

# CARMANAH WALBRAN PROVINCIAL PARK

## PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

September 2003

Approved by:



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Date: Sept. 6/03



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## **CARMANAH WALBRAN PROVINCIAL PARK Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan**

Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park is an expansion of the former Carmanah Pacific Provincial Park which was established in 1991 to protect the downstream portion of Carmanah Creek. In 1994, under recommendations of the Vancouver Island Land Plan, the boundaries were extended to form the existing boundaries of the protected area to include the entire Carmanah Creek watershed, as well as the majority of neighbouring west Walbran Creek watershed.

### **Primary Role**

The **primary** role of Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park is to protect old growth biodiversity values associated with the temperate rainforest of the west coast of Vancouver Island. Combined with Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, the park conserves splendid examples of the west coast temperate rainforest ecosystem in one multi-watershed protected area unit. The park comprises the entire watersheds of Carmanah, Logan and Cullite creeks, and part of the Walbran Creek watershed. The park has provincial, national and global significance given its unique features such as old growth rainforest, clear meandering streams, canyons, waterfalls, small freshwater lakes, high water quality, unique species assemblages, rare wildlife species, and floodplain groves of giant Sitka spruce.

The park protects some of the world's largest old growth Sitka spruce and western redcedar and provides habitat for at least 36 species of birds including marbled murrelet, northern goshawk, and pygmy owl and thousands of previously undocumented invertebrates living in the canopy. The creeks contain important anadromous salmonid species and resident cutthroat trout and steelhead which attract predator species such as gray wolves and black bears. Anderson Lake supports unique fish assemblages and aquatic communities, including the unusual occurrence of kokanee trout. The park also contains a high diversity of vegetation including a newly discovered variety of lichen unique to the west coast old growth forest.

Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park contributes significantly to the representation of biogeoclimatic features typical of the Windward Island Mountains Ecoregion, particularly the Coastal Western Hemlock Submontane very wet maritime (CWHvm1) and Coastal Western Hemlock Montane very wet maritime (CWHvm2) variants with their outstanding specimens of Sitka spruce. The park is representative of coastal watersheds along western Vancouver Island and is characterized by coastal plain and forested slope settings.

### **Secondary Role**

The **secondary** role is to provide significant day and multi-day opportunities for low impact recreation use which is compatible with a wilderness setting. Known as "the Green Cathedral", visitors come from all over the world to experience the peaceful solitude and spiritual nature of this wilderness park. The wilderness character preserved in Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park is not found elsewhere on southern Vancouver Island and is in sharp contrast to the clearcut and second growth landscape surrounding the park. The recreational opportunities include wilderness camping at four locations, backpacking, canoeing, fishing, hiking, wildlife viewing, and nature appreciation. Facilities include a parking lot, walk-in campsites with tent pads, picnic tables and fire rings, cold water taps, pit toilets, and a variety of hiking trails and viewing platforms that highlight many of the park's spectacular natural features. The park complements recreational opportunities provided by the adjacent west coast trail unit of Pacific Rim National Park Reserve.

### Tertiary Role

The **tertiary** role is to protect cultural features. Although no archaeological sites have been recorded in the park, Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park serves to preserve potential features associated with First Nations cultures of the Nuu-chah-nulth people. The Nuu-chah-nulth people settled estuaries and important salmon-bearing streams on the west coast, harvesting bark and planks off redcedar trees, berries and game from the forest.

Old logger's reports of the "legendary giants" of Carmanah led renowned conservationist Randy Stoltmann into Carmanah in 1988 where he raised international awareness for the rare ancient trees that were scheduled for logging. Stoltmann's work helped in the creation of Carmanah Pacific Provincial Park, later expanded and renamed Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park. An impressive stand of Sitka spruce trees ranging from 75 to 89 metres in height has been named the Randy Stoltmann Commemorative Grove, and a kiosk at this site offers information about the Carmanah and Randy Stoltmann.

### Quaternary Role

The **quaternary** role is to provide opportunities for forest research and outdoor education in the areas of biodiversity, ecosystem science, and wildlife and fisheries habitat, which are important for fostering environmental appreciation of temperate rainforest ecology.

### Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Unknown natural and cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Complete rare plant surveys, and identify special features and sensitive areas.</li><li>➤ Undertake surveys of aquatic communities in selected small lakes.</li><li>➤ Undertake a cultural values inventory and gather information on traditional use activities in consultation with First Nations.</li><li>➤ Support and seek out research initiatives from academic community.</li><li>➤ Acquire existing data from research already undertaken, including canopy research.</li></ul>
Access to the park and trailhead development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Work with the Ministry of Forests (MOF) to develop an access management strategy to ensure continued access to trailheads and to minimize impacts from any proposed logging related activities.</li><li>➤ Work with MOF, interest groups and stakeholders to designate trailheads to minimize impact to the park's natural values.</li><li>➤ Investigate the possibility of re-routing and restoring the Upper Carmanah Trail so that it connects with the existing trail system.</li><li>➤ Liaise with staff of Pacific Rim National Park Reserve to ensure that management objectives of both parks are complementary.</li></ul>
Future facility development, park boundary expansion, and appropriate recreation use levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Complete a park Management Plan with public input and continued consultation with Parks Canada, First Nations, interest groups and major stakeholders.</li></ul>

Impacts from adjacent land uses in the Walbran valley (edge effects, water quality, blow down risk, migratory routes, island ecosystem effects, potential slides etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with MOF and Timberwest in Fletcher Falls and “bite” area to resolve management issues arising from blow down and access development in the area.</li> <li>➤ Work with MOF and forest companies to protect park values during forest development.</li> </ul>
Impacts of increased eco-tourism on the park’s natural, cultural and recreation values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue to work with volunteers and eco-tourism operators to develop volunteer operating agreements, stewardship protocols and permits to manage and protect the park’s values.</li> <li>➤ Continue to monitor vegetation near viewing platforms.</li> </ul>
Lack of awareness of park boundaries and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify park boundaries through signing at high profile locations throughout the park and by marking boundaries where appropriate.</li> <li>➤ Develop a public awareness strategy to ensure the protection of these internationally significant natural values.</li> </ul>
Inappropriate recreational activities in sensitive areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Using an inventory of sensitive areas, ensure trails are located to minimize impact on sensitive features.</li> <li>➤ Monitor levels and types of recreational use to ensure impacts to park values are minimized.</li> </ul>
Limited multi-day hiking experiences as a result of trail closures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Investigate future needs for facilities and interpretation information while undertaking the management plan to allow for appropriate recreation activities in the park.</li> </ul>
Impact of fishing and adjacent land uses on fish populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with the Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to monitor fish populations and ensure their viability.</li> </ul>

## Zoning

**Intensive Recreation Zone** – covers the parking lot, camping and day use area at the main entrance to the park in the lower Carmanah, which represents an area of approximately 31 hectares, or less than 0.2% of the park. The objective of this zone is to provide a variety of readily accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.

**Natural Environment Zone** – covers the other three access points in the upper Carmanah, upper Walbran, “the bite” in mid Walbran and an area along the west side of Carmanah Creek. This represents an area of approximately 310 hectares, or 2 % of the park. The purpose of this zone is to protect scenic values and to provide for recreational opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment. A higher number of visitors are expected at these sites.

**Special Feature Zone** – covers two wet land areas -- along the west side of Carmanah Creek and a lake (Anderson Lake) and wetland area in the Walbran watershed. This represents an area of approximately 317 hectares or 2% of the park. The objective of this zone is to protect and present significant natural or cultural values given their special character, fragility and heritage values.

**Wilderness Conservation Zone** – represents the two intact watersheds of Cullite and Logan Creek and a portion of the lower Walbran watershed, an area of approximately 7,380 hectares or 45% of the park. The objective of this zone is to protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide unassisted backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a

pristine environment where no motorized activities are allowed. These watersheds will be left completely untouched with no active promotion of recreation activity within the zone.

