

Skeena Region

**MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
STATEMENT**

March 2003



**for Spatsizi Headwaters
Provincial Park**



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

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

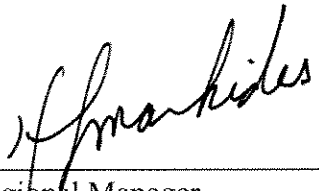
Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park Approvals Page

Forward


This management direction statement for Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park provides management direction until such time as it is revised. Ongoing consultation between Environmental Stewardship Division 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 Region
Environmental Stewardship Division



Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

**This management direction statement was developed through direction received from the
Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan.**

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Spatsizi Headwaters 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 direction focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies; and direction statements from other planning processes. While strategies may be identified in the MDS, the completion of all these strategies is subject to funding and funding procedures. In addition, all development associated with these strategies within the protected area is subject to the Parks and Protected Areas Branch's Impact Assessment Policy.

Context

The provincial government established Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park as a Class A Provincial Park on January 25, 2001 by Order-in-Council 63/2001 under the *Park Act*. The park is presently named and described in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*. The park covers 427 hectares of subalpine forest, alpine and lake in the headwaters of the Spatsizi River. The park is located in the headwaters near Mount Gunanoot in the Skeena Mountains subdivision of the Skeena Mountains physiographic region. The Tahltan First Nation identified Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park as being part of their traditional territory.

Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park is one of several new protected areas resulting from the Cassiar-Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). The park was established to protect the headwaters of the Spatsizi River, including upper elevation glacial lakes, alpine meadows, recreational values for hiking and wildlife viewing, and Tahltan traditional uses.

Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park is located 12 kilometres south of Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park and 60 kilometres west of Tatlatui Provincial Park of the Stikine Country Protected Areas System, which contains large, intact predator-prey ecosystems. Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park is located 90 kilometres east of Kinaskan Lake Provincial Park that contains a popular campground beside Highway 37. The Grand Canyon of the Stikine, in Stikine River Provincial Park, is an internationally significant landscape feature that attracts visitors from around the world. Other parks in the region area are mostly backcountry in nature without road access. Mt. Edziza Provincial Park to the west, Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness and Tatlatui parks to the east and the Stikine River Provincial Park to the north protect entire ecosystems and provide backcountry recreational opportunities. Ningunsaw Provincial Park and Ningunsaw River Ecological Reserve to the west protect important grizzly bear habitat.

Provincial Park Attributes

Conservation

Lies within the Eastern Skeena Mountains Ecosection, of which 9.02% is protected in the protected areas system. Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park's contribution to this representation is minimal (<0.02% of overall representation of the ecosection) given the small size of the park.

- Contributes minimally to the representation of the well represented ESSFmc (Engelmann Spruce – Subalpine Fir moist cold Subzone [48 hectares]) and AT (Alpine Tundra [324 hectares]) biogeoclimatic zones.
- Protects the headwaters of the Spatsizi River.
- Protects upper elevation glacial lakes (55 hectares) and alpine meadows.

Recreation and Tourism

- Contains no developed outdoor recreation facilities.
- Provides an outstanding wilderness environment because of its remoteness and undisturbed character.
- Provides hiking, hunting, nature appreciation and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Commercial Business Opportunities

- Provides limited commercial business opportunities for guided hunting activities. (See Appendix 1 for activities allowed in this park).
- Provides extremely low commercial business opportunities for guided interpretation based tour groups focused on the special features of this park.

Cultural Heritage

- Intended to maintain opportunities for First Nation cultural uses of the area, such as food harvesting (e.g. marmot harvesting). (Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP 2000).
- Cultural heritage values remain undocumented at this time. Environmental Stewardship Division is seeking Tahltan First Nations' contributions to resolve this lack of knowledge.

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- Protects the headwaters of the Stikine River, an internationally significant northern river which passes through areas with high spiritual value to the Tahltan First Nation.

