

STUART RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN Omineca Region 2005

Approved by:



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Date: Nov. 4th 2005



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Date: Oct. 31 2005

Stuart River Provincial Park Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Stuart River Provincial Park protects three-quarters of the 110 kilometer long Stuart River corridor between Stuart Lake and the Nechako River. The park includes 83 kilometers of river valley with undisturbed riparian habitat totaling 21,021 hectares in two separate sections separated by private land. The southern section of the park, which includes the confluence of the Stuart and Nechako Rivers, is located 30 kilometers east of Vanderhoof. Road access to the river corridor exists at several points but the most efficient access is by boat.

Stuart River Provincial Park is representative of the Nechako Lowlands Ecosection with flat to gently rolling terrain, low ridges and high bluffs along the Stuart River. The park provides the largest provincial representation of the Sub-boreal Spruce dry warm, Stuart (SBSdw3) biogeoclimatic variant, and protects riparian areas and upland forests associated with the major river systems of the plateau.

The Stuart River provides excellent, relatively undisturbed large river habitat, rich with aquatic life. The river system supports large numbers of sockeye and chinook salmon, and together with the Takla system, contributes up to one quarter of the sockeye salmon production in the Nechako drainage. The park protects critical habitat for many other species of fish such as rainbow trout, lake trout, Dolly Varden, kokanee, ling cod (burbot), brassy minnow, whitefish, bull trout (provincially blue-listed), and white sturgeon (red-listed provincially by CDC – nationally listed as Endangered by COSEWIC (Nov 2003)).

The Stuart River is an excellent wildlife corridor, and provides important winter range for ungulates. The area is home to an expanding elk herd, and an extensive mineral lick is found on the open natural grasslands on the north side of the river. The park provides habitat for bald eagles, waterfowl, cavity nesting birds, elk, moose, deer, wintering trumpeter swans, and other wildlife.

The Stuart River provides critical overwintering habitat for trumpeter swans, and has been designated an Important Bird Area by Bird Studies Canada.

The Stuart River provides a strong link to many aspects of British Columbia's historical development, including an important travel route for First Nations people, Simon Fraser's exploration (circa 1806), the New Caledonia fur trade, and gold miners until the 20th century. The park contains several Carrier archaeological sites and a provincially significant village site at Chinlac (circa 1745). In 1961, this long-abandoned village was designated as a Provincial Heritage Site. In the early 1900s, paddle wheelers plied the Stuart River, and many homesteads existed in the area, most of which were later abandoned. Historic ranches along the Stuart River are remainders of the early cattle ranching industry.

With its rich heritage features, Stuart River Provincial Park offers significant opportunities for recreation and tourism focused on cultural history. The natural setting supports backcountry recreation, including boating, canoeing, jet boating, hiking, fishing, hunting, wildlife and fish viewing, and nature and cultural heritage appreciation opportunities.

Stuart River Provincial Park was identified for protection in the Vanderhoof , Prince George and Fort St. James Land and Resource Management Plans. The park was originally proposed for protection under the Provincial Recreation Corridor Program in 1985, and the Stuart River has since been proclaimed as a Provincial Heritage River. Stuart River Provincial Park was established in June, 1999 and additions to the park occurred in June, 2000 as a result of the Prince George LRMP.

Primary Role

The primary role of the park is ecosystem representation, providing representation of the Nechako Lowlands Ecosession (including a large incised river and provincially significant freshwater ecosystem) and significant representation of the SBSdw3 biogeoclimatic subzone. The park also provides significant ungulate winter range on the south-facing slopes, and critical overwintering habitat for trumpeter swans.

Secondary Role

The park’s secondary role is to protect cultural features and settings that provide important links to British Columbia’s history before and after European settlement. The park protects a number of archeological sites including the Chinlac Village site, with potential for discovery of additional historic sites.

Tertiary Role

The tertiary role of the park is to support backcountry recreation opportunities associated with the river corridor (fishing, hunting, canoeing and jet boating), and to provide excellent opportunities for cultural and natural heritage appreciation.

