

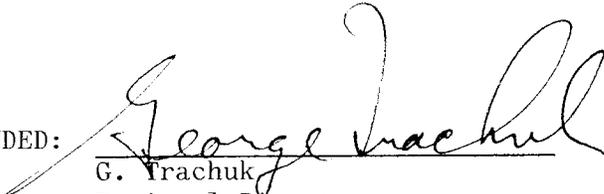
SCHOEN LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK

MASTER PLAN

September 1986

Mr. M. V. Collins  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Parks & Outdoor Recreation Division  
Ministry of Lands, Parks & Housing Victoria,  
B.C.

This Master Plan for Schoen Lake Provincial Park is submitted for your approval.

RECOMMENDED:  Sept 4/86  
G. Trachuk  
Regional Director  
South Coast Region  
Date

APPROVED:  10/1/87  
M. V. Collins  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Date

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The development of the Schoen Lake Provincial Park Master Plan was undertaken by J.S. Peepre & Associates of Vancouver, under contract to the planning division of South Coast Region, Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division. Mr. J. Morris of the region's planning section provided direction for the project with the helpful assistance of Mr. J. Gillings, District Manager, and other District staff.

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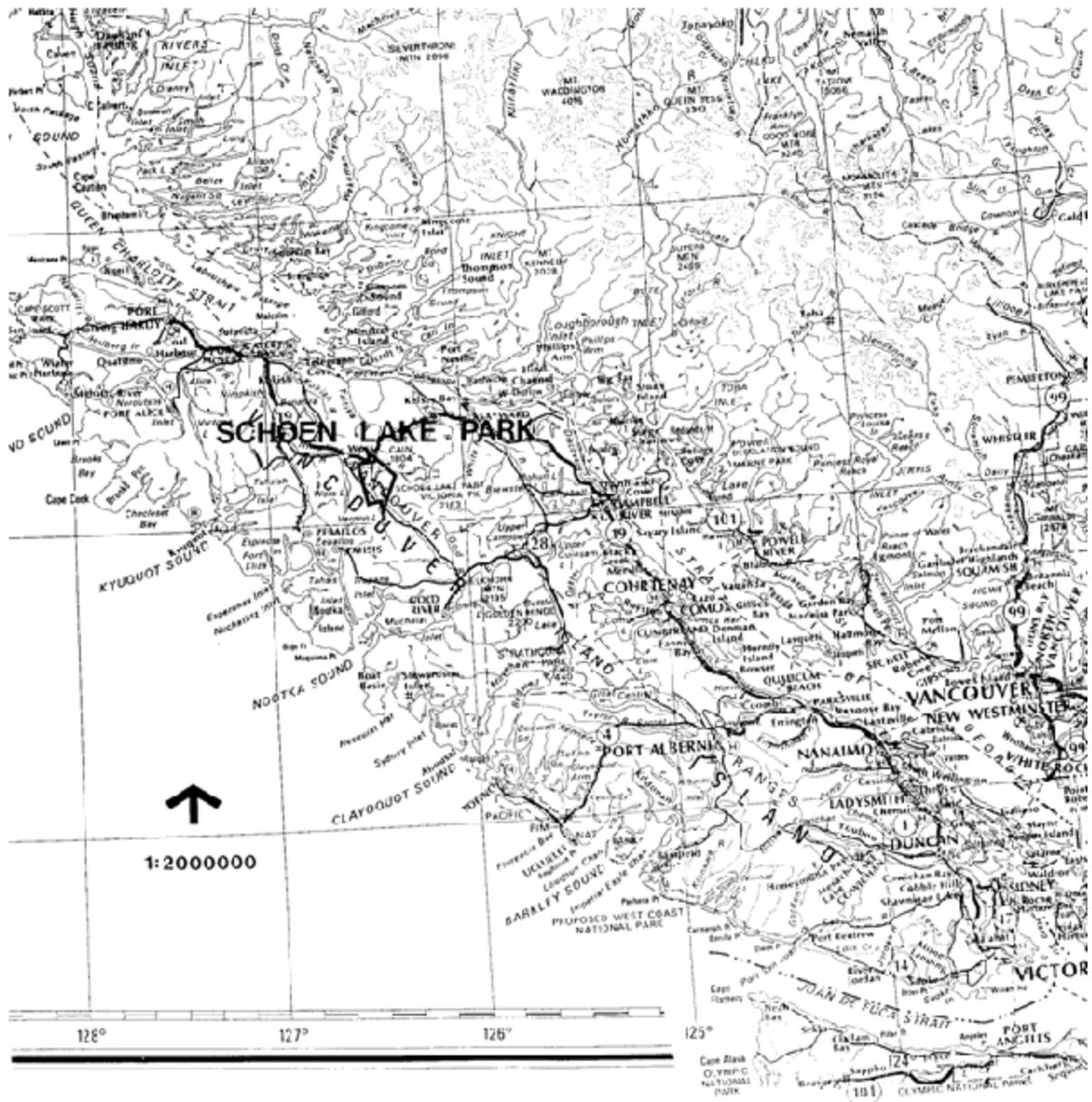
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**PART I. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND**



## A. PLAN SUMMARY

Schoen Lake Provincial Park provides good partial representation of the Vancouver Island Mountains Regional Landscape. Park resources are characterized by undisturbed coastal mountains encompassing Schoen Lake and associated drainages. The park is of provincial conservation significance due to the relatively undisturbed stands of old growth forest in a mountain freshwater lake setting and due to the regionally important Roosevelt Elk summer range. The wilderness setting provides important regional recreation opportunities.

- Visitor facilities are minimal, consisting of 10 substandard rustic campsites and a number of unmarked, poorly defined trails. Access road conditions are a constraint to certain types of visitor use and directional or information signage is minimal.
- The park will be developed and managed to protect the wilderness character while providing opportunities for vehicle-based and dispersed recreation with related service facilities. New facilities will include a minimum 35-unit campground, improved boat launch, trails, signage and information.
- The park is of regional recreation significance and will not likely become a major destination. Recreation carrying capacity of the park is limited due to the relatively small size of the lake.
- Wildlife is an important component of the park, and the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division should support existing research studies of wildlife resources. The long-term status of hunting in the park should be determined following completion of necessary wildlife research.
- Schoen Lake Provincial Park will be zoned primarily as Wilderness, with small areas designated for intensive recreation development. Natural Environment zones surrounding Schoen Lake and along roads will act as buffers to the Wilderness zone.

- Boat launch facilities will be improved to provide safer launching. Most boats are car-top size. A boat motor size restriction will be imposed as a means to manage use and noise levels.
- The proposed Canfor Ltd. access road through the park could have a significant impact on the visual quality of the southwest end of Schoen Lake Park. This impact will be mitigated by ensuring P.O.R.D. involvement in road location, design, and construction.

## **B. REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL CONTEXT**

Schoen Lake Provincial Park lies in the northern portion of Vancouver Island within the Vancouver Island Mountains. The park is of provincial conservation significance due to the significant stands of old growth forest and regionally important due to the Roosevelt Elk summer range. The park has further regional conservation and recreation significance due to its role in partially protecting the representative landscape of the Vancouver Island Mountains. The undisturbed lake environment and the rugged mountains offer a wilderness experience.

The primary role of the park is to conserve natural resources and provide relatively accessible opportunities for wilderness recreation, including fishing, camping, and hiking. The park provides a high quality recreational area which supplements forest recreation sites in the region.

Schoen Lake Provincial Park was established on October 28th 1977 covering an area of 8,170 ha (20,188 acres). It was established to protect, exhibit, and interpret an example of the natural features and processes of the Insular Mountains Natural Region. The park consists of Schoen Lake and the entire mountain viewshed as seen from the lake and tributary creeks. Mt. Schoen, at an elevation of 6,109 ft. (1,862 m), dominates the landscape, with the remaining steep forested slopes rising to 4,000 ft. or more throughout the park.

Access to the park can be gained by the North Island Highway. A gravel logging road 11 kilometres in length leads from the highway to the park. Secondary access may be gained from a logging road which passes through the east side of the park in the Adam River drainage. Hiking trails and lake travel are the only means of travel within the park at the present time.

Park objectives are to provide opportunities for dispersed wilderness recreation and vehicle camping, and to protect and interpret natural resources.