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

Visitors gain access to Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park from the British Columbia Railway (BCR) rail corridor. Access to the BCR rail corridor is achieved by driving the Ealue Lake road east from Highway 37 near Iskut. A visitor must be prepared to travel about 120 kilometres on the Ealue Lake road and the BCR rail corridor to a location 2.5 kilometres from the park. The BCR railgrade is an extremely rough four wheel-drive corridor often subject to frequent washouts that make the route impassable.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- A small portion of one guide outfitter territory is located in the park (the park represents only 0.2% of the guide-outfitter territory). The guide outfitter presently does not have a valid park use permit to operate in the park. The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section has not made any specific harvest allocations for the park.
- Contained within trapline territory 620T001. This trapline, if operating in the park, is not authorized under a valid park use permit.

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- Contains no permanent backcountry facilities.

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- Situated 2.5 kilometres from the BCR rail corridor.
- Located near coal deposits in the Klappan River headwaters. These coal resources have potential for development.
- Lies next to the greater Klappan River drainage where the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP has directed a deferment of forest harvesting for 15 years.

First Nations Interests

- Tahltan First Nations identified Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park as being part of their traditional territory. The Tahltan First Nations supported park establishment through their participation in the Cassiar-Iskut-Stikine LRMP.
- Tahltan First Nation has an interest in maintaining their aboriginal traditional uses and activities in the provincial park.

Other Agency Interests

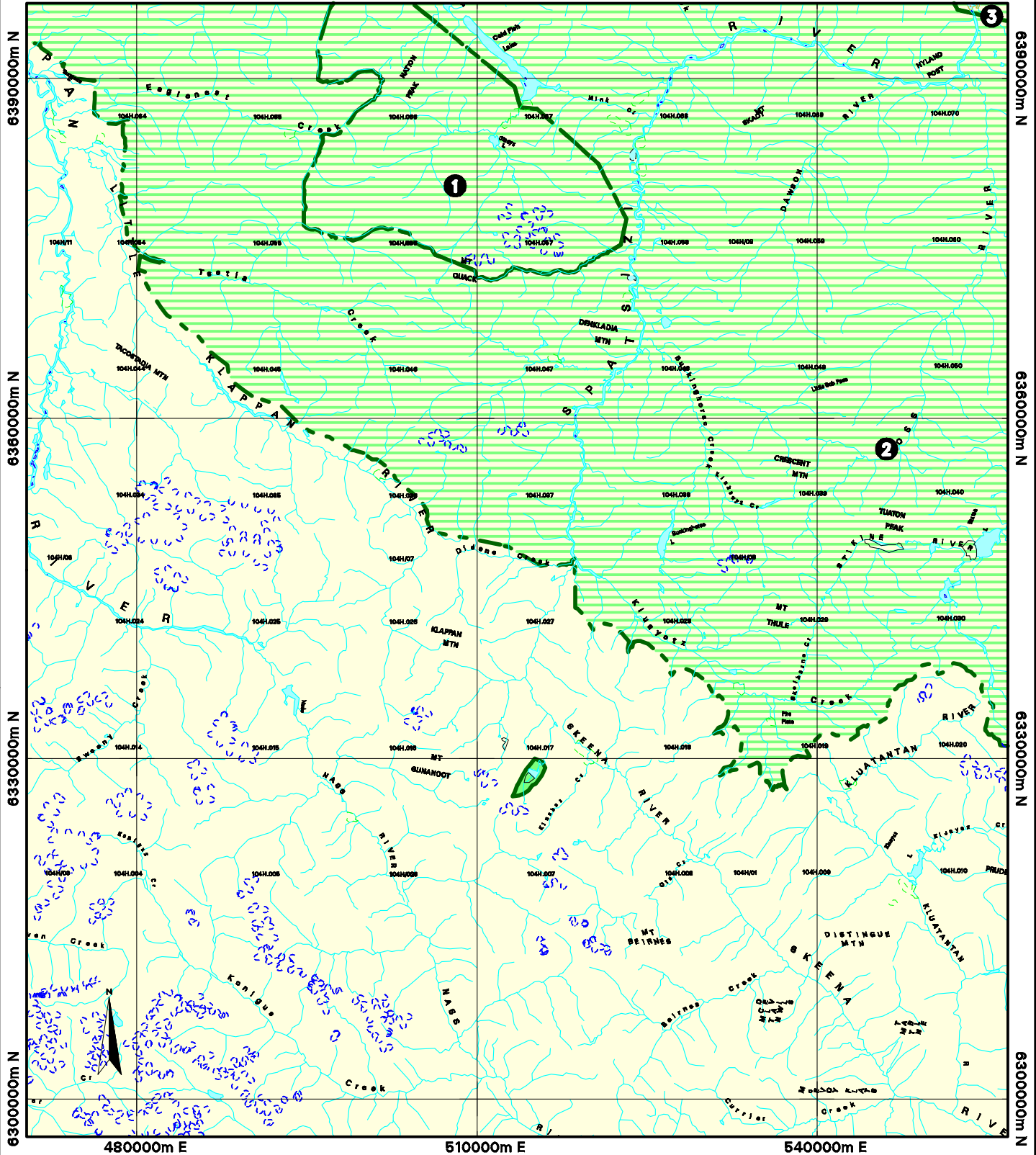
- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section, has an interest in the park because its wildlife species and their habitat.
 - Located within Wildlife Management Unit 6-20.
- Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (British Columbia Conservation Data Centre (CDC)) has an interest in rare species and species at risk in the park.

