

Callaghan Lake
Provincial Park

MANAGEMENT
PLAN

DRAFT

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Last update: December 31, 2000



**Ministry of Environment
Lands and Parks**

BC Parks Division

Callaghan Lake
Provincial Park

MANAGEMENT
PLAN

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VISION STATEMENT

Callaghan Lake Provincial Park will continue to significantly contribute to the recreational opportunities within the Sea-to-Sky Corridor and within the Lower Mainland region. The main focus of management decisions will be to continue backcountry recreation opportunities in a manner that maintains the protection of natural attributes such as fish and wildlife values, associated habitats, natural vegetation and views.

This park will continue its role as a local and regionally important recreation destination offering a variety of summer and winter recreation opportunities. As well, it will be managed with high consideration of adjacent recreational development to ensure broader linkages so as to provide wider outdoor opportunities.

The park will continue to be managed in a manner sensitive to the traditional use of the Squamish Nation and the Lil'wat Nation. The park will be encouraged as an educational opportunity to further identify traditional First Nation use of mid and high elevational areas within the Coast Mountains. Ongoing consultation with First Nations regarding management decisions will be of high priority.

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PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The Callaghan Lake Provincial Park Management Plan addresses a number of issues that affect the long-term management of the park. Outlined below are a number of key items that BC Parks will strive to complete during the life of this plan¹. These items were determined to be of priority through input from the public, land management agencies, First Nations, and non-government organisations. It is the view of BC Parks that these items will contribute significantly towards natural and cultural attributes and recreational opportunities within Callaghan Lake Provincial Park as well as contributing towards maintaining the vision of this park and its role within British Columbia's system of protected areas.

- Over 90% of Callaghan Park is zoned as Natural Environment allowing for the protection of natural and cultural values while offering a variety of backcountry recreation opportunities.
- BC Parks will continue to work closely with other agencies regarding the management of natural and recreational values that extend beyond park boundaries.
- Ongoing monitoring of fish and wildlife species to ensure populations are maintained at healthy levels.
- Protect vegetation including rare species or communities and rehabilitate areas previously impacted from unregulated recreation activities.
- Promote and maintain ongoing communications protocol with the Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation regarding park management and the protection of natural and cultural resources.
- Close the existing rustic camping location at the south end of Callaghan Lake and rehabilitate the area while including a small day use oriented site. Develop a walk-in/boat-in wilderness camping site on the north-east side of the lake.
- Expand summer recreation opportunities by developing trails that link to existing trail networks outside the park
- Maintain existing winter recreation activities and continue to assist with cooperative strategies to minimise user conflicts.

¹ While key items are identified, it should be noted that the completion of all items is subject to funding and funding procedures. As such, items are prioritized and completed as funding permits. As well, all development within Provincial Parks is subject to the BC Parks Impact Assessment Policy.

INTRODUCTION

The Management Planning Process

BC Parks prepares management plans to guide protected area management over the next ten to twenty years². The plan sets out objectives and actions for conservation, recreation, development, interpretation and operation of a protected area. A management plan relies on current information relating to such subjects as natural and cultural attributes, and recreation opportunities within a protected area together with land management activities occurring on surrounding lands.

The process for preparing a management plan involves a careful analysis of the overall goals of the protected area, use patterns, management objectives, and possible sources of conflict among protected area policies. Through the planning process, various options for managing the protected area are developed and assessed. In choosing the most appropriate option, the intent is to ensure the management decision protects the values of the protected area and that human use within and adjacent to the protected area does not result in unacceptable impacts.

A management plan not only establishes long-term management direction for a protected area, but also gives direction for immediate issues. As a result, a management plan contains numerous statements describing management actions to be undertaken. As BC Parks is unable to carry out all action items at the same time, the management plan must also set priorities for management actions.

Management plans are prepared with a high degree of public involvement. The general public and public interest groups have opportunities to review management planning documents and provide comments to BC Parks through a variety of means including public meetings and mail-outs. Similarly, BC Parks consults with First Nations, other levels of government and other provincial government agencies in the development and review of management plans. In certain instances, public advisory committees help prepare the management plan and often function as a partner with BC Parks in implementing the plan and monitoring progress.

For Callaghan Lake Park, the management planning process has relied on a variety of background information including:

² While management plans are initially developed to guide the management of a protected area for a 5 to 10 year period, a number of factors will influence how long the plan will be valid. Should this management plan still provide appropriate management direction for Callaghan Lake Park after 10 years, and still be appropriate with respect to the goals and vision of this protected area, the plan may still be deemed appropriate until such a time that updating or re-writing is required.

- The report from the Callaghan Study Team regarding PAS values for the park area as well as a larger study area;
- Related socio-economic reports and public consultation reports that were derived through the Callaghan study process;
- Numerous opportunities for public consultation during that process regarding public views of appropriate management options for the area;
- First Nations consultation and recommendations;
- Input from several agency, stakeholder and public advisory groups including a management plan advisory group;
- BC Parks' principles, policies and guidelines; and,
- Public review of draft forms of this document (through local libraries, the BC Parks web site, and open houses) whereby comments received were considered for finalising management direction.

Background Summary

Callaghan Lake Park was designated a Class A Provincial Park in July 1997, following the Province's decision to protect 2,667 ha. of land in the upper Callaghan Valley (Figure 1). The park is centred on Callaghan Lake at 1160 metres above sea level and includes nearby alpine peaks upwards of 2,270 metres. The park is typical of the Coast Mountains in that it contains numerous post-glacial physical features including tarns, cirques, hanging valleys and flat rocky benches.

