

Skeena Region

**MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
STATEMENT**

March 2003



**for Boya Lake
Provincial Park**



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

Ministry of Water, Land
and Air Protection
Environmental Stewardship
Division

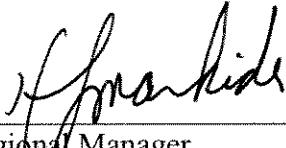
Boya Lake Provincial Park Approvals Page

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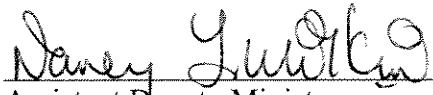
This management direction statement for Boya Lake Provincial Park provides management direction until such time as the plan is revised. Ongoing consultation between Environmental Stewardship Division and First Nations may require changes to this management direction statement. Aboriginal rights are honoured and respected within the park

Implementation of strategies identified in the MDS 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

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Boya Lake 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 dependent on funding and funding procedures. All development associated with these strategies is subject to the Parks and Protected Areas Branch's Impact Assessment Policy.

Context

The provincial government designated Boya Lake as a Class A provincial park in November 1965 by order in council under the *Park Act*. The park is currently named and described in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*. The most northern provincial park along the Stewart-Cassiar Highway, Boya Lake Provincial Park attracts highway travellers and regional residents to camp and to enjoy its special turquoise-coloured lake.

Boya Lake Provincial Park covers 4,597 hectares in northern British Columbia between the Stewart-Cassiar Highway and the Dease River. The extensive kettle and esker landscape with its associated lake, river and wetland environments within Boya Lake Provincial Park lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Kaska Dene First Nation.

The park encloses Boya Lake, several small unnamed lakes and surrounding wetland. The water is clear and its aqua-marine lake colour is exceptional due to the marl bottom. In marl lakes, calcium carbonate (CaCO₃) inhibits nutrients and hence phytoplankton, resulting in crystal clear waters. Interesting landscape features include eskers and kettle glacial deposition landforms. Campground facilities and location on a major travel corridor attract high levels of recreational use.

Tuya Mountains Provincial Park to the west protects rare subglacial volcano landforms and a large complex of wilderness parks to the south, including Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness, Mount Edziza and the Stikine River, protects entire ecosystems and offers a wide range of backcountry recreational opportunities.

Provincial Park Attributes

Conservation

- Currently provides the best representation of the very poorly represented (0.63%) Liard Plain Ecosystem in the provincial protected areas system. Boya Lake Provincial Park is one of six protected areas that provides representation to this ecosystem and accounts for 56% of the total representation.

- Situated in the BWBSdk2 (dry cool boreal white and black biogeoclimatic subzone, Liard variant), a moderately represented ecosystem (4.2%).
 - Although Boya Lake Provincial Park provides minimal representation of this ecosystem, the park is the second best example (6.7%) in the protected areas system behind Liard River Corridor Provincial Park (86%).
- Special features include turquoise-coloured marl-bottom lake and ponds, esker and kettle glacial landforms.
- Uncommon plant communities at the northern extent of their range (e.g. blue-listed Gorman's Penstemon; orchids – fairy lady's slipper (*Calypso bulbosa*)).
- Habitat for large mammals including moose, mule deer, caribou, grizzly bear and wolf.
- Protects habitat for fish species including arctic grayling, burbot, lake trout, sculpin and sucker.

Recreation and Tourism

- Regionally important recreational opportunities, providing one of the few lakes warm enough for swimming in summer; also has two hiking trails, a mountain bike trail and opportunities for boating (canoe, small motor).
- Located on Highway 37, a major alternate route to the Alaska Highway for travellers to the Yukon and Alaska.
- 45 unit campground with standard facilities.
- Boat launch.
- Angling opportunities at Boya Lake (though low success) and the Dease River (moderate to high success).

Commercial Business Opportunities

- Provides moderate commercial business opportunities for guided interpretation and education tour groups based on the special features of this park. This business opportunity is best developed as part of a systems approach where several provincial parks, protected areas and Crown land areas along Highway 37 are included in the tour to give clients a broad and interesting program.

Cultural Heritage

- Used by Kaska Dene for spiritual and ceremonial purposes.
- First Nations traditional use activities.

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- Protects a special kettle and esker glacial landscape with a spectacular turquoise-coloured lake.
- Conserves the best representation of the Liard Plain Ecoregion.
- Provides water, accommodation and lakeshore recreational opportunities for regional residents and Highway 37 travellers.