Known Management Issues	Response
Forest health	Monitor Douglas-fir and mountain pine beetle infestations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management action (fall and burn) will only occur at a small scale. • No further action will be taken for mountain pine beetle unless to address FireSmart issues • Work with licensees and Ministry of Forests to develop and implement best management practices for the extensive forest development activities adjacent to park.
First Nations	Develop a working relationship with First Nations, especially in regards to the Chinlac Village provincial heritage site.
Ungulate winter range	Initiate Impact Assessments and where appropriate, prescribed burns on south facing slopes to reduce forest encroachment on grasslands. Pre and post burn monitoring will be a key component of any prescribed burning program.
Unauthorized activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 traplines and 5 guide outfitting operations require park use permits. • Due to the new elk hunting season, considerable unauthorized ATV use is occurring, which requires additional funding for increased education and

Known Management Issues	Response
	enforcement.
Unregulated access, cabins and hunting camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, sign and restore impacted camp sites. • Determine tenures of 8 cabins in possible trespass. Issue park use permits where appropriate. • Monitor access development immediately adjacent to park, and unauthorized trail development within park.
Jet boating	Evaluate the impact of jet boating on key spawning, nesting and riparian areas. Consider need for restrictions.
Acceptable uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowmobiling, ATV use and trail construction are not permitted. • The potential for recreational facilities and lodges/cabins will be deferred to a future Management Direction Statement
Red listed species	Determine if there are any areas that sturgeon are using in the park for spawning and if so, implement management strategies to address in coordination with the Recovery Team.

Zoning

Stuart River Provincial Park in its entirety (21,021 hectares) will be zoned Nature Recreation to protect scenic values and provide backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

CONSERVATION

Representation

- ecosection X Nechako Lowland (NEL); 4.68% of this ecosection is protected; Stuart River Provincial Park contributes 30.4% of the overall representation placing it second behind Carp Lake Provincial Park (55.3%)
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant X provides the best Sub-Boreal Spruce (SBSdw3) biogeoclimatic zone representation in the province, contributing 57.4% of the overall representation

Special Feature

- X significant salmon migration route; ungulate winter range ; Important Bird Area for trumpeter swans

Rare/Endangered Values

- X Blue-listed:
SBS dw3 (06) - Douglas-fir, saskatoon and false sarsaparilla;
SBSdw3 (05), (02) and probably SBS/F103, which is red-listed.
Provincially red-listed white sturgeon (federally listed as Endangered by COSEWIC (Nov 2003).
Provincially blue-listed: bull trout, grizzly bear

Scientific/Research Opportunities

- X Rare ecosystems and species

RECREATION

Representation:

- backcountry X Variety of opportunities associated with a river corridor
- destination
- travel corridor
- local recreation X Popular for local boating and hunting.

Special Opportunities

- X Opportunities for recreation and tourism associated with cultural heritage appreciation

Education/Interpretation Opportunities

- X Cultural history, including First Nations, historic water route, exploration, fur trade
Natural history, including river and riparian ecosystems, sockeye and chinook salmon

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Representation

- X An historic water travel route; historic trail, areas of traditional First Nations occupation and use

Special Feature X Chinlac historic First Nations village site and massacre site (1745)

OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Other Designations X BC Heritage River; Chinlac Provincial Heritage Site; Important Bird Area

Relationship to Other PAs X Complements Carp Lake Provincial Park by providing significant representation of the Nechako Lowlands (the two parks provide almost 86% of the provincial representation of this under-represented ecoregion, of which only 4.68% is protected) and a large river corridor; complements Rubyrock Lake in contributing to the representation of the under-represented SBSdw3 (4.24% protected provincially). North of Stuart River Provincial Park, Paarens Beach and Sowchea Bay provincial parks provide intensive lake-oriented recreation opportunities, and Mount Pope Provincial Park supports high levels of trail-oriented recreation.

Co-operative Management Arrangements X Restoration of grasslands by a prescribed fire in Spring 2002. Multi-agency partnership including the Nechako Valley Sporting Association, the Ministry of Forests, the Nak'azdli and the guide outfitter of the area.

Partnerships X Possibility of working with the Carrier First Nations on the Chinlac village site.

Vulnerability X The Conservation Risk Assessment Process identified 3 risk factors (the shape, watershed integrity, and the size of the park) for the park and rated them as low significance. Six stressors/threats were identified for the park: land cultivation was rated as highly significant; boating/all types, forest harvesting activity, grazing/feeding, and fire suppression were rated as moderately significant, while housing was rated as low significance. New threats which have occurred since the completion of the CRA include significant impacts from forest harvesting for MPB salvage adjacent to the Upper Stuart (ie. all the country between Stuart and Necoslie Rivers will be harvested in the near future in a huge salvage effort.), watershed, blowdown and access concerns.