Located approximately 12 km. north-west of Whistler, B.C. and 75 km. north of Vancouver, the park is accessed via Highway 99, then turning west onto the Callaghan Lake Forest Service Road (FSR) about 8 km. south of Whistler. The gravel Callaghan FSR winds 17 km. to the south end of Callaghan Lake. Nearby parks include Alice Lake Park, Garibaldi Park, Brandywine Park, Nairn Falls Park and the new protected areas of Tantalus Park and Clendinning Park (Figure 2).

The park is comprised of approximately 50% Alpine Tundra and Parkland biogeoclimatic zone. 32% of the park falls within the Mountain Hemlock Zone while 11% occurs in the

Map not available

Map not available

Coastal Western Hemlock Zone. The remaining 7% is lake. Common tree species includes mountain hemlock, Engleman spruce, subalpine fir, Amabilis fir and occurrences of Douglas-fir and whitebark pine. The park contains one blue-listed species, nodding semaphore grass (*Pleuropogon refractus*), as reported by the Conservation Data Centre.

Wildlife in the park is typical of coastal mid and high elevation areas and includes black bear, black-tailed deer, cougar, mountain goat, wolf, wolverine, small furbearers, raptors, upland game birds and a variety of amphibians and reptiles. Grizzly bear occasionally use portions of the park within a larger range area. The park is adjacent to a BC Environment draft grizzly bear recovery zone and the Callaghan Valley is currently identified as having good grizzly habitat potential. Callaghan Creek, Callaghan Lake and Cirque Lake support Dolly Varden char and rainbow trout. Stocking of rainbow trout has occurred since 1975.

The park lies within an area that is considered traditional territory by both the Squamish Nation and the Lil'wat Nation. Little information exists regarding traditional activities and use within the park area for either group and no documentation exists in the Archaeology Branch regarding cultural features or traditional activities near Callaghan Lake.

Photo not available

Plate 1. High ridges and bowls provide snowmobiling opportunities just outside the northern park boundaries.

The park and surrounding area has a long history of recreational use for both summer and winter months. Callaghan Lake is one of only a few subalpine lakes accessible by 2-wheel drive vehicles within a reasonable drive from Vancouver. The south end of Callaghan Lake was managed as a Forest Service Recreation Site and has been used by campers for many years though the site is rustic with few facilities. The lake itself has been popular for fishers and small boaters and the surrounding landscape offers wilderness hiking and mountaineering. High snowfalls in the winter months in combination with the favourable terrain have lead to high use for nordic skiing and snowmobiling. As well, a growing trend towards snowmobile assisted skiing and snowboarding has been noted in recent years.

Photo not available

Plate 2. Callaghan Lake looking north towards Cirque Creek.

Relationship to Other Land Use Planning

Callaghan Lake area has been examined for park purposes since the early 1980s. The area was identified as a candidate area under various land use planning processes such as the Parks and Wilderness for the 90s program. The area was again identified as a candidate area under the Province's Protected Areas Strategy (PAS). In 1993, a multi-agency team studied the area and recommended park designation of the entire 11,376 ha. study area. This was then included for

consideration under the Lower Mainland PAS process whereby the current area of 2,667 ha. was approved by Cabinet for park designation.

In 1987, the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW), the Ministry of Forests and the Squamish Forest District initiated the Whistler Local Resource Use Plan (LRUP) in response to growing public concern over visual impacts from forest development and recreation use near the resort. The Whistler LRUP area lies adjacent to much of the south and east boundary of the park. As such, two key components of the LRUP plan of interest to park management are road access and neighbouring trail development.

The park is within the traditional territories of the Squamish Nation and the Lil'wat Nation (Mt. Currie Indian Band). The Squamish Nation is currently involved in treaty negotiations over traditional lands that include the park. At this time, the Lil'wat Nation is not involved in the treaty process.

In 1998, Whistler and Vancouver were the successful bidders to represent Canada in the competition to host the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. In 2003, a decision will be made as to which country will host these games. The Callaghan Valley south of the park has the highest potential to be developed for nordic skiing events for these games. Should Canada be successful in winning the Olympic bid, this potential site will be subject to ongoing planning in preparation for the 2010 games. BC Parks will need to ensure access corridors to the park for public use are identified in the Olympic Planning process. Development of nordic facilities and the anticipated large increase of visitors to the Callaghan Valley may require BC Parks to review this park management plan to determine appropriateness and effectiveness of management direction.

Planning Issues

The future of Callaghan Lake Park and its diversity of recreation, natural and cultural values will rely on key planning and management decisions. BC Parks now manages this portion of the Callaghan Valley that has a long history of human use. Previous use (both unregulated and as under Ministry of Forests management) must be examined with current BC Parks policies and regulations and decisions made with respect to appropriateness of existing and future recreation opportunities and impacts on natural and cultural values. A long-term vision to ensure the park and its values are viable and consistent with provincial protected area goals is the cornerstone of successful planning. As well, the park and its attributes must contribute to the overall system of protected areas both in the region and across the Province. As such, a protected area can not be all things to all people but rather contribute values to the overall system.

Key planning issues for Callaghan Lake Park include:

- **Future development:** The recreation role of the park must be clearly defined and decisions made regarding the future of existing and proposed recreation opportunities. This may mean a change to historic use and activities. Due to the relatively small size of the park and the popularity of recreation in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor, future opportunities must be made in conjunction with opportunities outside the park to ensure a wide variety of opportunities for the public.
- **Protection of natural and cultural values:** BC Parks must ensure management decisions do not adversely impact natural and cultural values even in protected areas with significant recreational opportunities.
- **Integrated management outside the protected area:** Given the park's small size in relation to the Callaghan Valley in general, natural, cultural and recreational values inside the park largely rely on land management outside the park boundaries for long-term viability. BC Parks and outside agencies and stakeholders must work in a co-operative manner to ensure cross-boundary values such as wildlife habitats, recreational trails and visual quality objectives can be integrated with other land management decisions.