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Northern British Columbia Tourism Association has an interest in the park because of its contribution to the tourism infrastructure in northwest British Columbia.
- Regional residents and communities have an interest in the park because of its conservation values, outdoor recreation opportunities and tourism contributions.
- Federation of British Columbia Naturalists has an interest in the park because of its conservation values and preservation of flora and fauna habitats.
- British Columbia Wildlife Federation has an interest in the park because of its contribution to the overall conservation of fish and wildlife values afforded by Stikine Country protected areas.

Figure 1: Context





Spatsizi Headwaters Park



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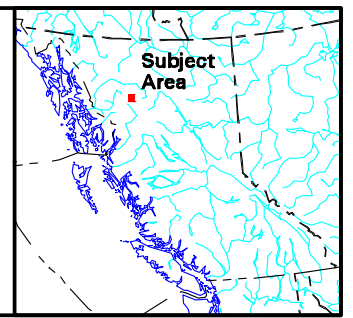
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	Subject Area
	Other Protected Areas
	Highway
	Road

0 10
km

- Other Provincial Protected Areas
- 1** Gladys Lake - (ER)
 - 2** Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness
 - 3** Stikine River



- The Guide Outfitters Association of British Columbia has an interest in the park because of the hunting opportunities in the park.
- The trapline and guide outfitter territory owners are interested in the park because the *Park Act* and park regulations may place limits on the trapping of fur-bearing animal species and the hunting of wildlife species within Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park.

Role of Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park

The primary role of Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park is to protect the headwaters of the internationally significant Spatsizi River. The headwaters contain upper elevation glacial lakes and alpine meadows. The park also conserves Tahltan First Nation cultural heritage values and traditional activities.

Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park performs a secondary role of protecting outdoor recreation opportunities such as hiking, camping and wildlife viewing in an undisturbed wildland setting.

Management Commitments and Issues

Management Direction from Previous Planning

The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP process recommended Spatsizi Headwaters as a provincial park. The LRMP provided the following direction for this protected area:

- Maintain opportunities for cultural uses of the area, such as food harvesting (e.g. marmot harvesting).
- Continue hunting according to the direction for hunting stated in the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP (See Appendix 1).

For forest fire management, Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park is outside of the Initial Attack Zone as defined by the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP.

