

**BOYLE POINT  
PROVINCIAL PARK**

**MASTER PLAN**

**December, 1990**



Province of  
British Columbia

Ministry of  
Parks

# MEMORANDUM

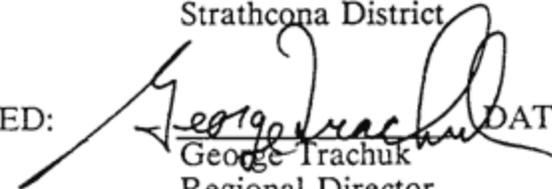
SOUTH COAST REGION

Mr. George Trachuk  
Regional Director  
South Coast Region

This Master Plan for Boyle Point Provincial Park is submitted  
for your consideration and approval.

  
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Typed by: Bobbie Grimard

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## **1.0 PLAN HIGHLIGHTS**

This document gives broad, long-term direction to the management of Boyle Point Provincial Park located on Denman Island. Comprising a typical Gulf Island environment and linked to Vancouver Island by ferry, the island is well visited by non-residents during the summer months. Residents of the island have a strong sense of community identity and highly value their island environment and atmosphere.

Highlights of this master plan include the following:

- Zoning of shoreline cliffs and marsh for preservation
- Enhancement of viewing opportunities
- Acquisition of inholdings and adjacent lands
- Development of a loop trail system
- Development of a fifteen vehicle staging area

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to guide the development and management of Boyle Point Provincial Park. The main issues to be addressed include the expansion of park boundaries into adjacent natural areas of significance and the type and level of development required.

### 2.2 Background Summary

Boyle Point is located at the southern tip of Denman Island. The park encompasses 125 hectares of gently sloping terrain enclosed by steep cliffs and covered in a Douglas-fir forest. Because of the small size, most of the natural resources in the park have very limited diversity. However, the underwater marine life adjacent to the park is highly diversified and acts as an attraction for divers. The main outdoor recreation features are the scenic sandstone bluffs that follow the shoreline boundary.

As the park was only established in 1989, there is little information on park use. However, residents confirm that they often use the area for walking and hiking.

### **3.0 THE ROLE OF THE PARK**

#### **3.1 Regional/Provincial Context**

Denman Island is situated between Hornby Island and the sheltered central east coast of Vancouver Island, approximately halfway along Georgia Strait (Figure 1). The nearest urban areas on Vancouver Island are Courtenay-Comox (about 20 km north) and Nanaimo (about 80 km south). Denman Island is linked to Vancouver Island by a small ferry (10 to 15 minutes to cross). A similar ferry service connects Denman Island with Hornby Island.

Although Denman Island is predominantly forested, much of the island is very pastoral in its setting with significant areas of agriculture and rural residential. The island's permanent population of about 1000 residents is supported by a small infrastructure of a few stores.

Denman and Hornby Islands differ little from the more southerly Gulf Islands of Georgia Strait. Because of their scenic and rural nature, some people have chosen to settle and live year-round on these pleasant islands, while others have established summer cottages. There are five provincial parks on both islands that serve both island residents and visitors by conserving scenic natural areas and providing opportunities for outdoor recreation.

