Skeena Region

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

March 2003



for Todagin South Slope Provincial Park



Todagin South Slope Provincial Park Approvals Page

Forward

This management direction statement for Todagin South Slope Provincial Park provides management direction until such time as it is revised. Preparation of a management plan for the adjacent wildlife management area is a priority and may result in the need to amend this plan in the next several years. Ongoing consultation between Environmental Stewardship Division and First Nations may result in revisions as required. 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.

Table of Contents

	Page
Approvals Page	
Forward	i
Introduction	
	1
Purpose of the Management Direction Statement	
Context	1
Provincial Park Attributes	
Conservation.	2
Recreation and Tourism.	2
Commercial Business Opportunities	2
Cultural Heritage	
Significance in the Protected Areas System	
Land Uses, Tenures and Interests	
Access	
Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances	
Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities	
Adjacent Patterns of Land Use	
First Nations Interests	
Other Agency Interests	
Private and Public Stakeholder Interests	6
Role of Todagin South Slope Provincial Park	6
Management Committee and Larray	
Management Commitments and Issues	7
Management Direction from Previous Planning	
Management Issues	/
Management Direction	
Priority Management Objectives and Strategies	8
Consultation and Future Planning	
Zoning Plan	
Figures	
Figure 1 – Regional Context Map	3
Figure 2 – Provincial Park Map	5
Figure 3 – Zoning Map	10
Appendices	
Appendix 1 – Table of Acceptable Uses, Activities and Facilities	11

Appendix 2 – Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP Objectives and Strategies for the WMA and Park......12

This page left blank on purpose

Todagin South Slope 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 strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies; and direction 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 Todagin South Slope Provincial Park as a Class A provincial park on April 11, 2001 by the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Amendment Act*. The park covers 3,557 hectares on Todagin Mountain, within the Klastline Plateau portion of the Stikine Plateau physiographic region. Todagin South Slope Provincial Park is located 25 kilometres south of Iskut. The Tahltan First Nation identified the park as part of their traditional territory. Todagin South Slope Provincial Park is within the 122,787 hectare Todagin Wildlife Management Area (WMA) established March 2001. The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) recommended this wildlife management area to the provincial government to ensure the protection of Stone sheep and other wildlife species. The park conserves critical Stone sheep winter range and a lambing area.

Todagin South Slope Provincial Park is one of several new protected areas resulting from the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP. The park provides the only opportunity to view wildlife, including Stone sheep and mountain goats, at a distance from Highway 37 because of the high visibility of prime habitat areas. Wildlife viewing is also possible in a backcountry setting by hiking to the park area via the Todagin Mountain Trail. The area is closed to mountain goat hunting, is within a motor vehicle prohibited area, and is in a no shooting zone open to bow hunting only.

Todagin South Slope is located nine kilometres north of Kinaskan Lake Provincial Park, which has a popular campground, and 50 kilometres south of Stikine River Provincial Park, which protects the Stikine River. 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 area are mostly backcountry without road access. Mount 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 south protect important grizzly bear habitat.

