

Skeena District

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

July, 2000

for Lakelse Lake
Provincial Park



Ministry of Environment
Lands and Parks
BC Parks Division



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MEMORANDUM

HIGHWAY 16 PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENTS - BINDER APPROVALS PAGE

Forward

This binder contains 11 management direction statements developed by BC Parks. These protected areas are all long established, some parks existing since the early 1950s. The 11 management direction statements provide strategic direction for these protected areas. Protected areas' roles, strategies and objectives will not change extensively over time. Management actions, implemented through operations plans, however, will change as priorities, funding and support resources come available.

- Diana Lake Park
□ Driftwood Canyon Park
□ Ethel F. Wilson Park
□ Kleanza Creek Park
■ Lakelse Lake Park
□ Pendleton Bay Park
□ Prudhomme Lake Park
□ Red Bluff Park
□ Ross Lake Park
□ Seeley Lake Park
□ Tyhee Lake Park

Approved by:

High Markides
District Manager
Skeena District

Date: 6 July 2000

Denis O'Gorman
Assistant Deputy Minister
Parks Division

Date: 2000-07-17



Table of Contents

Lakelse Lake Park	
Approvals Page	i
Forward	i
Introduction.....	1
Setting and Context.....	1
Protected Area Attributes	1
Conservation	1
Recreation and Tourism	1
Cultural Heritage.....	2
Significance in the Protected Areas System.....	2
Land Uses, Tenures and Interests	6
Access	6
Existing Tenures	6
Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities	6
Adjacent Patterns of Land Use.....	6
First Nations Interests	6
Other Agency Interests.....	7
Private and Public Stakeholder Interests.....	7
Role of Lakelse Lake Park	7
Management Commitments and Issues	8
Direction from Previous Planning	8
Management Issues	8
Management Strategy.....	9
Consultation and Future Planning.....	11
Preliminary Zoning	11
Appendix - Activity/Use Matrix.....	14
Figures:	
Figure 1 - Context Map.....	3
Figure 2 - Park Map - Furlong Bay Campground	4
Figure 3 - Park Map - Picnic Site.....	5
Figure 4 - Furlong Bay Area Zoning.....	12
Figure 5 - Picnic Site Area Zoning	13

Introduction

Purpose of Management Direction Statements

Management Direction Statements provide strategic management direction for all protected areas that do not have a full management plan. MDS do not negate the need for future, more detailed management plans. Management Direction Statements also describe protected area values, management issues and concerns; management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies; and, directional statements from other planning processes.

Setting and Context

Lakelse Lake Park covers 362 ha, in two parcels, on the northeast shore of Lakelse Lake, 25 km south of Terrace on Highway 37 (area population ~32,000; Terrace and Kitimat; Figure 1). The park, surrounded by the mountains of the Kitimat Range, lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Allied Tsimshian Tribes.

The park, established in 1956, protects lakeshore oldgrowth forest, salmonid spawning habitat and wildlife habitat, and provides recreation and camping opportunities for local residents and travelers along the Highway 16 corridor. Large day-use areas, within the southern parcel (Furlong Bay, with camping facilities) and the northern parcel (the picnic area and Gruchy's Beach; without camping facilities), are the major swimming, boating and picnic spots for area residents. Gruchy's Beach is accessible only by foot or water, providing a quieter day-use beach. The many camping facilities attract both en-route tourists and regional residents. The campground is the only full-facility park west of Smithers. World-class salmon fishing opportunities are available nearby in the Skeena River system.