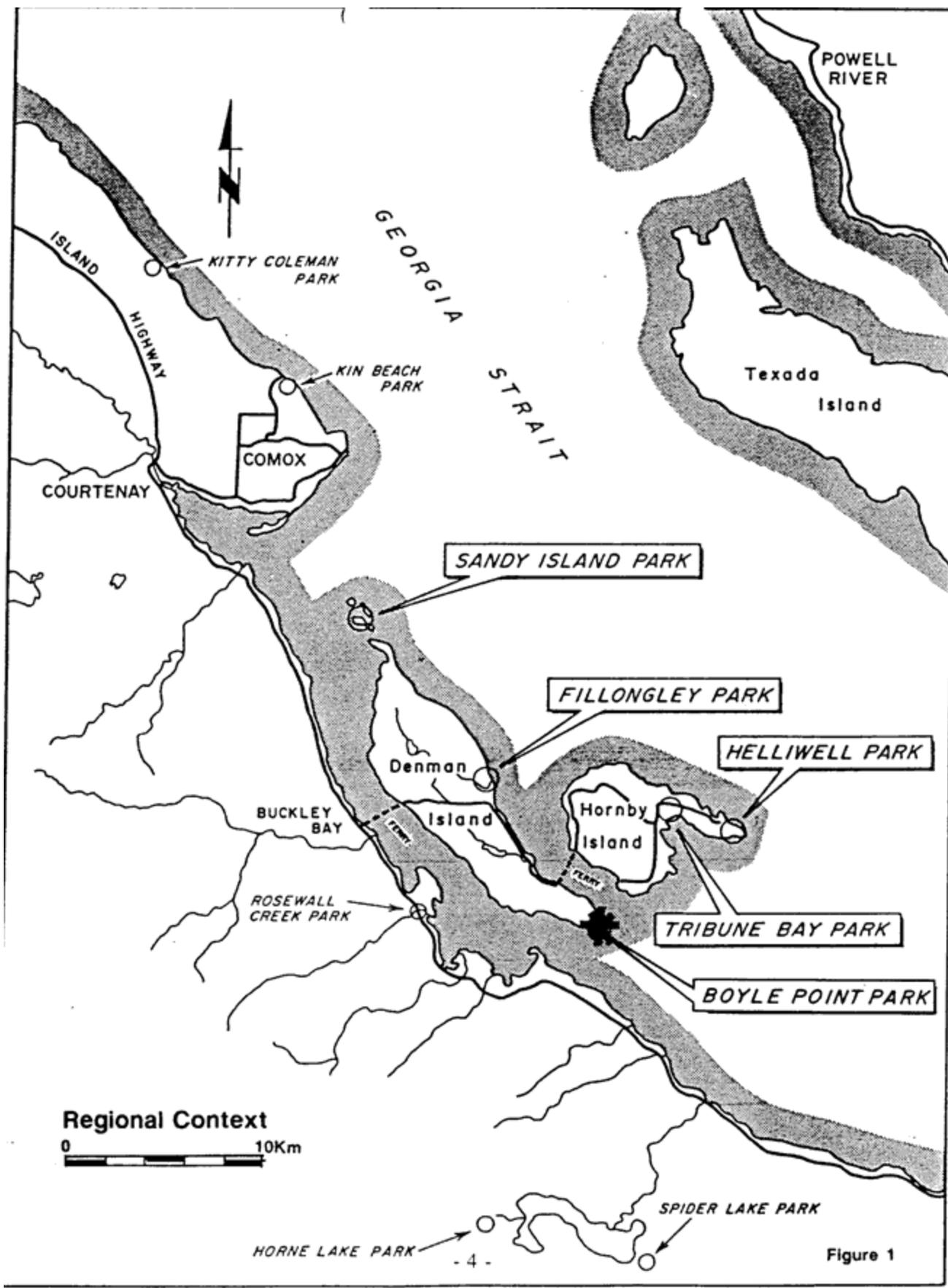


Figure 1

### 3.2 Conservation Role

In keeping with the Provincial Park System conservation goal of protecting the province's outstanding scenic features, the conservation role of Boyle Point Provincial Park is to conserve and protect the scenic sandstone cliff environment of Denman Island.

### 3.3 Recreation Role

The recreation goal of the Provincial Park System includes the provision of regional recreational opportunities to local and regional communities. Given this goal, it is the recreation role of Boyle Point Provincial Park to provide recreation opportunities, such as walking, viewing and nature appreciation to residents of and visitors to Denman Island.

## **4.0 ZONING**

Zoning is a procedure used to assist the planning and management of the provincial Park Act designations by dividing them into logical areas of land and water, based upon uniform and consistent management objectives. Boyle Point Provincial Park has been divided into three zones; Intensive Recreation Zone, Natural Environment Zone and Special Features Zone (Figure 2).

### **Intensive Recreation Zone**

This zone is used to define areas of concentrated facility development and park use. Although the natural environment is dominant, the developed facilities are readily visible. Management is oriented to maintaining a high quality recreation experience with intensive management of resources and control of visitor activities.

The proposed parking lot and surrounding area of the park entrance, about .5 hectare, are included in this zone. Most of the required facilities are concentrated here.

### **Natural Environment Zone**

The Natural Environment Zone is used to define areas managed for dispersed recreation with moderate to low levels of use and only basic facilities, such as trails, are provided.

The majority of the park reflects these conditions with about 107 hectares zoned as Natural Environment.

If the proposed land addition of Lot 125 is implemented, it will be included in this zone.

### **Special Features Zone**

The Special Features Zone is used to define significant natural or cultural features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage value, and to protect and present these features to visitors. Facilities are restricted to providing access and interpretation development.

The sandstone cliffs along the park shoreline are a significant feature of the Gulf Islands Regional Landscape and as the marsh area in the centre of the park is an important island ecosystem, it is included in the 17 hectares of the Special Features Zone. If Lot 127 is acquired as proposed, this zoning will also be applied to the sandstone feature of that lot which is used as a sea lion rookery during January and February.