Provincial Park Attributes

Conservation

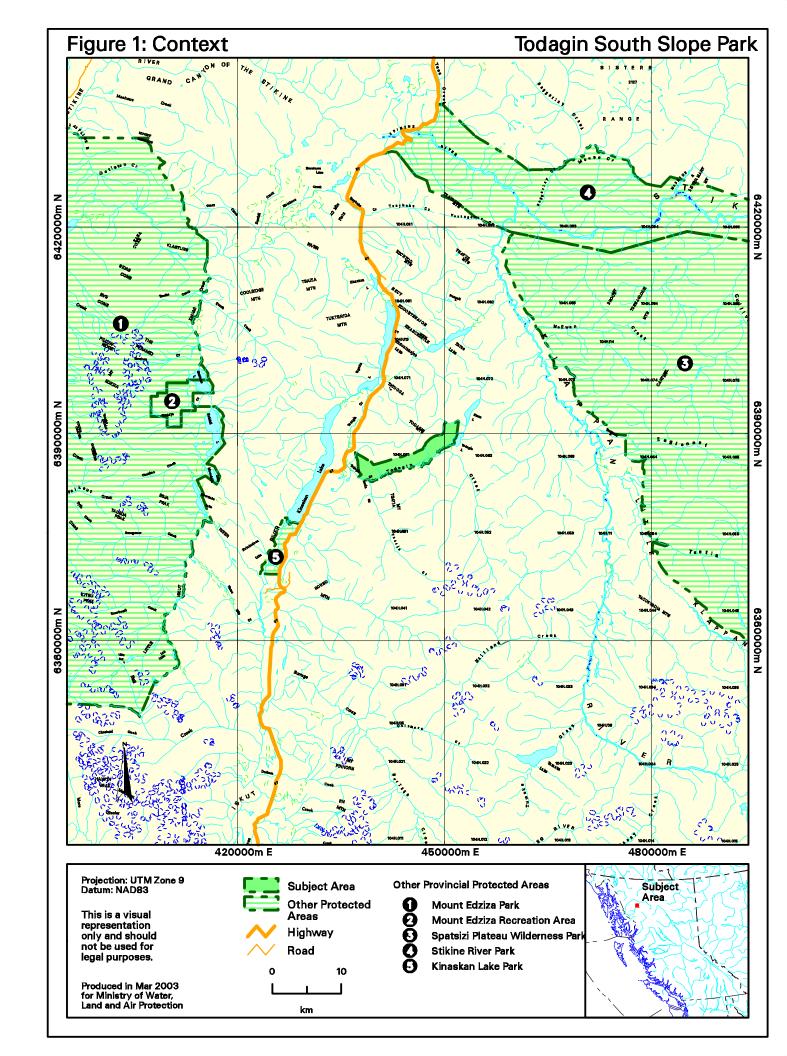
- Lies within the very well represented Southern Boreal Plateau Ecosection (43.42%). Todagin South Slope Provincial Park contributes 0.32% of the overall representation of this ecosection.
- Contributes to the representation of the BWBSdk1 (Boreal White and Black Spruce, dry cool Subzone, Stikine variant (250 hectares)), SWBun (Spruce – Willow – Birch (2399 hectares)) and AT (Alpine Tundra (867 hectares)) biogeoclimatic zones.
- Protects critical Stone sheep winter range and a lambing area.
- Contains the following rare plant species, whorled lousewort (*Pedicularis verticillata*) (bluelisted, G4G5, S2S3) and Mount Sheldon buttercup (*Senecio sheldonensis*) (bluelisted, G5, S2S3) that are listed with the Conservation Data Centre.
- Contains several rare plant communities in two biogeoclimatic zones (J. Pojar in preparation.):
 - ➤ Boreal White and Black Spruce
 - ⇒ *Artemesia frigida* (pasture sagewort) *Elymus* spp. (wild ryegrass). These species found on boreal steppe.
 - ⇒ Amelanchier alnifolia (Saskatoon berry) Elymus trachycaulus (slender wheat grass). These species found on warm dry steep, southwest facing slopes.
 - ➤ Alpine Tundra
 - ⇒ Kobresia myosuroides (Bellard's kobresia) Hierochloe alpina (alpine sweetgrass) Rhacomitrium lanuginosum (hoary rock moss) lichen. These species exist on extremely exposed alpine tundra on windswept ridgecrests.
 - ⇒ *Poa rupicola* (Glaucous bluegrass) *Agropyron violaceum* (violet wheat grass). These species are found on grassy promontories where sheep and goats graze and rest; lush, well fertilized with wildlife manure.
- Contains high quality mountain goat, moose and grizzly bear habitat though the park is too small to contain self-sustaining populations.

Recreation and Tourism

- Contains habitat and terrain conducive to potential wildlife viewing and interpretation from a good vantage point along Highway 37.
- Includes potential for recreational trail development, but this must proceed carefully to prevent disturbing wildlife on critical wintering and birthing areas.
- Contains a portion of the lone bow-hunting only area for Stone sheep in British Columbia.
- Provides hiking, nature appreciation, hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Commercial Business Opportunities

 Provides moderate commercial business opportunities for guided interpretation and education tour groups based on the special features, notably wildlife viewing and outdoor recreation opportunities of this park.



• This business opportunity is best developed as part of a systems approach where several provincial parks, protected areas and other Crown lands along Highway 37 are included in the tour to give clients a broad and interesting program.