## **C. RESOURCES**

### **1. Natural Resources**

#### **(a) Climate**

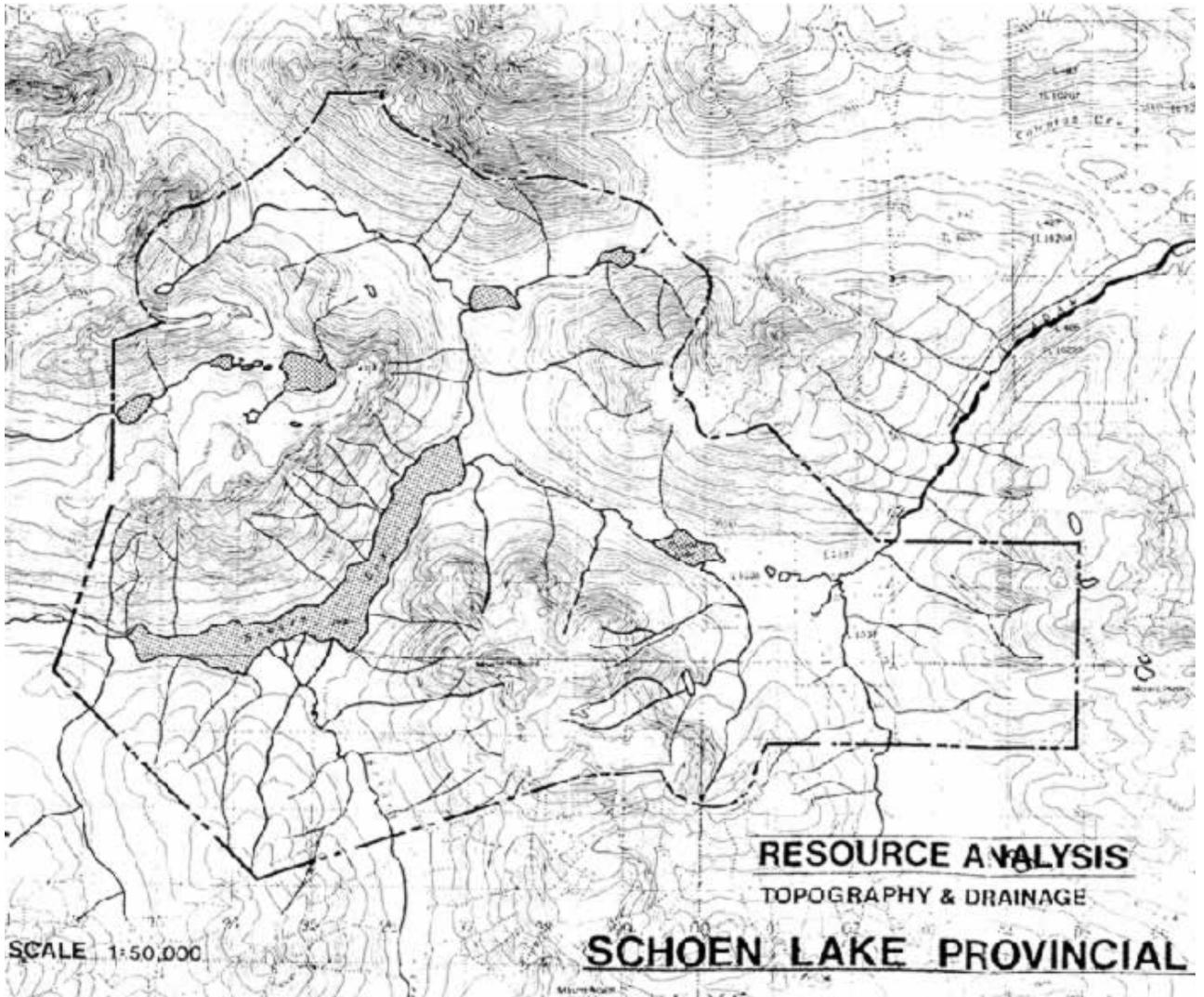
The climate of Schoen Lake Provincial Park is characterized by humid and wet conditions with a short summer dry period of less than two months. The area receives between 250 and 350 cm of precipitation annually with a heavy snow cover often over unfrozen ground. The July mean temperature is 14 to 16°C, while the January mean is in the order of 0 to 5°C. July precipitation can be expected on 6 to 9 days, and there are usually 18 to 21 days with precipitation in January.

The prevailing winds are from the west, and storm conditions are known to result in rough lake waters potentially dangerous for small craft such as canoes. The climate is limiting to recreation, with little opportunity for outdoor activity from November through April.

#### **(b) Physiography**

The physiography of Schoen Lake Park is characteristic of the Vancouver Island Mountains. Rugged mountains with blunted peaks, steep valley slopes, and valley wetlands with elongated lakes are typical of the region. The Vancouver Island Ranges are composed of a very heterogeneous mixture of pre-Cretaceous (pre-135 million years) sedimentary and volcanic rocks folded about northwesterly trending axes and intruded by numerous granitic batholiths. Schoen Lake Park appears to have predominantly volcanic bedrock (Ministry of Environment Terrain Maps, 1980).

Relief extends from + 1,320 ft. (402.3 m) at Schoen Lake to 6,109 ft. (1,862 m) at the summit of Mt. Schoen. Ridges and smaller summits in the park attain elevations of between 4,000 ft. and 5,500 ft.



Terrain conditions (refer to Appendix for map) range from a thin to deep veneer of colluvial soils. The lower slopes at the base of mountains and ridges tend to have deeper colluvial deposits often forming aprons as the result of mass wastage. In the hummocky subalpine and alpine areas, a thin veneer of colluvial soils is often found over bedrock. Volcanic bedrock is exposed throughout the park, particularly on steep valley slopes, ridges, and mountain crests.

Fluvial soils consisting of well-drained sands and gravels are found at the two major creek deltas in the park. These fans occur at the mouths of Schoen and Nisnak Creeks. Moderately well-drained sands and gravels also occur in the vicinity of the outlet to Schoen Lake. Organic soils also occur near the Schoen Lake outlet, while the most significant accumulation of organic materials is found at Nisnak Meadows and the upper small lakes draining from the north end of the park.

Morainal material occurs along the eastern flank of Mt. Schoen, while permanent snowfields are evident on the northeastern portion of the summit area.

There is evidence of debris slide activity on several mountain slopes within the park, and there are several active avalanche slopes leading into Nisnak and Schoen Creeks.

The shoreline of Schoen Lake is generally rocky, except for the creek delta areas where sands and gravels are present. There are no permanent natural beaches, although during low water conditions sand and gravel beaches of moderate quality are found at creek deltas and the western end of the lake.

### **(c) Water**

Schoen Lake is a significant fresh water body on Vancouver Island, and is one of the few remaining undisturbed lakes above 1,250 ft. (380 m) in elevation. There are no known problems with water quality.

**(d) Vegetation** (refer to Appendix for map)

Schoen Lake Provincial Park lies within the Coastal Western Hemlock and Subalpine Mountain Hemlock biogeoclimatic zones (Ministry of Environment Vegetation Zonation, 1980). Valley bottoms fall within the Yellow Cedar subzone, typified by Coastal Western Hemlock - Pacific Silver Fir associations. The deep coniferous forest of this subzone extends to elevations of 3,609 ft. (1,100 m) with Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and deciduous species occurring as seral trees. Common tree species include Pacific Silver Fir (*Abies amabilis*), Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Yellow Cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*). The Yellow Cedar subzone is of particular interest due to the accessible stands of old growth forest in the vicinity of Nisnak Creek and the mouth of Schoen Creek. There are no other Provincial Parks on Vancouver Island where a small mountain lake provides easy access to a large expanse of old growth forest.

The south-facing slopes on the north side of Schoen Lake fall within the Coastal Western Hemlock zone, which is dominated by Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). Understorey vegetation consists primarily of Red Huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*), Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), and Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*). These south-facing slopes are drier and tend to be more open.

The Subalpine Mountain Hemlock - Pacific Silver Fir association is found between 950 m and 2,200 m elevation. The zone is characterized by a mosaic of dense forest, open parkland, bedrock, and some alpine tundra. Mountain Hemlock (*Tsuga mertensiana*), Pacific Silver Fir (*Abies amabilis*), and Yellow Cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*) dominate, while a variety of shrubs prevail in the understorey. The zone has a short growing season, and vegetation grows on generally shallow soils.

(e) **Fish and Wildlife** (refer to Appendix for map)

Wildlife resources are a significant park value, although more research is required to determine the role of the park in wildlife habitat or migration route protection. Site-specific information is presently more anecdotal than documented, but the basic knowledge on wildlife resources is sufficient for park master planning purposes.

**Ungulates**

Schoen Lake Park lies within land zoned as having slight limitations to the production of ungulates due to excessive snow depth. The park plays a significant role as winter and summer range for ungulates. The Roosevelt Elk (*Cervus canadensis roosevelti*) is a relatively rare species on Vancouver Island. The elk of the Adam River drainage area use the valley bottoms and wetlands associated with Schoen Lake as summer range. Avalanche chutes that enter valleys are also considered to be summer range. The significance of the Schoen Lake Park range is reported to be high, although there are no definitive data available.

The rutting season for elk is in the fall, and can be expected to occur in the Nisnak Meadows area. Trail users are not perceived to be a potential conflict with Roosevelt Elk, while wildlife observation and interpretive opportunities exist throughout the Nisnak Meadows and creek environment.

Columbian Blacktail Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*) is an important species found in the park. Schoen Lake Park contains several areas having potential for deer winter range habitats. Deer require old growth forest having canopy closure of 65% or greater to survive severe winters, and the existing forest winter ranges will be protected against wildfire. Field evaluations will be conducted to determine the precise boundaries and capability ratings of the identified habitats to provide the most effective habitat protection.

## **Other Large Mammals/Predator-Prey Relations**

Wolves (*Canis lupus*) are known to occur in Schoen Lake Park, and are linked to the movements and habitat of both Roosevelt Elk and Blacktail Deer. Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) and Cougar (*Felis concolor*) are also known to inhabit the park area.