Management Issues

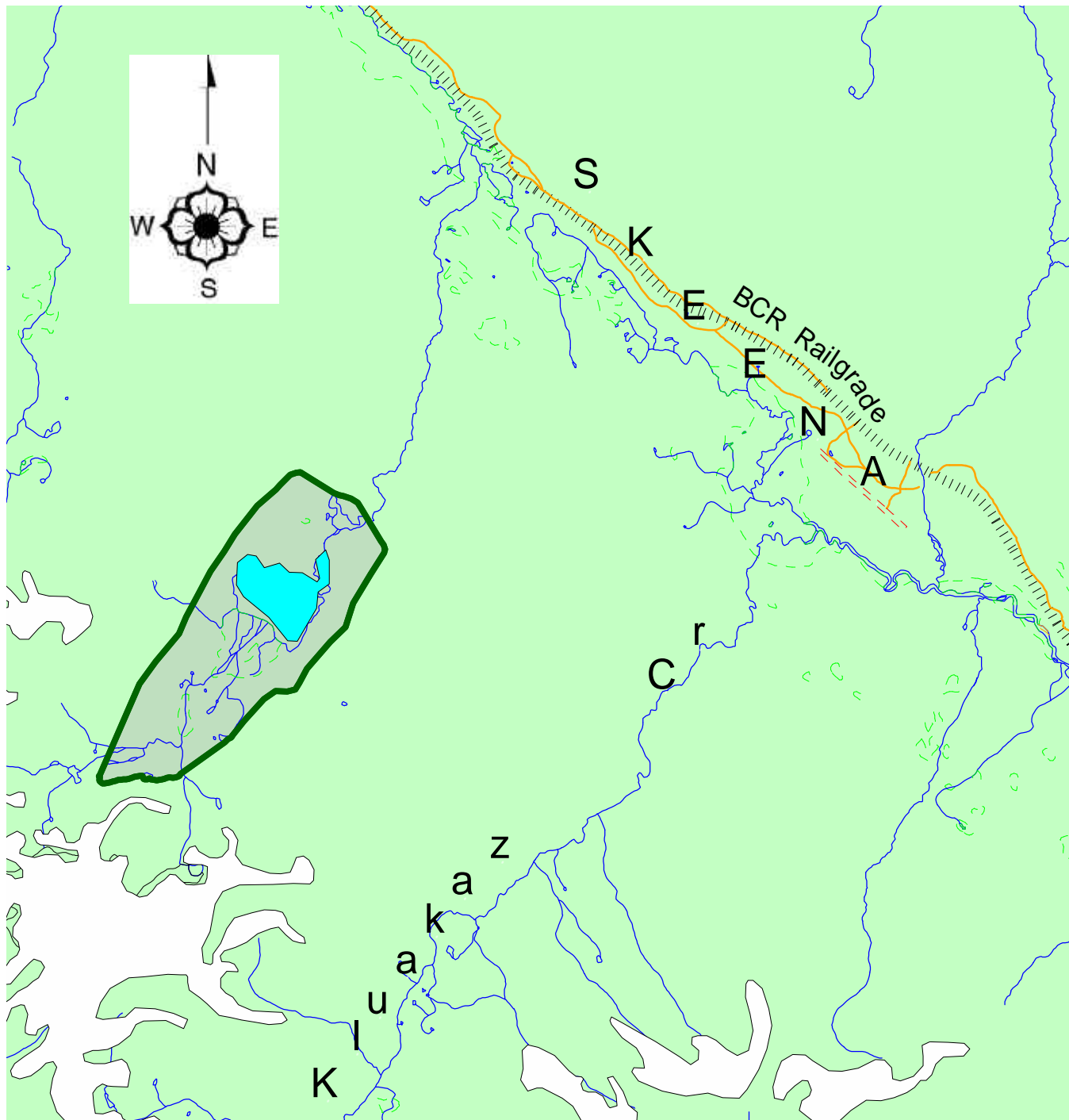
Theme	Issue
Protecting park ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park's flora and fauna may be risk because inventory of these values is incomplete. • The trapline owner and guide-outfitter, if they are operating in the park, do not have a valid park use permits.
Protecting outdoor recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park's outdoor recreation potential and visitor use are not well known because of the area's recent park status and remote location.
Protecting cultural heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park's cultural heritage values may be at risk because of the lack of cultural and historical inventories.
Park information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public is unaware of this park because of its recent establishment.

Management Direction

The vision for Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park is to maintain the park's wilderness environment and its ecology intact from human alteration while offering backcountry outdoor recreation opportunities.



Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| BC Parks Protected Area | River/Stream - Right Bank | Air Field |
| Natural Features | Lake - Definite | Road - Rough |
| freshWater | Marsh | Cut Earthwork |
| glaciersAndSnow | Glacier | Rail Line - Single Track |
| Rivers and Streams | Ice Field - Permanent Snow & Ice | |
| River/Stream - Definite | Island - Definite | |
| River/Stream - Left Bank | Sand/Gravel Bar | |

2.5 0 2.5 5 7.5 10 Kilometers



1 : 109,556 1 inch = 2.78 kilometers

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

The following table describes management strategies to deal with identified issues. In addition, Appendix 1 contains a list of acceptable activities, uses and facilities for Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park.

Objective	Strategy
To protect the park's ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an inventory of flora and fauna with priority given to rare and endangered plant and wildlife species and their habitats. Examine the park's contribution to the larger ecosystem (e.g. what is the relationship between this park and the lower Spatsizi River and the larger protected areas).
To protect the park's ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact the trapline and guide-outfitter licence owners to place these resource uses under valid park use permit if they are operating in the park.
To protect the park's outdoor recreation features and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an outdoor recreation features inventory of the park. Include this park in any existing visitor use monitoring scheme for other parks and protected areas in this region.
To protect the park's cultural heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with the Tahltan First Nation in collecting and documenting existing information on Tahltan First Nations cultural heritage values related to this park. Cooperate with local non-aboriginal residents in collecting and documenting existing information on the history of the Spatsizi River headwaters area.
To protect First Nations values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss issues through the Protected Areas Committee established pursuant to the Environmental Stewardship Division/Tahltan Joint Councils Agreement.
To provide information to park visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce information about the park as part of an information package about the Stikine River Country protected areas. Update the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection web site so that current and accurate information about Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park is available to the public.

Consultation and Future Planning

Environmental Stewardship Division will continue to consult with Tahltan First Nations regarding management of this park. Environmental Stewardship Division will also confer with the Ministry of Forests regarding possible impacts to the park resulting from forest harvesting on lands next to the park. Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park is considered low priority for the development of a management plan with full public involvement.

Zoning Plan

All of Spatsizi Headwaters Park is placed within a Wilderness Recreation Zone which entails the following:

Objective: To protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment where air access may be permitted to designated sites.