Cultural Heritage

• 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 critical winter habitat for a regionally significant Stone sheep population.
- Presents important wildlife viewing opportunities.

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

Access to Todagin South Slope Provincial Park is gained via the non-maintained Todagin Mountain Trail, which is located 20 kilometres south of Iskut. This trail is about 10 kilometres long and climbs about 1000 metres in elevation before reaching the park.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- Contains a water use tenure for domestic and agricultural use on Isben Creek.
- Lies within the local guide-outfitter territory (0.6% of territory). The owner 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.
- Lies within trapline territory 620T001. This trapline, if operating in the park, is not authorized under a valid park use permit.

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

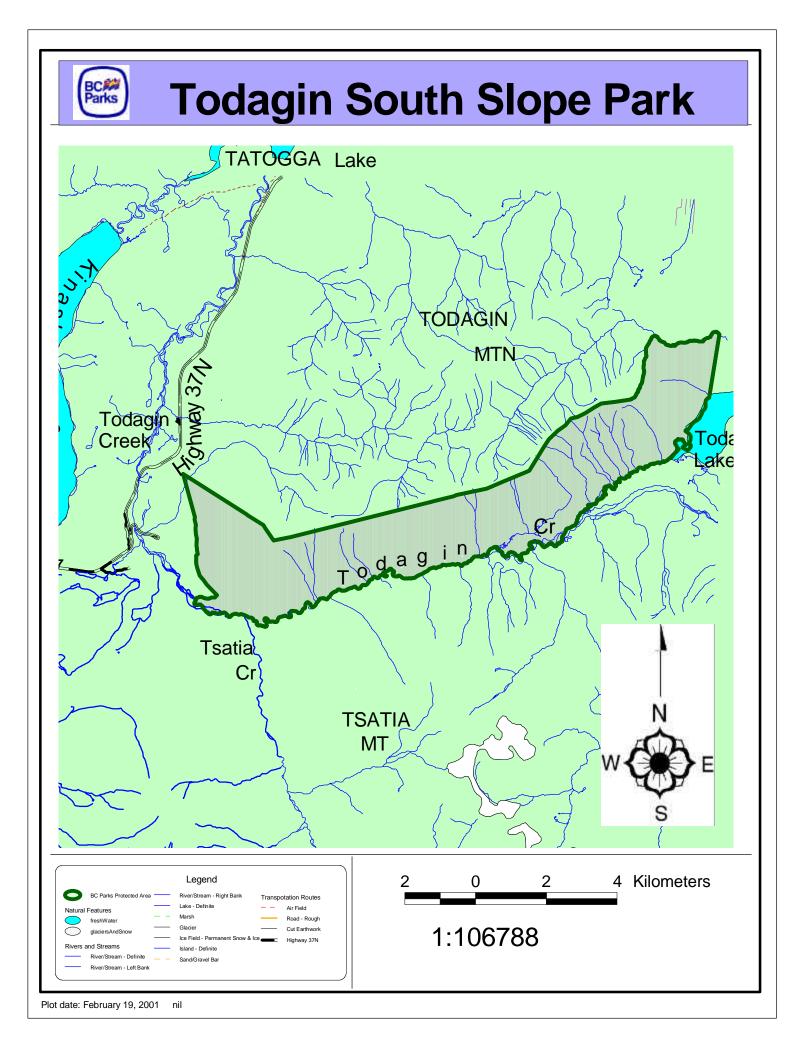
- Located near a potential mine development at the Red Chris property.
- Lies next to an active ranch operation along the park's southwest boundary.

First Nations Interests

- Tahltan First Nation has identified that Todagin South Slope Provincial Park as being part of their traditional territory. The Tahltan First Nation 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 Sustainable Resource Management (British Columbia Conservation Data Centre (CDC)) has an interest in rare species and species at risk in the park.
- The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section conducted a 1,500 hectare prescribed burn for Stone sheep habitat enhancement in 1986. A 384 hectare wildfire, started by humans, occurred in 1998.



Lies within Wildlife Management Unit 6-20 and the Todagin Wildlife Management Area.