THE ROLE OF THE PARK

Regional and Provincial Context

The Callaghan Valley, including the Callaghan Lake Park area, has a long history of a regional and backcountry recreation use for both summer and winter activities. Most notably, hiking, fishing, rustic camping, snowmobiling and backcountry skiing has occurred in the area.

The roles of the park described below, together with the following Vision Statement for the park, guide the management activities outlined within this management plan. These roles are consistent with the broader Protected Areas Strategy Goals and with the BC Parks System Goals as described in Appendix A.

Conservation Role

Conservation goals of the Protected Areas Strategy include: a) representation of the natural diversity of the province; and, b) protection of special natural, cultural heritage and recreation features of the province. Occurring within the Eastern Pacific Ranges (EPR) ecosection, Callaghan Lake Park does not significantly contribute to representation of the natural diversity of the EPR. Table 1 outlines current representation of the EPR and the contribution of Callaghan Lake Park.

Table 1. Callaghan Lake Park Contribution to Biogeoclimatic Representation in the Eastern Pacific Ranges Ecosection

Biogeoclimatic Zone (BGCZ)	Total of BGCZ in EPR (ha.)	Total of BGCZ protected in EPR	Callaghan Park contribution to BGCZ in EPR (ha.)*	Callaghan Park % contribution to BGCZ in EPR
AT p	124,665	25.77%	1301	0.27%
MHm2	62,890	21.61%	910	0.31%
CWHms1	53,012	13.64%	285	0.07%

* Lake contribution – 170 ha.

However, it does contain a number of important conservation values:

- The park contains a number of higher elevation wildlife species such as black bear, black-tailed deer, cougar, mountain goat, wolf, wolverine, small furbearers, raptors, upland game birds and a variety of amphibians and reptiles³. The park contributes to seasonal grizzly bear habitats and is adjacent to a BC Environment draft grizzly bear recovery zone;

³ However, due to the park's small size, it is unlikely the park provides the full range of habitat requirements for many larger species.

- The park is known to contain the blue-listed species *Pleuropogon refractus* (nodding semaphore grass) as reported by the Conservation Data Centre; and,
- The park contains some high elevation old-growth forests.

Photo not available

Plate 3. Callaghan Lake looking south. Brandywine Mountain in the background.

Recreation Role

Under the provincial system goals for recreation, BC Parks has four recreation goals: a) tourism travel routes; b) holiday destinations; c) backcountry; and d) local and regional recreation opportunities. The focus of Callaghan Lake Park is predominantly backcountry recreation opportunities along with regional recreation opportunities. The park contributes to the collective tourism values within the Sea-to-Sky Corridor and the communities of Squamish, Whistler and Pemberton.

- Callaghan Lake is the dominant recreational feature that provides summer fishing and boating opportunities and winter access to alpine areas for snowmobiling and backcountry skiing.

- The park is a small portion of the entire Callaghan Valley, which has a long history of recreation use for both summer and winter activities.
- The park will continue to focus on summer and winter recreation activities and be managed to provide linkages to recreation facilities (trails) and areas outside the park.

Vision Statement

The purpose of the vision statement is to identify the role and function of the park well into the future, beyond the life of the management plan. The long-term vision assists in ensuring the shorter term management actions are consistent with meeting this vision.

VISION STATEMENT

Callaghan Lake Provincial Park will continue to significantly contribute to the recreational opportunities within the Sea-to-Sky Corridor and within the Lower Mainland region. The main focus of management decisions will be to continue backcountry recreation opportunities in a manner that maintains the protection of natural attributes such as fish and wildlife values, associated habitats, natural vegetation and viewscapes.

This park will continue its role as a local and regionally important recreation destination offering a variety of summer and winter recreation opportunities. As well, it will be managed with high consideration of adjacent recreational development to ensure broader linkages so as to provide wider outdoor opportunities.

The park will continue to be managed in a manner sensitive to the traditional use of the Squamish Nation and the Lil'wat Nation. The park will be encouraged as an educational opportunity to further identify traditional First Nation use of mid and high elevational areas within the Coast Mountains. Ongoing consultation with First Nations regarding management decisions will be of high priority.

PARK ZONING

BC Parks uses a zoning system to assist in the management of protected areas. Zoning is used in park planning to develop general management guidelines for areas of a park on a geographical and ecological basis (Appendix B). Each zone reflects a general level of management with respect to natural, cultural and recreational values. Callaghan Lake Provincial Park is divided into two zones: the Intensive Recreation Zone and the Natural Environment Zone (Fig. 3).

Intensive Recreation Zone

The management objective of this zone is to provide for a variety of high use and readily accessible visitor services and facilities. This zone covers a small portion of the park and includes the road corridor (to 10 metres either side of road centre line) and the parking/day use area at the south end of Callaghan Lake bordered on the west by Callaghan Creek. Located within the zone will be vehicle access facilities, day use facilities and signage.

Natural Environment Zone

The objective of this zone is to provide accessible backcountry outdoor recreation activities in a largely undisturbed natural environment. This zone encompasses all but an approximate 5% of the park, including Callaghan Lake and the surrounding ridge and alpine area. The zone will be managed for moderate recreational facilities with hiking trails and a wilderness campground being the principal forms of development. For winter, BC Parks will designate a portion of this zone (a corridor that includes the Callaghan FSR, Callaghan Lake and the traditional access route to the bowls north of the park) for snowmobile use while managing the eastern and western portions (including Cirque Lake) for non-motorised winter activities.

