

Stikine Country Protected Areas Base Map

■ Stikine Country Protected Areas
■ Other Protected Areas
■ Excluded Mineral Claim Areas

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BRITISH COLUMBIA
 PROVINCE OF
 MINERAL RIGHTS

Map 1



Map 1. Stikine Country Regional Context Map.



1.3 Relationship to Other Land Use Planning

The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) provides management direction for new protected areas resulting from the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP process and for Stikine River Provincial Park, which was upgraded from recreation area to Class A park status. Management direction from the LRMP includes both general direction and specific direction for each new protected area in the LRMP area (Appendix 1).

New protected areas and additions to existing protected areas subject to recommendations from the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP include the Klastline addition to Mount Edziza Provincial Park, the Mess Creek addition to Mount Edziza Provincial Park, Stikine River Provincial Park, Pitman River Protected Area, Chukachida Protected Area, and, the Metsantan addition to Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park (Map 2).

Special provisions for those protected areas and protected area additions can be found in Appendix 1. *ELU Act* protected area status was recommended for Pitman River Protected Area and Chukachida Protected Area to allow for potential road access for mining purposes if required. Class A park status was recommended for all other proposed protected areas and additions.





The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP also directed that a portion of Mount Edziza Provincial Park be converted to *ELU Act* protected area status to provide land access to mineral claims in the Mount Edziza Resource Management Zone (formerly the Mount Edziza Recreation Area) if required. If a road corridor is established, the balance of the protected area will be returned to Class A park status.



The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP also provides direction regarding two areas with high mineral potential that were recommended for eventual protected area status. The Mount Edziza Resource Management Zone covers the former Mount Edziza Recreation Area and includes the Spectrum property, a gold-copper prospect (Appendix 2). The Metsantan Resource Management Zone includes an area recommended for protection but covered by mineral tenures near Metsantan Lake (Appendix 1). The intent is for those areas to eventually become part of Mount Edziza Provincial Park and Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park, respectively, at the end of 20 years following approval of the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP if mineral tenures have lapsed, or once mineral tenures lapse following 20 years.

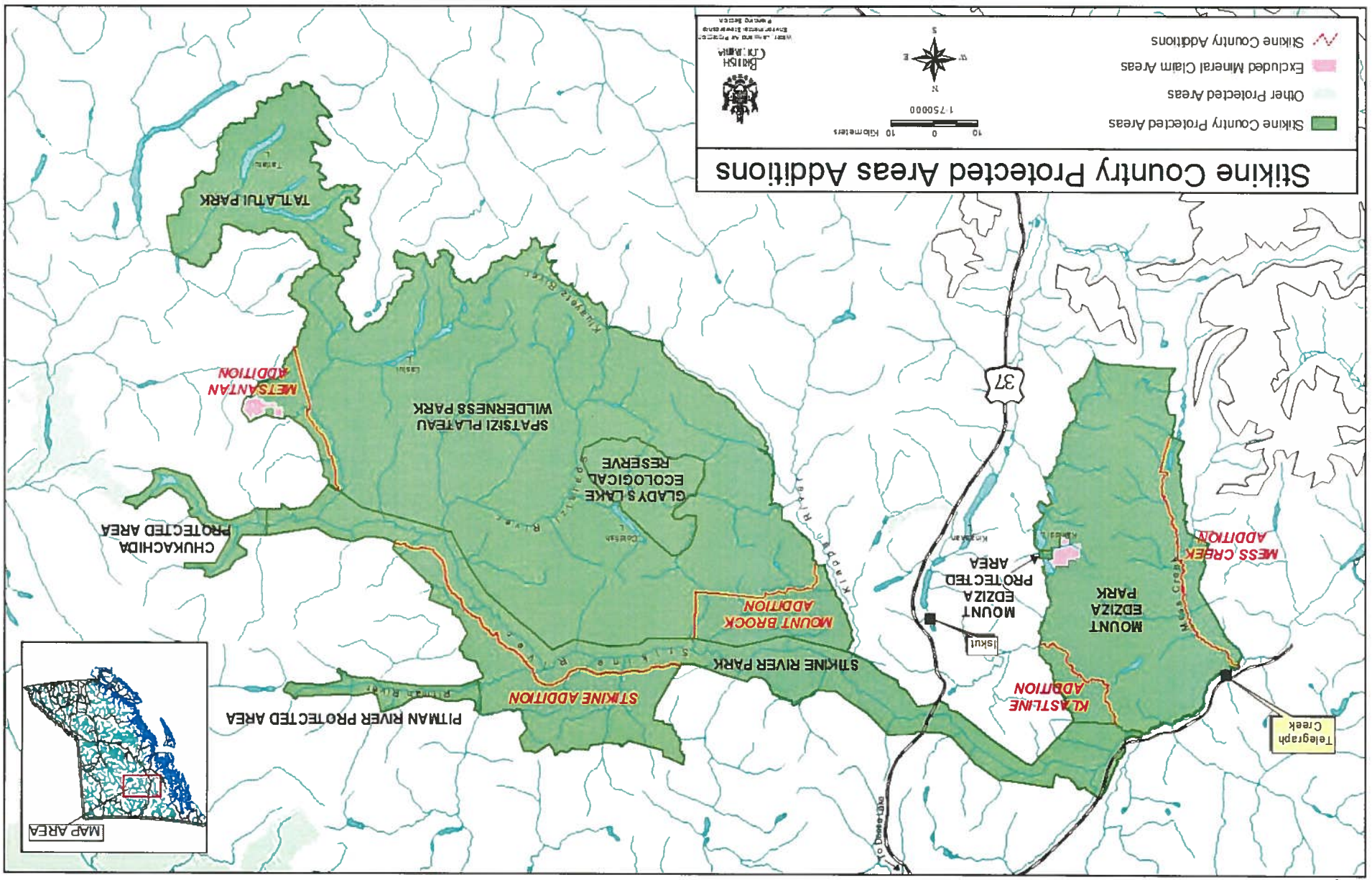
Although the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine area currently contains relatively little industrial development, the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP sets direction for future industrial development within the LRMP area. Potential new access roads may be developed that will affect access to and use of protected areas in the region. The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP gives management direction regarding some of these roads.

