

MORRISSEY PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

February 2003

Approved by:


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Date: Mar - 31/03

MORRISSEY PROVINCIAL PARK Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Primary Role

The **primary role** of Morrissey Provincial Park is to protect a natural stand of old growth cottonwoods and riparian habitat along the banks of the Elk River.

These unique black cottonwoods provide critical habitat for a wide range of wildlife species, including secondary cavity nesters (owls, ducks and woodpeckers) and ungulates (deer, elk and moose) which use the shrubby understory for browse and protection from predators.

The majority of riverfront property adjacent to the Elk River is privately owned and developed to accommodate commercial, residential and agricultural purposes. Severe fragmentation of the original riparian habitat has resulted. As such, Morrissey Provincial Park retains many of the natural landscape values associated with a pristine and unencumbered river.

Secondary Role

The **secondary role** of the park is to provide limited day use opportunities for fishing and picnicking. Former facilities in the park included a large parking lot, which was frequently utilized by fishers of the Elk River. However, public safety issues (windfall onto persons and/or vehicles) as a result of decaying black cottonwoods in the vicinity of the parking area prompted closure to vehicle access.

Known Management Issues	Response
Closure of parking lot (2002).	Monitoring of public response. Education related to the importance of wildlife trees in riparian habitat.

Zoning

The entire park is zoned Natural Environment (5 ha).

Conservation

- Representation
-ecosection Negligible contribution (0.02%) to the representation of the poorly represented Border Range (BRR) Ecosection (4.2%) because of its small size. Contributes the least of the 4 frontcountry parks in the BRR ecosection.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant Negligible contributor (0.04%) to the protected area representation of the ICHmk1 because of its small size. Mount Fernie is the largest contributor of ICHmk1 in the BRR ecosection (75%).
- Special Feature Old growth black cottonwoods and associated riparian habitat.
- Rare/ Endangered Values None identified. No studies completed.
- Scientific/Research Opportunities None identified.

Recreation

- Representation
-backcountry Not applicable.
- destination Not applicable.
- travel corridor Day use stop-over en route to the Flathead Valley and Alberta.
- recreation Local anglers use the adjacent area to launch boats. Elk River has acquired world class status for catch and release dry fly fishing.
- Special Opportunities None identified.
- Education/Interpretation Opportunities None identified.

Cultural Heritage

- Representation Not yet assessed.
- Special Feature None identified.

Other Management Considerations

- Other designations None identified.
- Relationship to other PAs 1 of 2 parks offering access to the Elk River between Fernie and the Alberta border (alternate - Elk Valley Provincial Park).
- Cooperative Management Arrangements None identified.
- Partnerships None identified.
- Vulnerability Recreational angler use of river (garbage, parking, illegal camping).
- Hazard trees that need to be retained for their conservation value.
- Park floods in times of high water.
- Relationship to other Strategies None identified.

Area: 5 hectares

Date of Establishment: August 5, 1962