Map not available

NATURAL AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES MANAGEMENT

The management of natural and cultural attributes in Callaghan Lake Provincial Park will be based upon the *Park Act*, Park and Recreation Area Regulations, ministry policies and the role of the park in the overall system of provincial parks and protected areas in British Columbia.

PAS conservation goals and the BC Parks recreation management goals will be met by protecting natural, cultural and outdoor recreation values, monitoring conditions and visitor use, and working co-operatively with others.

Land and Resource Tenures

Active timber harvesting occurs in the Callaghan Valley and has included harvesting near the southern boundary of the park. One commercial recreation tenure pre-dates the park and has recently been legitimised in the park through a Park Use Permit. This tenure allows for access through the park in winter months by backcountry skiers accessing the Mad River Nordic Centre lodge west of the park. The Callaghan Valley and the Sea-to-Sky Corridor in general have shown large increases in interest for commercial recreation tenures. Summer and winter operators for motorised and non-motorised backcountry tours have greatly increased in numbers. As well, short-term permit applications such as filming have increased.

Vancouver-Whistler was recently chosen as the successful Canadian bid for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. This bid must now compete against other country bids to host these games. The lower Callaghan Valley has been identified as a key area for nordic facilities and planning for these are in the early stages. It is anticipated that should the Canadian bid be successful, facility development for nordic skiing would occur in the lower valley.

Objective: To protect the conservation and cultural attributes within the park together with the recreational opportunities that exist or are planned and identified through this management plan.

To work in a co-operative manner with the Canadian Olympic bid committee regarding facilities in the lower Callaghan Valley and determine how best to ensure these developments and future uses would compliment the park.

Action:

- BC Parks will work closely with other agencies to manage conservation, recreation and cultural values that extend beyond park boundaries or that may affect the park.
- Review resource land use plans for adjacent areas and to ensure values associated with the park have been considered. Encourage agencies to adopt appropriate management techniques that will not adversely impact these values.
- Review this management plan if the Canadian Olympic bid is successful and on completion of the Olympic Games to determine if a plan amendment or new management plan is required based on new facilities and visitors associated with the nordic centre.

Vegetation

Callaghan Lake Park lies within the Eastern Pacific Ranges Ecosection and is comprised of the Alpine Tundra, Mountain Hemlock and Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zones. Vegetation in the park is typical of these zones and ranges from high alpine lichens, herbs and shrubs through to large Douglas-fir and coastal western hemlock forest stands (Figure 4). The forests of the park have only been subject to natural disturbance and are considered as high elevation old-growth (Figure 5).

Almost 50% of the park is considered high elevation alpine and parkland (ATp) and primarily occurs in the north-west portion of the park around Cirque Lake. Another area of ATp occurs on the eastern ridges and peaks of the park, east of Callaghan Lake. Vegetation in these areas is restricted to lichens, herbs and small shrubs with small amounts of subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmanni*), mountain hemlock (*Tsuga mertensia*), and whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulus*).

The leeward Mountain Hemlock moist maritime variant (MHmm2) follows an elevational band between Callaghan Lake and the ridges to the west, north and east. Approximately one-third of the park lies within this subzone and tree species include Mountain hemlock, western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), western red-cedar (*Thuja plicata*), yellow cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and Amabilis fir (*Abies amabilis*). Shrub species include blueberry and black huckleberry (*Vaccinium spp.*).

The immediate shoreline and area south of Callaghan Lake, including the Callaghan Creek area falls within the southern Coastal Western Hemlock moist sub-maritime variant (CWHms1). Approximately 15% of the park lie within this variant. The dominant tree species is western

Map not available

Map not available

hemlock, which grows in association with patches of Douglas-fir and western red-cedar. Shrubs include blueberry and huckleberry, falsebox (*Pachistima myrsinites*), bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*), queen's cup (*Clintonia uniflora*) and five-leaved bramble (*Rubus pedatus*). Also characteristic in this variant is a sparse herb layer and predominance of several moss species.

The Conservation Data Centre reports one blue-listed species, the nodding semaphore grass (*Pleuropogon refractus*) occurs in boggy habitats within the park.

A draft fire management plan was recently developed for the park with objectives that include protecting public safety, maintaining natural ecosystems, habitat and diversity in the park, allowing natural processes where possible and protecting natural and cultural values within and adjacent to the park. Approval and implementation of this plan will be conducted between BC Parks and the Ministry of Forests Protection Branch.

Objective: To protect the park vegetation as a natural dynamic ecosystem allowing natural processes as part of the park's ecological integrity.

To maintain natural plant communities for their value and contribution to wildlife habitats, visual values, and recreation attractions.

To protect the old growth forests which are critical wildlife habitats and endangered ecosystems.

To protect rare, endangered, or sensitive plant species and communities.

To revegetate and restore areas that have been negatively impacted by human use.

To prevent, where possible, the establishment of non-native vegetation.

Actions:

- Obtain approval of the draft fire management plan and implement in conjunction with the Ministry of Forests Protection Branch.
- Undertake an inventory and assessment of vegetation, particularly focusing on rare and endangered species and current gaps in plant community knowledge.
- Monitor any impacts to natural vegetation resulting from activities in the park and take appropriate measures to minimise impacts.

- Identify areas that have experienced adverse impacts and implement restoration strategies.
- Monitor the spread of invasive non-native species and remove as required.

Water

Two main waterbodies occur in the park. Cirque Lake, elevation 1500m, lies in the northern portion of the park and is fed by tributaries originating in snowcaps and ice fields. Callaghan Lake, at 1200m, forms the main feature of the park and is fed from a creek originating from Cirque Lake and numerous small tributaries to the east and west of Callaghan Lake. The lake outlet, Callaghan Creek, flows from the south end of the lake and soon exits the park.