**Wilderness Recreation Zone** – covers the remainder of the park, an area of approximately 8412 hectares or 51% of the park. The objective of this zone is to protect scenic values and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities in a pristine wilderness setting where air access may be permitted to designated sites. It is designed for large natural areas where ecological processes are uninfluenced by human activity, and where there is a low level of use confined to specific primitive facilities, which are not generally visited on a day use basis. Trails and minimal facilities that support the backcountry recreation use may be developed, while minimizing use impacts on the wildlife and wilderness values of the area.

## Conservation

Representation		The park represents 2% of B.C.'s remaining old growth forest.
- ecosection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park contributes significantly (8.1%) to the representation of the Windward Island Mountains Ecosection which is 17.42% protected. Carmanah Walbran's contribution ranks 3 <sup>rd</sup> (behind Strathcona & Brooks Peninsula parks) out of 50 protected areas representing this ecosection.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park contributes significantly (10.32%) to the representation of the CWHvm1 variant which has 7% protected provincially. Carmanah Walbran's contribution ranks 3 <sup>rd</sup> (behind Strathcona Provincial Park & Fiordland Recreation Area) out of 57 protected areas representing this variant. Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park makes a small contribution of 1.9% to the representation of the CWHvm2 variant which has 8.7% protected provincially. Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park contributes minimally (0.41%) to the representation of the CWHvh1 variant which has 19.3% protected provincially.
Special Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Three intact, completely unlogged watersheds in the park – Cullite, August and Logan creek drainages. Contains some of the largest trees in Canada – over 90 trees greater than 70 metres tall living for 800 years or more, the tallest of which is 96 metres ("Carmanah Giant" by Carmanah Creek – tallest tree in Canada). A cedar/spruce old growth stand at Anderson Lake is of note as well. Diverse flora and fauna associated with undisturbed ecosystems. Numerous small lakes with diverse aquatic communities are important special features. Kokanee trout in Anderson Lake, anadromous steelhead and salmon in Walbran Creek.
Rare/Endangered Values	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nesting territory for the <i>red-listed</i> marbled murrelet and northern goshawk, <i>laingi</i> subspecies. <i>Blue-listed</i> nodding semaphore grass, coastal cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden char, and probable breeding habitat for the northern pygmy-owl, <i>swarthy</i> subspecies.
Scientific/Research Opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Canopy studies related to old growth forests have been conducted since the early 1990s.

### Recreation

Representation backcountry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Park presents significant day and multi-day opportunities, international and regional interest. Environmentally-aware tourists (local, regional and international) as well as organized hiking groups, researchers and students are attracted to the old growth in Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park. Proximity to the population of southern Vancouver Island.
destination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
travel corridor local recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local day-use and multi-day recreational opportunities.
Special Opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	High inspirational/spiritual values. Potential egress from the West Coast Trail to particular feature points in the Carmanah and Walbran valleys.
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Potential self-guided interpretative trail around Sitka spruce. High media/public interest and opportunities for visitor information/education and appreciation of natural values.

### Cultural Heritage

Representation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown at this time. First Nations sites exist in Pacific Rim National Park and lands to the west and north.
Special Feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Possible Culturally Modified Trees (CMT)

### Other Management Considerations

Other Designations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Important Bird Area (IBA) site for breeding marbled murrelets called the Carmanah Walbran Forest site. The IBA program is an international program that identifies and supports the protection of lands having special bird habitats.
Relationship to other PAs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part of a system of protected areas on Vancouver Island. Adjacent to Pacific Rim National Park Reserve – West Coast Trail unit.
Co-operative Management Arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Partnerships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Two stewardship agreements: Carmanah Forestry Society, BC Pathways for construction and maintenance of trails.

Vulnerability

- Invasive species, increased use could result in loss of values, sensitive ecosystem and soils do not withstand high use when wet, spruce roots close to surface are easily damaged from hiking. Potential adverse effects of logging adjacent to the park boundary especially in the vicinity of the "low-intensity area" in the mid-Walbran watershed.