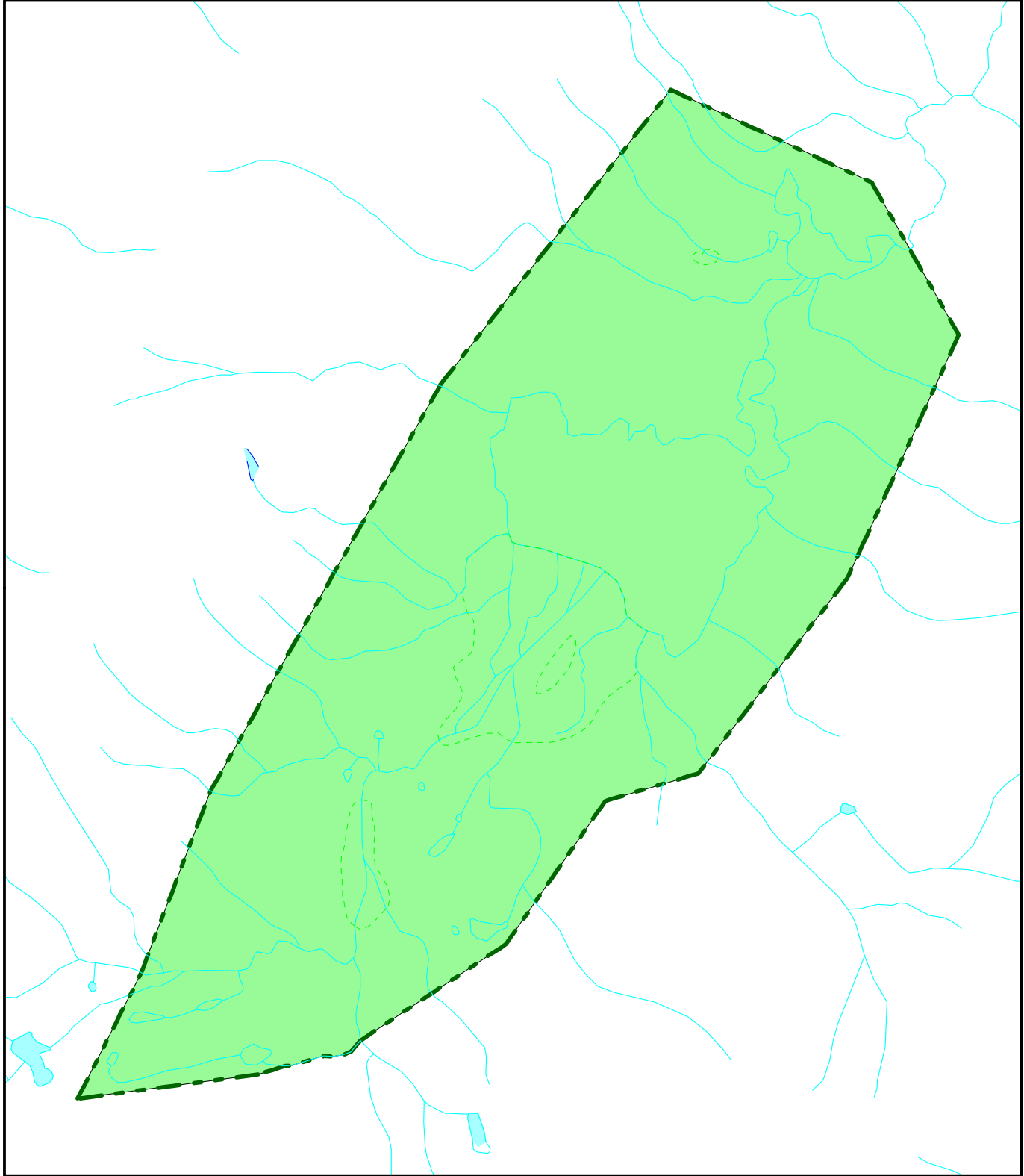
Zone Description: Covers the entire protected area (427 hectares).

Management Guidelines: Oriented to protecting a pristine environment. Management actions are minimal and not evident. Managed to ensure low visitor use levels. Visitor access may be restricted to protect the natural environment and visitor experience.

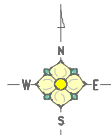
Figure 3 – Zoning Map

Figure 3: Zoning

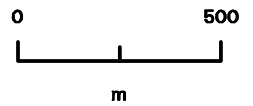
Spatsizi Headwaters Park



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 Wilderness Recreation
 Protected Area Boundary



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**Appendix 1. Spatsizi Headwaters Provincial Park
Table of Acceptable Activities, Uses and Facilities.**

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptability
Aboriginal traditional uses and activities	Y
Hunting	Y
Fishing	Y
Trapping	Y
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational Gold Panning/Rock Hounding	N
Utility corridors	N
Communication Sites	N
Horse Use/ Pack Animals	M
Guide Outfitting (hunting)	Y
Guide Outfitting (fishing)	Y
Guide Outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Guide Outfitting (river rafting)	Y
Cat-Assisted Skiing	N
Ski Hills	N
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility based)	Y
Backcountry Huts	N
Water Control Structures	N
Fish Stocking and Enhancement	N
Road Access	N
Off-road Access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road Access (motorized)	N
Off-road Access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorized Water Access	Y
Aircraft Access	Y
Fire Management (suppression)	Y
Fire Management (prescribed fire management)	M
Fire Management (prevention)	M
Forest Insect/Disease Control	N1
Commercial Filming	M
Noxious Weed Control	N1
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	N1
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/A= not applicable

N= not allowed

N1= allowed for expressed management purposes only

N2= present and allowed to continue but not normally allowed