# Boyle Point Provincial Park

## Zoning

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Figure 2



Baynes

Sound

DENMAN IS.

### Zones

-  Natural Environment
-  Intensive Recreation
-  Special Features

DL 126

Chrome Island

Boyle Point

DL 127

(Eagle Rock)

- 8 -

/TE

DL 125

POWER LINE

B.C.-HYDRO

PARK BOUNDARY

PARK BOUNDARY

## 5.0 NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The following management objectives and actions are based upon the *Park Act*, *Park Regulations* and appropriate ministry policies.

### 5.1 Land Management

**Objective:**

- To expand the upland area and add a foreshore component to the park.

**Actions:**

- Acquire Lots 125 and 127.
- Apply to BC Hydro to incorporate the hydro right-of-way within the park (Figure 5, page 25).
- Study the SW 1/4 of Section 2 as a potential addition.
- Establish a park study reserve over the foreshore fronting the park out to the 30 metre underwater contour.
- Prepare a marine park proposal.

### 5.2 Vegetation Management

**Objective:**

- To manage the plant communities of the park to preserve their current natural state.

**Actions:**

- Open fires will be prohibited.
- Wildfires caused by nature or man will be suppressed.
- Vegetation will be managed to prevent wildfires from occurring.
- Hazardous trees will be removed in accordance with ministry policy.
- Information will be provided as required to warn of fire hazards or the danger of falling trees during inclement weather.
- Harvesting flowers or other vegetation will be prohibited and will be discouraged through public education.

### 5.3 Wildlife Management

**Objective:**

- To retain existing wildlife levels and diversity.

**Actions:**

- Hunting or the discharge of firearms will be prohibited and the park will be added to Schedule B of *Park Regulations*.
- Dogs on leash regulations will be posted.
- Access to the sea lion rookery will be discouraged.
- Retain snags of cavity nesters and feeders unless a snag represents an imminent hazard to recreationists.

### 5.4 Soil Management

**Objective:**

- To ensure minimum disturbance to soil and rock.

**Action:**

- Pay strict attention to soil moisture regimes, soil classification and slope when modifying existing trails or designing new trails.

### 5.5 Water Management

**Objective:**

- To protect and maintain in their present condition the water courses of the park.

**Action:**

- Avoid developments near water courses, such as the marsh areas and ensure natural drainage is maintained.

### 5.6 Aesthetic Resources

**Objective:**

To protect the main visual resources of the park and enhance viewing opportunities where possible.

**Action:**

Provide viewpoints along the trail for visual access to Eagle Rock and Chrome Island.

## 6.0 VISITOR SERVICES MANAGEMENT

### 6.1 Introduction

As Boyle Point Provincial Park primarily offers visitors the opportunity to enjoy nature in the forest and along the seashore, the general visitor services management concept is to keep facilities and services to a minimal level to promote the enjoyment of the natural character of the park. This concept reflects the anticipated general low use and the limited potential of park resources to provide a wide variety or quantity of recreational opportunities.

Access will be provided through a parking area established at the fringe of the boundary with trails emanating from this central staging area.

The information strategy of the park will focus on the presentation of park features and the encouragement of high standards for environmentally sensitive ways of enjoying the outdoors.

### 6.2 Visitor Opportunities

#### **Objective:**

- To provide automobile and bicycle access day use, including walking, hiking, viewing, photography and nature appreciation.

#### **Actions:**

- A day use parking area for 15 vehicles and bicycles will be developed at the park entrance (Figure 3).
- Automobile access camping will not be provided at Boyle Point Provincial Park, as sufficient supply is provided in the vicinity by the private sector and at Fillongley Provincial Park, a 5 minute drive away.

Boyle Point Provincial Park  
Proposed Development

Ministry Of Parks - South Coast Region Oct 1990



Figure 3



Baynes

Sound

DENMAN IS.

