

Skeena District

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

September 2000

for Rainbow Alley Provincial
Park



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Environment
Lands and Parks
BC Parks Division

**This management direction statement was developed through direction received
from the Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan.**



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MEMORANDUM

**BULKLEY GOAL 2 PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
STATEMENTS - BINDER APPROVALS PAGE**

Forward

This binder contains five management direction statements developed by BC Parks. The Provincial Government designated these protected areas under *Bill 17, Protected Areas Act of British Columbia* which received Royal Assent on June 29th 2000. The five 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.

- Burnt Cabin Ecological Reserve
- Call Lake Park
- Netalzul Meadows Park
- Nilkitkwa Lake Park
- Rainbow Alley Park

Approved by:


Hugh Markides
District Manager
Skeena District

Date: Aug. 24, 2000


Denis O'Gorman
Assistant Deputy Minister
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Date: 00 09 01

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Introduction

Purpose

This management direction statement (MDS) provides management for newly designated Rainbow Alley Park. It identifies key strategies that will be ranked according to priority and completed as funding permits. Implementation will be dependent on available funding and agency priorities. All development associated with these strategies is subject to BC Parks' Impact Assessment Policy.

Setting and Context

Rainbow Alley Park covers 110 ha between Nilkitkwa Lake and Babine Lake, about 130 km north of Smithers (area population ~12,000; Park Map). Water flows north from Babine Lake, through Nilkitkwa Lake and into the Babine River, finally joining the Skeena River to the west. The Ned'u'ten community of Wud'at (Fort Babine, population 135) lies about 1 km south of the protected area. The park lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Ned'u'ten (Lake Babine Nation).

The park protects about 750 m of Rainbow Alley, well known for its world-class rainbow trout fishing opportunities. It also protects wet forest habitat to the west, on an alluvial fan, including wetland habitat used for breeding by American bitterns. This section of the Babine River is easily navigable by flat-water canoeists as well as motorized watercraft. Babine River Park, downstream of Nilkitkwa Lake, offers wilderness river recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities, and many small sites along Nilkitkwa and Babine Lakes (the Babine Lake and Nilkitkwa Lake recreational boating system) offer lake and lakeshore recreation.

Protected Area Attributes

Conservation

- Babine Uplands Ecoregion; SBSmc2 (moist cold sub-boreal spruce subzone, Babine variant)
- breeding habitat for American bittern (blue-listed)
- provincially significant salmonid (including steelhead and sockeye) and trout populations

Recreation and Tourism

- internationally significant angling opportunities (guided and non-guided; primarily trout)
- wildlife viewing opportunities
- primitive boat-in camping
- small portion of Babine Heritage River

Cultural Heritage

- long history of fishing use by Ned'u'ten people
- other attributes not identified to BC Parks

Figure 1

Rainbow Alley Provincial Park Locator Map

Legend

- Highways
- Rivers/Lakes
- Coastline
- Rainbow Alley Provincial Park
- Skeena Parks District