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

Boya Lake Provincial Park is situated on Highway 37 (also known as the Stewart – Cassiar Highway) 150 kilometres north of Dease Lake and 82 kilometres south of the British Columbia – Yukon border.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- BC Railway right-of-way reserve includes the whole park.
- Boya Lake Access Road right-of-way is a public Section 4 road.
- Chain Lakes Road right-of-way is a public Section 4 road.
- Ministry of Transportation reserve lies alongside Highway 37.
- Ministry of Forests weather station authorized under park use permit SK9710062.
- Trapping license 624T004. This trapline operation does not have a park use permit to operate in the park.
- Guide-outfitter 623G001. This guide-outfitter operation does not have a park use permit to operate in the park.
- No guided angling or commercial fishery exists in the park.

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- 45-unit campground with standard facilities, including 11 pit toilets and a hand pump.
- Boat launch and wharf located at the southeast portion of Boya Lake.
- Two hiking trails, one with viewing platform; mountain bike trail around lake.

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- The Dease River forms the park's eastern boundary.
- Highway 37 forms the park's western boundary.
- District Lots 6863, 6864, 6969, 6868 (southern half is crown land), 6867 form the park's northern boundary.
- District Lots 2211 and 7016 form the park's southern boundary.

First Nations Interests

- The park is within the asserted traditional territory of the Kaska Dene Nation.
- Aboriginal traditional activities and uses will be honoured and respected.

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's wildlife and their habitats - MU 6-23.
- Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (British Columbia Conservation Data Centre (CDC)) has an interest in the species at risk in this park.

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Travellers passing through the region have an interest in the park's camping, day use and boating outdoor recreation opportunities.

- Regional residents have an interest in the park because it is one of the few places where visitors can enjoy swimming, boating and fishing recreation opportunities in this remote area of British Columbia.
- Naturalists have an interest in this park because of its extraordinary glacial landscape features, the lake, river and wetlands environments and the variety of small and large mammals that inhabit or migrate through the area.
- Trapper and guide-outfitter because of their existing land encumbrances on the park for these activities.

Role of Boya Lake Provincial Park

The primary role of Boya Lake Provincial Park is to conserve one of the most significant esker and kettle glacial deposition landscapes in northern British Columbia and the protected areas system. Boya Lake is especially noteworthy for its turquoise blue colour, a feature only duplicated in the protected areas system at this lower elevation by such water bodies as Kalamalka and Atlin lakes. The park also protects a relatively small, but the best, representation of the Liard Plateau Ecosession. This conservation role is further highlighted by the park's protection of wetlands and wildlife habitats. The park may also contribute to the protection of First Nations cultural heritage conservation values.

Boya Lake Provincial Park performs an important secondary role of providing to the public the most significant destination and day use provincial park along Highway 37, north of Dease Lake. The park fulfils several Environmental Stewardship Division recreation goals, on both a regional and provincial basis, by providing facilities and services for:

- Lakeside destination camping for visitors to the Cassiar and the lower Dease River area;
- Beach access and associated swimming, picnicking and play areas;
- Boat launch and parking facility to allow access to Boya Lake;
- Hiking trails and nature appreciation;
- Panoramic views of the Horse Ranch Mountains to the east, the Cassiar Mountains to the west and the lower portion of the Dease River Valley;
- Potential for interpretation of the magnificent esker and kettle glacier deposition landforms in the park;
- Potential for interpretation of the wildfire theme that dominates the park's vegetation and forest succession; and,
- Potential for interpretation of First Nations use of the area.

The park has the potential to serve an important tourism role, offering accommodation and interpretation features along a major travel corridor for tour groups. The park's strategic location south of the Alaska Highway makes it an ideal location for groups to stop prior to travelling west to Alaska or east to Liard River Hotsprings Provincial Park.

Management Commitments and Issues

Direction from Previous Planning

Boya Lake Provincial Park has not been considered in any Land and Resource Management Plan. Annual management plans provide year-to-year direction for Boya Lake Provincial Park.

Management Issues

The following management issues require management attention:

Theme	Issue
Protecting ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park's natural features may be at risk because an inventory of natural features is incomplete. • The park's marl bottom lake is at risk for a rapid shift to eutrophic¹ conditions because of lake siltation. • Loons nesting in the park are at higher risk because of increased motorboat use. • Unauthorised vehicle use of the park is occurring because of easy access over the old trespass cabin road system. • The trapline and guide-outfitter territory owners, if they are operating in the park, do not have a valid park use permit.
To protect the park's recreational experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain maximum 9.9 HP motorboat regulation in cooperation with Transport Canada.
Protecting cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural heritage features may be at risk because no inventory of these features is complete
Protecting outdoor recreation features and opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some park visitors' recreational experiences are deteriorating because of increased motorised watercraft use that causes noise and water pollution.
Attracting more park visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of visitors has decreased over past decade because of competition from new campgrounds in the Yukon Territory and attractive Ministry of Transportation pull-outs in British Columbia. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The closing of Cassiar mine reduced significantly the day use visitation.

