

MANAGEMENT PLAN

March 2000



for Churn Creek
Protected Area



Ministry of Environment
Lands and Parks
BC Parks Division

Churn Creek
Protected Area

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Prepared by
BC Parks
Cariboo District
Williams Lake, BC



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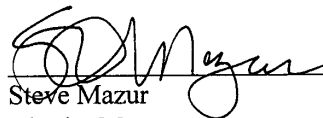
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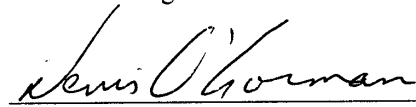
Churn Creek
Protected Area

Management Plan

Approved by:


Steve Mazur
District Manager

Date: March 10/00


Denis O'Gorman
Assistant Deputy Minister

Date: MAR. 16, 2000


Joan Sawicki
Minister

Date: Mar 31, 2000

This Management Plan is a component of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan (CCLUP) and was developed through direction from that land use plan.

This Management Plan has been endorsed by the Cariboo Chilcotin Regional Resources Board and the Cariboo Mid-Coast Interagency Management Committee as being

“Consistent with the spirit and intent of the CCLUP.”

This Management Plan was developed with the input of a Local Advisory Group to address the grasslands conservation and restoration requirements of the nationally significant Churn Creek Protected Area. As with all Park and Protected Area Management Plans, the approaches and methods used in the plan are adapted to the unique nature of the Protected Area and will not necessarily be used in other Parks and Protected Areas that have domestic livestock grazing.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BC Parks would like to acknowledge the time and effort of the Churn Creek Local Advisory Group in the development of this Management Plan. We recognize most people donated a great deal of their personal time in order to help us in writing the document, and that sacrifice is acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

In addition to the Local Advisory Group, a number of individuals and organizations donated their special skills and knowledge. Kristi Iverson, a consulting ecologist, put in many unpaid volunteer hours at Churn Creek working on grassland issues. Ducks Unlimited also donated many dollars of free engineering time determining the state of the water storage systems and providing advice on how they could be fixed in innovative ways. Thanks also to Larry Ramstad of the Gang Ranch for providing valuable background information on ranching in the Churn Creek area. We would also like to thank Henry Koster for providing much of the history of the Empire Valley Ranch and for his many wonderful stories about ranch life at Churn Creek.

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Chris Hamilton
BC Parks, Cariboo District
Senior Park Planner

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Cariboo Chilcotin Land Use Plan Commitments

- ✓ This Management Plan for the Churn Creek Protected Area was developed with the direct involvement of a Local Advisory Group comprising a wide variety of interests and perspectives. The Local Advisory Group will meet once a year to monitor and review implementation of the Plan.
- ✓ The Churn Creek Protected Area will be managed for its nationally significant grassland conservation values. The historic Empire Valley Ranch continues to operate as a cow-calf ranch operation at its historic levels. Hayfields will be renovated, irrigation systems upgraded and dams and water systems restored to provincial standards.
- ✓ An industrial corridor providing access through the Protected Area has been confirmed, offering access through the Protected Area for logging, mining and other industrial users.
- ✓ The right to access placer claims through the Protected Area has been confirmed.
- ✓ The right to access private land through the Protected Area has been confirmed.
- ✓ Hunting and grazing has been confirmed as an acceptable use in the Protected Area.
- ✓ Trapping, guide-outfitting and recreational guiding are confirmed as acceptable uses in the Protected Area and will be authorized through permit.

Management of Natural and Cultural Values

- ✓ Over 82% of the Protected Area will be managed as a Natural Environment Zone with no vehicle access.
- ✓ 4% of the Protected Area has been designated as a Special Feature Zone to allow for three large benchmark/no-grazing areas. These will be used primarily to increase understanding of how natural grassland ecosystems function.
- ✓ Three critical grassland lakes/riparian areas will be fenced, while providing water to livestock through innovative methods.
- ✓ An Archaeological Overview Assessment and Traditional Use Study will be undertaken in order to document the significant First Nations values in the Protected Area.

- ✓ Extensive baseline research has been undertaken on the Churn Creek grasslands to develop appropriate strategies for their continued restoration.
- ✓ A fire management plan will be developed to reintroduce fire into the Protected Area.
- ✓ Weeds will be mapped and chemical and biological controls considered for their control.
- ✓ A long term wildlife management plan will be developed with BC Environment and First Nations.

Management of Recreation and Tourism

- ✓ A staging area for horseback riders and other Protected Area users will be developed at the Calving Barn. A campground may be developed at this site as use warrants.
- ✓ A parking lot and interpretative site will be developed near the Empire Valley Ranch headquarters.
- ✓ 6% of the Protected Area has been zoned Natural Environment – Motorized to permit vehicle access near scenic areas important for recreational activities.
- ✓ 2% of the Protected Area has been zoned Intensive Use/Recreation to permit recreation development and to allow for the continued activities of the Empire Valley Ranch.
- ✓ Access has been provided for recreation activities such as hunting, snowmobiling, horseback riding and hiking.
- ✓ An informal system of open trails providing non-motorized access to some of the most important and scenic areas will be developed.
- ✓ Recreational activities will be monitored for their potential impacts on natural and cultural values.
- ✓ Tourism activities such as wildlife viewing, ranch tourism and cultural tourism are generally acceptable in the Churn Creek Protected Area. A bed and breakfast may be developed at the Empire Valley Ranch headquarters.