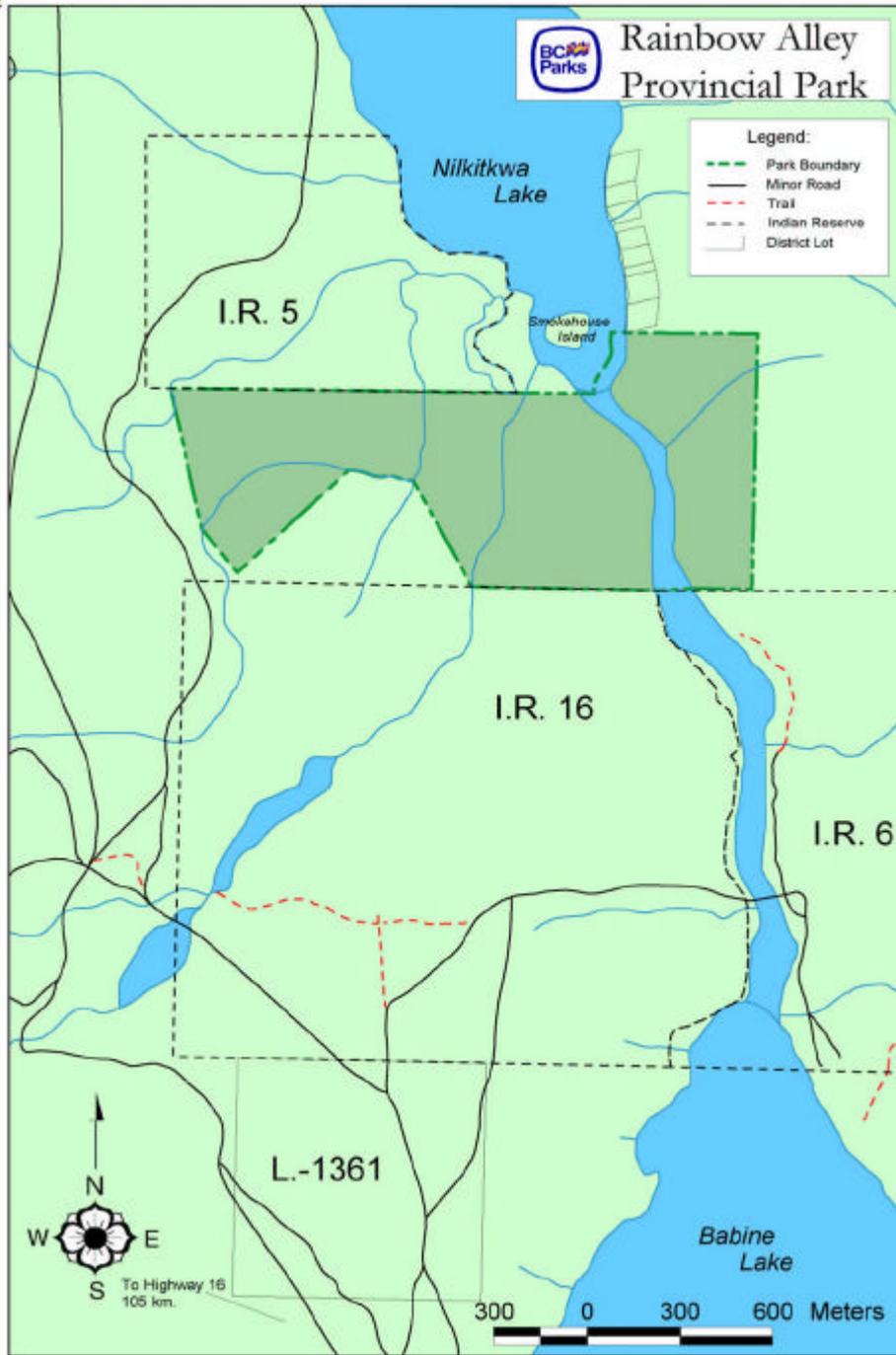


0 100 200 300 Kilometers

Scale 1:6,000,000



Figure 2



Significance in the Protected Areas System

- protects remnant under-represented SBSmc2 within Babine Uplands Ecosection
- provides easily accessible, internationally significant angling opportunities

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

Access to the river is via boat (motorized or non-motorized) from the north end of Babine Lake or the south end of Nilkitkwa Lake. Boats are launched from Babine Lodge (north end of Babine Lake) or from Fort Babine (no parking). The Nilkitkwa Lake road meets the eastern and northern boundary of the park. No trails are developed through the park; hence most travel is along the river corridor.