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.
- Backcountry outdoor recreation enthusiasts are interested in the park as a place to enjoy an undisturbed natural environment
- Federation of British Columbia Naturalists have 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 along with the 122,787 hectare Todagin Wildlife Management Area.
- Guide Outfitters Association of British Columbia because of the hunting opportunities in the park.
- The guide outfitter is interested in the park because provincial park regulations may place limits on hunting activities within Todagin South Slope Provincial Park
- The trapline holder is interested in the park because the *Park Act* and its regulations may place limits on the owner's trapping of fur-bearing animal species in the park.

Role of Todagin South Slope Provincial Park

Todagin South Slope Provincial Park's primary role is to protect critical Stone sheep winter and lambing areas and habitat for mountain goat, moose and grizzly bear. Added to this conservation role is the preservation of several rare plant species and plant communities. The park also performs a vital role by complementing the conservation goals established for the management of the contiguous 122,787 hectare Todagin Wildlife Management Area.

Todagin South Slope Provincial Park's performs an important outdoor recreation role by providing backcountry recreation activities. The most significant aspect of this role, however, is the park's potential for wildlife viewing and interpretation opportunities. This park, with its Stone sheep, moose, mountain goat and grizzly bear populations, along with Meziadin Lake Provincial Park (grizzly bear and spawning salmon species) and Ningunsaw Provincial Park (grizzly bear and moose), could provide an impressive system of wildlife viewing areas along Highway 37. This wildlife viewing system would rival similar wildlife viewing opportunities now found in Muncho Lake, Liard River Hot Springs and Stone Mountain provincial parks along the Alaska Highway.

An important tertiary role for Todagin South Slope Provincial Park is its function as an area for scientific research and education purposes, complementing a similar role for the Todagin Wildlife Management Area.

Management Commitments and Issues

Management Direction from Previous Planning

The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP process resulted in the establishment of Todagin South Slope Provincial Park. The LRMP provided the following direction for this new provincial park:

- Address the use of helicopters particularly during those periods when wildlife (e.g. kidding and lambing seasons) is most easily disturbed.
- Respect the existing license for domestic and agricultural water use on Isben Creek.
- Maintain the existing bow hunting only provision.
- Consider a wildlife viewing area at the western end of the provincial park, overlooking Highway 37. Details regarding management within a wildlife viewing area will be developed as part of the wildlife management plan for Todagin Plateau.

For forest fire management, Todagin South Slope Provincial Park is within the Initial Attack Zone as defined by the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP.

Management Issues

Theme	Issue
Protecting ecological values	 Wildlife may be at risk during those periods (e.g. kidding and lambing season) when they are most susceptible to disturbance by low flying helicopters. Wildlife may be susceptible to diseases carried by domestic sheep, goats and llamas if these exotic animals are introduced to the area or used as pack animals. The park's flora, especially rare plant species and plant communities, and fauna may be at risk an inventory of these values is incomplete. The trapline and guide-outfitter territory owners do not have valid park use permits authorizing operation within the park. Wildlife may be at risk because of the development of mine prospects in the area. Proper management of Stone sheep may not be achieved because the population status of this mammal in the park and WMA is unknown. Wildlife may be at risk because of off-road motorised vehicle access to the park and wildlife management area.
Providing recreational opportunities	The outdoor recreation potential for wildlife viewing is not realized because Environmental Stewardship Division has not instituted any evaluation of such an opportunity along Highway 37 next to the park.
Protecting cultural values	The park's cultural heritage sites may be subject to disturbance because archaeological and historic sites are not fully inventoried.
Park information	 Little current information about the park is available to the public because of the park's recent establishment. The travelling public is not aware of the presence of the park's wildlife viewing opportunities from Highway 37 because of a lack of signs and information.