Management direction statements (MDS) have been prepared separately for other protected areas in the Cassiar Region that are not included in the Stikine Country Protected Areas Management Plan.

Stikine Country Protected Areas Additions

 Stikine Country Protected Areas
 Excluded Mineral Claim Areas
 Other Protected Areas
 Stikine Country Additions


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Map 2



Stikine Country Protected Areas Management Plan – November 2003

Map 2. Stikine Country Protected Areas Additions.

1.4 Management Issues

Many management issues arise in a system of protected areas as large and diverse as the Stikine Country Protected Areas System. Table 2 presents the issues in broad terms to include a wide range of possible management directions.

| Table 2. Management issues in Stikine Country Protected Areas. | |
|--|--|
| Theme | Issue |
| Protecting ecological values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of the large predator-prey systems focused on Mount Edziza Provincial Park and Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park is hampered by insufficient knowledge and understanding of how these predator-prey systems function. Protection of natural values, such as plants and plant communities at risk, fish and wildlife, is constrained in many areas because of lack of research and inventory information. Outdoor recreation activities could impact wildlife, fish and vegetation if not managed appropriately; however impacts are not well documented because of a lack of evaluation and monitoring baseline data. Helicopter and floatplane access could result in unacceptable impacts on fish and wildlife populations and wilderness values if not managed properly. Developments on adjacent land could result in unacceptable impacts on protected area values if not managed properly. Disturbance processes (e.g. fire, mountain pine beetles) are often managed to protect current ecosystem structure (e.g. mature forests, grasslands) rather than ecosystem function (e.g. succession, regeneration) even though they are vital to maintaining natural ecosystem functioning. The use of exotic animals as pack animals may put wildlife species in danger through the introduction of diseases to endemic species. The use of exotic plant species as feed for pack animals could harm native plant communities through the introduction of exotic plants. Water quality near heavily used areas and major land use developments could decline if waste is not managed appropriately. |
| Protecting recreation values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilderness outdoor recreation values in some areas may be compromised by uses and developments that are not compatible with a wilderness setting. Commercial recreation activities and infrastructure could affect the outdoor recreation experience of public users if not managed properly. The wilderness character of the protected areas may be impacted if motorized activities are not managed properly. Conflicts between motorized and non-motorized river users could occur if not managed appropriately. Outdoor recreation use could exceed levels appropriate to protect ecological and wilderness values if acceptable levels are not determined and implemented. |
| Protecting geological values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreational or industrial activities on or near sensitive geological features, such as cinder cones, hot springs and columnar basalt formations, may result in unacceptable impacts on those features. |
| Managing access levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unacceptable impacts may occur to natural, cultural and wilderness values if human access is not managed appropriately. |
| Protecting cultural values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection of fragile and vulnerable cultural heritage sites, such as obsidian quarry and village sites, may be ineffective because the remoteness of these features makes enforcement difficult. Protection of cultural heritage values is hampered because of insufficient research and inventory. Cultural heritage sites (e.g. former First Nation village sites) may deteriorate because of insufficient active monitoring and on-site management. |
| First Nations involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Nations and local communities feel they should be more actively involved in protected area management. |
| Public safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential for negative human/wildlife interactions along existing trails and river routes is unknown because of insufficient information. |
| Providing public information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision of information to the public and user groups may be difficult because of the remoteness of many of the access points. |

2 The Role of the Protected Areas

2.1 Provincial and Regional Context

Stikine Country Protected Areas consists of over 1.4 million hectares of contiguous protected areas in northwestern British Columbia. This large block of connected protected areas is nationally significant because it protects large mammal predator/prey systems and conserves a relatively natural vegetation mosaic where large-scale disturbances such as fire have been relatively unaltered by humans. Rugged mountains, high elevation alpine plateaus, and low elevation forested valleys and plateaus characterize the landscape. The climate is predominantly continental with cold winters and relatively cool, short summers.

