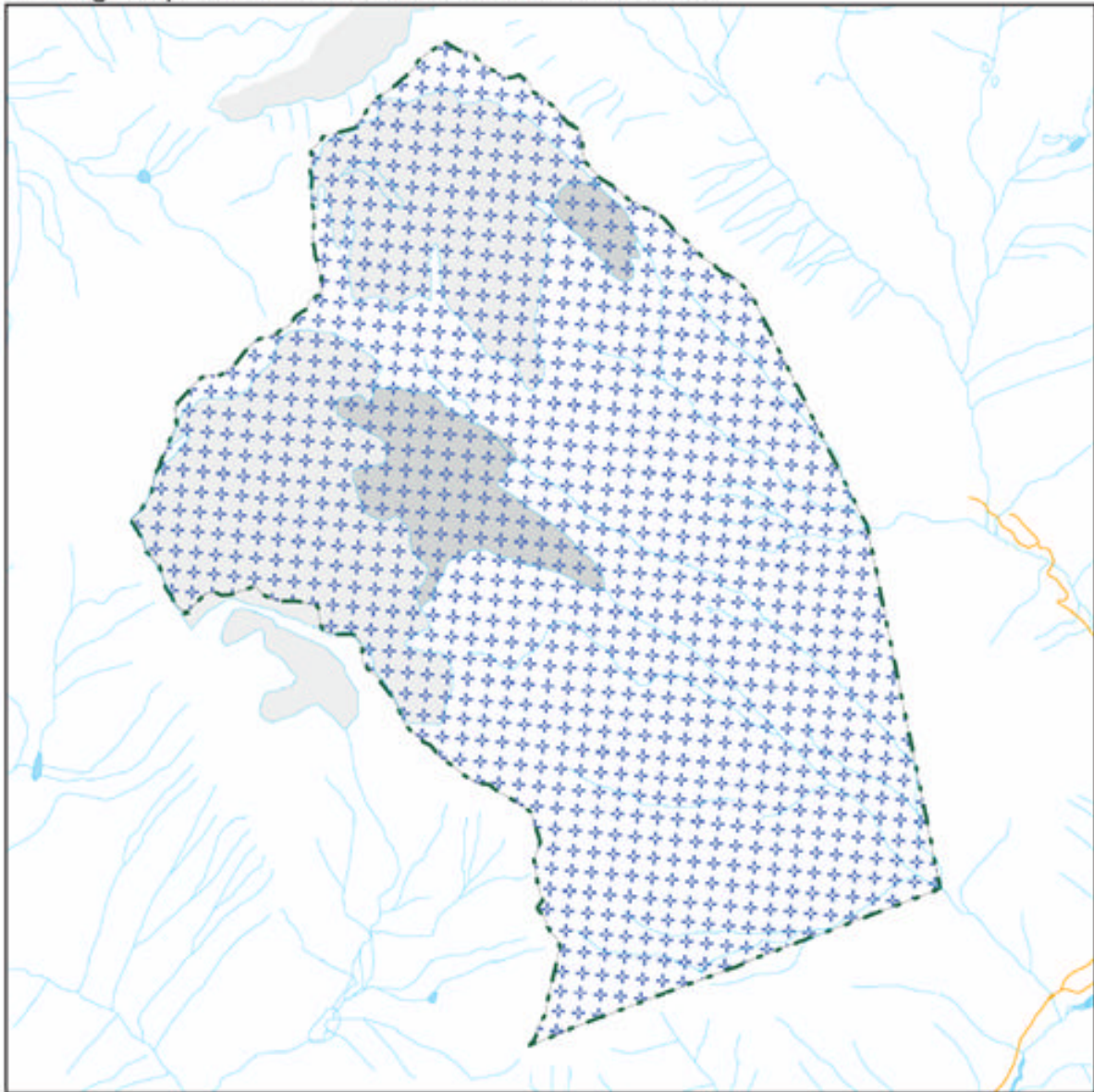
**Relationship to Other Strategies**

Recommended for protection in the Robson Valley LRMP which was approved in April 1999.

**Area:** 1,818 ha

**Date of establishment:** June 29, 2000

## Zoning Map - Small River Caves Provincial Park



Projection: Albers Equal Areas  
Datum: NAD83



-  Special Feature
-  Glacier
-  Icefield
-  Protected Area Boundary



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