Management Direction

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

Objective	Strategy
To protect the park's ecological values	 Provide guidelines to aircraft operators informing them about avoiding critical lambing and kidding areas during sensitive periods (generally between April 15 and June 15). Prohibit the use of domestic livestock other than horses as pack animals in the park and wildlife management area. Contact the trapline and guide-outfitter territory owners to place their operations under valid park use permits if they are operating in the park. Complete an inventory of flora and fauna with priority given to a) rare plant species and communities; and b) Stone sheep. Work with mining companies and other government agencies to ensure that potential mine developments do not unacceptably impact wildlife values. Carry out, in cooperation with the Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section, a Stone sheep population monitoring program that regularly calculates population numbers. Take management actions as required to ensure healthy Stone sheep populations.
To provide recreational opportunities	 Prepare a wildlife viewing concept plan for the portion of Highway 37 adjacent to Todagin South Slope Provincial Park and implement as appropriate. Investigate the feasibility of a wildlife viewing area within the park along with possible no hunting area in consultation with affected users and implement if appropriate. Consider change in Schedule to <i>Protected Areas of British Columbia Act</i> to allow issuance of permit for pre-existing water supply as per LRMP direction
To protect the park's cultural values	 Meet with the Tahltan First Nation to investigate and collect information on aboriginal cultural heritage values. Meet with local citizens to document the non-aboriginal and pioneering cultural heritage values associated with the park and WMA.
To protect First Nations values	Discuss issues through the Protected Areas Committee established pursuant to the Environmental Stewardship Division/Tahltan Joint Councils Agreement.
To provide information to park visitors, local residents and stakeholders.	 Produce information about the park that can be disseminated to the public including through the Internet. Provide information to local residents, especially farmers and tourism operators, about the dangers of disease transmission from domestic livestock.
To ensure access does not unacceptably affect wildlife and their habitat.	Prohibit ATV, snowmobile and off-road vehicle use for recreation and hunting in the park.

Consultation and Future Planning

Environmental Stewardship Division will continue to consult with Tahltan First Nation regarding management of this park. As required, Environmental Stewardship Division will meet with the Ministry

of Forests regarding possible impacts to the park relating to forest harvesting in adjacent areas. This park is considered of low priority for the development of a park management plan with full public involvement. This management direction statement will be used to contribute to the development of a management plan for the Todagin Wildlife Management Area.

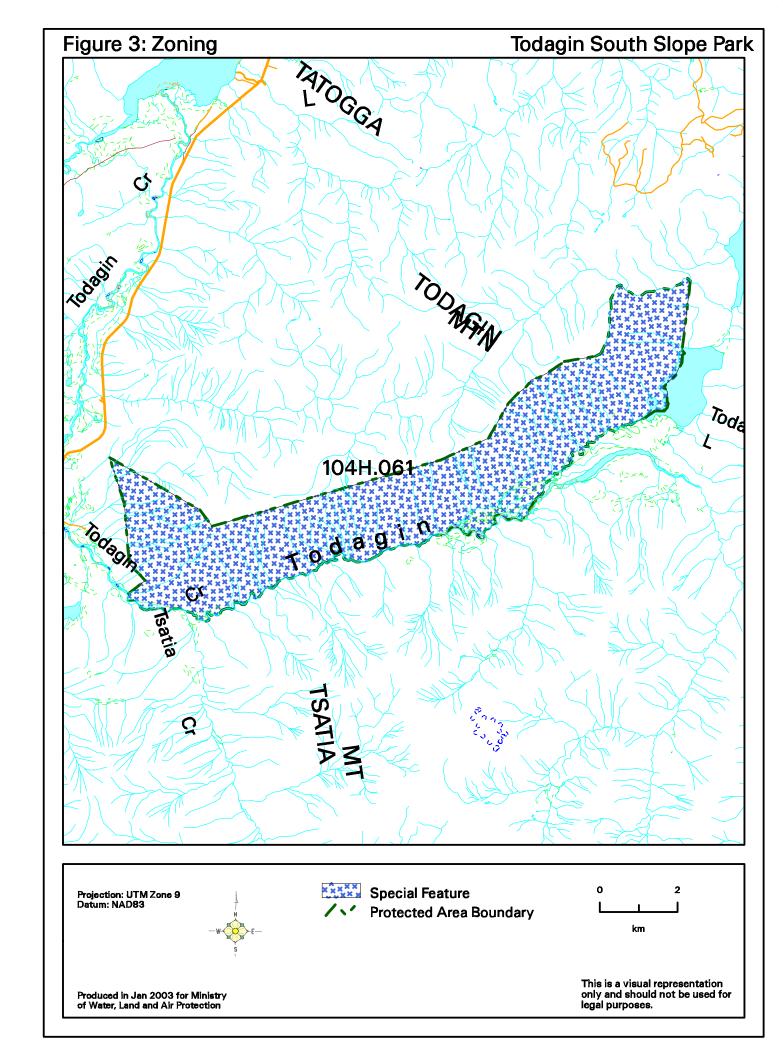
Zoning Plan

All of Todagin South Slope Provincial Park is placed within a Special Feature Zone which entails the following:

Objective: To protect and present significant natural or cultural resources, features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage values.