Prior to the mid-1970's, deer populations in Schoen Lake Park and the surrounding area were known to be substantial. Since then, wolf populations increased greatly and reduced deer populations to approximately 25% of their former abundance. Studies in the adjacent Davie, Nimpkish, and Adam watersheds demonstrated that wolf predation on deer fawns and adults resulted in reduced deer populations, and deer numbers in Schoen Lake Park were similarly affected. The park is too small to function as a separate predator-prey system over the long term, and detailed studies in the park are not warranted. However, B.C. Parks has previously cooperated with the Wildlife Branch to monitor wildlife in adjacent areas. This cooperation will continue to maintain an understanding of wildlife requirements in the park, and of the park's role in regional wildlife management.

There will be no predator control within park boundaries. However, trapping in nearby areas may result in increased deer populations in the adjacent watersheds, and deer numbers in the park will benefit as a result.

## **Avian Wildlife**

Schoen Lake and the smaller lakes and wet meadows are not classified as productive waterfowl sites according to the Canada Land Inventory. However, Nisnak Meadows and the smaller upper drainage meadows are considered important to migration routes. Resident divers are known to include Loons (*Gavia immer*) and Mergansers (*Mergus spp.*).

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

The old growth forest groves accessible from the shores of Schoen Lake are worthy of protection and interpretation as identified in the plan.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

Mt. Schoen dominates the park viewshed and is used as a mountaineering objective by local climbers and hikers.

## **Fish**

Schoen Lake is an important regional freshwater sport fishery. Ministry of Environment data (Fish and Wildlife Branch, Nanaimo Regional Office) indicate 10,000 angler-hours per year, equating to approximately 3,000 angler-days at an average angling success rate of 2.2 fish per day. The average angler can expect a success rate of .7 to .8 fish per hour according to the Ministry. These data compare very favourably to other lakes in the central and northern parts of Vancouver Island.

Cutthroat Trout (*Salmo clarki*) is the primary species, accounting for up to 95% of the fish caught, with Rainbow Trout (*Salmo gairdneri*) and possibly Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus malma*) accounting for the remaining proportion.

Schoen Lake has not been stocked in the past, nor does a management agreement exist between agencies. At the present time, Ministry of Environment biologists describe the lake fishery as stable and self-sustaining. A large increase in campground units would likely correspond to overharvesting and a need for future management activities to enhance the fish stocks.

## **2. Cultural Resources**

### **(a) Archaeological**

Schoen Lake falls within the territory inhabited by the Southern Kwakiutl and Nootka ethnic groups. There are no verified archaeological sites within the park area, although a wooden dugout canoe was allegedly seen at the east end of the lake in 1953. Site inspections by the Heritage Conservation Branch failed to recover the canoe (see Appendix for detailed description).

The delta sites and creek outlets are potential archaeological sites, as it is thought that early natives may have used the Adam River - Nisnak Creek - Schoen Lake corridor for hunting or fishing purposes.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

The Schoen Lake environment is pristine, and the wilderness character is enhanced because recreationists can disappear around the bend in the lake to fish or hike in relative solitude.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

Cobble beaches are found at low water next to creek deltas. These are attractive seasonal features.

## **(b) Historical**

Historical references to Schoen Lake were not found, although anecdotal evidence by Canfor Ltd. employees indicated that a Mr. Otto Schoen of the Campbell River area hunted and trapped in the area some 60 to 70 years ago. A Mr. Bud Frost of Sproat Lake was a knowledgeable naturalist and was known to participate in cougar hunting within the park area in the 1950's to the 1970's.

Tree carvings at the east end of Schoen Lake date back to 1938, but the history of the Nisnak Creek trail is not known. The boathouse at the west end of the lake was built and used by a trapper in 1971. Further historical research would be helpful for park interpretation purposes.

## **3. Visual Resources**

The visual resources of the park are outstanding, and represent one of the more important resource values worthy of protection. The park boundaries were delineated to protect the integrity of the viewshed as perceived from Schoen Lake and other lower elevation valleys. There is a minor visual disturbance to the west of the lake which has been caused by timber harvesting on a ridge outside the park boundaries.

Visual quality is derived from the scenic diversity of the site, due mainly to the dramatic elevation change between the lake and surrounding mountains. The steep valley walls are heavily forested and serve to enclose or frame most of the significant views within the park. These forested slopes would be highly sensitive to disturbance due to their steepness and uniformity of colour.

Visual quality is also derived from the inherent wilderness quality perceived within the park. This aspect would be changed with visible intrusions such as road rights-of-way or shoreline alterations. The visual integrity of the park environment declines as the recreationist gains elevation and is able to perceive distant timber harvesting outside the park boundaries.

#### **4. Resource Analysis**

##### **(a) Major Opportunities and Constraints**

###### **OPPORTUNITIES**

###### **CONSTRAINTS**

###### **CLIMATIC RESOURCES**

- generally, warm dry summers are suitable for outdoor recreation
- wet fall and spring, and winter snow limit park use opportunities

###### **PHYSIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES**

- mountain morphology creates an interesting visual environment
- steep slopes and rugged peaks make trail development difficult
- fluvial deltas provide suitable sites for park development
- access to park resources is difficult

###### **HYDROLOGICAL RESOURCES**

- Schoen Lake provides high quality boating and fishing opportunities
- wetlands are important range for ungulates and serve a significant role as stopover points for migratory waterfowl

###### **VEGETATION RESOURCES**

- old growth forest sites provide outstanding interpretive opportunities
- old growth trees present a serious safety hazard when in or adjacent to park developments
- old growth forest areas in valley bottoms are well suited to trail development
- old growth forest sites should be protected from overuse and potential fire hazards associated with recreational use
- forests and meadows are important as wildlife range and migratory waterfowl stopovers
- dense underbrush throughout much of the park limits views and makes recreational use or trail development and maintenance difficult
- south-facing slopes with old growth forest provide important winter range for Columbian Blacktail Deer

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

## **CONSTRAINTS**

### **WILDLIFE RESOURCES**

- most important ungulate habitat is Blacktail Deer winter range
  - valley bottoms are summer range for Columbian Blacktail Deer and Roosevelt Elk
  - the park may play a very significant role as a wildlife refuge, particularly for conserving habitat and populations of non-game species as more of the surrounding terrain is disturbed
  - wildlife offers an important interpretive and recreation opportunity
  - the wetland areas serve a role as migratory waterfowl stopover points, providing viewing opportunities
  - Schoen Lake is an important regional sport fishery
- deer winter range must be protected from fire
  - more research is required to determine the role of the park in protecting wildlife resources
  - limited hunting has been a traditional activity in the park, yet this activity is questioned by some local user groups who value nonconsumptive use of wildlife
  - overharvesting of fish would result in future requirements for fish management
  - fish habitat must be protected in the inlet and outlet streams

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

- the archaeological and historical resources of the park have not been thoroughly investigated or well documented, yet the known facts suggest that the history of the park could be an interesting interpretive feature
- further archaeological and historical research would benefit park interpretation; present knowledge is limited

### **VISUAL RESOURCES**

- the park environment offers high quality viewing opportunities associated with views from Schoen Lake to Mt. Schoen and other mountains
  - the wilderness character is an important part of the visual resource
- alpine viewpoints are significant, but the wilderness character is reduced by evidence of timber harvesting activities outside the park boundaries
  - portions of the park access road present a negative image as it passes through recent clear-cut areas; the impact of these areas will be reduced as revegetation occurs

## OPPORTUNITIES

## CONSTRAINTS

### VISUAL CONT'D

- the proposed logging access road through the park may have a negative impact on the visual resource unless mitigation is achieved by good design

### RECREATION CARRYING CAPACITY

- the forested areas are suitable for dispersed use on trails
- alpine areas have a limited recreation carrying capacity due to their small size
- while relatively large in relationship to many regional lakes, Schoen Lake has a low recreational carrying capacity; as the number of boaters increases, the wilderness recreation experience declines
- overharvesting of fish due to excessive numbers of park users would result in a decline in the quality of the recreation experience

#### **(b) Resource Analysis Summary**

Schoen Lake Provincial Park protects an interesting and diverse landscape with significant wildlife resources. The wilderness character of the park should be an important consideration in developing the management strategy, and this aspect must be balanced against the impacts of desired recreational use.

Dispersed use is well suited to the majority of the park environment, while more concentrated use associated with overnight camping or lake boating will require careful management. Primary park activities are fishing, camping, hiking, boating, canoeing, climbing, and hunting. The provision of a vehicle campground and hiking trails will ensure that sufficient opportunities exist for these activities, while maintaining the natural qualities of the area.

## D. LAND TENURES

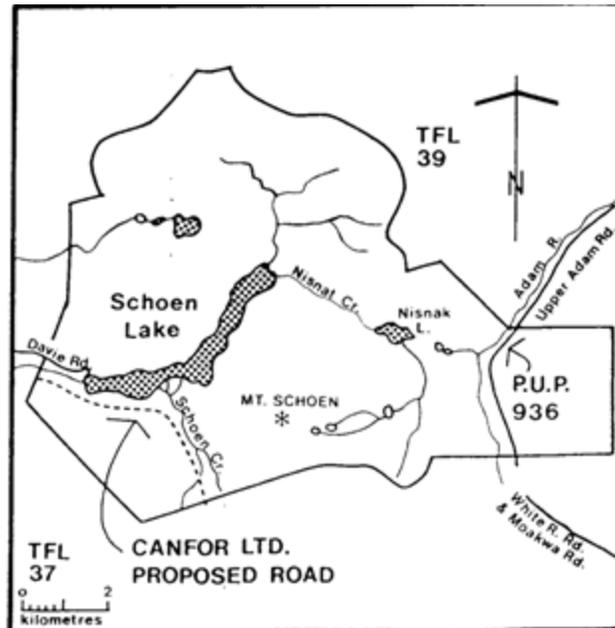
Schoen Lake Provincial Park was established as a "Class A" Park in 1977. A park use permit allowed for a logging access road to pass through the eastern portion of the park along the east side of the Adam River headwaters.

