



Yard Creek Park

Management Plan

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BC Parks

Yard Creek Park Management Plan

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Management Plan Purpose

The purpose of this management plan is to guide the management of Yard Creek Park. The management plan:

- articulates the key features and values of the 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

The 175 hectare Yard Creek Park is located on the Eagle River between Sicamous and Revelstoke (Figure 1). The park is in a narrow valley that contains the Trans-Canada Highway (Hwy. # 1) and the main Canadian Pacific Railroad line. The area is oriented toward tourism. There is private land adjacent to the park boundaries in the valley, with Crown land on the slopes that is managed for timber production.

1.3 Legislative Framework

Yard Creek Park was established as a 59 hectare Class A park on March 16, 1956 for the purpose of providing a campground for the travelling public on the Trans-Canada Highway. As an outcome of the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan, 116 hectares were added to the park in 2004, adding a strong conservation component to the park's role. 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 the natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public.

1.4 Management Planning Process

The process to develop this management plan included both First Nations and public involvement. The draft management plan was posted on the BC Parks' website for a 30 day public review.

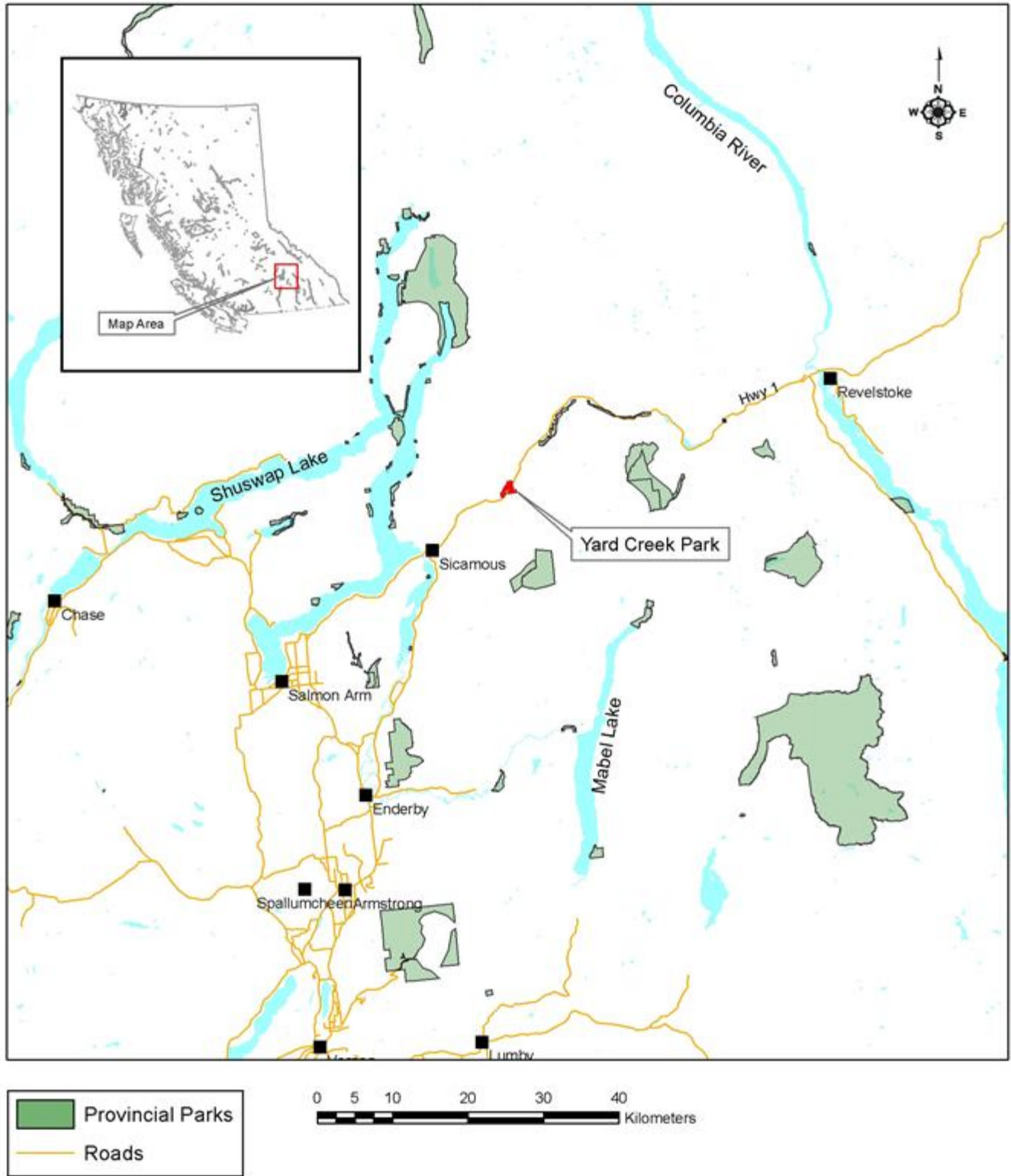


Figure 1: Regional Context Map for Yard Creek Park

2.0 Values and Roles of the Park

2.1 Significance in the Protected Areas System

Yard Creek Park is a relatively small park that protects spawning habitat for the blue-listed Westslope Cutthroat Trout and salmon species, as well as riparian and wetland habitats. It is also the first provincial campground encountered by travellers coming from Alberta on the Trans-Canada Highway.

2.2 Values

Yard Creek Park's role is both for protecting conservation values and providing for recreation. The original use as a campground and day use recreation area remains, with an added role in protecting important riparian habitat and associated fish species in Yard Creek and on the Eagle River floodplain. The traditional local First Nations use of the park for gathering and ceremonial use also has a continuing role.