Relationship to Other Strategies X The Vanderhoof LRMP recommended protection of this park in January 1997. The Fort St. James LRMP recommended protection of this park in May 1999. The Prince George

LRMP recommended protection of this park in March 1999.
BC Heritage Rivers System
Important Bird Area

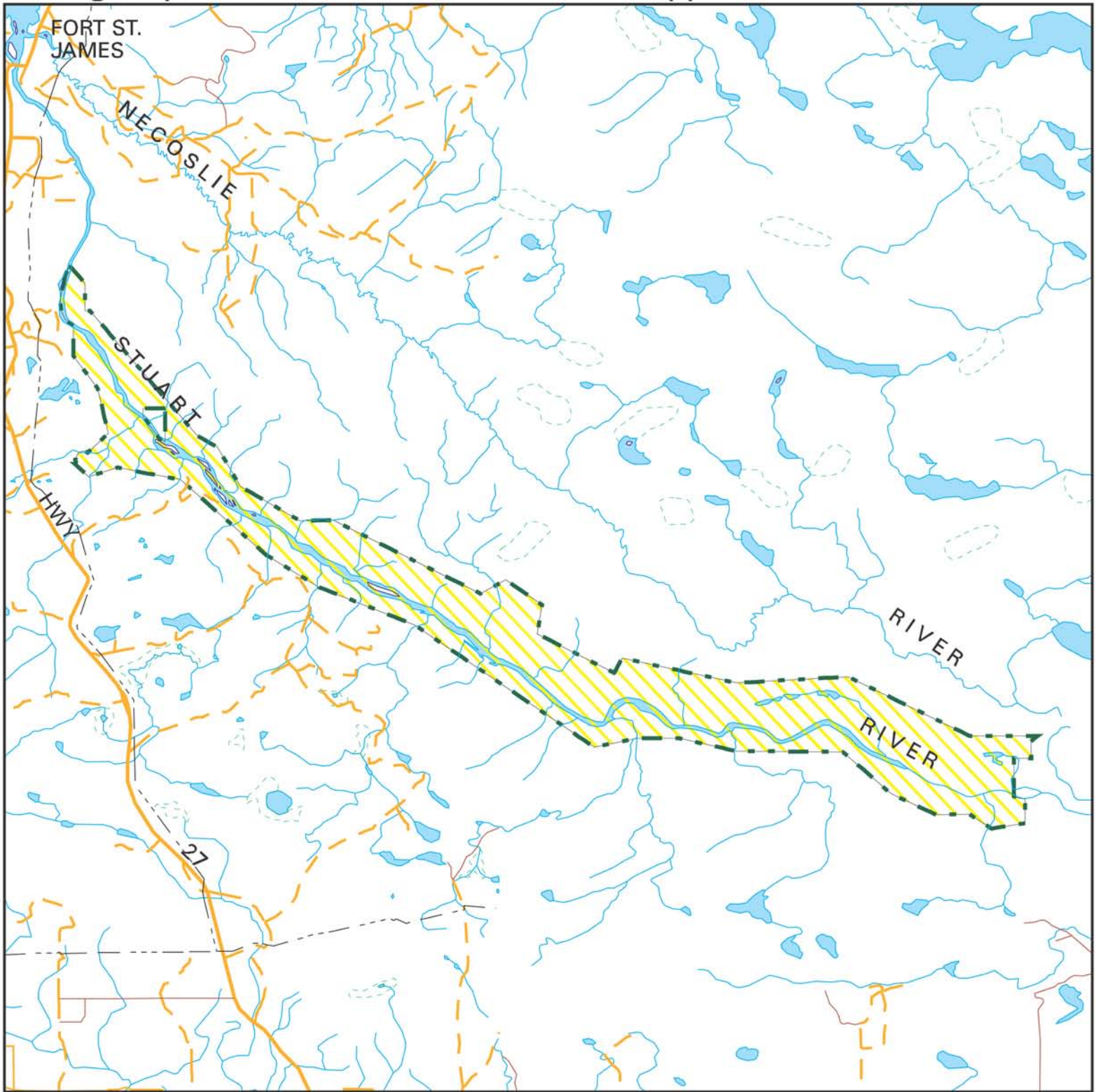
Area:

21,021 hectares

Date of establishment:

The Park was originally established on June 29, 1999.
Additions to the Park occurred on June 29, 2000 as a result
of the Prince George LRMP.