Proposed Trail

Parking

Existing Trail

Viewpoint

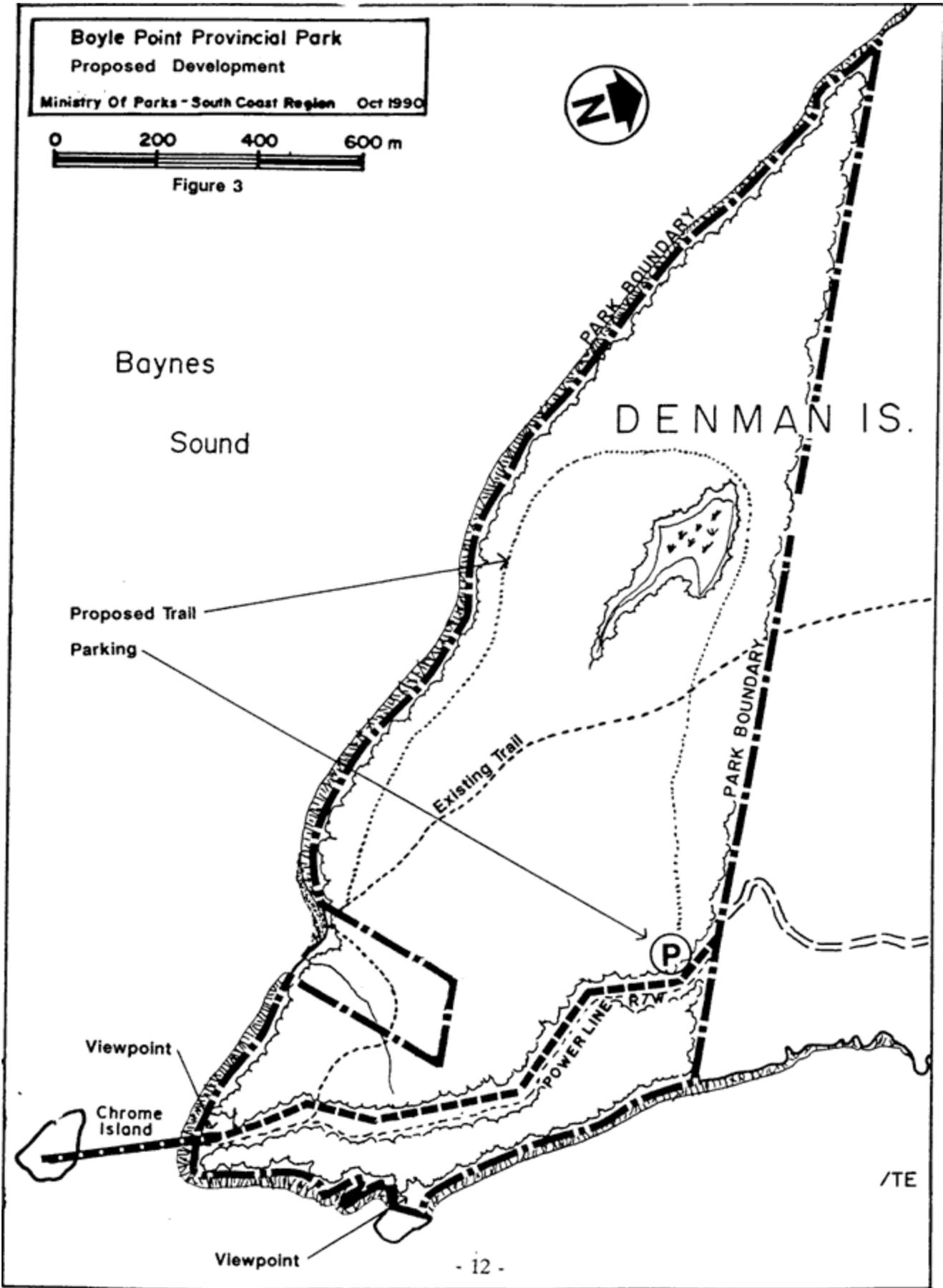
Chrome  
Island

Viewpoint

POWER LINE R/W

PARK BOUNDARY

/TE



- Bicycle access camping will not be provided at Boyle Point Provincial Park. However, the potential future addition of the SW 1/4 of Section 2 might accommodate development of walk-in and bicycle camping facilities.
- Boat access opportunities are extremely limited and overnight anchorage will not be encouraged.
- The park offers excellent opportunities for walking and day hiking. The trail system will include the BC Hydro access road and the existing trail which bisects the park and adjacent vacant Crown land (SW 1/4 of Section 2). A new trail will be developed along the western portion of the park, with loops back to existing trails. All trails will be Type 2 and designed to minimize impacts on forest vegetation.

### 6.3 Management Services

- Boyle Point Provincial Park is managed as part of the Strathcona District, the headquarters being at Rathtrevor Beach Provincial Park in Parksville.
- Wildfires will be controlled in cooperation with the Denman Island Volunteer Fire Department and the BC Forest Service.
- Garbage disposal services will not be provided at the park. Visitors will be requested to remove their own garbage.
- Potable water will not be provided at the park.

### 6.4 Promotion/Education

- Promotional information will be provided at the ferry terminals and in the park to raise the level of public awareness about the park's recreation opportunities and special natural features. In terms of education, the nature interpretation themes of the Douglas-fir forest, the cliffs, the sea lions and the marsh areas, as well as the significance of Chrome Island, will be presented through on-site signs.