Protected Area Attributes

Conservation

- Kitimat Ranges Ecosection; 130 ha of oldgrowth CWHws1 (wet subarctic coastal western hemlock subzone, submontane variant)—one of few remaining oldgrowth patches between Kitimat and Terrace
- spawning habitat for salmonids in park creeks; due to flooding, very high fish rearing potential
- habitat for wildlife, including black bear, moose, wolf, coyote, cougar
- White Malaxis (blue-listed plant) found within park

Recreation and Tourism

- full-facility campground, accessible to disabled visitors, on travel corridor (en route to Prince Rupert ferries)

- regionally significant lake and lakeshore recreation opportunities (swimming, picnicking, boating, sailing, waterskiing, fishing, ice fishing, walking, wildlife viewing)
- promoted locally

Cultural Heritage

An inventory of cultural heritage features has not been completed. However, the following values are known to exist or have a likelihood of existing:

- many culturally-modified trees within park
- may be evidence of fishing and trapping sites
- Lakelse is the Tsimshian word for the freshwater molluscs present in the lake

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- protects remnant oldgrowth CWHws1 in Kitimat Ranges Ecosection (regionally significant, underrepresented ecosystem in Kitimat Valley)
- provides easily accessible lake and lakeshore recreation for regional residents and traveling visitors
- provides accommodation for travelers (en route to Prince Rupert ferries)

Figure 1 – Context Map

Figure 2 – Park Map

Figure 3. Park Map - Picnic Site

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

Highway 37 reaches the park 20-km south of Terrace and 35 km north of Kitimat. Within the northern section of the park, separate parking lots access the 1-km walking trail to Gruchy's Beach and the developed picnic area. A parking lot also serves the day-use area at Furlong Bay, 2 km to the south. About half of the campsites at Furlong Bay are accessed by a paved road, and about half by gravel.

Existing Tenures

- Highway 37 passes through both sections of the park
- BC Hydro right-of-way
- Pacific Northern Gas right-of-way
- BC Telephone right-of-way
- water rights: two domestic, one conservation, parks waterworks
- partially Agricultural Land Reserve

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- 59 picnic tables in day-use areas, 415 parking stalls
- 156 pad-and-spur campsites
- two shelters, flush and pit toilets, three toilet/shower buildings with disabled-accessible showers, two change buildings, sani-station, water
- concrete boat launch
- playground
- amphitheatre
- beach
- 2.5 km of interpretative trail
- gatehouse
- Park Headquarters (fully-serviced building with offices)

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- private land (District Lots 3985, 5134, 7652, 1278, 4127, 3991) surrounds Furlong Bay (southern park unit), excepting a UREP (use and recreational enjoyment of the public) reserve to the south (DL 1300, File 0210332) and vacant crown land to the east (between DL 3985 and DL 5134)
- a license of occupation for a firehall lies south (DL 1300, File 6404844) of Furlong Bay
- private land (DLs 3982, 422, 4467; DL 3980 Blk A) and gas and hydro rights of way surround the northern park unit, excepting some crown land (DL 2702) to the north

First Nations Interests

- part of the asserted traditional territory of the Allied Tsimshian Tribes
- Traditional Use Study underway
- general concern on the management of the fishery resource and spawning grounds

- interested in a First Nations history panel that describes some of the areas Tsimshian history
- interested in the protection of identified cultural-heritage sites
- would like to investigate the feasibility of establishing a First Nations Rediscovery Camp within the various parks in the asserted territory of the Allied Tsimshian Tribes
- would like to consider the potential of being the Park Facility Operator
- interested in commercial cultural tours

Other Agency Interests

- BC Environment and Department of Fisheries and Oceans have interests in the fishery in Lakelse Lake and fish habitat within creeks
- BC Environment maintains a dyke on Granite Creek to protect adjacent residences
- Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture, Archaeology Branch, and the Tsimshian have an interest in archaeological sites
- Ministry of Forests has an interest in the Watershed Restoration Program ongoing near Lakelse Park
- Regional District of Kitimat Stikine has an interest in regional tourism

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- recreational users: swimmers, picnickers, anglers, boaters (motorised and non-motorised), water-skiers
- local residents: Kitimat and Terrace communities
- lakeshore residents (particularly park neighbours)
- naturalists

Role of Lakelse Lake Park

Lakelse Lake Park plays an important conservation role within the British Columbia protected areas system. The 130 ha of remaining valley-bottom old-growth forest (under-represented wet subarctic coastal western hemlock; CWHws1) is one of the last stands between Kitimat and Terrace. In addition, the streams within the park provide excellent salmonid spawning habitat.

