

OMINEACA PROVINCIAL PARK AND PROTECTED AREA

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

March 2003

Approved by:



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Date: March 18/03



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Date: Mar. 31/03

OMINECA PROVINCIAL PARK AND PROTECTED AREA

Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Omineca Park and Omineca Protected Area were established as a result of the Fort St. James (approved March 30, 1999) and Mackenzie (approved November 14, 2000) Land and Resource Management Plans. Omineca Park (130,231 ha) was formally established as a Class A park on April 11, 2001 and is presently named and described in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*. Omineca Protected Area (3,138 ha) was established by order in council under the *Environment and Land Use Act* on April 18, 2001. The protected area was established to allow for the construction, use and maintenance of a road through the area for the purpose of providing access to lands beyond the park and protected area.

Omineca Park and Protected Area are located in north central British Columbia, 170 km northwest of Mackenzie. It is 133,369 ha in size. The park and protected area protect 80 km of the wide Omineca Valley, Germansen Lake, the Wolverine Range and large wilderness areas. They provide the best representation of the Southern Omineca Mountains Ecoregion.

Omineca Park and Protected Area provide areas of very high habitat values for caribou, moose, waterfowl and wolverine.

The Omineca River provides very high habitat values for Arctic grayling. Bull trout and rainbow trout populations are also found in the area. Wildlife viewing and boating/paddling along the wide, meandering Omineca River has high potential for day use opportunities. Germansen and Nina lakes provide exceptional backcountry camping, fishing and boating in an undisturbed forested habitat, and the gently rolling terrain of the Wolverine Ranges appeals to many hikers and backpackers. Vehicle accessibility, high wildlife viewing opportunities, and relatively gentle terrain provide an abundance of opportunities.

Primary Role

The primary role of Omineca Park and Protected Area is to conserve a representative sample of the biodiversity of the Southern Omineca Mountains Ecoregion. The park also includes habitat for caribou in the Wolverine Ranges and provincially significant riparian habitat and wetlands along the Omineca River. The Omineca River is also one of the highest value watersheds in the Williston Reservoir for the red-listed Arctic grayling.

Secondary Role

The secondary role of Omineca Park and Protected Area is to provide a variety of recreational opportunities at Germansen Lake, in the Omineca Valley and in mountainous wilderness areas.

Boating and wildlife viewing opportunities abound along the Omineca River. Camping, fishing, boating, scenic viewing, hunting, hiking and snowmobiling are enjoyed at Nina and Germansen lakes.

Known Management Issues	Response
<p>At least 5 errors exist in the current boundary description for Omineca Park and Protected Area. The following 5 errors must now be corrected to ensure that land use commitments are respected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Mackenzie LRMP directed that a protected area be established to allow access to Indian Reserve #12, Takla Lake. The current boundary of the protected area corridor follows the north bank of the Omineca River from the Omineca Mining Road to the Indian Reserve. Half of this corridor is submerged for several months of the year as it is in a wetland. Amending this boundary will allow the future access road to be placed on dry ground. ii. The Mackenzie LRMP directed that the southwest corner of the Settlement Corner (south of Germansen Landing) be used as the point of commencement for the boundary leading to Germansen Lake. The boundary is currently shown as originating in the southwest corner of a mineral tenure. iii. The Mackenzie LRMP directed that Slocan be allowed to construct an access road along the north side of Germansen Lake and Gehbart Arm. The present boundary of the Omineca Protected Area only extends to The Narrows, where it then crosses over and out of the park. To honour the LRMP table's decision, a protected area corridor will need to be established around Gehbart Arm to enable road construction to proceed in the summer of 2003 as planned. iv. The Mackenzie LRMP agreed to establish wildlife corridors through the existing Omineca Settlement Corridor and to accommodate the existing and future need for the residents to establish micro hydro facilities for their domestic 	<p>Pursue legislative changes in the Spring 2003 session.</p>

<p>use. The new boundaries have now been approved by the LRMP and the residents of Germansen Landing. This will require amendments to the existing boundaries of both the park and protected area, as well as to the order in council establishing the protected area to provide the necessary authorities to approve micro hydro facilities.</p> <p>The south boundary of Omineca Park was identified through the Fort St. James LRMP which included provisions for road access by Canfor. The current boundary does not provide for such road access. A boundary amendment is necessary to correct the error and to provide road access.</p>	
<p>Germansen Lake Industrial Road</p>	<p>Issue a Park Use Permit to Slocan to construct and maintain an industrial road in Omineca Protected Area as provided for in the Order in Council establishing the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Impact Assessment • Ensure access is improved and maintained to 3 recreation sites on Germansen Lake.
<p>Forest Health</p>	<p>In March 2002, a Mountain Pine Beetle Strategy was completed for all parks in the Omineca Region. The strategy provides recommendations for appropriate beetle management in Omineca Park and Protected Area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor through aerial surveys • Action through fall and burn, if consistent with strategy
<p>Ecosystem Management</p>	<p>Complete an Ecosystem Management Plan to provide guidance on the management of caribou habitat, moose habitat, and fire.</p>
<p>Management Plan</p>	<p>This park and protected area, due to the complexity of issues will require the completion of a management plan.</p>
<p>Adjacency Issue</p>	<p>Review development plans and monitor industrial activity.</p> <p>Propose de-activation of roads within 2 km of park and protected area boundaries.</p> <p>Monitor forest harvesting adjacent to park and protected area boundaries.</p>
<p>Omineca Valley Boundary</p>	<p>Markers will be put up in strategic spots to</p>

