

Skeena Region

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

November 2003



for Topley Provincial Park



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

**Ministry of Water, Land and
Air Protection
Environmental Stewardship
Division**

Topley Provincial Park

Approvals Page

Forward

This management direction statement for Topley Provincial Park provides management direction until Environmental Stewardship Division revises the plan. Ongoing consultation between Environmental Stewardship Division and First Nations may require changes to this management direction statement. Aboriginal traditional activities and uses are honoured and respected within the provincial park.

Implementation of strategies identified in the management direction statement (MDS) will be dependent on available funding and Environmental Stewardship Division priorities.

Approvals



Regional Manager
Skeena Region
Environmental Stewardship Division



Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

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Topley Provincial Park Management Direction Statement

Introduction

Purpose of the Management Direction Statement

Management direction statements (MDS) provide strategic management direction for protected areas that do not have an approved management plan. Management direction statements describe protected area values, management issues and concerns, a management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies, and direction from other planning processes. While the MDS identifies strategies, the completion of all these strategies is dependent on funding and funding procedures. All development associated with these strategies is subject to the BC Parks and Protected Areas Impact Assessment Process.

Context

The provincial government established Topley Provincial Park by Order in Council #1034/1964 under the *Park Act* in April 1964. The provincial government placed the park's boundary in legislation in June 2000 by naming and describing the park in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*. The park is presently named and described in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*.

Environmental Stewardship Division (BC Parks at that time) removed all recreational facilities in 1998 and does not promote the park for outdoor recreation use.

Topley Provincial Park lies next to Babine Lake, 12 kilometres east of Granisle, immediately west of the community of Topley Landing and 40 kilometres north of Topley. This small 12 hectare provincial park is within the asserted traditional territory of the Nat'oot'en Nation which used this site for a food fishery.

A large natural beach dominates the park's frontage on Babine Lake. The park is close to the Fulton River sockeye salmon spawning channel.

Topley Provincial Park is one of a several small parks along the shore of Babine Lake. Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park includes sites at Pendelton Bay, Sandpoint, Hook (Deep) Bay, Pinkut Creek, Pierre Creek and Smithers Landing. Other parks along Babine Lake and adjacent Nilkitkwa Lake include Sutherland River, Red Bluff, Rainbow Alley, Nilkitkwa Lake sites and Babine River Corridor. Sutherland River Provincial Park and Protected Area and Babine River Corridor Provincial Park protect the ecological and outdoor recreation values of narrow corridors along these rivers; the remaining parks protect small, recreationally focussed, sites along lakes. Pendelton Bay offers camping opportunities and a boat launch. Ethel F. Wilson Memorial Provincial Park offers access to angling on Pinkut Lake, 10 kilometres to the south.

Provincial Park Attributes

Conservation

- Protects an extremely small area of the under-represented Babine Upland Ecoregion. Currently only 4% of the Babine Upland Ecoregion is included in the protected areas system. Topley Provincial Park is one of 19 protected areas in this ecoregion, contributing less than 1% of the overall protected area representation of this ecoregion. Rubyrock Park (55%), Sutherland River Park and Sutherland River Protected Area (25%) and Babine River Corridor Park (14%) are the major contributors to the protected area representation of this ecoregion.
- Contributes minimally (less than 1%) to the overall protected areas system representation of SBSmc2 (Sub-boreal Spruce, moist cold subzone, Babine variant). SBSmc2 is well represented in the protected areas system (13%). Tweedsmuir Provincial Park is the major contributor (76%) to the overall protected areas system representation of this variant.
- Protects remnant riparian ecosystem; high fish habitat values.

Recreation and Tourism

- Provides access to a fishery at the mouth of the Fulton River.
- Offers a large natural beach on Babine Lake, used for picnicking.

Commercial Business Opportunities

- Provides no commercial business opportunities.

Cultural Heritage

- Nat'oot'en Nation fishery removal and transport site.

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- Provides access to Babine Lake and fishing opportunities at the mouth of the Fulton River.

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

Visitors reach Topley Provincial Park by travelling 40 kilometres north of Topley, from Highway 16 to Topley Landing on Babine Lake.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- BC Hydro right-of-way through park (Park use permit SK9710002).
- Lies within subdivision plan 5252 with road right-of-ways.

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- Nat'oot'en Nation Fisheries Commission has a concrete pad used to remove fish.
- Contains a road and parking lot, one pit toilet and an artesian well in a culvert (locked).