Zone Description: Covers the entire park (3,557 hectares).

Management Guidelines: High level of management protection with ongoing monitoring. Oriented to maintaining resources and, where appropriate, a high quality recreational and interpretative experience. Active or passive management depending on the size, location, and nature of the resource. Visitor access may be restricted to preserve the recreation experience and to limit impacts.



Appendix 1. Todagin South Slope Provincial Park Table of Acceptable Activities, Uses and Facilities.

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptability
Aboriginal traditional uses and activities	Υ
Hunting	Y (bow hunting only)
Fishing	Υ
Trapping	Υ
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational Gold Panning/Rock Hounding	N
Utility corridors	N
Communication Sites	N
Horse Use/ Pack Animals	M (horses only)
Guide Outfitting (hunting) - bow hunting only may be restricted if wildlife viewing area established	Y (bow hunting only)
Guide Outfitting (fishing)	Y
Guide Outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Guide Outfitting (river rafting)	N/A
Cat-Assisted Skiing	N
Ski Hills	N
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility based)	Y
Backcountry Huts	N
Water Control Structures – water supply to adjacent private property	N2
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	Υ
Aircraft Access – subject to controls as necessary	M
Fire Management (suppression)	Y
Fire Management (prescribed fire management)	M
Fire Management (prevention)	M
Forest Insect/Disease Control	N1
Noxious Weed Control	N1
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	N1
Commercial Filming	М
Scientific Research (specimen collection)	М
Scientific Research (manipulative activities)	М

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/= not applicable N= not allowed

N1=allowed for expressed management purposes only

N2=present and allowed to continue but not normally allow

Appendix 2

Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP Objectives and Strategies for the Todagin South Slope Wildlife Management Area and Park

The Todagin zone comprises a large area that includes Todagin Plateau and Tsatia Mountain. The eastern boundary extends to the treeline of the Klappan drainage.

The management intent for Todagin zone is to integrate management for Stone's sheep and other wildlife, recreational activities, and mineral exploration, mine development and reclamation. The zone has been recommended for designation as a wildlife management area.

The zone provides habitat for a major Stone's sheep population. Other wildlife species include mountain goats, grizzly, wolves, caribou, marmots and raptors. The area also has high recreation values for hiking, wildlife viewing and bow-hunting (including guided hunting trips).

The northern portion of the zone, which encompasses Todagin Plateau, has very high mineral potential and includes the Red Chris project, a large copper-gold deposit. As of 2000, the Red Chris project was in the Environmental Assessment process. Because of its proximity to the community of Iskut, development of this deposit has the potential to provide significant local economic benefits.

Objective: To conserve Stones sheep populations and habitat and other wildlife values integrated with mineral exploration and development.

Management Category Policy Recommendations

Strategies

- With the exception of the Red Chris property, this zone will be designated as a Wildlife Management Area (WMA) (see Map 14) with the following conditions:
- Mineral exploration and mine development and associated access continue to be recognized as appropriate activities;
- Fully integrate the management of wildlife, mineral exploration and mine development north of Todagin Creek. South of Todagin Creek, mineral exploration and mine development are acceptable activities, with maintenance of wildlife values as the primary consideration.
- Current approval processes will continue i.e., there will still be a one-window approach to project approval with consultation between the Ministry of Energy and mines and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

• Add the Red Chris property to the WMA once mineral tenures lapse.