Objective: To maintain the park watersheds in their natural condition and protect water quality to benefit park visitors, plants, animals and downstream users.

To manage and protect creeks, streams and lakes as part of the park's natural ecosystem.

Actions:

- Monitor development outside the park and work with the related agencies or companies to minimise impacts on water quality.
- Ensure sanitary facilities are properly designed, located and monitored.
- Ensure park development such as trails, campsites and parking facilities are constructed and maintained so as to minimise soil erosion and surface water flow.
- Provide the public with information on water use ethics.

Aquatics

Little is known about the fisheries resources of the park. Rainbow trout are fished in Callaghan Lake, mountain whitefish are present, but uncommon in the lake, and the creeks are reported to contain Dolly Varden char, and possibly bull trout, a vulnerable species.

Objective: To maintain healthy populations of natural fish species.

Actions:

- Complete a fish and spawning habitat survey of the lake and creek mouths in order to determine the composition and condition of existing stocks.
- Maintain recreational fishing opportunities, if sustainable.
- Continue to work with the Fish and Wildlife Branch to develop a fisheries management strategy for the park.

Wildlife

The park's small size and straight-line boundaries make it unviable to sustain populations of many wildlife species. However, the park does contribute to habitat requirements for species associated with the CWH, MH and ATp zones in coastal B.C. such as grizzly and black bear, wolves, wolverine, mountain goats and black-tailed deer.

Objective: To identify and maintain the diversity of wildlife species within the park by protecting sensitive or important habitats and minimising impacts of activities and development on wildlife populations.

Actions:

- Continue to collect wildlife existence and population information for the park and monitor any changes that may be noted over the years.
- Identify important wildlife corridors and travel areas that cross park boundaries. Work with other agencies such as BC Environment and the Ministry of Forests to ensure wildlife values are considered and managed for.

Cultural Values

No archaeological sites are recorded with the Archaeology Branch of the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture. Traditional use in higher elevation areas such as Callaghan Park are not well documented and further information collection is required.

Objective: To identify, present and protect significant cultural features and values including traditional use patterns by First Nations in the park area.

Action:

- Maintain communication channels and good working relationships with all First Nations with traditional uses within the park.
- Work with First Nations to identify and inventory traditional use areas, cultural, spiritual or sustenance resources. Develop strategies that will allow for the continued practice of traditional activities by present and future generations of First Nations.

Visual Values

Callaghan Lake and Cirque Lake lie within a relatively narrow watershed area in relation to the rest of Callaghan Valley. From either lake, park visitors enjoy the vistas offered by the surrounding ridges to the east, north and west. As well, high elevation scenery to the west of the park can be viewed from many vantagepoints within the park. Some of these key viewing features include Powder Mountain, Metal Dome, Brandywine Mountain and Mount Cayley.

Objective: To protect the viewing opportunities from within the park.

Action:

- Work in a co-operative manner with agencies involved in adjacent development to incorporate appropriate visual management considerations for protection of visual values.
- Ensure any proposed development or facilities in the park are aesthetically pleasing and blend with the natural environment.

Relationship with First Nations

The Squamish Nation and the Lil'wat Nation (Mt. Currie Indian Band) recognises the Callaghan Lake area as part of their traditional territories. BC Parks has limited information on the values of the park's resources and features as they relate to First Nations' culture and heritage.

Currently, the Squamish Nation is involved in treaty negotiations with senior levels of government. First Nations' contributions to this management plan are recognised and understood to be without prejudice to future treaty negotiations. At this time, the Lil'wat Nation is not involved in the treaty process.

Once formal treaty agreements have been reached with the First Nations, this management plan will be reviewed to determine whether it is in compliance with the Treaties. If it is not in compliance, then this management plan will be revised accordingly. Changes will be made through an open public review process so everyone understands what these changes mean to the park and its use.

Objective: To maintain ongoing communication and working relationships with First Nations people whose traditional territories include the park.

Actions:

- Discuss with First Nations areas of special spiritual and cultural interest they may have within the park and how BC Parks can recognise and protect those interests.
- Develop a strategy with the First Nations that will protect and allow for the continued practice of traditional activities for present and future generations of First Nation's people.

Photo not available

Plate 4. Callaghan Lake as seen from ridges near Cirque Lake.

OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES MANAGEMENT

Introduction

The Callaghan Valley in general has a long history of recreational use that includes hiking, camping, boating, mountain biking, climbing, backcountry skiing, snowmobiling, and heli-skiing. Road access to near sub-alpine elevations and its proximity to Whistler and Vancouver make the Callaghan Valley a significant multi-use recreation destination.

The park forms only a small part of the valley and most recreational activities include areas outside of the park boundaries. Hiking, snowmobiling, mountain biking, climbing and backcountry skiing all rely on areas in other portions of the valley or areas adjacent to the park. In order to offer a broad range of activities to visitors of the park, recreation opportunities must be planned and developed with agencies having jurisdiction outside the park as well as outdoor recreation groups and First Nations. This will provide an integrated approach to managing recreation and result in a desirable diversity of activities over a broader area and ensure objectives of the management plan are achieved.

Access Strategy

Callaghan Lake Park is accessed primarily from the Callaghan Valley Forest Service Road from Highway 99, 17 kms. to the southern end of Callaghan Lake. Less than 10% of this road is within the boundaries of the park, the rest within Provincial Forest lands. The vast majority of park users for both summer and winter seasons use this access. The BC Forest Service has pledged to maintain this road to a 4-wheel drive standard although for much of the summer, 2-wheel drive vehicles can easily drive to the lake. In the winter, the road is used by snowmobiles and backcountry skiers to access the park and areas beyond the park boundaries. Currently, few hikers access the park from areas to the east and west.

