

3.0 Protected Area Zoning

BC Parks uses zoning to assist in the planning and management of provincial parks. In general terms, zoning divides an area into logical units to apply uniform and consistent management objectives for conservation and recreational values. The zones reflect a mix of intended land use, existing patterns of use, the degree of human use desired, and the level of management or development required.

At one end of the spectrum, the Intensive Recreation Zone indicates a portion of a park that is appropriate for high levels of recreation and facility development. At the opposite end, the Wilderness Conservation Zone indicates an area of a park that receives the highest level of resource protection and minimal human presence. Between these two extremes, there are three additional zones providing a range of conservation and recreation management priorities - Natural Environment Zone, Special Feature Zone and Wilderness Recreation Zone. Appendix C has a full description of the BC Parks zoning policy.

3.1 Zoning Rationale

Zoning Rationale - Bowron Lake Park

The majority of Bowron Lake Park is zoned as *Wilderness Conservation*. This zoning reflects the vision of the interior of the park as a wildlife reserve/benchmark with very little human presence and interference.

The canoe circuit and the three additions (Betty Wendle, Wolverine, Upper Cariboo River) are zoned as *Wilderness Recreation*. This zone allows for the continuation of hunting, trapping (in the Wolverine), commercial guiding, existing helicopter skiing and helicopter hiking operations. The Wilderness Recreation zoning supports the idea that the circuit supplies a carefully managed, internationally significant wilderness-oriented canoe and kayak experience, and confirms relatively low levels of use and minimal development.

The Goat River/Wolverine Trail corridor is zoned as *Natural Environment*, as is Bowron Lake itself. This zoning allows for higher levels of human presence and the associated improvements and maintenance. In the case of Bowron Lake, this recognizes motorized boats, signage, fishing, and other day oriented activities, while the Wolverine Trail will be considered for a four-season connection to the Robson Valley. In the summer, the corridor will be a non-motorized hiking trail, possibly part of a national system, and in the winter the corridor may function as a potential snowmobile corridor, subject to further wildlife research and safety/feasibility studies. (see Section 4.5 Access and Adjacency for details on a potential snowmobile corridor).

The very north end of Bowron Lake Park is zoned *Intensive Recreation*, which facilitates a road access campground and other supporting infrastructure.

Zoning Rationale - Cariboo Mountains Park

The vast majority of Cariboo Mountains Park is zoned as *Wilderness Recreation* in recognition of pre-existing hunting, trapping, helicopter skiing and commercial guiding operations. This zoning supports the vision of the area as a huge undeveloped refugia for wildlife, while allowing for some new non-motorized commercial tourism and public recreation activities that are designed to be compatible with wildlife and wilderness recreation values.

Several areas – Mitchell Lake and the eastern portion of Ghost Lake - have been zoned as *Natural Environment* due to higher expectations of encountering people in these areas, existing motorized boat traffic, fishing activities, float plane operations and commercial tourism facilities on both lakes. An area around Roberts Peak has also been zoned Natural Environment to permit existing snowmobile activities.

The western end of Ghost Lake is zoned as *Intensive Recreation* in recognition of the vehicle accessible campsite and primitive boat launching facilities located there. It is expected this campsite will be used to service Ghost Lake as well as those people on day trips to the Mitchell River, Matthew Valley or on the loop from Likely to Barkerville.

The lower Mitchell River and Mitchell Wetlands are zoned as *Special Feature*. This zoning acknowledges the provincially significant fish, grizzly bear, and migratory waterfowl habitat, in addition to the many other environmental values of this special part of the park. The zoning is intended to reflect the numerous recreational and commercial uses that occur in this area, including guided fishing, hunting, trapping and wildlife viewing. The *Special Feature* zone recognizes the increased management of these activities that is required to maintain the ecological integrity of the area.

Zoning Rationale - Cariboo River Park

The entire Cariboo River Park is zoned as *Natural Environment*. This zoning supports the primary role of Cariboo River Park as providing critical winter range for moose as well as providing a blend of river-based recreation activities in the summer.

3.2 Wilderness Conservation Zone

Zone Objective

The primary objective of the Wilderness Conservation Zone is to protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape as a refugia for wildlife and a benchmark for natural processes.

Zone Description

The largest area of the Wilderness Conservation Zone is in the interior of Bowron Lake Park, but it also continues around the outside of the Chain of Lakes. The total size of this zone is 93,381 hectares, or 36.5 % of the parks.