Management Direction

The vision for Boya Lake Provincial Park includes unaltered lake ecology and moderate to high recreational use (day use and overnight camping) and visitor appreciation of the lake and its associated ecosystems.

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

The following table describes management strategies to deal with outstanding issues raised. In addition, Appendix 1 contains a list of acceptable activities, uses and facilities for this park.

Objectives	Strategies
To protect the park's natural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an inventory of the park's fauna and flora with priority placed on rare plant species. • Establish limits on certain recreational uses in the park so that damage to the park's natural features and ecological values are reduced. • Complete a study using the Parks and Protected Areas Branch's Impact Assessment Policy to ensure outdoor recreation activity effects on the park's environment are minimal.

¹ **Eutrophic:** In lake aging pertains to an old-age lake and indicates high supply of nutrients supporting high biologic productivity.

Objectives	Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action to reduce the silt deposition in Boya Lake by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Assessing and rehabilitating the former trespass cabin road system around the lake; ➢ Working with the Ministry of Transportation to reduce the harmful effects of road ditching. • Limit vehicle use to designated park roads. • Contact the trapline owners to place this resource use under a valid park use permit if they are operating in the park. • Contact the guide-outfitter whose territory covers the park and seek to either have the park removed from the territory or issue a valid park use permit for this resource activity in the park. • Continue park ranger patrols in autumn to educate and inform hunters about their responsibilities and obligations while in the park and to implement regular spring clean up.
To consolidate and improve the integrity of the park's boundary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the legal status of a possible BC Railway Reserve and pursue options for its extinguishment. • Determine status of the Lion's Camp (south half of DL 6868). If Crown land, take action to add this property to the park.
To protect the park's cultural heritage values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and collate existing information on cultural heritage values with Kaska Dene First Nation and prepare a cultural features inventory. • Meet with the Kaska Dene to discuss issues.
To provide information to the public about the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection web site by describing Boya Lake Provincial Park with current and accurate information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Place emphasis on the park's superb visitor destination attributes. • Evaluate the need for an electronic and paper brochure focused on protected areas system along Highway 37 and the outstanding opportunities this travel corridor provides to the traveller. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Include the concept of the "Golden Circle" of Highway 37, the Alaska Highway, Highway 97 and the Yellowhead (Highway 16). • Implement a specific information program focused on hunters and fishers using the park. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Post hunting and fishing information on the park information board. • Evaluate the potential for an interpretative program for the park focused on the themes of glacial deposition landforms, northern wildlife habitats and wildfire. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Consider information signs, self-guiding trails and viewpoints.
To encourage an increased number of visitors to park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the special outdoor recreation opportunities and natural features in Boya Lake Provincial Park by continuing to meet with Highway 37/37A Tourism Strategy Group. • Maintain the park's outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities to a standard park visitors expect for remote northern British Columbia destination parks.

Consultation and Future Planning

The Environmental Stewardship Division will continue to consult with the Kaska Dene First Nation and will meet with local stakeholders and resource users as issues arise.

The priority for developing a management plan for Boya Lake Provincial Park is ranked as moderate.

Zoning Plan

Boya Lake Provincial Park contains outstanding natural, cultural and outdoor recreation features. As a result, the careful application of the Environmental Stewardship Division's protected areas management planning zoning system is warranted. Thus, the following zoning scheme is applied to Boya Lake Provincial Park.

Intensive Recreation Zone

Objective: To provide for a variety of readily accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.

Zone Description: Covers 67 hectares of the park and includes the campground, day use and boat launch facilities. The zone also includes all park roads.

Management Guidelines: Oriented toward maintaining a high quality recreation experience. Intensive management of resource and/or control of visitor activities. Operational facilities designed for efficient operation while remaining unobtrusive to the park visitor