Zoning Map - Stuart River Provincial Park - Upper Site



Projection: Albers Equal Areas
Datum: NAD83



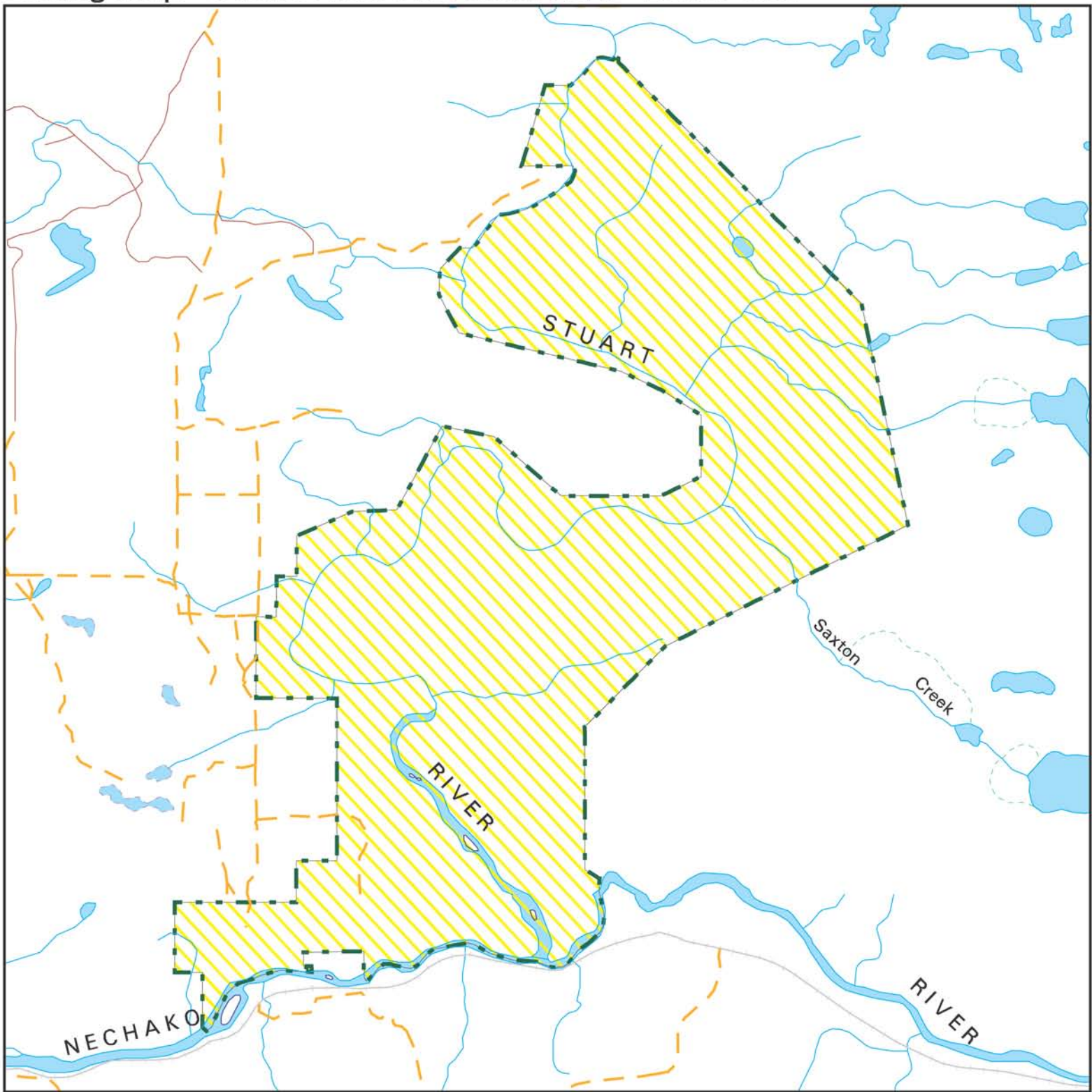
 Natural Environment
 Protected Area Boundary

0 4
km

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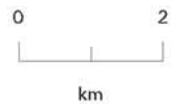
Zoning Map - Stuart River Provincial Park - Lower Site



Projection: Albers Equal Areas
Datum: NAD83



-  Natural Environment
-  Protected Area Boundary



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