Key Zone Strategies

Human use will be extremely low and management/intervention in this zone will be negligible. Fire will be allowed to run its natural cycles, but may also be reintroduced in areas with unnatural seral stage distributions. Mechanized use and air access for recreation is prohibited in this zone. Strategies for this zone include:

- Conservation of natural values and natural processes takes precedence over recreation use in this zone.
- Minimal management intervention in these areas so natural processes occur unimpeded. Fire may be used as a management tool to reintroduce natural seral stage distribution, and about 10% of the zone will also be subject to management that will minimize the impact of insects on values adjacent to the park.
- Hunting is not allowed in this zone.
- Bowron wetland upstream of the “no access beyond this point” sign will continue to be closed to the public as a wildlife refugia. Huckey Creek caves will also be closed to the public due to extremely high grizzly bear values and safety issues with the caves themselves.

Allowable Activities and Levels of Use in the Wilderness Conservation Zone

Activity/Use/Facility	Allowable in the Wilderness Conservation Zone
Activity	
Beach activities (swimming, sunbathing)	N/A
Boating (power)	N
Boating (non-power)	N (none past limits to navigation on Bowron River)
Camping – no trace	Y
Camping –other	N
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial Recreation (non-facility based)	N
Fishing	Y
Hiking and walking	Y
Hunting	N
Natural and cultural values appreciation(birding, photography, wildlife viewing)	Y
Recreational gold panning and rock hounding	N
Scientific research (manipulative activities)	M
Scientific research (specimen collection)	M
Skiing (downhill or cross country tracked)	N
Skiing (helicopter or cat assisted)	N
Skiing (other)	Y
Trapping	N
Use	
Aboriginal Rights	Y
Aircraft Access	N
Exotic Insect/disease control	M
Filming (commercial)	N
Fire Management (prescribed fire)	Y
Fire Management (prevention)	N/Y (see fire management plan)
Fire Management (suppression)	N/Y (see fire management plan)
Fish Stocking and enhancement	N
Forest insect/disease control	Y/N (see vegetation management zoning)
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Guide outfitting (fishing)	N
Guide outfitting (hunting)	N
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	N
Horse use/pack animals (not exotic)	N

Motorizes water access	N
Non-motorized water access	N
Noxious weed control	Y
Off - road access (mechanical activities)	N
Off - road access (motorized – not snowmobiles)	N
Off - road access (snowmobiles)	N
Pack animals (exotic)	N
Facility	
Administration buildings and compounds	N
Backcountry huts and shelters	N
Boat launches	N
Campgrounds with picnic areas (vehicle accessed and serviced)	N
Campgrounds (other)	N
Communication sites	N
Interpretation and information buildings	N
Roads and parking lots	N
Ski hills and snowplay areas	N
Lodges and other service accommodation	N
Trails (hiking, cycling, cross –country skiing)	Y (short trails only - see Bowron Lake canoe circuit strategies)
Utility corridors	N
Water control structures	N

Specific direction on management in this zone can be found in Section 4.

Click to view plate 11: Looking east up to the headwaters of Bowron Lake Park. This is the heart of the Wilderness Conservation Zone.

3.3 Wilderness Recreation Zone

Zone Objective

The primary objective of the Wilderness Recreation Zone is to protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities dependent upon a pristine environment where air access may be permitted to designated sites.

Zone Description

The Wilderness Recreation Zone is the largest zone across this block of parks. It covers 146,588 hectares, or 57% of the parks, and covers the large majority of Cariboo Mountains Park, the Betty Wendle, Upper Cariboo River areas of the Wolverine addition outside the Natural Environment Zone, and the Bowron Lake canoe circuit.

Key Zone Strategies

Key strategies for this zone include:

- Recreational activities managed to ensure ecological integrity is unimpaired.
- Helicopter skiing and helicopter hiking are permitted only in existing tenured areas (existing helicopter hiking and helicopter skiing in Betty Wendle, helicopter skiing in the headwaters of the

Mitchell and Niagara drainages, and helicopter skiing north of the river in the Upper Cariboo River addition).

- Hunting is permitted in this zone (except Bowron Lake canoe circuit), subject to regulations.
- Hunting and aircraft landing are not permitted around the Bowron Lake canoe circuit. The circuit will be managed for its internationally significant wilderness recreation values. More detail can be found in section 4.7 - Bowron Lake canoe circuit.

Click to view plate 12: Looking east into the Upper Niagara Creek in the Wilderness Recreation Zone.