Future recreation trails into the park from the east and west side (as part of a larger trail network for areas beyond the park boundaries) will likely result in higher use of park visitors for backcountry recreation purposes.

Objective: Continue utilising the Callaghan Valley Forest Service road as the primary motorised access to the park. Encourage the Ministry of Forests to maintain the road to 2-wheel drive standards.

Action:

- Continue to monitor road conditions for both summer and winter seasons to ensure access to the park is maintained.
- Continue to encourage a co-operative approach to sharing the road between vehicles (primarily snowmobiles) and non-mechanised backcountry users during the winter season. This requires the full co-operation of winter users, Ministry of Forests and BC Assets and Lands Corporation.
- Develop the recreation facilities as described in this management plan including the parking and day-use facilities and hiking trails.
- Prohibit the use of motorcycles and ATVs within the park except on designated roads.
- Permit recreational float plane access to Callaghan Lake.

Recreation Opportunities/Facilities

The following summary outlines each opportunity, its objective and the facilities or services required as illustrated in the Proposed Development Map (Figure 6). Before any facilities are developed it is standard BC Parks Policy that they be subjected to an environmental assessment to determine what impacts, if any, may occur or what adjustments should be made to minimise any impacts.

Summer Recreation**Hiking**

Currently, few formalised hiking opportunities exist in the park. Some hiking occurs using the trail through the park, south-west of Callaghan Lake to the Conflict Lake area or up to the alpine areas both inside and outside the park. As well, a rough trail exists from the north end of Callaghan Lake up to Cirque Lake.

Hiking use is continually increasing, particularly from those wishing to utilise the alpine and sub-alpine areas to the east, west and north of the park. As the boundary of the park generally follows height-of-land, hikers tend to cross over the park boundary at a number of locations. As well, the park comprises only a small portion of the Callaghan Valley. Other hiking locations include the Conflict Lake area to the west of the park and the Madley Lake area to the east of the park. In

Map not available

order to effectively offer a quality hiking opportunity, it is desirable for hiking trails in the park to connect with existing and future hiking routes outside the park. In particular, future hiking opportunities in the north-west portion of the Whistler LRUP area should be incorporated with hiking trails in the park.

All trails should be located so as not to impact sensitive areas or vegetation. Prior to trail construction, impact assessments must be completed to ensure all aspects of environmental impacts are considered and mitigated. Trails must be built to standards to accommodate intended use and minimise erosion. Trails extending beyond the park boundaries should only be developed as “last links” to existing and compatible trail development by adjacent land agencies.

Objective: To encourage a range of hiking opportunities linked to areas and trails within and outside the park.

To ensure hiking trails and routes meet BC Park standards.

Actions:

- Formalise the existing rough trail from the north end of Callaghan Lake to the south end of Cirque Lake by improving the trail up to BC Parks standards. This may require relocating portions of the trail to meet safety concerns. Continue to offer this trail as a boat-access trail.
- Encourage co-operation with the Resort Municipality of Whistler and the Ministry of Forests to develop a trail from Madley Lake north to the north-east portion of the park. Develop a trail from this point down the small, unnamed valley towards Callaghan Lake and along Callaghan Lake to the access road and day-use area.
- Develop a trail from the existing trail access to Conflict Lake up the west side of the park to the upper alpine and sub-alpine areas.
- Encourage backcountry travellers who wish to access the alpine areas to be prepared for unassisted travel including knowledge of route finding.
- Develop an interpretive loop trail west from the day use area and west of Callaghan Creek. The trail theme should include the interpretation of sub-alpine and alpine ecosystems.

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing recreational activities and demand for high quality mountain biking experiences in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor has increased significantly over the past

decade. The Callaghan Valley contains a number of roads, both active and inactive, as well as trails suitable for mountain biking. However, within the park, there are no areas appropriate for mountain biking except for the access road.

To provide a quality mountain biking experience near Callaghan Lake, trail development will be required with co-operation from the RMOW and MoF. The trail system along the east side of Callaghan Lake to the park boundary and south to Madley Lake will be developed to a standard to accommodate mountain bikes.

Objective: To provide a mountain biking loop trail that utilises a portion of the park and links to trails outside the park.

To ensure hiking/mountain biking trails meet BC Park standards.

Actions:

- Discuss the proposed east side trail that will connect with Madley Lake with the RMOW and MoF as a trail that accommodates mountain bikers as well as hikers. Develop the portion of trail to a mountain biking standard once the entire trail route outside the park has been built to accommodate mountain bikes.
- Disallow mountain biking on all other park trails as well as disallowing bikes on the proposed mountain biking trail until it is built to a standard to accommodate bikes.

Camping

Callaghan Lake was the site of a former rustic campground operated by the Ministry of Forests. Facilities at the site included a pit toilet and picnic tables but the camping area consisted of an open gravel area without designated campsites. Unorganised and uncontrolled camping has led to increased impacts of vegetated areas around the south end of the lake. Future camping in this area will not be allowed for a number of reasons including a short summer season, difficulty of control, and other existing camping opportunities in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor such as Cal-Cheak Forest Service Campground, Brandywine Park, the RMOW, and Nairn Falls Park.

As multi-day hiking and backcountry travel demand increases, trails around Callaghan Lake and neighbouring valleys and ridges will receive steady increases in use. Provisions for a wilderness style camping area would encourage overnight tenting in a controlled area while maintaining a camping opportunity for visitors to the park. The walk-in sites will be located on the east side of Callaghan Lake and accessed by trail or boat.