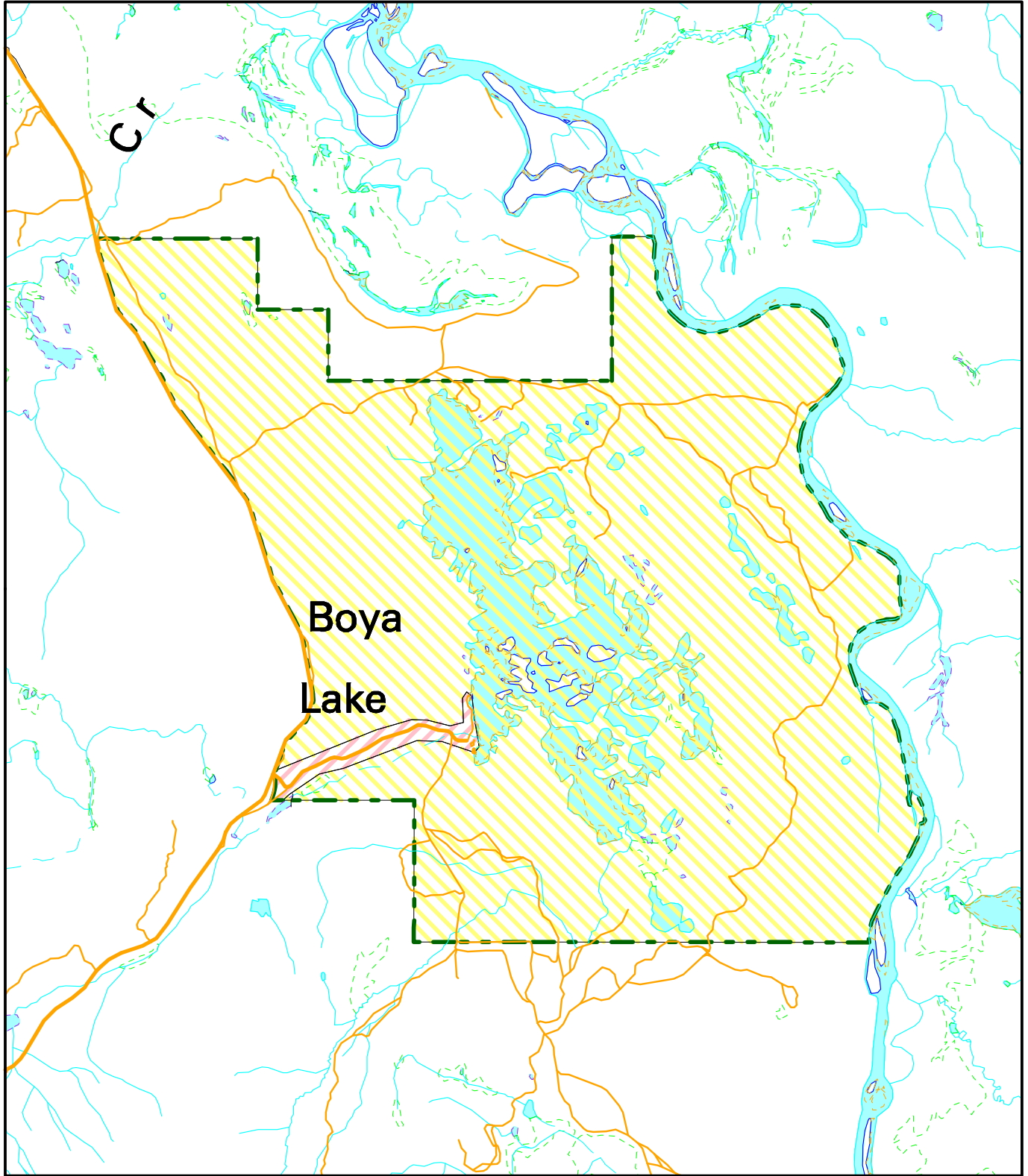
Natural Environment Zone

Objective: To protect scenic values and to provide for backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

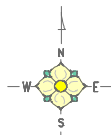
Zone Description: applies to 4,530 hectares of the park.

Management Guidelines: Oriented to maintaining a natural environment and a high quality recreation experience. Designation of access methods and limits on use may be necessary to avoid potential conflicts or minimize impacts (e.g., horse trails, cycle paths, hiking trails).

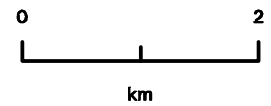
Figure 3: Zoning



Projection: UTM Zone 9
Datum: NAD83



-  Intensive Recreation
-  Natural Environment
-  Protected Area Boundary



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legal purposes.

**Figure 1. Boya Lake Provincial Park
Table of Acceptable Activities, Uses and Facilities**

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptable Uses
Aboriginal traditional activities and uses	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)	N
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	M
Guide outfitting (river rafting)	N
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	Y
Off-road access (snowmobile)	N
Off-road access (motorised)	N
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	Y
Motorised water access	Y (max 9.9hp proposed)
Aircraft access – no access adjacent to occupied campsites	Y
Fire management (suppression)	Y
Fire management (prescribed fire management)	N1
Fire management (prevention)	N
Forest insect/disease control	N1
Noxious weed control	N1
Exotic insect/disease control	N1
Commercial filming	M
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 = not allowed

N1 = allowed for expressed management purposes only

N2 = present and allowed to continue, but not normally allowed