The Park Use Permit (#936) was issued in 1980 to MacMillan Bloedel Ltd. to construct a 20 m right-of-way approximately 3.3 km long. Canfor Ltd. wishes to construct a road along Schoen Lake and Schoen Creek to gain access to the upper Schoen Creek drainage. No Park Use Permit has been applied for or issued at this time.

The park boundaries are enclosed by Tree Farm License 37, held by Canfor Ltd., and Tree Farm License 39, held by MacMillan Bloedel Ltd., all within the Nimkish Provincial Forest. The entire length of the park access road is owned and controlled by Canfor Ltd.

There are no other known tenures or special interagency management agreements. The park is subject to existing provincial hunting and fishing regulations.

### LAND TENURES & PARK USE PERMITS



## E. EXISTING FACILITIES

There are 10 rustic vehicle campsites, each with a picnic table and circular metal fire pit. The campground has not been designed to park standards, and hence suffers from poor circulation and an awkward layout of sites.

There are two pit toilets, one information sign, and a number of refuse cans. The park access road is gravel and is in poor condition. Alder trees along the edge of the road are rapidly enclosing the right-of-way. The existing boat launch is not designed to park standards, although the gravel surface and gradients function relatively well.

There are two trails in the park, with a total length of 14.5 km. The Adam River Road to Schoen Lake trail is 7 km with a 1.5 km spur trail to a falls on the east flank of Mt. Schoen. The trail from the existing campground to the upper Schoen Creek area is approximately 6 km in length. All of the park trails are in relatively poor condition and lack trail direction signs and an easy-to-follow trail pad. The trail alignment is frequently through wetlands, and requires rerouting to firm terrain.

### EXISTING PARK FACILITIES



## **F. MARKET ANALYSIS**

### **1. Existing Use**

Schoen Lake Park is primarily used by Vancouver Island residents seeking a fishing, camping, or hunting experience in a wilderness setting. Hiking and climbing are also pursued, although this activity is less frequent. Local mountaineering clubs from the Duncan and Campbell River area report use of the park.

The majority of use includes overnight stays, although day use for fishing or hiking is also known to occur. There is little reliable data available on park use, with figures after 1981 being incomplete. Park use statistics for 1981 indicate the following campground attendance in parties:

Total	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Nov.	Dec.
1,046					111	115	217	496	107		

A study by the Fish and Wildlife Branch (Nanaimo Regional Office) determined that there are approximately 3,000 angler use days per year on Schoen Lake, with 94% of the fishermen residing on Vancouver Island and the balance consisting of Canadian residents and foreign tourists. The use by anglers can be assumed to include both day use and overnight use, although no assumptions are made on the proportion of each type.

Schoen Lake Park does not appear to be used extensively by highway travellers en route to Port Hardy or the north coast. There are no figures available to support this other than the correlation with the angling statistics, the poor access road, and nominal signage.

### **2. Demand**

Since there is little available information on existing park use, it is difficult to determine if recreation demand for the Park is increasing, decreasing, or remaining stable. If access road conditions and highway signage are improved, a significant increase in day use and overnight use

by highway travellers could be expected.

### **3. Supply**

There are a number of small forest recreation sites and highway rest stops in the vicinity of Schoen Lake Provincial Park. None of these provides wilderness recreation opportunities in an undisturbed natural setting. The park provides access to a scenic wilderness that has been set aside from timber harvesting and is representative of the area's natural heritage. It represents one of the last opportunities to preserve a higher elevation inland lake within the Vancouver Island Ranges.

### **4. Implications**

Schoen Lake Provincial Park will not likely be a major destination area for travellers or a major high use area for north Island residents due to constraining factors such as:

- (a) adverse seasonal climatic conditions,
- (b) limited recreational carrying capacity,
- (c) difficult access along logging roads,
- (d) limited range of types of recreation available in the park.

The park has the potential to fill an important role in the Provincial Park System, particularly in the Vancouver Island regional context. If the park is left primarily as a wilderness area with limited but improved development, it will become increasingly important as a regional, and perhaps provincial, destination area.

## **G. PLANNING ISSUES**

A number of park planning issues have become apparent during the preparation of the Master Plan. These issues are central to the development approach selected, the management of park resources, and the provision of recreation opportunities. The problems and solutions identified here are reflected in the development plan details and management policies.

1. Wilderness character, park development, and use restrictions.

The park offers wilderness recreation opportunities, yet the recreation carrying capacity of the lake is limited. The present wilderness character could be reduced with development of a large improved vehicle campground. The location of such a campground may have some influence on the perceived wilderness character of the park.

2. The condition of the park access road and possible improvements in access.

The present access road is in poor condition. While this discourages use by highway travellers and some tourists, it does help maintain the existing wilderness character of the park. Improved access could change the nature of park use, and management agreements for the private access road may be difficult to attain. The issue of an improved access road is central to overall park management objectives.

3. The location of the logging access road which may be granted under a Park Use Permit to Canfor Ltd., and the implications on campground location and visual quality.

The proposed Canfor Ltd. logging access road would have a negative impact on the visual quality of the southwest end of Schoen Lake. However, if the Schoen Creek delta area is selected as a future campground site, the road would provide good access. The potential impact of logging activities in upper Schoen Creek should be assessed. A liaison should be established with the Ministry of Forests and the licensee to ensure that appropriate measures are adopted to prevent debris accumulation,

floods, erosion, and reduced water quality in the park.

4. Hunting and the role of the park as a wildlife refuge.

Hunting in the park is not presently a public issue, but some special interest groups have expressed concern about it. Monitoring is required to help determine the future role of the park in protecting wildlife and to determine the impact of hunting.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

This view is from the north flank of Mt. Schoen and illustrates the potential for future trail development to the alpine areas of the park.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

The Schoen Lake outflow is just off the lower right of the photo. The proposed Canfor access road would parallel the visible shoreline from right to left.

## **PART II: THE PLAN**

## **A. PARK OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of Schoen Lake Provincial Park focuses on two distinct functions, one relating to protection of wilderness resources and the other to provision of wilderness recreation opportunities. This dual park role is well suited to the natural landscape features of the park, and is consistent with its location, size, and land use in adjacent jurisdictions.

The purpose of the park is:

- to protect the mountain and lake environment representative of the Vancouver Island Mountains Regional Landscape; and
- to provide wilderness recreation opportunities in a coastal mountains environment.

A number of objectives have been established to realize this park purpose and to assist in the development and management of the park. The park objectives are:

- to protect the natural resources that are characteristic of the Vancouver Island Mountains Regional Landscape;
- to protect the wildlife resources of the park, particularly the habitat associated with Roosevelt Elk and Columbian Blacktail Deer;
- to retain a natural setting throughout the park and to retain the opportunity for wilderness experiences throughout the park;
- to protect the visual quality of the park environment, and to protect the existing visual integrity in all park activity areas;
- to encourage understanding and appreciation of the coastal mountains environment;

- to encourage wilderness recreation activities by improving trail linkages in the park;
- to monitor general park use;
- to monitor fishing and hunting activities to ensure that necessary management activities are undertaken to conserve fish and wildlife resources;
- to improve park facilities, including access roads and signage, vehicle camping opportunities, trails, interpretive and orientation information, boat launch, and related services.

**B. Zoning** (refer to Zoning Plan map)

The purpose of Schoen Lake Park focuses on wilderness conservation and recreation values, and this theme is reflected in the zoning plan. The majority of the park has been zoned as Wilderness according to criteria established by the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division, while smaller units have been zoned Natural Environment and Intensive Recreation to allow construction of facilities necessary to provide access, accommodation, interpretation and other recreation opportunities in the park. Visitor facilities will be developed within the respective zones in a manner compatible with natural resource protection objectives.

**Wilderness Zone**

Excluding Schoen Lake and adjacent upland, all of the lands in the park not associated with the access roads and accommodation facilities are contained within the Wilderness Zone. This accounts for over 90% of the park area and includes all alpine and wetland sites. The Wilderness Zone is designed to preserve landscapes and natural processes, yet permit low levels of recreation use which result in minimal human impact on the environment.

**Natural Environment Zone**

This zone is intended to serve as a buffer between access routes/lake area and the Wilderness Zone beyond. Trailhead facilities such as small parking areas and information signs will be developed in this zone.