All of the Stikine Country Protected Areas lie within the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRM area except Tatlatui Provincial Park, which lies within the Mackenzie LRM area. The protected areas covered by the Stikine Country Protected Areas Management Plan make up the majority of the protected areas in the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine planning area. However, several smaller protected areas protect other nationally, provincially and regionally significant geological, vegetation and wildlife features or offer significant frontcountry and backcountry outdoor recreation and camping opportunities. These smaller protected areas include areas such as:

- Tuva Mountains Provincial Park, 100 kilometres to the northwest, which protects a rare tuya formation;
- Craig Headwaters Protected Area, 80 kilometres to the southwest, which protects a low elevation coastal ecosystem with high quality fisheries and grizzly habitat values;
- Lava Forks Provincial Park, 85 kilometres to the southwest, which protects the most recent lava flow in Canada;
- Ningunsaw Provincial Park and Ningunsaw River Ecological Reserve, 46 kilometres to the south, which protect a valley bottom to alpine ecosystem with high quality grizzly bear year round habitat and significant moose summer habitat;
- Todagin South Slope Provincial Park, near Iskut, which protects very high value Stone's sheep winter range and lambing habitat;
- Kinaskan Lake Provincial Park, 36 kilometres south of Iskut, which provides provincially significant frontcountry camping, boating and fishing outdoor recreation opportunities; and,
- Boya Lake Provincial Park, 150 kilometers north of Dease Lake, which protects a superb glacial moraine esker and kettle landscape and excellent frontcountry camping, boating and wildlife viewing outdoor recreation opportunities.

Three large protected areas exist east of Stikine Country Protected Areas: Finlay-Russel Park and Protected Area (122 771 hectares) lies adjacent at the eastern boundary of Chukachida Protected Area. About 30 kilometres northeast of Pitman River Protected Area are the Denetiah Park (90 379 hectares) and Denetiah Corridor Protected Area (7 441 hectares), and Dune Za Keyih Park and Protected Area (Frog-Gataga, 346 833 hectares). All three of those *ELU Act* protected areas contain provisions for potential new road corridors and are part of the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area.

Currently, 73% of the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Planning Area is in a wilderness or semi-wilderness state. The main roads include Highway 37, which runs north-south and crosses the Stikine River

in Stikine River Provincial Park and the Telegraph Creek Road, which runs east-west between Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek. Other less developed roads, including the BC Rail (BCR) railroad grade and the Willow Creek Road, provide limited access to some of the protected areas.

The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Region is relatively isolated and sparsely populated with the total population estimated at 1230 in 1996; the total includes people of aboriginal descent, who account for 62% of the population. Three main communities are located within the region: Dease Lake is located on Highway 37, 40 kilometres north of Stikine River Provincial Park; Iskut is located on Highway 37, 40 kilometres south of Stikine River Provincial Park; and Telegraph Creek is located 115 kilometres southwest of Dease Lake on the Telegraph Creek Road. These communities offer basic amenities such as food services, accommodation, a general store, a gas station and some flight services; Dease Lake is the main service centre for the region. The local people are active users of the Stikine Country Protected Areas and are interested in commercial opportunities within the protected areas system. The three communities are the main staging areas for visitors accessing Stikine Country Protected Areas.

2.2 Significance in the Protected Area System

The Stikine Country Protected Areas System is one of five major concentrations of adjoining protected areas in British Columbia that presents internationally significant wild landscapes in relatively undisturbed natural conditions. Only the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area, the Tweedsmuir Provincial Park – Kitlope Heritage Conservancy Protected Area - Entiako Provincial Park and Protected Area – Fiordland Recreation Area protected areas centre, Tatshenshini – Alsek Provincial Park and the Wells Gray – Cariboo Mountains – Bowron Lake nucleus rival the Stikine Country for the conservation of vast ecosystems and landscapes.