Existing Tenures

- angle guides
- guide outfitter
- trappers

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- primitive campsite on east side of Rainbow Alley
- most of the area to the west of the river has been logged
- land clearing immediately adjacent to Rainbow Alley
- most use is for angling (guided and non-guided)

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- Ned'u'ten IR #5 to north of park, west of Babine River
- Ned'u'ten IR #16 and #6 to south of park, both sides of Babine River
- small private lots to north of park, east of Babine River
- within landscape corridor as defined by Bulkley LRMP
- Ned'u'ten food fishery on Nilkitkwa Lake; Smokehouse Island north of park on Nilkitkwa Lake

First Nations Interests

- Asserted traditional territory of the Ned'u'ten (Lake Babine Nation)
- very close to Ned'u'ten community of Wud'at
- used regularly as part of food fishery
- trapping along lakeshore identified as an important activity
- concern on the process of designation and ongoing consultation

Other Agency Interests

- BC Environment has an interest in protecting American bittern breeding habitat and in managing steelhead and trout populations
- DFO has an interest in the salmon populations passing through the park

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- recreational users: boaters, anglers (Steelhead Society, BC Wildlife Federation, BV Rod and Gun Club)
- local residents: Wud'at community
- commercial users: angling guides, guide outfitter, trappers
- lodge operators
- naturalists (BV Naturalists)

Role of Rainbow Alley Park

Rainbow Alley Park serves both conservation and recreation roles within the British Columbia protected areas system. The focus of the park's conservation role is to protect the exceptional fish habitat of Rainbow Alley. The park also protects a small remnant (110 ha) of moist cold sub-boreal spruce (SBSmc2) ecosystems within the Babine Uplands Ecoregion, including breeding habitat for the blue-listed American bittern. This ecoregion is under-represented within the parks system.

The focus of the park's recreation role is to provide internationally significant recreational opportunities, primarily angling for rainbow trout. The relatively small, special feature, park complements the much larger Babine River Corridor Park downstream and the recreational boating parks along Babine and Nilkitkwa Lakes.

Management Commitments and Issues

Direction from Previous Planning

The Bulkley LRMP recommended Rainbow Alley as a protected area in 1996. The LRMP recommends that the shoreline of Rainbow Alley be managed as a landscape corridor, maintaining connectivity within the landscape. The LRMP notes that Rainbow Alley is a "priority area for watershed assessments". Management direction within the surrounding Babine River Landscape Unit also follows guidelines set out in the Babine River Interim Local Resource Use Plan and Coordinated Access Management Plan. In this landscape unit, emphasis is placed on grizzly bear management.

Management Issues

The following management issues require attention:

Theme	Issue
Protecting ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• inventory of natural features is incomplete• impact of high level of angling on fish populations is unknown
Protecting recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• boat launches and parking may be inadequate• primitive camping site is unmanaged
Protecting cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• actively used for traditional purposes• high use may damage cultural sites
First Nations Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• food fishery and trapping• concerned about the process of designation

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 Rainbow Alley Park is safe for public use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider posting signs about water safety and safety around bears
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the park's natural values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory fauna and flora; prepare Ecology Information Summary • Encourage angler compliance with regulations; maintain posting of provincial sport angling regulations, including daily and possession limits and area and season closures • Consider posting signs about no-trace camping and garbage removal; monitor impacts of use on resources • Communicate with BC Environment and DFO over arising fishery issues; participate in management actions as requested
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the park's recreational values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow existing use • Consider adequacy of boat launch and parking facilities for Babine Lake and Nilkitkwa recreational boating system as a whole; pursue designation of system under federal Pleasure Craft Sewage Pollution Prevention Regulation; discuss options for appropriate human waste disposal or removal
<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 (based on the Lake Babine Nations interests and desires) • Work with the Lake Babine Nation and the Ned'u'ten and Wud'at communities over park use and management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nation Values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Rights may be exercised subject to safety and conservation concerns • Meet with the Lake Babine Nation to discuss park issues including the designation process • Follow ministry guidelines on consultation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop appropriate facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No development is anticipated

Consultation and Future Planning

BC Parks will consult with the Ned'u'ten (Lake Babine Nation) about their use of the area and future site management. Due to the park's location, BC Parks will not encourage additional use or services at the park without prior consultation with the Lake Babine Nation. BC Parks will continue to consult with DFO and BC Environment regarding fishery management.

Preliminary Zoning

The park is zoned as Natural Environment to provide for recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

**Appendix I. Rainbow Alley Park - Table of
Acceptable Activities, Uses and Facilities**

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