

FINTRY PROTECTED AREA

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN


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Approved by:



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Fintry Protected Area Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Introduction

Fintry Protected Area is located on the northwest side of Okanagan Lake, approximately 34 kilometres north of Kelowna and 49 kilometres south of Vernon. The protected area can be accessed by a number of logging roads extending from Westside Road. The White Creek Forest Service Road provides access to a parking lot and trail system along the northern edge of the area.

The boundaries of the protected area include foreshore on Okanagan Lake and extend west over the front slopes above Fintry Park and along the north and south rims of Shorts Creek Canyon. The protected area abuts crown forest land to the south and tree farm license land to the north. A large section of private lots covers the lower valley bottom to approximately midway up the Canyon section of the protected area. These private lands are accessed by rough roads and are developed with recreational cabins and small farm holdings. The Okanagan Lake Westside Road right-of-way crosses through the lower section of the protected area.

The protected area was established through recommendations of the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) under the *Environment Land Use Act* with provision that the Okanagan Lake Westside Road right-of-way may be relocated through the area. Allowance is also made for potential development of a forest access road through the northeast corner of the protected area and possible upgrade of the White Elephant non-status road.

From lake edge to its most westerly point, the protected area stretches 15 km into Shorts Creek canyon, encompassing 523 hectares of creek bottomlands, forest mountain sides, steep open rocky and grassy slopes and cliff rimmed canyon walls. Ponderosa pine dominates the slopes above Fintry Park and the southerly exposures of the lower canyon. These dry open forests break out onto steep rocky slopes about half way up the south side of the canyon, with pockets of grassland interspersed with aspens, juniper and shrubby cover of saskatoon berry and ceanothus. Further up, the canyon sides form a series of open rocky basins and high rimmed cliff walls. The creek environments include a mix of Douglas fir, aspen, cottonwoods, cedar and juniper. The north facing and wetter slopes of the south side are covered in thick stands of Douglas fir. These north facing slopes fringe into the upper plateau forests of lodgepole pine and spruce.

Shorts Creek canyon is very rugged and difficult to access. Much of it is in pristine condition; however, private land developments in the lower valley bottom disrupt the integrity of the area's natural ecosystems. Key parcels at the very top end of the private land have been acquired by Nature Trust. These properties abut the protected area and will be maintained in a natural condition to buffer impacts from lower valley activities.

Shorts Creek canyon has been the focus of efforts to increase the population of California bighorn sheep along the north side of Okanagan Lake. California Sheep occurred historically in Shorts Creek and efforts are being made to re-establish a viable herd in the drainage. The project involves ongoing forest thinning and prescribed burning to improve grassland habitats on the

south facing slopes of the canyon. Sheep have been transplanted into Shorts Creek from viable herds elsewhere in the province. The canyon is also prime winter range for mule deer.

Primary Role

The primary role of Fintry Protected Area is to protect the environments of Shorts Creek canyon and the continuity of ecosystems connecting down to Okanagan Lake and Fintry Park; and to provide a large intact management unit with the necessary terrain and habitat attributes to re-establish and maintain a viable population of California bighorn sheep on the west side of Okanagan Lake.

Secondary Role

The secondary role of the protected area is to provide for continued recreation access and use with particular emphasis on hiking and nature viewing. A parking lot and an established system of trails lead hikers to a number of viewpoints along the north rim of the canyon. The trails dip in and out of the protected area boundaries.

Known Management Issues	Response
<p>There may be opportunity to review and revise the current legislative status and to consolidate boundaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As directed through the Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP, the lower portion of the protected area will be retained under the <i>Environment Land Use Act</i> to allow for potential relocation of the Westside Road, potential development of logging road access through the northeast corner of the protected area and possible upgrade of the White Elephant non-status road. • Pursue potential to move the unencumbered upper portions of the protected area to <i>Park Act</i> designation. • Work with Nature Trust to determine the potential to establish partnership agreement and possible inclusion of Nature Trust lands within the protected area.
<p>Re-establishment of big horn sheep is a primary objective for area pursuant to the LRMP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no road access to the canyon bottom in the protected area. • No trails will be built or maintained within the canyon bottom. • Management focus will be placed on long term program of habitat enhancement and sheep transplants.

<p>There is limited opportunity for public access and recreation in the area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with Ministry of Forests and Range, and forest companies to maintain road access to the trail parking lot on the north side of the canyon. Trail access on the north side must be carefully considered to avoid encroachment onto sheep range, including lambing areas. • There may be potential to construct a trail on the south side of the canyon to Shorts Mountain.
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Zoning

The whole of the protected area is zoned as Nature Recreation.

Protected Area Values and Significance Summary Matrix

Conservation

Representation
Ecosection

North Okanagan Basin – 7.6% contribution to the protected area system representation. This ecosection is poorly represented (5%) in the protected areas system.

Western Okanagan Upland – major (28%) contribution to the protected area system representation. This ecosection is poorly represented (2.5%) in the protected areas system.

Biogeoclimatic subzone/variant

IDF mw1 – contributes significantly (35%) to the protected areas system representation of this subzone/variant. This subzone/variant is not well represented (4.6%) in the protected area system.

IDF xh1 – contributes 3.9% to province-wide representation. This sub/zone is reasonably well represented (7.2%) in the protected areas system.

MSdm2 – contributes 1% to province-wide representation. This subzone/variant is poorly represented (3.5%) in the protected areas system.

Special Features

Shorts Creek canyon as a geological feature.

Rare/Endangered Values

California sheep re-introduction.

Scientific/Research Opportunities

Sheep recovery.

Recreation

Representation

Backcountry

Canyon provides rugged terrain for adventuresome hikers and hunters

destination

Travel corridor

Local recreation

Hiking along the rim; hunting particularly for deer and grouse.

Special Opportunities

Future potential opportunity to view bighorn sheep once population is established

Education/Interpretation Opportunities

Cultural Heritage

Representation

Special Feature

Other Management Considerations

Other Designations

Relationship to Other Protected Areas

Connects with Fintry Park to provide continuity of habitat representation from lake shore to upper end of Shorts Creek Canyon. The only large protected area on the north end of Okanagan Lake; Okanagan Mountain Park represents southern end of the lake. Fintry Park combines with Kalamalka Lake Park, Kalmalka Lake Protected Area and Cougar Canyon in providing large natural area representation of North Okanagan Basin.

Collaborative Management Arrangements

Partnerships

Vulnerability

Relationship to Other Strategies

Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP

Area

523 hectares

Date of establishment

April 18, 2001