	indicate park and protected area when border has been finalized.
Caribou Management	<p>The mountain caribou present are part of the Southern Mountains National Ecological Area population, which has been designated as threatened by COSEWIC. They are also included on Schedule 1 of SARA, the federal Species at Risk Act, which will require that a recovery plan be prepared. Continue involvement with the Northern Caribou Technical advisory Committee which is preparing the recovery plan. Liaise with researchers to ensure the Environmental Stewardship Division is involved in informational exchange.</p> <p>Implement Ungulate Winter Range objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize predation on caribou through vegetation management strategies. • Manage Pine Lichen Winter Range (PLWR) so that 45-55% is 0-70 years old and 45-55% is 70-140 years old. Included within a sustainable supply of 45-55% of the PLWR habitat is a 15% buffer against natural disturbance such as fire or bark beetle outbreaks. Expectation of natural disturbance beyond 15% needs to be considered in long-term planning.
Arctic Grayling	Liaise with Peace-Williston Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program to ensure the Environmental Stewardship Division is involved in informational exchange.
Funding Withdrawal – the recreation sites in Omineca were included in the 2002 Service Withdrawal initiative	Determine if a local community group is interested in maintaining the recreation sites.
Recreational Risk Assessment	<p>Conduct recreational risk assessment and develop a plan to minimize risks.</p> <p>Assess facilities and upgrade as required (Public Safety).</p>
First Nations Use	Maintain liaison with First Nations and plan and manage accordingly.
Local Community Involvement Local and regional residents have lobbied for over twenty years to have a park established in the Ominecas. The residents have a very strong interest in the park and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve in management of the park wherever feasible • Investigate potential for stewardship agreements

need to be involved in any communication regarding management in the park.	
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Zoning

The park and protected area have been zoned:

Intensive Recreation (approximately 1,264 hectares or 1% of the area) to provide access to a variety of recreational opportunities along the north and west shore of Germansen Lake;

Natural Environment (approximately 76,609 hectares or 59% of the area) in the western portion of the park and provides protection for the scenic values and provision of backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment; and

Wilderness Recreation (approximately 52,358 hectares or 40% of the area) in the eastern portion of the park and provides backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment and to protect significant wildlife habitat.

CONSERVATION

Representation

- ecosection X Southern Omineca Mountains (SOM). One of only 3 protected areas contributing to this well represented ecosection (14.28% is protected), of which 86.42% is in Omineca Park and Protected Area.
Manson Plateau (MAP). 2.69% of this ecosection is protected, of which 12.71% is in Omineca Park and Protected Area.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant X ESSFmv3 – 7.01% protected, Omineca Park and Protected Area contribute the greatest extent of representation to this ecosystem (59.1%)
BWBSdk1 – 21.95% protected. Omineca Park and Protected Area contributes 10.32%, placing it third

Special Feature

- X Provincially significant riparian habitat and wetlands along the Omineca River
Very important caribou habitat in the Wolverine Range

Rare/Endangered Values

- X Arctic grayling; caribou are part of the of the Southern Mountains National Ecological Area population, which has been designated as threatened by COSEWIC. They are also included on Schedule 1 of SARA, the federal Species at Risk Act, which will require that a recovery plan be prepared..

Scientific/Research Opportunities

- X Caribou, grayling, wolverine and moose
Continue involvement with the recovery plan for the mountain caribou

RECREATION

Representation:

- backcountry X Wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting, horse riding, camping, hiking, snowmobiling
- destination X Omineca River – canoeing, camping, wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting
Germansen Lake – camping, boating, fishing
- travel corridor
- local recreation X Germansen Landing and Mansen Creek residents

Special Opportunities

- X Flat water canoeing and wildlife viewing along Omineca River

Education/Interpretation Opportunities

Messaging on managing for biodiversity

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Representation

First Nations sites throughout area

Special Feature Mining flumes along Germansen River canyon

OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Other Designations

Relationship to Other PAs Nation, Chase, Heather-Dina, Muscovite and 5 ERs are located within 75 km