Also found in this zone will be primitive boat-in and trailhead camping facilities at the east end of Schoen Lake. This facility would be designed to accommodate five campsites located near the beach in close proximity to the old growth forest interpretive feature and the trailhead to Nisnak Lake. The campsite would include five grates and centralized sanitary facilities. Such minimal development would provide opportunities for camping which will be accessible to both boaters and hikers. The camping experience will be distinct from the vehicle-based campground at the west end of

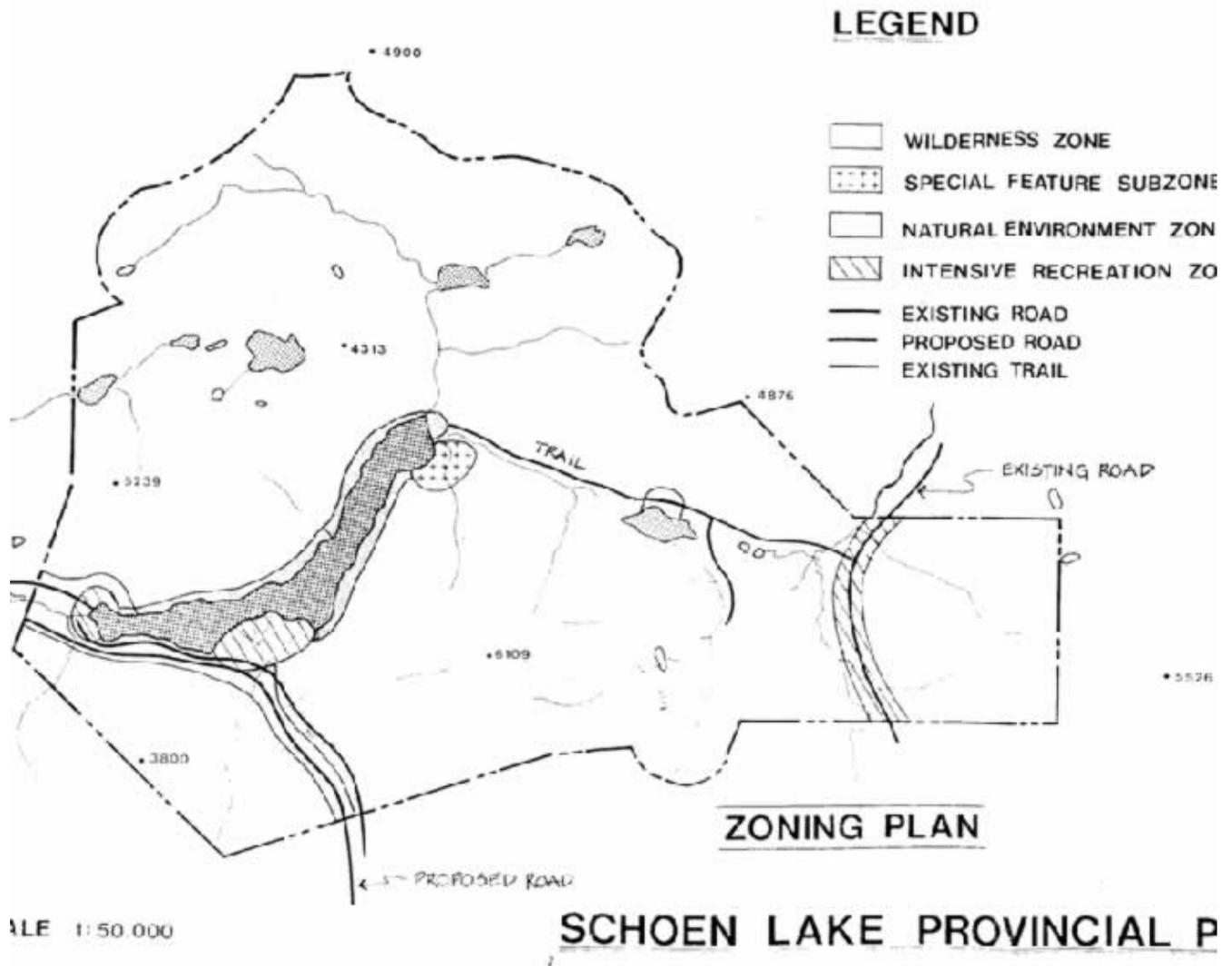
Schoen Lake. The Natural Environment Zone around the perimeter of Schoen Lake will also accommodate future potential trail development.

### **Intensive Recreation Zone**

Intensive Recreation Zones are identified at the east end of Schoen Lake (existing campground area) and at Schoen Creek delta. This zone allows for recreational development such as vehicle campgrounds, boat launches, service buildings and day-use areas.

The Intensive Recreation Zone will include the installation of a minimum 35 unit vehicular campground with associated service facilities. A boat launch designed for car-top boats and small trailers will be provided in association with the day-use area. Interpretation and information signs will be provided, as well as short loop trails leading from the campground to interpretive features and the Schoen Lake shoreline.

More detailed site investigations would be required prior to selecting a campground location. Should the campground be developed in the existing area, the Schoen Creek delta would only be identified as a potential area dependent on a logging access road along Schoen Lake.



PHOTOGRAPHS NOT AVAILABLE

The existing campground is too small and is not designed to Provincial Park standards. It is presently the only accessible boat launch site in the park.

Trout fishing is one of the primary recreation activities in the park. Motor size restrictions are appropriate to help preserve the wilderness character of the park.

## **C. DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Schoen Lake Provincial Park will fulfill the role of providing wilderness recreation experiences in a coastal mountains environment. The moderate size of the park and the limited recreational carrying capacity of the lake indicate the need to develop the required facilities with careful attention to potential impacts on the wilderness character of the park. The relatively remote location of Schoen Lake will influence site design, as durable and relatively low maintenance facilities are necessary.

The primary development in the park will be an upgraded or new campground accommodating a minimum of 35 vehicles. All other construction will be related to road or trail access improvements, wilderness campsites, and information signs. Facility development will be undertaken as funds are available and according to provincial and regional priorities.

The following description of facility development acceptable for Schoen Lake Provincial Park is outlined according to priorities.

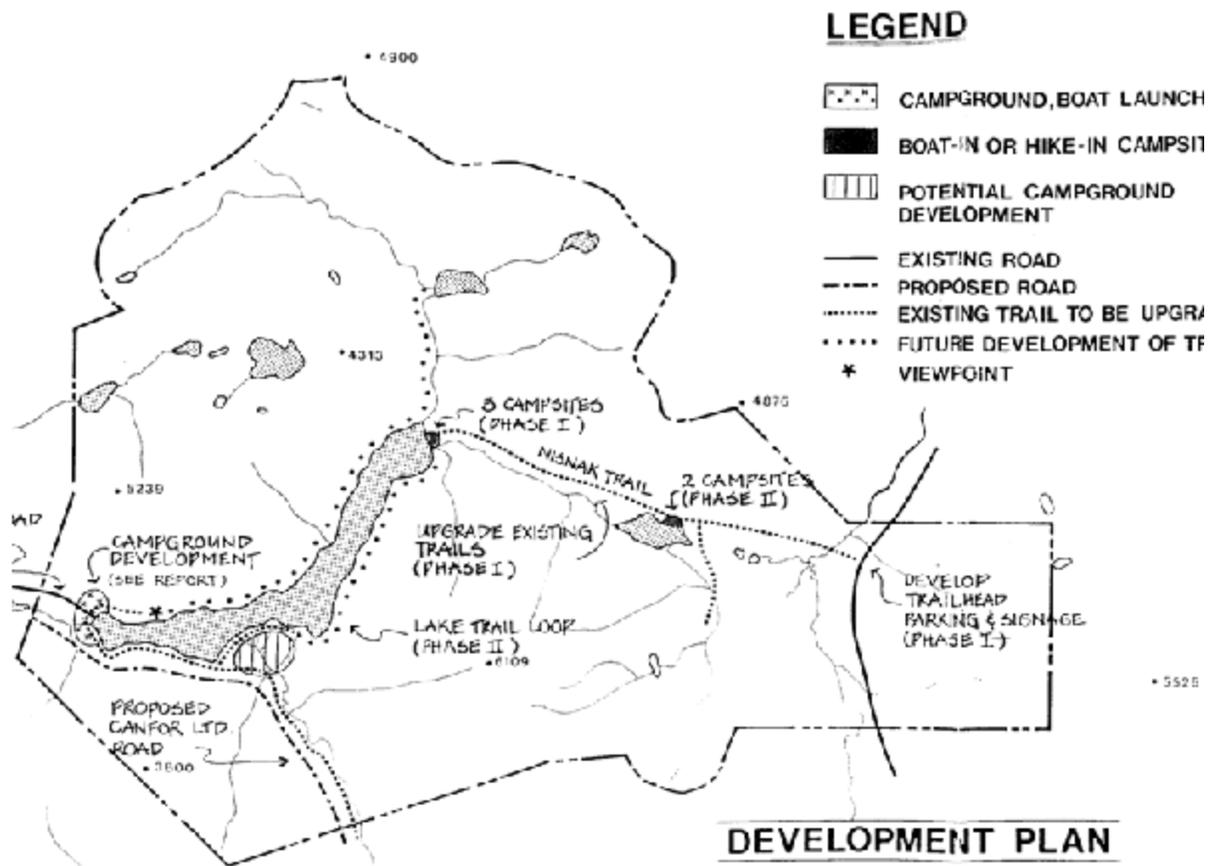
### **Phase 1**

1. Develop campground according to established P.O.R.D. standards to accommodate a minimum of 35 vehicles. The final site selection for a campground would depend on more detailed site investigations.
2. Develop boat-in campsite in vicinity of Nisnak Creek mouth to accommodate five sites, fire circles, and a sanitary facility.
3. Improve existing boat launch by removing natural hazards and redesigning circulation and parking.
4. Upgrade existing trails along Nisnak Creek and Schoen Lake - Schoen Creek. Reroute existing trails as required, provide trailhead signage and parking and appropriate route signage.