## **7.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

In order of priority, the following actions are to be implemented as regional priorities dictate.

1. Develop visitor facilities at the entrance to the park, including a parking area for approximately 15 vehicles, pit toilets, a park information sign and gate. The view points at Eagle Rock and Chrome Island will also be built at this time.
2. Initiate discussion with BC Hydro concerning control of visitors and management of the right-of-way.
3. Implement the proposed park additions.
4. Initiate action to formulate a proposed marine park addition to the park including establishing a reserve over the foreshore area.
5. Pursue with the Ministry of Crown Lands in consultation with the Islands Trust the establishment of a map reserve over the SW 1/4 of Section 2, including the trail that passes through the site.
6. Expand the existing trail system.

# **BOYLE POINT PROVINCIAL PARK**

## **BACKGROUND REPORT**

### **APPENDIX I**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Boyle Point Provincial Park consists of approximately 125 hectares of rolling forested land and precipitous rocky shoreline cliffs, comprising the southern tip of Denman Island in Georgia Strait.

Historically, the area was held by the Crown Provincial for forestry purposes. The Director of Lands established a reserve from alienation for future recreational use on the parcel in 1971. In 1983, the Ecological Reserves Unit of the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing proposed that the area be designated an ecological reserve but a pre-existing petroleum exploration permit covering the area at the time precluded ecological reserve designation. In 1986, the Comox-Strathcona Regional District initiated creation of a Regional Nature Park for the area as part of its "Comox Valley Area Parks Plan". In 1989, the area was designated as a provincial park.



Rocky shoreline and cliffs typical of  
Boyle Point Provincial Park

## 2.0 NATURAL RESOURCES

### 2.1 Land

The park's terrain is relatively flat or undulating land bounded on three sides by steep sandstone and conglomerate escarpments dropping to the sea. The coastline is approximately 70% cliffs, the remainder sloping, with extremely limited land access to the foreshore. There are no protected bays or inlets. All beaches are boulder beaches. There is a small gravel beach which is accessible and relatively sheltered in front of Lot 125. Eagle Rock is a separate islet, accessible by land at low tide.

The upland soil cover is generally shallow, overlaying rock rubble, gravel pockets, clay or flat-lying sandstone. There is a small marsh in the southwestern portion of the park.



Sandstone of Eagle Rock severely eroded  
by wave action forms unusual patterns

## 2.2 Vegetation

The park is dominated by a largely undisturbed plant community of the Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic subzone. Thirteen distinct plant communities occupy various areas of the park, although Douglas-fir, in community with grand fir, red alder, mosses, salal and various herbs and shrubs, dominate the upland. Old-growth Douglas-fir are found throughout the area amidst younger stands of + /- 100 years. There are several notable small stands of mature grand fir as well as scattered arbutus and broadleaf maple specimens. Specialized plant ecosystems are found along the sandstone escarpments. A fern, *Dryopteris arguta*, grows in the park and is rare in British Columbia, being at the northern fringe of its North American range.

## 2.3 Water

The park area is largely very dry with no year-round running freshwater. The marsh in the southwesterly portion of the park holds seasonal surface water and drains to the gravel beach in Lot 125.

## 2.4 Climate

The climate is moist, with most of the 70 to 100 cm of precipitation occurring between October and June. Summers are mild and dry, with temperatures moderated by a sea breeze from Georgia Strait. Average winter temperatures are slightly above freezing and snowfalls are rare. The dominant wind direction is from the southeast, with northwesterlies often prevailing in the summer months.

## 2.5 Wildlife

**Mammals:** Although a wildlife inventory has not been conducted, the park represents one of the largest undisturbed parcels of land on the island, providing habitat for significant numbers of typical coastal species. The upland area is criss-crossed with deer trails, indicating a substantial population of Columbian black-tailed deer, while Steller's sea lions occupy the adjacent waters throughout the winter months and haul-out on Eagle Rock. At times the number of

sea lions have been estimated as high as 100 animals. This is one of only a handful of habitual sea lion haul-outs in the strait. Harbour seals are also often visible from the park and killer whales occasionally pass through Lambert Channel. River otters are seen along the foreshore areas.

**Birds:** Residents report that there are outstanding bird-watching opportunities. Bald eagles are common and can often be seen at close range gliding on wind currents created above the cliffs. The large number of old-growth Douglas-fir trees favour eagle nesting and perching, and residents report a number of eagle nesting sites within the park. Other large forest birds, such as ravens, pileated woodpeckers and flickers are also reported, along with a variety of small songbirds. The adjacent cliffs, islets and waters support large bird populations which include cormorants, loons and gulls.