Relationship to other Strategies

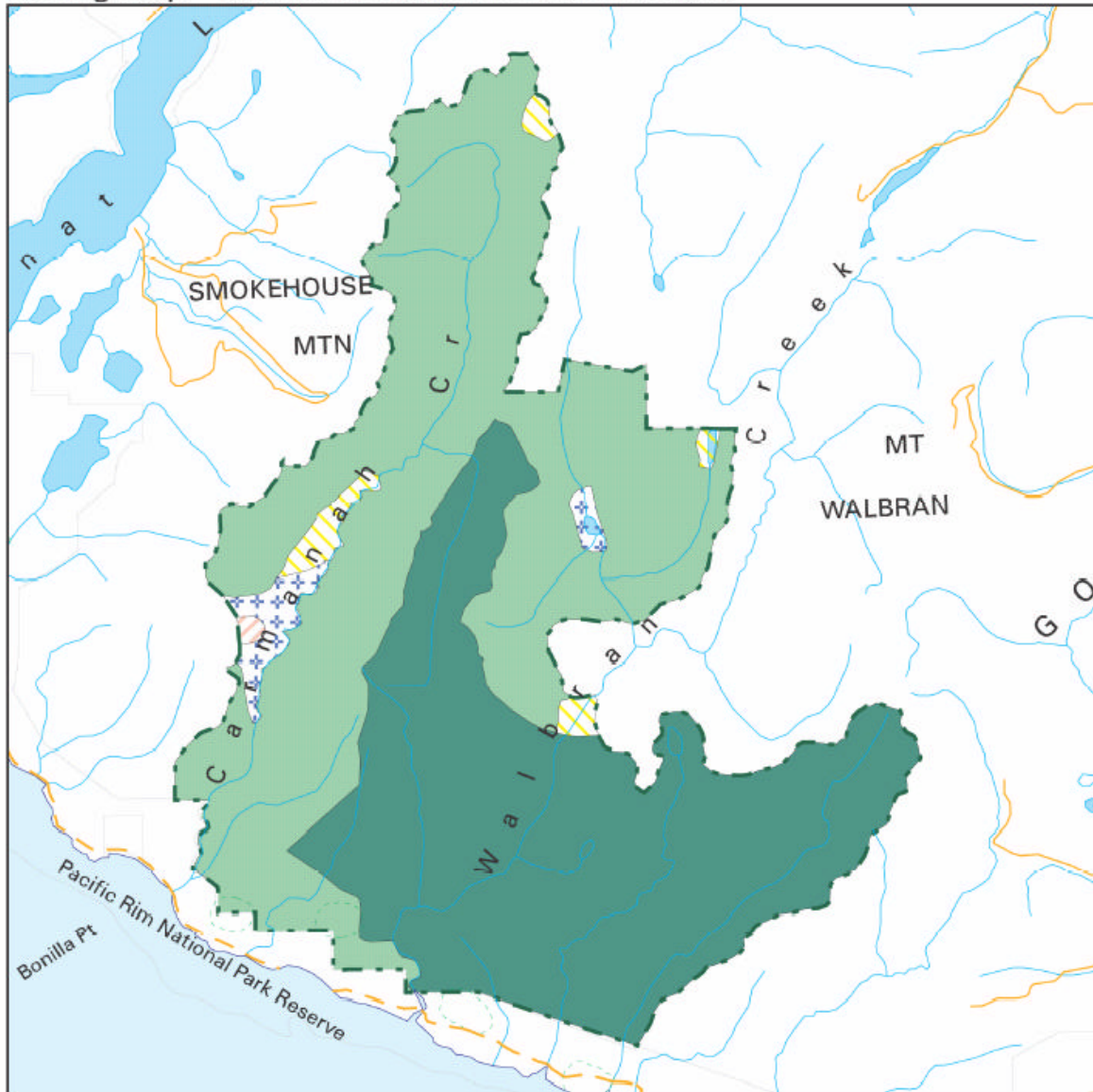
- Original Carmanah Pacific Provincial Park was expanded from recommendations of the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan to create Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park

**Area:** 16,450 hectares

**Date of establishment:** March 13, 1991



# Zoning Map - Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park

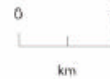


Projection: Albers Equal Areas  
Datum: NAD83



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Protection by MSRM, Decision  
Support Services

-  Intensive Recreation
-  Natural Environment
-  Special Feature
-  Wilderness Conservation
-  Wilderness Recreation
-  Protected Area Boundary



This is a visual representation  
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