Objective: To encourage vehicle based camping opportunities outside the park and to redesign the former camping area to meet day use objectives in this plan and to rehabilitate any areas not required for future facilities.

To provide a wilderness camping opportunity for hikers and boaters.

Actions:

- Close and rehabilitate the current camping location at the south end of Callaghan Lake.
- Encourage overnight vehicle accessible camping at other locations such as Cal-Cheak Recreation Area, the RMOW, as well as Brandywine Falls, Nairn Falls and Alice Lake parks.
- Develop a small wilderness campground on the east side of the lake along the proposed trail from Madley Lake to Callaghan Lake. Ensure the site and design minimises impacts to the environment and sanitary facilities are properly located.

Fishing

Both Callaghan Lake and Cirque Lake are known to contain rainbow trout and Dolly Varden char. Callaghan Lake has been stocked with rainbow trout since 1975 and continues to offer good fishing opportunities. Due to the long access road, most fishing occurs using small boats, canoes, bellyboats, or from the shore.

Objective: To maintain a high quality experience based on a self-sustained fishery.

Action:

- Work with the Fish and Wildlife Branch to monitor fish populations and health with the goal of maintaining a sustainable, natural fish population.
- Provide fisheries information at the information shelter near the boat launch that would inform visitors about regulations, conservation measures and species identification.

Boating

A small, unimproved boat launching area is located at the end of the access road at the south end of Callaghan Lake. The site is currently in rough condition and requires upgrading in order to better serve park visitors. Boating on Callaghan Lake is receiving an increasing amount of use for small boats and canoes and the boating experience is often a family oriented activity, offering

viewing and fishing opportunities. Boats can also be used as access to the Cirque Lake trail and proposed wilderness campground.

To protect the natural setting of this high elevation lake, management strategies to encourage low-impact use will be implemented. This includes restricting the lake to small motors and banning the use of personal watercraft including jet-skis.

Objective: To provide low impact and safe boating opportunities for park visitors while protecting the scenic and tranquil atmosphere of the lake.

Actions:

- Re-develop the existing boat launch area to accommodate small boats only including small rooftop and light trailered boats.
- Encourage small boat and canoe usage to retain the peaceful atmosphere of the lake by implementing a less than 10 hp. motor restriction and banning the use of personal water craft including jet-skis.
- Provide boating safety literature on information board at the boat launch.

Picnicking

Picnicking is not a primary reason for people to visit the park. Other provincial parks, recreation sites and community parks experience more use for destination picnicking sites. However, for visitors of the park, picnicking is often a part of their activities.

Objective: To provide picnicking opportunities at the south end of Callaghan Lake.

Actions:

- Develop small picnicking areas east and west of the boat launch at Callaghan Lake. Ensure the site takes into consideration viewscapes of the lake and mountains to the north and west.

Winter Recreation

Snowmobiling

Snowmobile activities at Callaghan Lake have been increasing over many years. The park itself is generally not a snowmobile destination but rather used as access to the pothole lakes area north of the park. In general, the Callaghan Valley along with Brandywine Valley to the west, are popular snowmobiling areas.

BC Parks recognises snowmobiling as an accepted activity in some protected areas (subject to the protected area's management plan) including Callaghan Lake Park. However, BC Parks also appreciates the potential for conflict between snowmobiles and non-motorised winter activities such as backcountry skiing and snowshoeing. As the access road to the park is not plowed in the winter, both motorised and non-motorised activities originate outside the park, and to some degree, continue past park boundaries. Co-operation between users is vital to peaceful co-existence in the valley. While maintaining snowmobiling activities in the park, BC Parks will continue to work with user groups to maintain co-operative multi-use opportunities inside the park boundaries. Currently, an agreement exists between Mad River Nordic Centre and the Powder Mountain Snowmobile Club for shared use of Callaghan Road to minimise user conflicts. This type of volunteer arrangement should continue to be supported by all agencies and stakeholders in the valley as it upholds the spirit of co-existence between potentially conflicting user groups.

BC Parks will also work closely with snowmobile clubs to encourage club participation in monitoring snowmobile activities in the park. This will include a co-operative approach to educating members on snowmobile ethics to prevent environmental damage. Incidents such as snowmobiles sinking in Callaghan Lake and fuel spills exemplify risks that create environmental concerns for natural park values. Many snowmobilers have extensive knowledge of ice conditions and safe crossing procedures and BC Parks will utilise existing knowledge in determining closures in order to reduce human and environmental risks.

Objective: To maintain snowmobiling opportunities in the park in a manner that minimises impacts to non-motorised winter visitors and to natural park values.

Actions:

- Continue to encourage shared use of the access road to the park for snowmobilers and backcountry skiers (track skiing on one side, snowmobile use on the other side) through agreements such as the one between Mad River Nordic Centre and the Powder Mountain Snowmobile Club. This also requires the support of the Ministry of Forests and BC Assets and Lands Corporation to manage shared use in a similar manner for the portion of road outside the park.
- Allow snowmobile use through the park to access areas beyond the park boundaries by establishing a snowmobile corridor that includes the access road, Callaghan Lake, and the traditional access route to the areas lying north of the park (Figure 6). Snowmobiling will not be permitted outside this corridor.
- Work with snowmobile clubs to encourage their members to monitor and report on activities inside the park and to educate their members on snowmobiling ethics

for the protection of natural values.

- Monitor ice conditions on Callaghan Lake and close the lake to snowmobiling once open water areas develop in the spring to prevent safety and environmental risks.

Backcountry Skiing and Snowshoeing

Backcountry skiing and snowshoeing are popular activities both inside and outside the park. As with snowmobiling, this activity originates outside the park, as the access road to Callaghan Lake is not plowed. Mad River Nordic Centre lodge is located near Conflict Lake, to the west of the park. Backcountry skiing is the main activity for this operation and access to their lodge is through the park. Track setting by Mad River for clients also benefits skiers wishing to access the Conflict Valley through the park.