**Marine Life:** The tidal waters of Boyle Point are rich in a variety of marine life. Although an underwater inventory has not been done, divers report a variety of marine life typical of these waters, including a few species of anemones, nudibranchs, scallops, octopus, Wolfe Eel, abalone and several species of rock fish.

The water around Boyle Point is also an important Herring spawning area which may account for the influx of sea lions during the herring run in March.

## 2.6 Outdoor Recreation Features

The main features of the park are the sandstone cliffs and forest. The sandstone and conglomerate rock cliffs are of high significance as a recreation feature because of their height, colour and visual interest, while the Douglas-fir forest of the park is highly significant because it is the largest protected unlogged area on Denman Island.

## 2.7 Resources Analysis

The purpose is to briefly describe the significance of major park resources relative to the provincial park system conservation and recreation programs.

### **a) Conservation Programs**

- **Natural Landscape Representation**  
Boyle Point Provincial Park is located within the "Georgia Strait Lowland and Islands Landscape" but does not represent the range of landscape characteristics because of its size.
- **Marine Environment Representation**  
The park does not at present include an intertidal or underwater component.
- **Outstanding Features**
  - The upland forest represents an outstanding example of undisturbed dry coastal Douglas-fir regime.
  - The cliffs are quite spectacular and of interest for their geologic formations and specialized plant communities.

## b) **Recreation Programs**

- **Backcountry**

The park area is too limited for this use.

- **Boating**

The shoreline is neither suitable nor accessible for boat launching.

- **Road Access**

- The area is suited to day use, offering excellent opportunities for leisure walking, day hiking, nature study, viewing and photography.

- The park is well situated for touring bicyclists, including groups en route to Hornby Island.

- **Winter**

The climate is too mild for snow or ice oriented activities.

Viewing of hauled-out sea lions is popular during the winter months.

### **3.0 TENURES, OCCUPANCY RIGHTS AND JURISDICTIONS**

Leases and Permits	:	Lots 125 and 127 are Crown leases. There is a foreshore lease fronting Lot 125 for mariculture
Fee Simple Holdings	:	None
Water Rights	:	None
Rights-of-Way	:	BC Hydro
Mineral Claims	:	None
Trespasses	:	None
Statutory Jurisdiction	:	None
Guiding	:	None

## 4.0 VISITOR SERVICES

### 4.1 Existing Development (Figure 4)

#### **Parking**

At present, vehicles park at the beginning of the BC Hydro right-of-way, along the side of the road. Development of an off-road parking area to accommodate 15 vehicles is required.

#### **Toilet System**

None exists at present. Pit toilets should be provided at the parking area.

#### **Trails**

The BC Hydro service road, which is gated, serves as a trail to the southern tip of the park. A short, steep path down a bank connects this trail with the foreshore by Eagle Rock. A longer woodland footpath originates in the SW 1/4 of Section 2, roughly bisects that 1/4 section, then angles south and east to join the BC Hydro road near the park's southern tip. In Lot 125, a trail leads from this footpath down to the beach.

#### **Freshwater**

No potable water is available in the park area.

### 4.2 Management Services

No services are provided at present.

### 4.3 Park Attendance and Visitor Activities

As this is a newly-created park, there is no record of attendance or activities.

The area has long been used by residents and visitors on a day use basis, primarily for hiking and nature study. Frequency of use by horseback riders, mountain bicyclists and trail bikers is not known, though at present, some of this use appears to be occurring.

**Boyle Point Provincial Park**

Existing Features/Development

Ministry Of Parks - South Coast Region Oct 1990



Figure 4



Baynes

Sound

DENMAN IS.