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- Topley Landing community along Babine Lake to the south
- Babine IR #25 across Fulton River to the north
- Fulton River sockeye fish channel located to the northwest of Topley Provincial Park.

First Nations Interests

- The Nat'oot'en Nation is interested in the park because it lies within their asserted traditional territory.
- First Nations is interested in the park because it is the site of a First Nations fishery, including removal and transportation of fish.

Figure 1: Regional Context



Other Agency Interests

- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has an interest in the fishery values of Babine Lake and the Fulton River fish channel.
- The Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, British Columbia Conservation Data Centre (CDC) has an interest in any species at risk in the park.

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Local residents from Tachet, Granisle, Topley Landing and Topley are interested in the park as an outdoor recreation site on Babine Lake.
- Anglers and boaters are interested in the park as a location to pursue their recreation activities.

Topley Provincial Parks Role Statement

The primary role for Topley Provincial Park is to protect cultural heritage features and values associated with First Nations use of the site and the Nat'oot'en Nation fishery. The park performs a secondary conservation role by protecting a remnant riparian ecosystem at the mouth of the Fulton River where it enters Babine Lake. Fish habitat values are high. The park also performs an outdoor recreation role as an access point to the Fulton River mouth and angling, non-motorised boating and viewing recreation opportunities.

Management Commitments and Issues

Management Issues

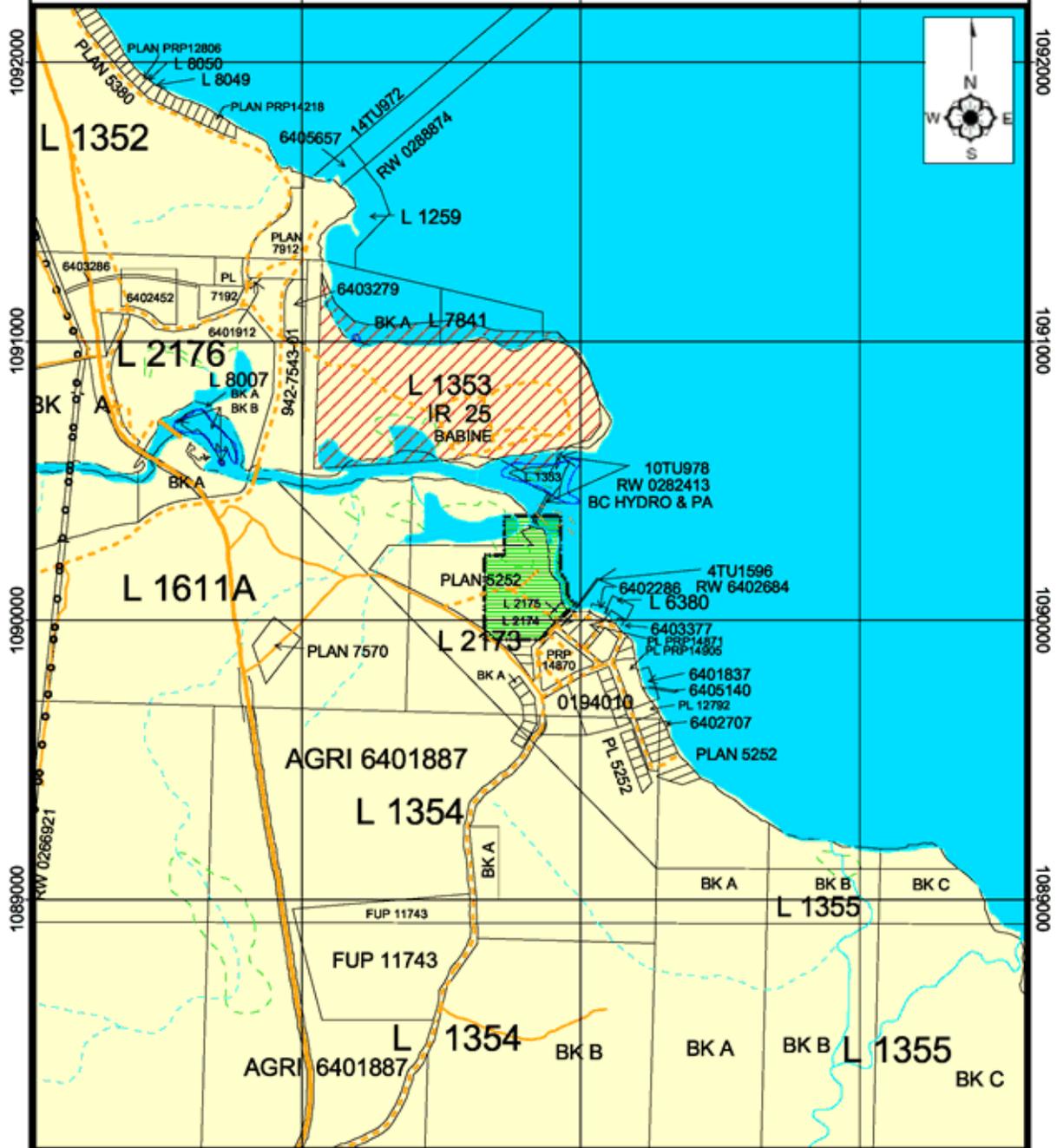
Environmental Stewardship identified the following management issues.