Yard Creek Park partially protects the provincially significant spawning areas for the most westerly located natural population of the blue-listed Westslope Cutthroat Trout, *Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi*. The park includes spawning habitat for three species of salmon (coho, chinook, sockeye), including kokanee, and is general habitat for Bull Trout, Rainbow Trout and Steelhead. The park also protects low elevation valley bottom wetland and river riparian habitats of the Eagle River floodplain.

Of cultural value, the site was formerly the location of a Japanese internment camp, though there is no known remaining on-site evidence or relics left from this time.

The park has a five kilometre network of hiking and cross-country skiing trails on the north side of the highway to provide for visitor activities and nature appreciation. The trails are very popular with the local community and school groups. There is some minor regional day use to watch spawning trout and walk or ski along the existing trail system.

Yard Creek Park is the only provincial park campground on Highway #1 between Kamloops and the Alberta border, and is used as a stopover by the public travelling on the highway. BC Parks ceased to operate the site due to decreased campground use, with the campground and day use areas subject to closure until the Columbia Shuswap Regional District volunteered to take over the operation and financing of this site. Operation of the 65 unit campground and day use area was made available to the Columbia Shuswap Regional District in 2004 through a park use permit. The campground receives approximately 1,700 camping nights annually. Some angling takes place, primarily on the Eagle River, and an angling guide utilizes the park under park use permit.

Yard Creek Park is situated in the traditional territory of the Splitsin, Neskonlith, Adams Lake and Little Shuswap Lake First Nations.

3.0 Management Direction

3.1 Management Vision

Yard Creek Park continues to be a popular, year-round recreational asset to local communities and the travelling public. Use of the trails provides healthy activity for hiking and skiing and an opportunity for nature appreciation as visitors experience the riparian forest, wetlands or watch spawning salmon. Travellers on the Trans-Canada Highway stop to camp and learn about the area. First Nation people periodically visit to continue and celebrate the activities of their ancestors. Healthy salmon and trout populations, along with other species that depend up on them, continue to use the Eagle River and Yard Creek, sustained by the clean waters and protected riparian habitat.