Existing Trail	- - - - -
Forest Cover	☁
Cliffs	⚡

Wetland

Gravel Beach

DL 125

Road To Ferry

DL 126

Chrome Island

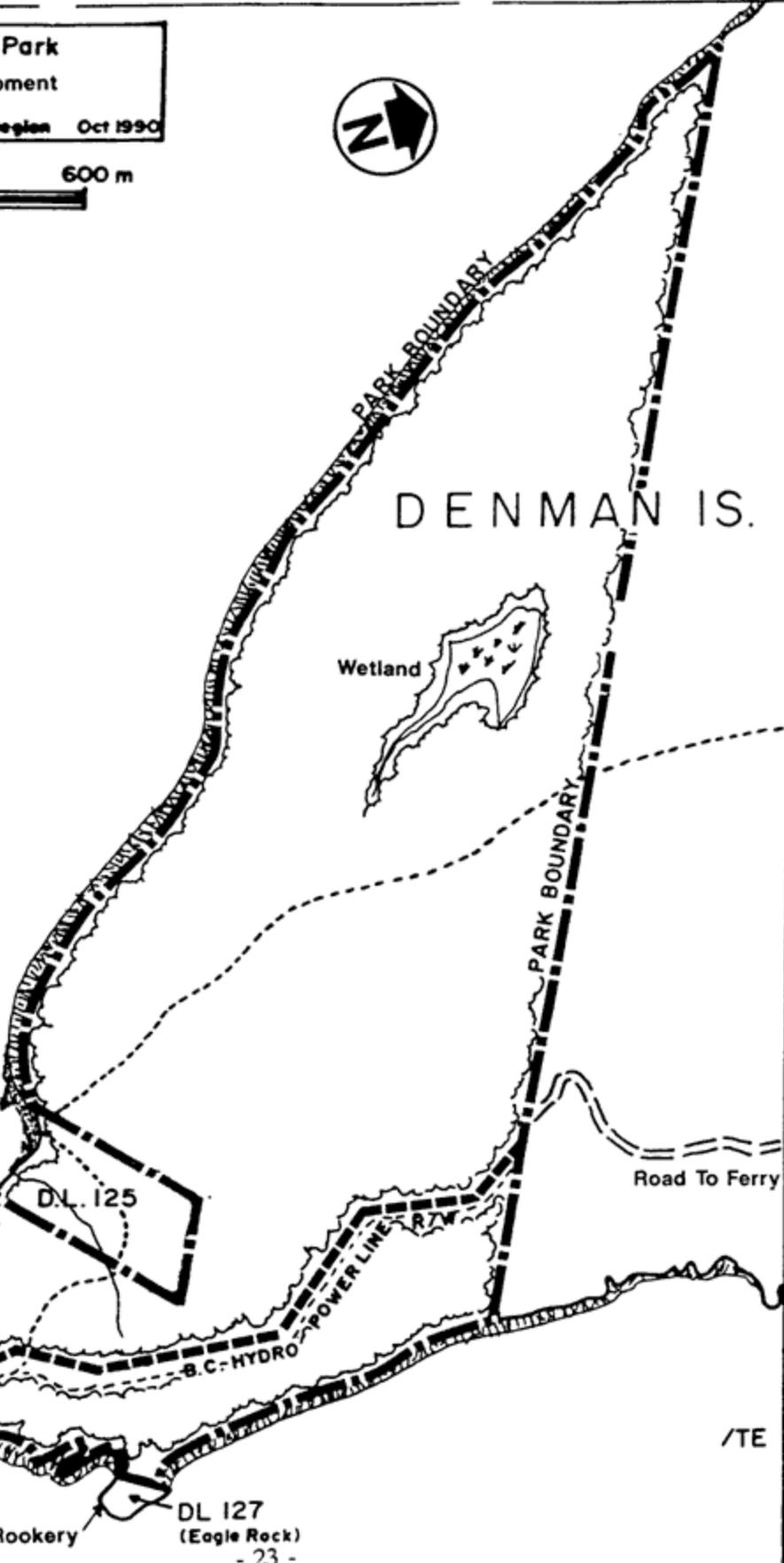
Boyle Point

Sea Lion Rookery

DL 127  
(Eagle Rock)