Lakelse Lake Park plays an equally important recreation role. The park is the primary family recreation spot around Terrace and Kitimat. The variety of family-oriented opportunities provided by the lake, lakeshore and forest settings attract regional visitors for day-use and for stays of several days. The scenic, full-facility campground also attracts travelers along the Highway 16 corridor. Summer interpretative programs offer educational opportunities for people of all ages.

Management Commitments and Issues

Direction from Previous Planning

Lakelse Lake Park has been managed as a Class A Park since 1956. Annual Management Plans provide year-to-year direction.

Management Issues

The following management issues require attention:

Theme	Issue
Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aging trees create potential hazards • human-bear conflicts exacerbated by nearby garbage and high number of users • motorised water traffic endangers swimmers
Protecting ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inventory of flora and fauna is incomplete (Vegetation Management Plan is complete) • park development and recreational activities impact oldgrowth trees and ecosystem—over 1300 oldgrowth trees have been removed in the past 20 years • garbage and food, in and near park, endangers bears • off-trail use damages vegetation • BC Environment has concerns that tiny ephemeral streams, important fish habitat due to frequent flooding, could be impacted by park operations • impact of angling on fish populations is unknown • logging and development (outside the park) have seriously impacted fish habitat in the Lakelse watershed • dyke on Granite Creek, maintained by BC Environment to protect nearby residents, might impact park values • residential development adjacent to park will fragment the two park sections • flooding causes effluent to leach from toilets at Furlong Bay and Gruchy's Beach
Protecting recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land slides impact recreation (historical slide in 1965 destroyed park facilities) • annual flooding damages facilities at Gruchy's Beach • Gruchy's Trail poses management problems—marshy areas and exposed tree roots necessitate boardwalk; flooding loosens boardwalk anchors
Protecting cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high use may impact cultural values • vandalism damages culturally-modified trees • implementation of hazard tree policy may destroy culturally-modified trees
First Nations Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of cultural heritage sites (see Strategy for “cultural heritage values”) • Protection of fishery (see strategy for “Natural Values”) • First Nations history panel • Rediscovery Camp • Interest in economic opportunities including Park Facility

Theme	Issue
	Operator and Cultural Tours
Park operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any increase in number of campsites or facilities may impact oldgrowth group camping facility across highway from picnic site undergoing feasibility study day-use area is expensive and brings no revenue
Unauthorised activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vandalism destroys facilities

Management Strategy

The following table describes management strategies to deal with outstanding issues raised. In addition, figure 1 contains a list of acceptable land and resource uses for this park.

Priority Management Objectives	Priority Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure Lakelse Lake Park is safe for public use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement park-specific Hazard Tree Management Policy (see below) Maintain park-specific Bear-People Conflict Prevention Plan; include prompt garbage removal (particularly at Gruchy's Beach), increased education on the causes and results of habituation (signage at all day-use and camping areas, plus direct communication by Park Facility Operator, Park Hosts, interpreters and other staff) Maintain well-defined swimming and boating areas Work with RCMP and Coast Guard to reduce boater-swimmer conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> protect the park's natural values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate significance of flora and fauna; prepare Ecology Information Summary Minimise garbage (see Bear-People Plan above) Continue to implement Hazard Tree Management Policy, based on new hazard tree guidelines; take into consideration park zoning (e.g., in Special Feature zone, restrict visitor access rather than removing hazard trees) and culturally-modified trees (see CMT Management Plan below) Complete annual hazard tree assessments; visual checks in spring, detailed assessments of a rotating area each fall Assess recommendations of Vegetation Management Plan, including leaving felled hazard trees as coarse woody debris, planting high-use areas, and developing an education program targeting tree damage and its effects; incorporate appropriate recommendations into Hazard Tree Management Policy Do not expand current facilities within oldgrowth area Maintain clearly-posted, well-defined trails; increase