3.2 Management Objectives and Strategies

Management Context	Management Objectives and Strategies
<p>Increased knowledge will support protection of flora, fauna and important aquatic habitats</p> <p>Prevent potential impacts to fish habitat and water quality, especially Yard Creek, particularly from activities on adjacent lands.</p> <p>Invasive weed species require management.</p>	<p>Management Objective: To protect the park's natural values.</p> <p>Management Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up on the completed weed inventory and ensure implementation of the regional weed treatment plan to control the weeds in the park. • Inventory important habitats, assess potential impacts and implement monitoring where necessary (e.g., riparian spawning habitat). • Work with forest companies and the appropriate provincial government agency to minimize the impacts of logging activities on the sensitive downstream fish habitat, especially in Yard Creek.
<p>There is an interest in maintaining the existing trail system.</p> <p>Campground is presently providing a benefit to the local economy but is underutilized.</p> <p>Widespread disease is affecting hemlock, creating potential hazard trees and public safety issues.</p>	<p>Management Objective: To provide recreational opportunities.</p> <p>Management Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the existing trail system along the Eagle River to allow continued visitor use. • Remove hazard trees to protect public safety. • Continue to support third party operation of the campground. At such time that the current organization is no longer interested in operating the campground, evaluate the options for campground operation. Options may include a new third party operator, operation by BC Parks or closing the campground if demand appears insufficient.

<p>The park contains parts of three traplines.</p> <p>There is long-standing use of a corral by a rancher for temporary cattle holding while being transferred to and from pastures. Original use of the corral was not officially recognized or tenured. Cattle are disturbing soil, preventing reestablishment of natural vegetation and promoting conditions for weed establishment.</p> <p>There is a highway drainage ditch running from Highway #1 to the Eagle River in the southwest portion of the park.</p>	<p>Management Objective: To recognize pre-existing park uses.</p> <p>Management Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to allow trapping. • Allow the maintenance, on an as-needed basis, of the drainage ditch. • Allow use of the corral to continue under park use permit while encouraging the rancher to find an alternative facility.
<p>Recognition of First Nation traditional use of the park area.</p>	<p>Management Objective: To honour the traditional use of the park area by First Nations.</p> <p>Management Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct First Nations cultural heritage assessment for the park as resources allow. • Collaborate with First Nations on relevant management decisions.

3.3 Zoning Plan

In general terms, a zoning plan divides a protected area 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 protected area and provides visitors and managers with a quick visual representation and appreciation of how a particular protected area 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. This park is divided into two zones.

Intensive Recreation Zone

This zone comprises the campground and day use areas (36 hectares, or 21% of the park) located on the south side of the Trans-Canada Highway (Figure 2). The objective of this zone is to provide for a variety of readily accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.

Nature Recreation Zone

The remainder of the park (139 hectares, or 79% of the area) is within this zone, encompassing the area to the east of Yard Creek and to the north of the highway (Figure 2). This zone includes the riparian area and old-growth forest, as well as hiking and ski trails.

The objective of this zone is to protect scenic values and to provide for recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