- 23 -

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## 5.0 PLANNING ISSUES

### 5.1 Park Additions (Figure 5)

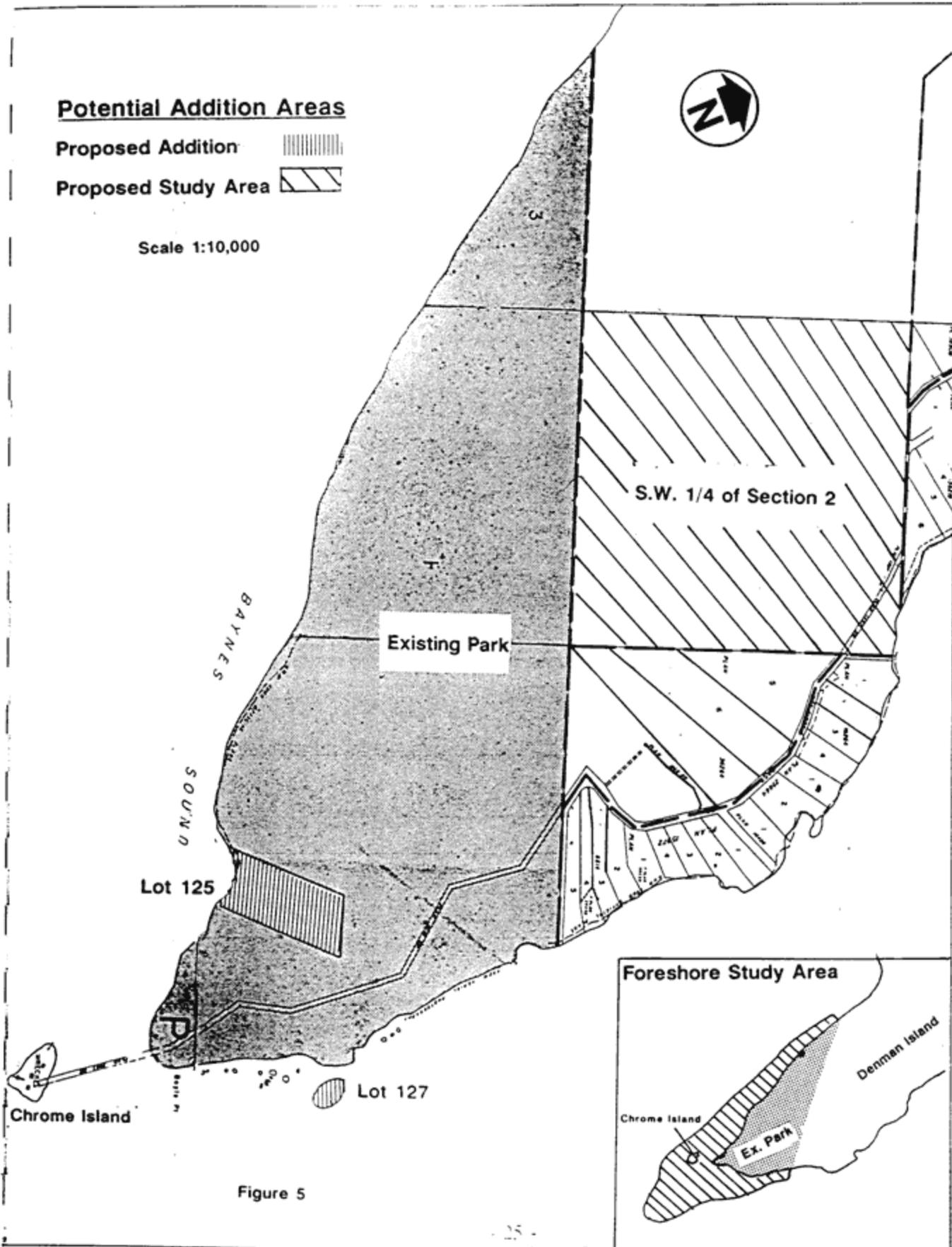
- The SW 1/4 of Section 2 adjacent to the park is Crown land reserved for the Islands Trust with a small portion held as a gravel reserve in favour of the Ministry of Transportation and Highways. These lands contain the same forest values as is in the park and are part of the same drainage system. The trail through this parcel and into the park has been used by the public for many years. The Ministry of Crown Lands has been requested by the community to consider inclusion of this parcel in the park if and when the gravel reserve is cancelled. The Ministry of Crown Lands has undertaken to establish a Notation of Interest in this respect.
- The two parcels of land in the park contain complementary features that would be of interest to park visitors and would assist in park management; however, they are currently encumbered by Crown leases and in the case of Lot 125, a cabin trespass.
- The addition of the foreshore would provide protection over significant marine life and scuba diving recreational opportunities; however, an oyster lease encumbers the foreshore of Lot 125.
- The BC Hydro right-of-way and the access road is used as a trail to access the park. Control of public use and management of this area should be considered.

**Potential Addition Areas**

Proposed Addition 

Proposed Study Area 

Scale 1:10,000



**Foreshore Study Area**



Figure 5

## 5.2 Level and Types of Development

The main development requirement is an appropriate off-road parking area to establish an entrance and staging area for the park.

Given the small size of the park, it is not considered appropriate to develop overnight camping facilities, though such development might be accommodated on a walk-in basis should the SW 1/4 of Section 2 be added to the park.

Residents have repeatedly expressed concern that development be sensitive to the natural values of the area; for example, that trails be developed only as minimum-width footpaths and that no fencing be installed along the top of escarpments.

The trail down the cliff to Eagle Rock is problematic, being potentially hazardous at present. Community opinion favours no improvement to the trail so as to discourage its use, thereby minimizing impacts upon both cliffside vegetation and hauled-out sea lions.

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