5. Develop short spur and loop trails along Schoen Lake to provide improved fishing and viewing opportunities. Develop loop trails in conjunction with campground development.
6. Provide improved highway signs and road access signs. Provide park information sign immediately adjacent to park access road/highway junction to explain road conditions and provide information on park facilities. This information sign will serve as a management method to reduce casual use by highway travellers with inappropriate vehicles not suited to access road conditions.
7. Provide general park information sign at park entrance.

## **Phase 2**

1. Develop trail around Schoen Lake.
2. Develop spur trails from Schoen Lake into upper drainages on north side of park.
3. Expand campground as required to meet demand, and in a manner consistent with park management objectives.
4. Develop three wilderness campsites in vicinity of Nisnak Lake, complete with fire rings and a sanitary facility.
5. Develop access trail to alpine areas on north side of Schoen Lake.



ALE 1:50,000

## SCHOEN LAKE PROVINCIAL P.D.

### MANAGEMENT POLICIES

#### 1. Resources

##### (a) Land

A working agreement should be reached with Canfor Ltd. regarding the upgrading and maintenance of the park access road.

A working agreement should be reached with Canfor Ltd. to establish landscape management practices for those timber harvesting areas within view of key park vantage points. Liaison with the Ministry of Forests, Recreation Management Branch is recommended.

##### (b) Water

Schoen Lake water quality should be periodically monitored following campground development.

**(c) Vegetation**

Timber harvesting will not be permitted within the park boundaries. A working agreement should be reached with Canfor Ltd. to establish landscape management practices for those timber harvesting areas within view of key park vantage points.

The Division will develop a fire suppression plan in conjunction with other agencies. All fires in the park will be suppressed.

The park ecosystem should be allowed to evolve naturally with minimal interruption from recreational activities. Disturbance to vegetation should be minimized during construction of facilities.

The Division's Tree Hazard Program should be implemented in areas of developed visitor facilities. Tree hazards should be assessed prior to design and construction to minimize the potential for windthrow problems.

Old growth forest areas should be assessed prior to facility site design, and every effort should be taken to avoid disturbance of these stands.

**(d) Fish and Wildlife**

Fish and wildlife habitat in the park should be protected by ensuring appropriate logging practices in the upper Schoen Creek area, and by ensuring that park development does not have an impact on deer winter range.

All fires should be suppressed to protect deer winter range.

Existing hunting activities should be monitored. The long-term park hunting policy should be based on the outcome of comprehensive wildlife research related to the conservation role of the park.

Fishing activities should be monitored and future necessary fish management undertaken to conserve and enhance fish stocks and provide ongoing satisfactory recreation experiences.

**(e) Visual**

A working agreement should be reached with Canfor Ltd. to establish landscape management practices for those timber harvesting areas within view of key park vantage points. Liaison with the Ministry of Forests, Recreation Management Branch is recommended.

The proposed Canfor Ltd. forest access road location and design should be reviewed, modified as required, and approved by P.O.R.D. prior to construction.

## **2. Public Use**

### **(a) Recreation**

Acceptable types of recreation in Schoen Lake Provincial Park include camping, fishing, hiking, climbing, canoeing, boating, picnicking and other day-use activities, and interpretation. The long-term role of hunting should be determined after wildlife research is completed.

Boating should be permitted with restrictions on motor size to a small horsepower.

Appreciation of the natural and heritage resources of the park should be encouraged.

### **(b) Education**

Park interpretation should include the following components:

- the natural history of the park, including mountain building and old growth vegetation
- native history
- local history

### **(c) Research**

A regular system of recording visitor use should be implemented. Periodic visitor surveys should be conducted to monitor visitor appreciation of the wilderness recreation experience.

Wildlife research should be supported to determine the role of the park as a refuge for Roosevelt Elk and Blacktail Deer. Wildlife research should focus on the importance of habitat, and include the significance of the park in preserving habitat for non-game species.

Following the development of a new campground, fishing activities should be monitored and the necessary conservation and enhancement measures taken to provide ongoing satisfactory recreation experiences (see Wildlife policy).

**(d) Visitor Services and Facilities**

Interpretive and information signage should be provided to ensure adequate orientation of park visitors.

Contractual agreements that may be undertaken for park services should include clear guidelines to ensure that all work is consistent with the wilderness character of the park.

## **E.     MARKETING**

Schoen Lake Provincial Park provides a wilderness recreation setting, yet the relatively small size of the lake and the limited potential for trail corridors indicates that there are constraints in the ability of the park to absorb large numbers of users. Excessive numbers of boats or hikers would reduce the wilderness recreation experience.

A low profile marketing strategy is appropriate for Schoen Lake Park. Provision of highway signage and other information will be sufficient to achieve marketing objectives. Active promotion should not be undertaken.

Standard road access and park information signs should be provided. An additional information sign near the highway exit should indicate road conditions and the limited park facilities available.

## **F.     PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The implementation of the Schoen Lake Provincial Park Master Plan will be completed according to the priorities of the region and district, and as funds are available.

The development plan outlines in some detail the specific proposed construction phases, while a strategy for overall plan implementation is summarized here.

### **STAGE I** (in general order of priority)

1.     Develop campground according to P.O.R.D. standards to accommodate a minimum of 35 vehicles.
2.     Secure improved access agreement to approach road and obtain longer term maintenance agreement.

3. Provide improved highway signs and road access signs. Provide general park information sign at park entrance and highway intersection.
4. Support required wildlife studies as described in the report.
5. Improve existing boat launch or design new launch as required.
6. Implement regular system of recording visitor use.

## **STAGE 2**

1. Develop boat-in campsite in vicinity of Nisnak Creek mouth.
2. Upgrade trails along Nisnak Creek and Schoen Lake - Schoen Creek.
3. Develop short spur and loop trails along Schoen Lake.
4. Negotiate with forest companies to provide enhanced visual landscape management in areas around park boundary.
5. Institute wildlife management policy if required after research and monitoring.

## **STAGE 3**

1. Develop trail around Schoen Lake.
2. Develop spur trails from Schoen Lake into upper drainages.
3. Expand campground as required to meet demand, and in a manner consistent with park management objectives.
4. Develop wilderness campsites in vicinity of Nisnak Lake.

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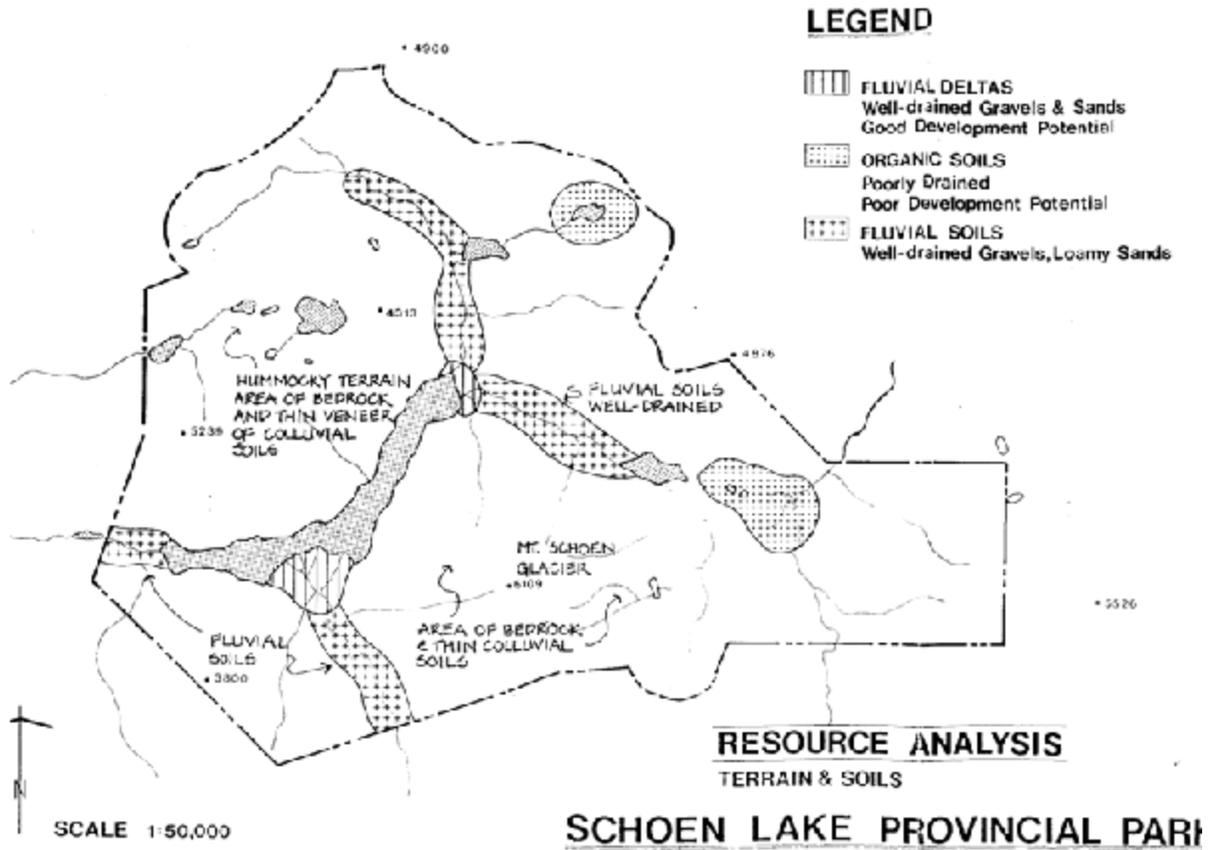
## **APPENDICES**