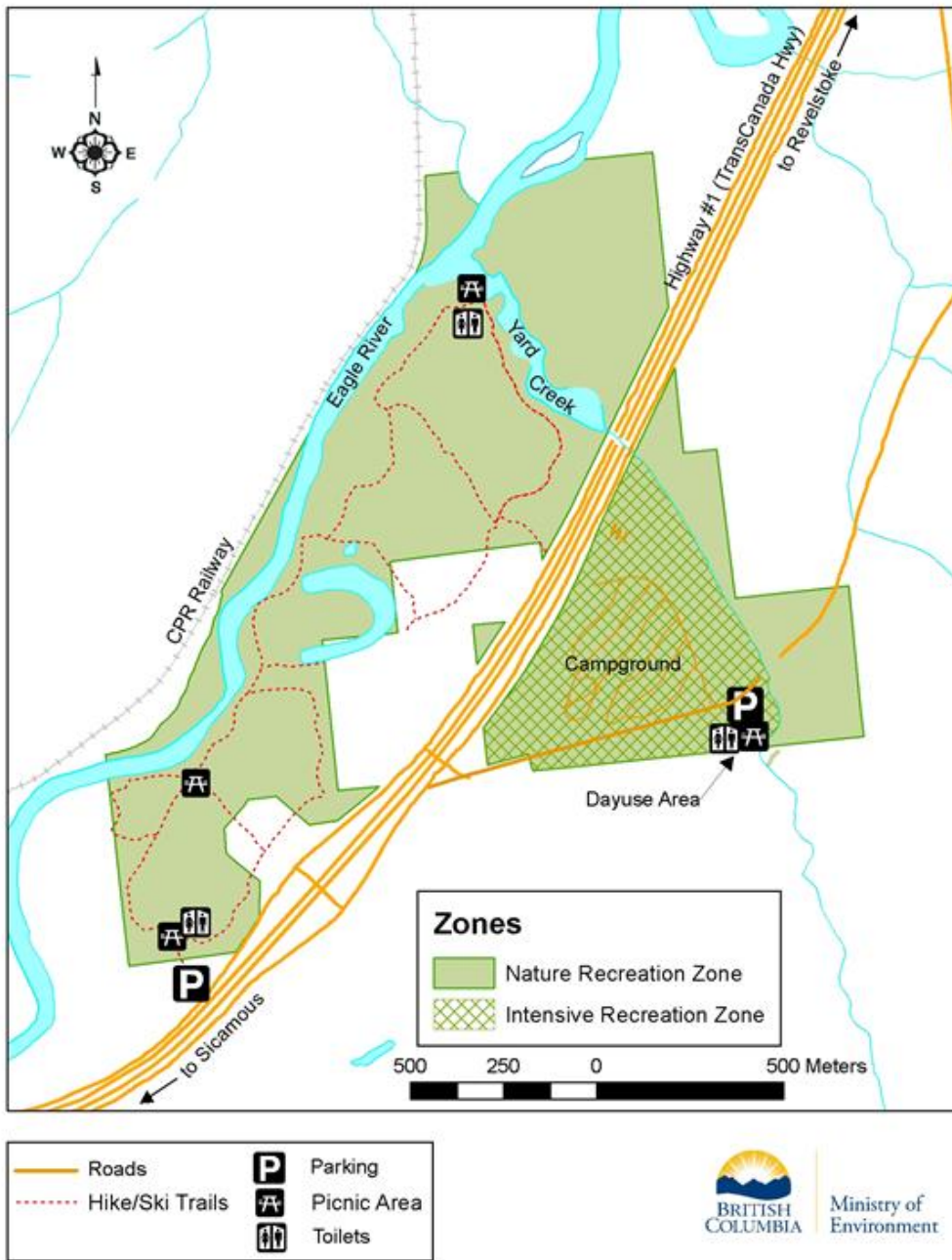


Figure 2: Map of Yard Creek Park

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 collaborate with First Nations on all aspects of 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:

- Collaborate with First Nations on relevant management decisions.
- Maintain the existing trail system along the Eagle River to allow continued visitor use.

4.3 Plan Assessment

In order to ensure that the management direction for Yard Creek Park remains relevant and effective, BC Parks staff 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 plan requires an amendment or if a new plan is required.

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

Appendix 1: Appropriate Use Table

The following table summarizes existing and potential future uses in Yard Creek 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 Yard Creek 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	<p>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.).</p> <p>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 Impacts Assessment Process) or evaluation process (e.g., park use permit adjudication) is completed.</p>
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
Activities/Uses			
Boating (non-power)	N/A	Y	
Boating (power)	N/A	Y	
Camping – vehicle accessible	Y	N	
Camping – motorised boat accessible	N/A	N	
Fish Stocking	Y	Y	
Fish Habitat Enhancement	Y	Y	
Fishing	Y	Y	
Hiking/Backpacking/Walking	Y	Y	
Horse Use/Pack Animals (not exotic)	N	N	
Hunting	N	N	Safety - frequent park users on trails, main highway and railway present
Mechanized Off-Road Activity (e.g., biking, mountain boarding)	N	N	
Motorized Off-Road Activity (e.g., quads, 4x4s, dirt bikes- not including snowmobiles, snowcats or aircraft)	N	N	
Cross-country Skiing	Y	Y	
Snowmobiling	N	N	
Trapping	Y	Y	Pre-existing only.
Facilities/Infrastructure			
Administrative Buildings and Compounds	Y	N	
Boat Launches	N/A	N	
Campgrounds	Y	N	
Picnic Areas (vehicle access and serviced)	Y	N	
Lodges, Cabins, Shelters and Huts	N	N	
Interpretation and Information Buildings	Y	Y	In the Nature Recreation Zone, buildings are only appropriate in the area by the parking lot.
Roads and Parking Lots	Y	Y	In the Nature Recreation Zone, only the existing parking lot is appropriate.
Trails	Y	Y	
Water Control Structures	N	Y	Pre-existing drainage ditch for highway
Wharves/Docks	N/A	N	