Priority Management Objectives	Priority Strategies
	<p>awareness through interpretative programs and in-park handout; focus on Gruchy's Trail as well as self-guided trail in Furlong Bay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise sediment and nutrient contribution to streams and lake during operational and maintenance activities; consult DFO and BC Environment habitat biologist for recommendations about sediment control if any substantial new construction activities are planned; consider that even ephemeral streams are important habitat during planning • Quantify park-based angling effort and harvest on Lakelse Lake if requested by BC Environment • Encourage compliance with angling regulations; maintain postings of Provincial sport angling regulations at boat launch, particularly daily and possession limits for trout and char • Co-operate in Watershed Restoration Program assessment, if reaches of streams within park are selected for detailed evaluation • Work with BC Environment to minimise impacts of Granite Creek dyke on park values • Monitor development in adjacent land; discuss potential mitigative measure with developers • Investigate means of reducing effluent leaching • Consider developing Conservation Stewardship program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect the park's recreation values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue maintaining boardwalk on Gruchy's Trail to improve accessibility while protecting resources • Consider developing Park Watch program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect the park's cultural heritage values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and collate existing information on cultural heritage values; prepare Cultural Features Information Summary and Management Plan in consultation with Tsimshian, using information collected from the Traditional Use Study to ensure recognition and protection of values • Develop Culturally Modified Tree Management Plan in consultation with Tsimshian; ensure that CMTs are adequately protected; within Intensive Recreation zone, where hazard trees will be removed when required, assess the age and significance of each site, consult local First Nations people, and protect significant sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations Values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with the Allied Tsimshian Tribal Council prepare a First Nations History panel when funding permits • Entertain applications for rediscovery camps within Highway Parks in asserted Allied Tsimshian Tribes territory. First priority should be to identify sites outside of parks and then to consider parks subject to MDS and park development objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain facilities appropriate for a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain full facilities at current level; replace aging facilities

Priority Management Objectives	Priority Strategies
full-facility park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider improving disabled access • Complete feasibility study on group camping site; if appropriate, complete impact assessment of conservation and recreation values • Determine need for future expansion and examine potential sites outside oldgrowth area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide information to the public about the park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain relevant interpretative programs • Maintain in-park handout; include information about bear habituation, oldgrowth dynamics, the effects of human-induced injury to trees, and the trade-offs between conservation and recreation values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decrease deficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review recommendations of Highway 16 Overview Analysis • Investigate demand for walk-in camping at Gruchy's Beach; if demand exists, consider performing feasibility study • Maintain Park Host program • Consider other advertising options • Consider offering mid-week events • Promote park at community events

Consultation and Future Planning

Good relationships with local communities are crucial in maintaining the park's reputation and minimising vandalism. BC Parks will continue to build a relationship with the Tsimshian and will discuss issues at Lakelse Lake Park during scheduled Khutzeymateen Grizzly Sanctuary meetings and as necessary to deal with specific issues.

The priority for preparing a management plan for Lakelse Lake Park is ranked as moderate.

Preliminary Zoning

All current park facilities (excepting trails), plus a 75-m buffer, will be zoned Intensive Recreation, managed for a safe, high quality recreation experience. All other areas, including walking trails, will be zoned as a Special Feature, recognising the value of the oldgrowth ecosystem. Management in this zone will focus on protection of ecological and cultural features.

Figure 4 – Zoning

Figure 5 - Picnic Area Zoning

Appendix - Activity/Use Matrix for Lakelse Lake Park

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptable Uses
Aboriginal Rights	Y
Hunting	N
Fishing	Y
Trapping	N2
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational gold panning/rock hounding	N
Utility corridors	N2
Communication sites	N
Horse use/pack animals	N
Guide outfitting (hunting)	N
Guide outfitting (fishing)	N
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Guide outfitting (river rafting)	N
Cat-assisted skiing	N
Ski hills	N
Commercial recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility-based)	M
Backcountry huts	N
Water control structures	N
Fish stocking and enhancement	N1
Road access	Y
Off-road access (snowmobiling)	N2
Off-road access (motorised)	N
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	M
Motorised water access	Y
Aircraft access	N
Fire management (suppression)	Y
Fire management (prescribed fire management)	N
Fire management (prevention)	Y
Forest insect/disease control	M
Noxious weed control	M
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