Theme	Issue
Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People may be at risk from drinking the artesian well water because water safety officials do not test the water regularly to ensure water purity and safety.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ The culvert containing the well is kept locked but local residents of Topley Landing, about 80 people, have removed the lock and use the water for drinking.
Protecting ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flora and fauna may be at risk because an inventory of natural features is incomplete.
Protecting cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural heritage features may be at risk because an inventory of cultural features is incomplete.
First Nations' values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Nations would like full consultation.• Potential risk to the natural values from First Nations traditional activities and uses, e.g. trapping, hunting, fishing and gathering.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ The concrete pad has not been used for several years because of insufficient fish harvest.

Management Direction

The vision for Topley Provincial Park includes maintaining extremely low numbers of visitors, i.e. primarily the Nat'oot'en Nation and local residents. The following table describes management strategies to deal with identified issues. In addition, Appendix 1 contains a table that provides a list of acceptable activities, uses and facilities for this provincial park.

Figure 2: Tenures and Land Use



Scale 1:20000

Roads	Topley Boundary	Indian Reserves
Rail	Cadastral Data/Tenures	Protected Areas
	EMPR Mines and Showings	

Skeena Region

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

Objective	Strategy
To protect public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the park's artesian well water supply with Bulkley-Nechako Regional District. Consider allowing the local residents to use the water, if an agreement is reached with the Regional District to perform regular water testing. Alternatively, do not allow residential use of the well.
To conserve the park's natural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement an inventory of the park's fauna and flora with the priority on plant and animal species at risk. • Consider decommissioning and removal of the concrete pad, if it is no longer used by the Nat'oot'en Nation.
To protect the park's cultural heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and collate existing information on cultural heritage values in association with the Nat'oot'en Nation.
To protect and respect First Nations' values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow First Nations' traditional activities and uses to occur subject to meeting safety and conservation concerns. • Follow the ministry guidelines on consultation and where possible, consider specific Nat'oot'en Nation consulting protocols.
To provide information to park visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the park is not promoted for recreation, but emphasise the conservation role. • Provide accurate and current information about Topley Provincial Park on the official Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection web site.

Consultation and Future Planning

Environmental Stewardship Division will consult with appropriate First Nations and stakeholders as issues arise. Environmental Stewardship Division ranks this park as low for the preparation of a management plan with full public consultation.

Zoning Plan

Natural Environment Zone

Objective: To protect scenic values and to provide for backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

Description: The entire park is Natural Environment zone.

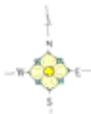
Management Guidelines: Oriented to maintaining a natural environment and a high quality recreation experience. Visitor access may be restricted to preserve the recreation experience or to limit impacts. Separation of less compatible recreational activities and transportation modes. Designation of transportation routes may be necessary to avoid potential conflicts (e.g., horse trails, cycle paths, hiking trails).

Figure 3: Zoning

Topley Park



Projection: UTM Zone 9
Datum: NAD83



 Natural Environment
 Protected Area Boundary



Produced in Jan 2003 for Ministry
of Water, Land and Air Protection

This is a visual representation
only and should not be used for
legal purposes.

**Appendix 1. Topley Provincial Park
Table of Acceptable Activities, Uses and Facilities**

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptability
Aboriginal traditional activities and uses	Y
Hunting	Y
Fishing	Y
Trapping	Y
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational gold panning/rock hounding	N
Utility corridors	N2
Communication sites	N
Horse use	N
Pack animals	N
Guide outfitting (hunting)	Y
Guide outfitting (fishing)	Y
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	N
Guide outfitting (river rafting)	N
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	N
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	Y
Fire management (suppression)	Y
Fire management (prescribed fire management)	N
Fire management (prevention)	N1
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