Skeena District

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

July 2000

for Red Bluff Provincial Park

Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks

Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks

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MEMORANDUM

HIGHWAY 16 PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENTS - BINDER APPROVALS PAGE
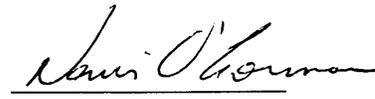
Forward

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:

Hugh Markides
District Manager
Skeena District

Date: _6 July 2000_

Denis O'Gorman
Assistant Deputy Minister
Parks Division

Date: _2000 · 07 · 17_

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Red Bluff Park

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

Red Bluff Park covers 148 ha on the southwest shore of Babine Lake, between Topley Landing and Granisle, about 30 km north of Topley (area population ~12,000 including Houston and Burns Lake; Regional Location Map). The park lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Ned'u'ten (Lake Babine Nation) and the Yekooche First Nations.

The park, established in 1978, protects marsh, bluff and shoreline habitats along BC's longest natural lake. It provides access to internationally significant fishing and boating opportunities and offers camping for local residents and destination travellers. Other parks along Babine Lake, including Pendleton Bay, Topley and Smithers Landing, not directly linked by road, can be visited by motor boat from Red Bluff.

Protected Area Attributes

Conservation
- remnant Babine Upland Ecosection; SBSmc2 (moist, cold sub-boreal spruce subzone, Babine variant)
- marsh area provides abundant waterfowl habitat
- habitat for wildlife, including black bear and moose
- active eagle nest, sockeye salmon in lake

Recreation and Tourism
- destination camping with access to internationally-significant angling opportunities (rainbow and lake trout) along 200 km of waterways
- self-guiding trail; wildlife viewing opportunities

Cultural Heritage
- archaeological sites within park

Significance in the Protected Areas System
- protects remnant ecosystem, including marsh habitat, within the Babine Upland Ecosection (high priority, underrepresented ecosection)

- provides outstanding angling and boating opportunities for local residents and destination travellers

Figure 1 – Context Map

Figure 2 – Park Map

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

Topley Landing Road (paved to Granisle) borders the park about 30 km north of Topley on Highway 16.

Existing Tenures
- Topley Landing Road runs through the northwest corner of the park

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities
- 14 picnic tables in day-use area; 20 parking stalls
- 9 new "pad-and-spur" campsites; 18 overflow sites and 46 old, unused sites (downsized from 64 sites in 1993)
- pit toilets, water pump
- 1 boat ramp, dock, breakwater
- 274 m of developed beach
- 4 km of interpretative trail

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use
- Babine lake forms the northern boundary
- community campsite adjacent to park
- rural and recreational crown leases (lots 25, 24, 23) begin at southern tip
- abandoned gravel pit lies west of southern tip of park (crown tenure file # 0301793)
- crown land, subject to timber harvest, surrounds the rest of the park

First Nations Interests
- asserted traditional territory of the Ned'u'ten and Yekooche First Nations
- archaeological sites identified

Other Agency Interests
- BC Environment has an interest in the Babine Lake fishery
- Ministry of Forests has an interest in forest issues on nearby crown land, and manages several nearby Forest Recreation Sites; Ministry is working with Granisle Community Forest Committee on trails in the area
- Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture, Archaeology Branch, and the identified First Nations have an interest in the archaeological sites
- Regional District of Bulkley Nechako has an interest in regional tourism

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests
- recreational users: anglers, boaters, picnickers, swimmers
- local residents: Granisle, Topley, Houston, Burns Lake communities
- naturalists
- Babine Lake Users Group
- local service club operates campground adjacent to park

- Granisle Community Forest Committee; area between Granisle and Red Bluff Park is proposed as a Community Forest; they are planning a trail linking Granisle to Red Bluff Park

Role of Red Bluff Park

Red Bluff plays an important recreation role within the British Columbia protected areas system. The park offers camping and access to the internationally significant angling and boating opportunities provided by Babine Lake, one of the largest natural freshwater lakes in the province. The bluff and marsh provide wildlife viewing and lakeshore family recreation opportunities, making the park popular with regional residents and destination visitors alike. Red Bluff Park complements several other small park sites, including Topley Landing, Smithers Landing and Pendleton Bay, that provide camping, picnicking, boat launching and nature appreciation opportunities within the Babine Lake Marine Park system.

Red Bluff Park serves a minor conservation role. The park protects a small remnant (148 ha) of lakeshore marsh and forest ecosystems (moist cold sub-boreal spruce; SBSmc2) within the underrepresented Babine Upland Ecosection. The relatively small size of the park limits its conservation role.

Management Commitments and Issues

Direction from Previous Planning

Red Bluff Park has been managed as a Class A Park since 1978. Annual Management Plans provide year-to-year direction.

Management Issues

The following management issues require attention:

Theme	Issue
Public safety	• ageing cottonwoods create potential hazard • human-bear conflicts exacerbated by nearby garbage
Protecting ecological values	• inventory of natural features is incomplete • impact of angling on fish populations in Babine Lake is unknown; BC Environment has concerns about the impact of fishing pressure, particularly on lake trout
Protecting recreational values	• visitors prefer old campsites (treed), but these facilities are deteriorating • interpretative trail is deteriorating
Protecting cultural values	• significance of cultural values is unknown
Park operations	• high deficiency and low occupancy rates • abundant nearby camping opportunities

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
• ensure Red Bluff Park is safe for public use	• Follow Hazard Tree Guidelines; continue to assess cottonwoods • Develop park-specific Bear-People Conflict Prevention Plan, including education program for information board and local communities
• protect the park's natural values	• Investigate the significance of the park's flora and fauna; prepare Ecological Information Summary • Quantify park-based angling activity if requested by BC Environment • Encourage angler compliance with regulations; maintain posting of provincial sport angling regulations, including daily and possession limits for rainbow trout and lake trout, and area and seasonal closures • Discuss options for lake trout management with BC Environment; consider designating a size window (i.e. minimum and maximum size for retention) • Consider developing a Conservation Stewardship program
• protect the park's recreational values	• Develop Facilities Management Strategy to deal with overflow sites • Maintain interpretative trail
• protect the park's cultural heritage values	• Investigate and collate existing information on cultural heritage values; investigate need for, and means of, protecting archaeological sites; prepare Cultural Features Information Summary and Management Plan (based on Lake Babine Nation interests and desires)
• provide and maintain standard camping facilities	• Develop Facilities Management Strategy
• reduce deficiency	• Re-investigate opportunities for community facility management • Maintain good relationship with communities

Consultation and Future Planning

BC Parks will invite discussion about options for facility management from local communities, the Ministry of Forests and the Ned'u'ten people. BC Parks will work on establishing a relationship with the Ned'u'ten (Lake Babine Nation) and Yekooche First Nations. BC Parks will consult with local communities before changing the opening season or level of services offered. BC Parks will discuss trail linkages with the Granisle

Community Forest Committee and Ministry of Forests when invited, and will discuss bear issues with local communities as necessary.

The priority for preparing a management plan for Red Bluff Park is ranked as low.

Preliminary Zoning

The developed portion of the park is zoned Intensive Recreation. The remainder is zoned as Natural Environment (Figure 3 - Zoning Map). If the old sites are rehabilitated, the southern portion can also be zoned Natural Environment at a later date.

Figure 3 - Zoning

Appendix - Activity/Use Matrix for Red Bluff Park

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptable Uses
Aboriginal Rights	Y
Hunting	N
Fishing	Y
Trapping	N
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational gold panning/rock hounding	N
Utility corridors	N
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)	N
Off-road access (motorised)	N
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N
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