Allowable Activities and Levels of Use in the Wilderness Recreation Zone

Activity/Use/Facility	Allowable in the Wilderness Recreation Zone
Activity	
Beach activities (swimming, sunbathing)	Y
Boating (power)	N (except for management)
Boating (non-power)	Y
Camping – no trace	Y
Camping –other	Y
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	Y
Commercial Recreation (non-facility based)	Y
Fishing	Y
Hiking and walking	Y
Hunting	Y (except Bowron canoe circuit)
Natural and cultural values appreciation (birding, photography, wildlife viewing)	Y
Recreational Gold panning and rock hounding	N
Scientific research (manipulative activities)	Y
Scientific research (specimen collection)	Y
Skiing (downhill or cross country tracked)	N
Skiing (helicopter or cat assisted)	Y (existing only and some very limited hiking opportunities as outlined in appendix A)
Skiing (other)	Y
Trapping	Y (except Betty Wendle and Bowron Circuit)
Use	
Aboriginal Rights	Y
Aircraft Access	Y (except Bowron Circuit)
Exotic Insect/disease control	Y
Filming (commercial)	M
Fire Management (prescribed fire)	Y
Fire Management (prevention)	N/Y (see fire management plan)
Fire Management (suppression)	N/Y (see fire management plan)
Fish Stocking and enhancement	N
Forest insect/disease control	Y/N (see vegetation management zoning)
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Guide outfitting (fishing)	Y (except Bowron Circuit)
Guide outfitting (hunting)	Y (except Bowron Circuit)

Guide outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Horse use/pack animals (not exotic)	Y (except Bowron Circuit)
Motorized water access	N
Non-motorized water access	Y
Noxious weed control	Y
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N
Off-road access (motorized – not snowmobiles)	N
Off –road access (snowmobiles)	N/Y (see 4.8 for details)
Pack animals (exotic)	Y (except Bowron Circuit)
Facility	
Administration buildings and compounds	N
Backcountry huts and shelters	M
Boat launches	N
Campgrounds with picnic areas (vehicle accessed and serviced)	N
Campgrounds (other)	Y (around canoe circuit)
Communication sites	N
Interpretation and information buildings	N
Roads and parking lots	N
Ski hills and snowplay areas	N
Lodges and other service accommodation	N
Trails (hiking, cycling, cross –country skiing)u	N
Utility corridors	N
Water control structures	N

Specific direction on management in this zone can be found in Section 4.

3.4 Special Feature Zone

Zone Objective

The primary objective of the Special Feature Zone is to protect and present significant natural or cultural resources, features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage values.

Zone Description

This area - the Mitchell River and Mitchell River wetlands - supports large populations of spawning sockeye salmon, bull trout, grizzly bears, migratory and song birds, moose and other wildlife. The total size of this zone is 1,966 hectares, or 0.77 % of the parks.

Key Zone Strategies

Strategies for this zone include:

- Increased focus on research and information gathering, in particular the grizzly bear, bull trout, bird populations and habitat and any rare vegetation present.
- Mitchell River will have special management that will allow traditional angling to continue, and will be considered as a Class One River in order to manage the wilderness angling experience and to minimize potential impacts on wildlife and fish resources.
- Wildlife viewing will be an acceptable activity in this area and will be carefully managed to ensure recreational and natural values are not impacted.
- Hunting will be allowed in the Mitchell River Special Feature Zone.

- Use will be restricted to between 9:00 a.m. –4:00 p.m. from August 1 onward to protect grizzly bears during key feeding and foraging times.

Allowable Activities and Levels of Use in the Special Feature Zone

Activity/Use/Facility	Allowable in the Special Feature Zone
Activity	
Beach activities (swimming, sunbathing)	Y
Boating (power)	Y (special season restrictions – see 4.3 – Wildlife and Fish)
Boating (non-power)	Y
Camping – no trace	N
Camping –other	N
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial Recreation (non-facility based)	Y
Fishing	Y
Hiking and walking	Y (subject to seasonal closures)
Hunting	Y
Natural and cultural values appreciation (birding, photography, wildlife viewing)	Y
Recreational Gold panning and rock hounding	N
Scientific research (manipulative activities)	Y
Scientific research (specimen collection)	Y
Skiing (downhill or cross country tracked)	N
Skiing (helicopter or cat assisted)	N
Skiing (other)	Y
Trapping	Y
Use	
Aboriginal Rights	Y
Aircraft Access	N
Exotic Insect/disease control	Y
Filming (commercial)	N
Fire Management (prescribed fire)	Y
Fire Management (prevention)	N/Y (see fire management plan)
Fire Management (suppression)	N/Y (see fire management plan)
Fish Stocking and enhancement	Y
Forest insect/disease control	Y/N (see vegetation management zoning)
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Guide outfitting (fishing)	Y (subject to regs)
Guide outfitting (hunting)	Y (subject to regs)
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Horse use/pack animals (not exotic)	N
Motorized water access	Y (with special restrictions)
Non-motorized water access	Y
Noxious weed control	Y
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N (access to private lots through zone permitted)
Off-road access (motorized – not snowmobiles)	N (except for a corridor down the Z Road)
Off –road access (snowmobiles)	N
Pack animals (exotic)	N
Facility	
Administration buildings and compounds	N
Backcountry huts and shelters	N
Boat launches	N