# APPENDIX 1

## RESOURCE ANALYSIS MAPS

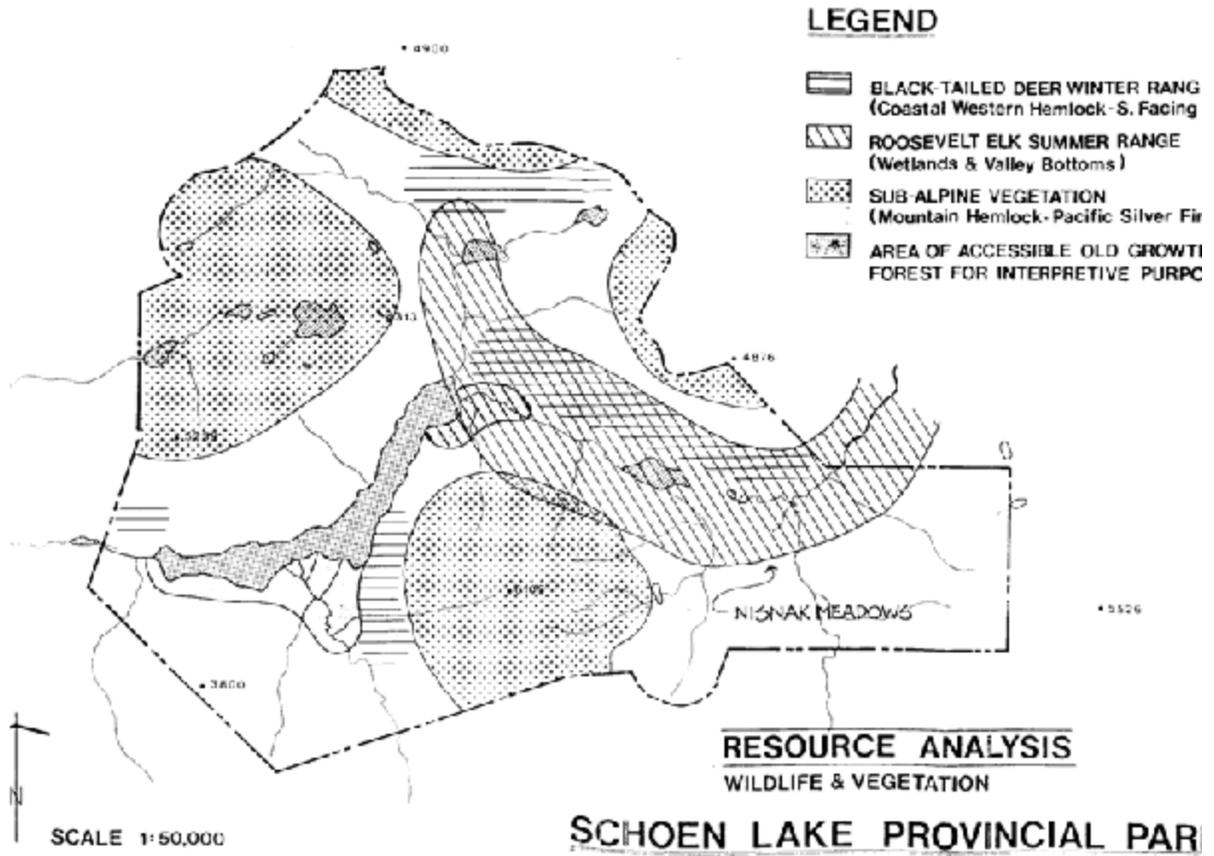
### 1. TERRAIN AND SOILS

### 2. WILDLIFE AND VEGETATION



# APPENDIX 2

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE DESCRIPTION



PLEASE CONSULT ACCOMPANYING GUIDE BEFORE COMPLETING

1. Site No. EbSn - 1

BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE INVENTORY FORM

2. Previous designation(s) EbSn T81-1
3. Site name(s) Schoen Lake Canoe Find
4. Legal Unknown
5. (a) Location This site is located in the SE end of the Nimpkish Valley on N Vancouver Island. The site is situated on the E shore of Schoen Lake at the mouth of Nisnak Creek in Schoen Lake Provincial Park.
- (b) Access From the N Island Highway (No. 19) take turn-off for Schoen Lake Provincial Park, proceed via Davie Road to campsite, and by boat to E end of Schoen Lake.
6. Administrative jurisdiction (a) Regional Dist. Mount Waddington
- (b) Forest/Grazing Dist. Vancouver (c) Highways Dist. 6-64 Courtenay
- (d) Park Dist. 6-3 Strathcona (e) Resource Management Reg. Vancouver Island
7. Lat. 50° 11' 10" N. 8. Long. 126° 14' 30" W.
9. UTM U XF / E 970 N 626 10. Air photo Unknown
11. Map (a) 092 L / 1 (b) Mount Waddington Regional District
12. Drainage (a) minor Nisnak Creek (b) major 16-North Vancouver Island
13. Elevation (a) 435 m ASL (b) N/A
14. Cultural affiliation (a) Wakashan, Kwakiut, Nimpkish (b) N/A
15. Site type Isolated Find, Canoe
16. Dimensions (a) exact m - UNKNOWN - (b) estimated few M<sup>2</sup>
- (c) original unknown