Some accesses to the ridges on the western and eastern boundaries of the park exist for backcountry skiers and snowshoers. These areas are generally not popular for snowmobiling and the potential for conflicts are few in this area. BC Parks will continue to encourage backcountry skiing in the western and eastern portions of the park including the west and east sides above Callaghan Lake and the ridges on the west side of the park.

Objective: To maintain backcountry and nordic skiing and snowshoeing opportunities in the park in a manner that minimises potential conflict with motorised winter activities.

Actions:

- Continue to encourage shared use of the access road to the park for snowmobilers and backcountry skiers (track skiing on one side, snowmobile use on the other side).
- Encourage backcountry skiing and snowshoeing in the west and east of the park including the west and east sides above Callaghan Lake and the ridges on the west side of the park.

Hunting

Callaghan Park is included as part of Management Unit 2-6. Species open to harvest (dependant on regulations) include black-tailed deer, mountain goat, black bear, wolf, coyote, racoon, skunk, snowshoe hare, bobcat, cougar, upland game birds and waterfowl. Most hunting seasons occur during the fall and winter, generally from September to March. Current hunting pressure within the park is unknown but is likely light in comparison to other areas of MU 2-6.

Objective: To maintain hunting as an accepted activity within the park so long as wildlife populations are not impacted to unacceptable levels.

Actions:

- Continue to collect information on wildlife populations in the park to determine if hunting remains an acceptable activity.
- Monitor wildlife populations, particularly mountain goat, to determine future hunting opportunities, seasons and quotas.

Commercial Recreation

Commercial Activities

Some forms of commercial recreation are appropriate for the park providing environmental and social impacts remain low and potential activities pass the BC Parks Environmental Impact Assessment process. One commercial tenure (Mad River Nordic) predates the park and is currently authorised by Park Use Permit. All commercial activities within the park must be authorised through the Park Use Permit process.

Objective: To allow for commercial recreation opportunities that enhance the recreational experience for park visitors while minimising environmental and social impacts.

Actions:

- Review potential commercial recreation activities in the park and consider approval for those proposals that meet the objectives and vision of the park, are considered low impact through the BC Parks Impact Assessment Process, and maintain the atmosphere of the park.
- Ensure any approved commercial activities are legitimised through a Park Use Permit and conform to the activity matrix shown in Table 2.

Management Services

Park Office and Service Yard

The park administrative office and service yard will continue to be located at Alice Lake Provincial Park.

Site and Facility Design Standards

All sites and facilities developed for public use will meet the design standards of BC Parks. Factors to be considered include visual aesthetics, safety, durability and operational efficiency.

Safety and Health

Every normal precaution will be taken to ensure the safety and health of visitors to Callaghan Lake Provincial Park. All high use areas will have periodic safety inspections to ensure reasonable care is taken. In the event of hazardous conditions or emergencies, appropriate action will be taken as defined in the Emergency Procedures Manual for the park.

Photo not available

Plate 5. Callaghan Lake looking west.

Public Information

Promotion

As very few people are aware of the park, standard park signs are required to identify that Callaghan Lake and area is now a provincial park. As well, ensure the park is included in standard BC Parks information brochures, maps, and agency website. Information Centres in the local communities will be contacted and provided with information on the park so they can appropriately advise tourists and residents of the opportunities available in the park. As formal facilities are developed, an information shelter will be provided at the day use area.

Objective: The information strategy for Callaghan Lake Provincial Park is to emphasise ecological systems, encourage environmental ethics and educate the public on recreational and environmental safety issues.

Action:

- Develop an interpretive plan and material for public information.

Table 2: Acceptable Uses, Activities and Facilities at Callaghan Lake Park.

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptable Uses	Comments
First Nation Traditional Use	Y	Subject to conservation and public safety
Hunting	Y	Subject to hunting regulations
Fishing	Y	Subject to fishing regulations
Trapping	Y	Park is small portion of larger trapping tenure
Horse Use/ Pack Animals	N	No historic use
Mountain Biking	Y	Restricted to road. Allowed on east side trail only after trail built to mountain bike standards
Guide Outfitting (hunting)	N/A	
Guide Outfitting (fishing)	M	Small parties only.
Guide Outfitting – non mechanized (hiking, backpacking, nature tours, ski touring)	Y	Subject to management plan objectives and actions
Commercial snowmobile tours	M	Restricted to access corridor described in this plan. Small parties only.
Cat-Assisted Skiing	N	
Heli-skiing	N	
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N1	Limited to the groomed winter trail as part of the Park Use Permit to mad River Nordic Centre.
Backcountry Huts	N	
Fish Stocking and Enhancement	Y	Subject to fisheries management plan
Road Access	Y	Current road access only. No further road development
Off-road Access (snowmobiling)	Y	Restricted to access corridor described in this plan
Off-road Access (motorized)	N	
Off-road Access (mechanical activities)	N1	Restricted to winter grooming machine operated by Mad River Nordic Centre under Park Use Permit
Motorized Water Use	Y	Restricted to under 10 hp. No personal watercraft
Recreational Aircraft Access	Y	Recreational float planes permissible
Commercial Aircraft Access	M	No commercial helicopter landings within park. Low volume commercial float plane access will be considered – not considered as staging area for flights
Commercial Filming	Y	Subject to management plan objectives and actions
Fire Management (suppression)	N1	
Fire Management (prescribed fire management)	M	
Forest Insect/Disease Control	M	
Noxious Weed Control	N1	
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	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