Campgrounds with picnic areas (vehicle accessed and serviced)	N
Campgrounds (other)	N
Communication sites	N
Interpretation Signs	Y
Interpretation and information buildings	N
Roads and parking lots	N
Ski hills and snowplay areas	N
Lodges and other service accommodation	N
Trails (hiking, cycling, cross –country skiing)u	N
Utility corridors	N
Water control structures	Y (existing only)

Specific direction on management in this zone can be found in Section 4 – Wildlife and Fish, Cultural Heritage, Vegetation Management etc sections.

Click to view plate 13: The Mitchell River wetlands are one of the most ecologically diverse areas in this block of parks. The approximate park boundary is indicated by the dotted line.

3.5 Natural Environment Zone

Zone Objective

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

Zone Description

This zone covers all 3,137 hectares of Cariboo River Park, 1,956 hectares on Bowron Lake, 732 hectares following a corridor through the Wolverine addition to Bowron Lake Park, a 4,829 hectare snowmobile area centered on Robert’s Peak, 322 hectares on Ghost Lake and 2,353 hectares on Mitchell Lakes. This zone covers 13,297 hectares, or 5.2% of the parks.

Key Zone Strategies

Strategies for this zone include:

- Facility development is minimal on the Wolverine/Goat trail, at a level sufficient to satisfy basic user needs, safety concerns and wilderness recreation experiences while protecting the overall ecological integrity of the park.
- No summer vehicle access to the Wolverine/Goat trail.
- The potential for a snowmobile corridor through the Wolverine/Goat trail will be subject to additional wildlife research and safety/feasibility studies. These information needs are outlined in section 4.5 Access and Adjacency.
- Bowron Lake will continue to be accessible for motorized boat use. Impacts will be monitored and horsepower restrictions may be recommended if impacts are demonstrated. A Code of Ethics for boaters will be developed to address user conflicts. Details on this can be found in section 4.4 Bowron Lake.
- Snowmobile use is permitted on Ghost Lake and Roberts Peak.
- Cariboo River Park will continue to be available for motorized and non-motorized boat traffic. Research will be undertaken to better understand waterfowl patterns and usage. Facilities to launch boats next to the bridge may be made available over the medium term, if increased usage is demonstrated and site impacts are occurring.

- There is interest in a future road corridor that would link the Robson Valley with the Cariboo. One location for this road linkage that has been discussed has been the Goat River/Wolverine drainages, following approximately the corridor outlined in this zone. The road itself is discussed in section 4.5 - Access and Adjacency.

Click to view plate 14: Looking west down Ghost Lake in the Natural Environment Zone. The campsite is located at the far end near the outflow of the Matthew River.

Allowable Activities and Levels of Use in the Natural Environment Zone

Activity/Use/Facility	Allowable in the Natural Environment Zone
Activity	
Beach activities (swimming, sunbathing)	Y
Boating (power)	Y
Boating (non-power)	Y
Camping – no trace	Y
Camping –other	Y (no overnight camping on Bowron Lake)
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	Y (not on Bowron Lake)
Commercial Recreation (non-facility based)	Y
Fishing	Y
Hiking and walking	Y
Hunting	Y (Not Bowron Lake)
Natural and cultural values appreciation(birding, photography, wildlife viewing)	Y
Recreational Gold panning and rock hounding	N
Scientific research (manipulative activities)	Y
Scientific research (specimen collection)	Y
Skiing (downhill or cross country tracked)	N
Skiing (helicopter or cat assisted)	N
Skiing (other)	Y
Trapping	Y (not on Bowron Lake)
Use	
Aboriginal Rights	Y
Aircraft Access	Y (not on Wolverine Corridor)
Exotic Insect/disease control	Y
Filming (commercial)	Y
Fire Management (prescribed fire)	Y
Fire Management (prevention)	N/Y (see fire management plan)
Fire Management (suppression)	N/Y (see fire management plan)
Fish Stocking and enhancement	N
Forest insect/disease control	Y/N (see vegetation management zoning)
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Guide outfitting (fishing)	Y (subject to regs, but not on Bowron Lake)
Guide outfitting (hunting)	Y (subject to regs, but not on Bowron Lake)
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Horse use/pack animals (not exotic)	Y (but not on Bowron Lake)
Motorized water access	Y
Non-motorized water access	Y
Noxious weed control	Y

