

Relationship with First Nations

With the emergence of treaty negotiations in British Columbia and the growing awareness of aboriginal rights, BC Parks has begun to forge relationships with First Nations across the province. The provincial park system contains cultural and natural values that are highly significant to First Nations. Some parks are important as sources of natural medicines and foods or as sacred sites. BC Parks needs to consider the traditional knowledge and concerns of First Nations. To this end, a staff member of the Ktunaxa Traditional Use Study was contracted in 1996 to compile existing traditional use information for the parks in the East Kootenay. For Height of the Rockies and Elk Lakes Parks there was little information available.

Two First Nations tribal councils (Ktunaxa/Kinbasket and Shuswap) have included Height of the Rockies and Elk Lakes provincial parks within their asserted traditional territory. The management plan proposes to develop working relationships between BC Parks and First Nations in a number of areas to ensure that management of the park considers the traditional uses of First Nations people. While direct consultation with tribal council representatives on the management plan was requested, limitations of time and resources have prevented First Nations from participating. However, this management plan provides a foundation upon which continued relationships between BC Parks and First Nations' tribal councils are based.



Plate 4: Petain Falls in Elk Lakes Provincial Park