Co-operative Management Arrangements

Partnerships Need to involve local community

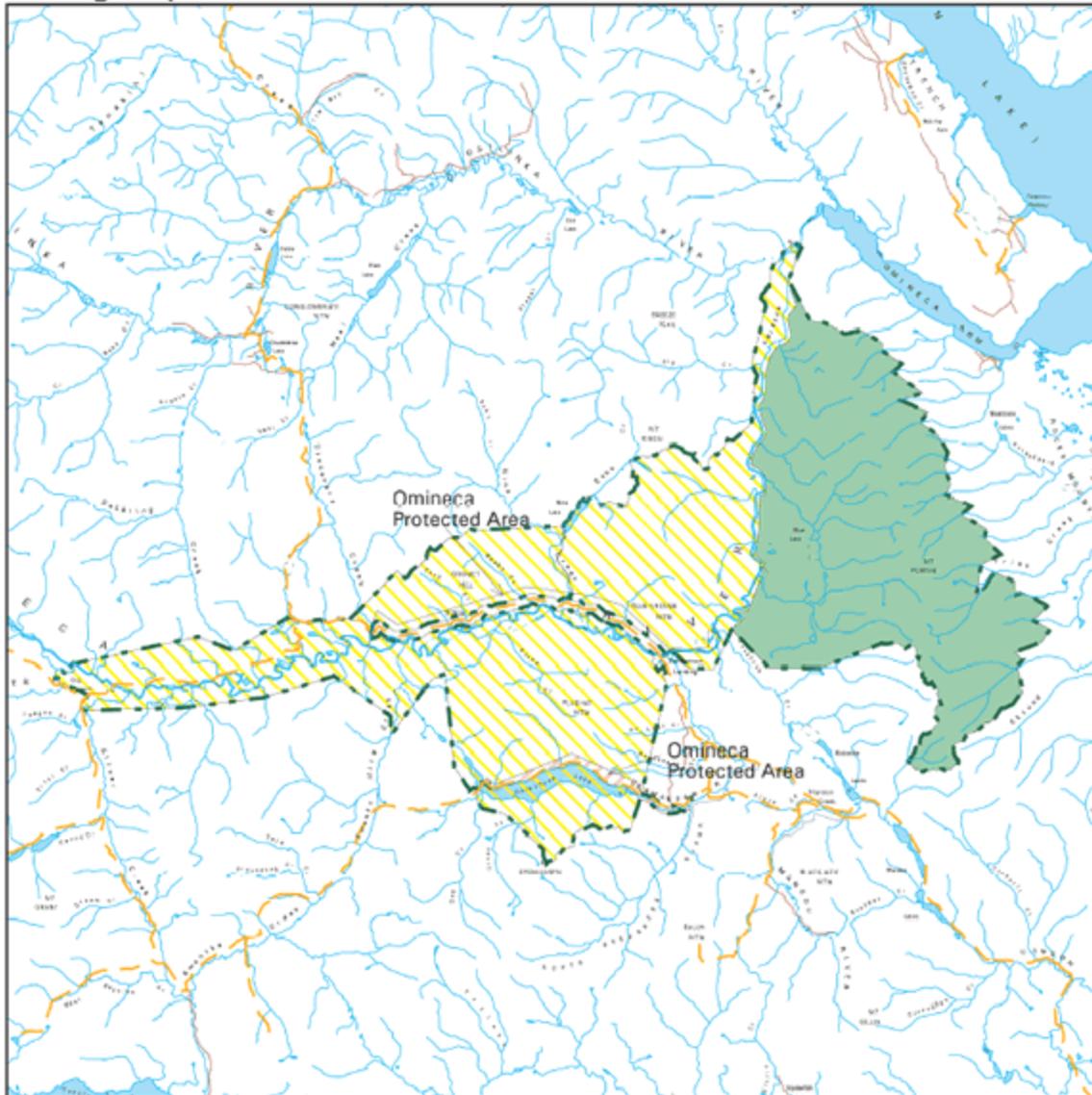
Vulnerability X Concern of mountain pine beetle/early winter caribou habitat
The Conservation Risk Assessment Process identified 2 risk factors (the shape and the size of the park) for the park and rated them as low significance. Six stressors/threats were identified for the park: fire suppression was rated as highly significant; roadways and mine development/potential were rated as moderately significant; corridor nodes, housing and boating were all rated as low significance.

Relationship to Other Strategies X Omineca, and all parks listed above were established by Mackenzie/Fort St James LRMP.
Omineca could potentially contribute to Biodiversity and Living Rivers strategies.

Area: 130,231 hectares

Date of establishment: April 11, 2001

Zoning Map - Omineca Provincial Park and Omineca Protected Area



Projection: Albers Equal Areas
Datum: NAD83



-  Intensive Recreation
-  Natural Environment
-  Wilderness Recreation
-  Protected Area Boundary



Produced in Mar 2003 for
Ministry of Water, Land and Air
Protection by MSRM, Decision
Support Services

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