Of-road access (mechanical activities)	N
Off-road access (motorized – not snowmobiles)	N
Off –road access (snowmobiles)	N/Y (permitted on Ghost Lake, Roberts Peak and on Wolverine Corridor subject to feasibility studies)
Pack animals (exotic)	Y
Facility	
Administration buildings and compounds	N
Backcountry huts and shelters	N
Boat launches	Y
Campgrounds with picnic areas (vehicle accessed and serviced)	N
Campgrounds (other)	N
Communication sites	N
Interpretation Signs	Y
Interpretation and information buildings	N
Roads and parking lots	Y (parking facilities)
Ski hills and snowplay areas	N
Lodges and other service accommodation	N
Trails (hiking, cycling, cross –country skiing)u	Y
Utility corridors	N
Water control structures	N

Specific direction on management in this zone can be found in Section 4.

3.6 Intensive Recreation Zone

Zone Objective

The primary objective of this zone is to provide for a variety of facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.

Click to view plate 15: The newly constructed Bowron Lake campground and parking lot in 1973. This site was originally a hayfield. Today the trees are mature and most visitors would never know the site ever looked like this.

Zone Description

The two Intensive Recreation zones in this block of parks are located at the north end of Bowron Lake and at the west end of Ghost Lake at the old Forest Service campground and boat launch. The zone at Bowron Lake is 325 hectares, and the area at Ghost Lake is 66 hectares in size, representing 0.15 % of the three parks.

Key Zone Strategies

Strategies for this zone include:

- Continuing to provide a campground adjacent to the Bowron Lake Registration Center, developing a small day-use area adjacent to the existing canoe dock, and expanding dock facilities at the north end of Bowron Lake to make access to the lake easier and safer for the public. (see section 4.4 – Bowron Lake, for a complete discussion). The acquisition of private land at the north end of the lake will be considered.
- Upgrading the old Forest Service campground and facilities at Ghost Lake in the medium to long term or as demand warrants.

- Providing interpretive facilities and signs to inform visitors of important park values, safety issues, codes of ethics and behaviors, and historical and cultural values.
- Providing visitor services, including interpretation, at Bowron Lake Registration Center.

Allowable Activities and Levels of Use in the Intensive Recreation Zone

Activity/Use/Facility	Allowable in the Intensive Recreation Zone
Activity	
Beach activities (swimming, sunbathing)	Y
Boating (power)	Y
Boating (non-power)	Y
Camping – no trace	Y
Camping –other	Y
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial Recreation (non-facility based)	Y
Fishing	Y
Hiking and walking	Y
Hunting	N
Natural and cultural values appreciation(birding, photography, wildlife viewing)	Y
Recreational Gold panning and rock hounding	N
Scientific research (manipulative activities)	Y
Scientific research (specimen collection)	Y
Skiing (downhill or cross country tracked)	N
Skiing (helicopter or cat assisted)	N
Skiing (other)	Y
Trapping	Y (not on Bowron Lake)
Use	
Aboriginal Rights	Y
Aircraft Access	Y
Exotic Insect/disease control	Y
Filming (commercial)	Y
Fire Management (prescribed fire)	Y
Fire Management (prevention)	N/Y (see fire management plan)
Fire Management (suppression)	N/Y (see fire management plan)
Fish Stocking and enhancement	N
Forest insect/disease control	Y/N (see vegetation management zoning)
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Guide outfitting (fishing)	Y (subject to regs, but not on Bowron Lake)
Guide outfitting (hunting)	Y (subject to regs, but not on Bowron Lake)
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Horse use/pack animals (not exotic)	N (not on Bowron Lake)
Motorized water access	Y
Non-motorized water access	Y
Noxious weed control	Y
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N
Off-road access (motorized – not snowmobiles)	N
Off –road access (snowmobiles)	N/Y (permitted on Ghost Lake and at the north end of Bowron with a permit – see <i>Bowron</i>)

	<i>Lake</i>
Pack animals (exotic)	Y (not on Bowron)
Facility	
Administration buildings and compounds	Y
Backcountry huts and shelters	N
Boat launches	Y
Campgrounds with picnic areas (vehicle accessed and serviced)	Y
Campgrounds (other)	Y
Communication sites	N
Interpretation Signs	Y
Interpretation and information buildings	Y
Roads and parking lots	Y
Ski hills and snowplay areas	N
Lodges and other service accommodation	Y
Trails (hiking, cycling, cross –country skiing)	Y
Utility corridors	N
Water control structures	N

Specific direction on management in this zone can be found in Section 4.

Click to view Zoning Map