17. Condition (a) present destroyed % intact (b) future N/A

18. Priority

19. Detailed information (a) Vegetation on site alder, willow, water birch, paper birch

(b) Major vegetation Coast Western Hemlock

(c) Cultural matrix none observed

(d) Depth of cultural matrix N/A

(e) Non-cultural matrix Alluvial sand and gravel bars

(f) Water source Nisnak Creek

20. Known finds and present location Canoe (presumed destroyed)

21. Photo record Provenance Research 813-1

22. Published and unpublished references (a) N/A

(b) Ham, Personal Communication 80/11/25

23. Site age and/or date (a) historic period  absolute  relative

(b) Source based on location and nature of find

24. Owner/Tenant Scholan Lake Provincial Park

25. (a) Informant Mr. R.S. Jewesson 80/11/25

(b) Observer Geordie Howe and Mike Broderick Date NOV 22, 19 81

(c) Recorder Len Ham Date JAN 29, 19 82

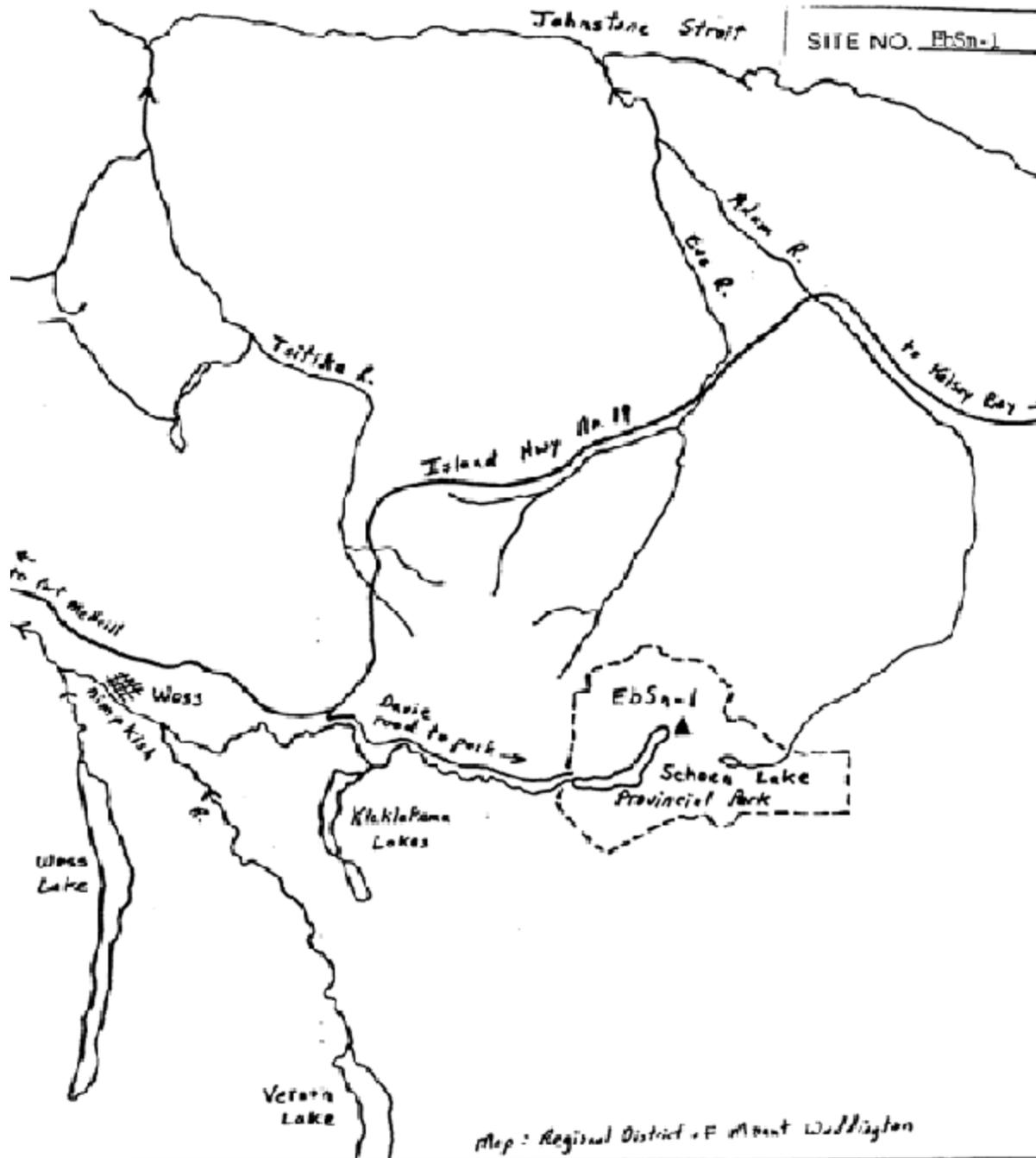
(d) Revisitor Date    , 19    

Date    , 19

26. Remarks In response to rumours from Alert Bay residents that a plank house (or?) had been observed by Canfor employees in the early 1950's in the vicinity of the Klaklallana Lakes, Mr. Jewesson was contacted. Formerly an employee of Canfor in the Nimpkish Valley, Mr. R.S. Jewesson is currently (1980) Vice President of Woodlands of Canadian Cellulose Co. Ltd., 1200-111 West. Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6E 2K2. The following quote is from Mr. Jewesson's letter to L. Ham of November 25, 1980:

"I have no recollection of any signs of native occupation in the Klaklakoma Lakes area, but I do remember seeing the remains of what was apparently an Indian cedar log canoe at the east end of Schoen Lake in 1953."

The 1981 survey failed to locate any sign of a canoe, or any cultural deposits. Logging in the Nimpkish Valley over the past 40 years has caused many periods of high runoff after heavy rains and Nisnak Creek is no exception. Erosion and deposition of sand and gravel bars at the mouth of Nisnak Creek would have destroyed any cultural remains.



- EXTENT OF SITE
- BUILDING
- FOUNDATION
- ROAD
- TRAIL
- RAILWAY
- FENCE
- RIVER / CREEK
- STEEP RISE

ADDITIONAL LEGEND

T:50,000 MAP NO. 92 L/1

LATITUDE 50° 11' 10"

LONGITUDE 126° 14' 30"

UTM GRID REF. 90XF970626

TRUE  MAGNETIC

DECLINATION USED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 8/1/25

SCALE: 1 CM. = \_\_\_\_\_ M.



### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **LETTERS RECEIVED FROM PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS**

A letter requesting information was sent to several Vancouver Island outdoor recreation groups, with the two responses enclosed.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Re: Schoen Lake Provincial Park Master Plan, Vancouver Island

The Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division is preparing a Master Plan for Schoen Lake Provincial Park. The purpose of this park is to protect landscape features representative of the Vancouver Island Mountains, including the Schoen Lake drainage and the vegetation and wildlife of the area.

The second objective of the park is to provide recreation opportunities in a relatively remote wilderness setting. Recreation use presently includes fishing, camping, small craft boating, canoeing, and viewing or wildlife observation. Future recreation potential includes alpine hiking, climbing, and wilderness camping.

The Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division would like your group's comments on the park with respect to future development and management options. At this time development possibilities include:

- upgrading existing campground
- modest campground expansion
- trail improvement from Schoen Lake to Adam River road
- future alpine trail development
- provision of boat-in campsite at north end of lake
- development of short trails from campground

It is expected that access conditions will remain unchanged for the foreseeable future, and that the level of use will remain low to moderate.

Please consider your interests in the park and indicate any concerns or ideas related to conservation or recreation. Comments related to fishing, camping, access, levels of use, trail development, wildlife, and park management are requested.

Forward comments to Mr. Juri Peepre, by November 20th, at

J.S. Peepre & Associates  
2110 West 12th Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C. V6K 2N2  
(phone: 731-7918)

TEXT OF LETTER RECEIVED BY J.S. PEEPRE & ASSOCIATES

P.O. Box 754  
Duncan, B.C.  
V9L 3Y1

Mr. Juri Peepre  
2110 West 12th Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C.  
V6K 2N2

Dear Sir,

The Sierra Club, Victoria office, has forwarded to my wife and I your letter re: "Schoen Lake Provincial Park Master Plan, Vancouver Island." Possibly the reason for that is because my wife and I have taken a great deal of interest in Schoen Lake Provincial Park, exploring it long before it became a park. We have explored most corners of it, and have climbed Mt. Schoen perhaps more than any other person, we believe pioneering a route up the east side of the mountain. Also, we have hiked into the two lakes in the N.E. corner of the park. With this experience of the area, we would like, on behalf of the Sierra Club, to put forward some ideas concerning the park's Master Plan.

First of all, we will comment on the development possibilities as you listed them.

- We agree with "upgrading" the existing campground, not relocation.
- "Modest campground expansion" is also agreeable.
- "Trail improvement from Schoen Lake to Adam River" is a high priority, with a great need for relocation at the east end where the trail passes through the meadows. A route through the trees a small distance to the north would be a good deal more environmentally sound and easier for using the trail as well.
- "Future alpine trail development." This, if we gauge the wording correctly, would be the making of trails into alpine areas. We have climbed Schoen Mountain from both sides, and neither, in our opinion, is suitable for trails. The west side is a rock climb (with ropes) or an advanced grade scramble on extremely steep terrain, all starting soon after leaving the trees. The east side of Schoen, if the route is exactly known, is difficult because of its steepness and technical requirements due to snow on the upper slopes. This alpine area should not be developed for those reasons. We do not know any other alpine areas within the park that would be worthwhile to go into.

- "Provision of a boat-in campsite at the northeast end of the lake." Unless the lake is made a no-motor designated one (which we firmly believe is the right decision), some very serious things would happen. With motorized boats, garbage in excess, chainsaws, etc. would be easily brought in and the area at the N.E. end of the lake desecrated, so we would be against a campsite there for these reasons. Unfortunate but true, persons coming into an area by motor as compared to hiking/canoeing leave a far greater mark on the environment. A campsite somewhere close to Nisnak Lake would be far preferable.
- "Development of short hiking trails from the campground" is excellent, as would be the upgrading of the fire trail that exists now along the south side of Schoen Lake.

The most major point that must be addressed in the Master Plan is the park and hunting. Most people enjoy animals by their presence only, perhaps with a camera or binoculars (this was shown in a survey done by the government within the last two years). We don't have the particulars, but as we remember, less than 10% hunt or think of animals as sport. Something like 80% try to enhance or watch animals for their pleasure on their properties or in the wild. There is also the very foreign thinking that when you are in a park (during hunting season) you are extremely aware that hiking may be dangerous, not a great feeling when in an area that is designated as a park for the people of the province to enjoy - the majority of people don't like or want to hunt. Hunting must be definitely stopped. A park is for the majority, not a small minority when animals are involved.

A trail continuing along the south side of Nisnak Creek, going along above (in the trees, not on the lakeshore) where an animal trail exists, past Nisnak Lake, following the lake to the Nisnak Creek above the lake till it reaches Kiwi Lake via the lower part of Kiwi Falls would be a very worthwhile project, as this would open up the most beautiful part of the park. We suggest a very basic trail, thinking of wilderness hiking, not a tourist trail.

We hope this is of help in making a very beneficial Master Plan for Schoen Lake Provincial Park. We would be very pleased to help further if required. You may call at 748-1374 or 746-5751 if quicker results are needed.

Yours sincerely,

Warrick & Jan Whitehead



Tel. 687-3333

1200 HORNBY STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C. V6Z 2E2

**FEDERATION OF MOUNTAIN CLUBS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**  
representing hiking, climbing and conservation groups

November 5, 1985

Mr. Juri Peepre  
J.S. Peepre & Associates  
2110 West 12th Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C. V6K  
2N2

Dear Mr. Peepre,

Re: Schoen Lake Provincial Park Master Plan

Your letter has been referred to our Island members for specific comment, but a few general observations are appropriate based on FMCBC policy.

1. We emphasize that the "relatively remote wilderness setting" should be retained. There are far too few true wilderness environments left on Vancouver Island, and pressures to develop the area or to provide commercial recreation opportunities should be resisted.
2. Development of alpine trail access is appropriate assuming the trail is designed to a standard that will not encourage large numbers of individuals to use the area and that it is located to avoid sensitive meadows, wetlands, etc.
3. We are opposed to the development of new facilities which may increase the numbers of powerboats using the lake.
4. Given the close proximity of large-scale forestry operations in the area, the park will likely play an important role as a refuge for important wildlife species. We believe, therefore, that hunting should be prohibited.

Sincerely,

FEDERATION OF MOUNTAIN CLUBS OF B.C.

Jim Rutter  
Executive Director

JR:sm