- Support mineral exploration, mine development and associated access as appropriate activities.
- See Wildlife and Access
- As per GMD
- Prepare a wildlife management plan, in consultation with all interested stakeholders, to address recreational impacts and to effectively integrate resource development activities with habitat needs for mountain ungulates.
- Map critical habitats for Stone's sheep and mountain goat at 1:5000 to 1:20,000 scale (e.g. lambing areas, south-facing slopes, escape terrain).
- Locate roaded access, mining camps and other infrastructure away from critical habitats. Only consider exceptions to this strategy after fairly assessing and weighing all implications (ecological, economic, safety, etc.).
- Where mineral deposits occur and mine development proceeds within mapped critical habitat:
- Design development to minimize impacts to habitat during operations; and
- Fully reclaim habitat in a timely manner (on an ongoing basis and when operations are completed).
- If mine development is proposed, the following should be addressed as part of the approval process:
- Complete baseline inventories of wildlife population and habitat.
- Incorporate a mountain ungulate monitoring plan as part of issuing mine permits.
- Address potential for copper toxicity in Stone's sheep.
- When operations are finished, fully rehabilitate mine sites and roads with native species ecologically suited to the area and palatable to local wildlife species.
- Monitor Stone's sheep and mountain goat populations and habitat to identify any cumulative impacts of recreation use (commercial and non-commercial), mineral development, hunting and access.
- Undertake wildlife habitat enhancement, where required.

Mineral and Energy Resources

Biodiversity

Wildlife

Aquatic Ecosystems and Riparian Habitat

• As per GMD

Hunting, Trapping, Guide- outfitting, Fishing

- Maintain the current hunting restrictions limiting the area to bow-hunting on Todagin Plateau.
- Apply other management strategies (e.g., limited entry hunting for Stone's sheep, other bow-hunting areas) as required to conserve wildlife populations.

Agriculture, Settlement, Range

• Provide information to local residents and tourism operators about the potential dangers of disease transmission from domestic sheep, goats and llamas to wild sheep and goat populations.

Recreation/Tourism

- Manage levels of recreational use to minimize impacts on plateau ecosystems and wildlife. Examples could include the following:
- Establish limits of acceptable change and manage recreation use accordingly;
- Direct recreational users to specific sections of the plateau;
 and
- Identify sensitive habitat areas where hikers and commercial recreation users are discouraged.
- Manage trail development near Todagin Plateau in cooperation with BC Environment and the wildlife management plan.
- Address potential impacts on sheep and goat populations when reviewing commercial recreation proposals (displacement from critical habitat areas, levels of use, disease transmission from domestic animals, aircraft use, etc.)
- Locate roaded access, mining camps and other infrastructure away from existing tourism facilities.
- Recommend designating an area of the plateau as a wildlife viewing area. Details about boundaries and management within the wildlife viewing area will be developed as part of a wildlife management plan for the Todagin zone.
- Increase public awareness of Todagin wildlife and First Nations values e.g., by creating a wildlife viewing stop and information kiosk off the highway, consistent with the direction in the wildlife management plan and parks management plan.
- Coordinate planning for recreational use in the Todagin wildlife management plan with the recreation plan for Iskut

Lakes area (See Section 2.4.6: Kakkidi/Mowdade/Nuttlude Lakes zone).

Visual quality

Access Management

- As per GMD
- Encourage air access for mineral exploration throughout the zone.(1)
- Minimize impacts to wild sheep and goats (particularly lambing and kidding areas) and address community safety in considering options for access routes within the wildlife management area
- Apply seasonal restrictions on use of access within or adjacent to identified critical habitat areas for lambing and kidding from April 15 – June 15. Only consider exceptions to this strategy after fairly assessing and weighing all implications (ecological, economic, safety, etc.) This strategy does not apply to operating mines.
- Consult fully with the public, including local residents and the LRMP Monitoring Committee, regarding any new road locations.
- Provide access controls, including staffed gates, where needed, to manage public access to the plateau area.
- Prohibit use of ATVs (not including snowmobiles) for recreation and hunting. Restrict snowmobile use on the plateau if wildlife are shown to be adversely impacted.
- Permanently deactivate roads upon completion of operations
- Provide guidelines to aircraft companies to inform pilots about avoiding critical lambing and kidding areas during sensitive periods (generally between April 15 and June 15).

Timber

• As per GMD

Todagin South Slope Park

To protect critical winter range and lambing area for Stone's sheep

- Maintain the existing bow-hunting only provision
- Respect the existing license for domestic and agricultural water use on Ibsen Creek.
- Address use of helicopters particularly during sensitive periods (kidding and lambing season)
- Consider a wildlife viewing area at the western end of the protected area,

overlooking Highway 37. Details regarding management within a wildlife viewing area will be developed as part of the wildlife management plan for Todagin Plateau.