Stikine Country Protected Areas is second only to the Tweedsmuir Provincial Park – Kitlope Heritage Conservancy Protected Area – Entiako Provincial Park and Protected Area – Fiordland Recreation Area protected areas centre in conserving the largest system of adjoining protected areas in British Columbia. Indeed, Stikine Country Protected Areas is the chief system in the province containing diverse large mammal predator-prey systems that include caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*), Stone's sheep (*Ovis dalli stonei*), mountain goat (*Oreamnos americanus*), moose (*Alces alces*), grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*), black bear (*Ursus americanus*) and wolf (*Canis lupus*). The protected areas contribute significantly to the protection of large mammal predator-prey systems in British Columbia. To the east, the protected areas in the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area also conserve a large area for large mammal predator-prey systems but many of those protected areas are not connected. As well, Stikine Country Protected Areas is the largest system of adjoining protected areas in the province where humans (e.g. fire suppression) have not significantly altered the large-scale natural disturbance regime; the current vegetation landscape is mainly the result of natural processes.

Stikine Country Protected Areas represent mountains, alpine plateaus and northern boreal forests within the Southern Boreal Plateau and Stikine Plateau ecoregions including the following biogeoclimatic zones and subzones: Alpine Tundra (AT): Boreal White and Black Spruce (BWBSdk1); Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir (ESSFvv), Spruce-Willow-Birch (SWB) and Sub-Boreal Spruce (SBS). The Cassiar Ranges, Tahtan Highland, Northern Skeena Mountains and Eastern Skeena Mountains ecoregions are also represented but to a lesser extent.

Stikine Country Protected Areas fulfil both the Protected Areas Strategy goals of ecosystem representation and special features. Stikine Country Protected Areas occur within six of the province's 100 land-based ecoregions (Appendix 3). Over 1.2 million hectares or 88% of Stikine Country Protected Areas land base lie within the Southern Boreal Plateau Ecoregion, including all of Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park and Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve and most of Tatlatui Provincial Park, Mount Edziza Provincial Park and Stikine River Provincial Park east of Highway 37. With 69% of the ecoregion within protected areas, all four biogeoclimatic subzones found within this ecoregion (ESSF_{vw}, BWBSdk1, SWB, AT) are well represented (see Appendix 3 for biogeoclimatic zone and subzone descriptions).

Another 8% of Stikine Country Protected Areas lie within the Stikine Plateau Ecoregion. That ecoregion includes Stikine River Provincial Park east of Highway 37 and the northern portion of Mount Edziza Provincial Park, with primarily the BWBSdk1 biogeoclimatic subzone represented. Chukachida Protected Area and portions of Pitman River Protected Area and Stikine River Provincial Park, which make up 2.5% of Stikine Country Protected Areas, lie within the Cassiar Ranges Ecoregion. The protected areas in this ecoregion protect mostly valley bottoms within the SWB and BWBSdk1 biogeoclimatic subzones. Less than 2% of Stikine Country Protected Areas lie within the other three ecoregions (Tahtan Highland, Northern Skeena Mountains, and Eastern Skeena Mountains).

Stikine Country Protected Areas contain many animal and plant species and plant communities at risk including 27 plant species, 11 plant communities, and 15 animal species (bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), caribou, grizzly bear, wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), and fisher (*Martes pennanti*); and 11 bird species).

Stikine Country Protected Areas include the following special features.

- Stikine River Provincial Park contains the entire Stikine River Canyon and a major portion of one of the largest free-flowing rivers in British Columbia. People recognize the Stikine River as an internationally significant natural feature with canyon, volcanic and internal structural rock exposure features. The park also contains important low elevation forested caribou winter range for the Spatsizi caribou population and rare dry steppe plant communities.
- Mount Edziza Provincial Park contains distinctive nationally significant volcanic features including Mount Edziza Peak and associated cinder cones (e.g. Eye Cone, Coffee Crater, Cocoa Crater), the Spectrum Range, obsidian deposits that were quarried and traded by the local First Nations, and hot springs and associated special plant communities.
- Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve is the largest ecological reserve in British Columbia and is the only one large enough to protect a range of habitat features for a diverse large mammal predator-prey system that includes caribou, Stone's sheep, mountain goat, moose, grizzly bear, black bear and wolf.
- Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park, Stikine River Provincial Park, Pitman River Protected Area and Chukachida Protected Area combined provide the only fully protected region in British Columbia enclosing contiguous streams, large rivers and lakes believed to support the blue-listed bull trout in the full diversity of its life histories.
- Pitman River Protected Area and Chukachida Protected Area contain important low elevation forested and wetland habitat for moose, and wildlife migration corridors to the east.

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- The area covered by Stikine Country Protected Areas has great cultural significance to First Nations, containing many cultural heritage sites such as Metsantan and Caribou Hide village sites in Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park.
- The Klastine addition to Mount Edziza Provincial Park contains important mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) habitat for a small isolated population of mule deer.



Figure 1. Grand Canyon of the Stikine River, Stikine River Provincial Park.

Stikine Country Protected Areas conserve outstanding wilderness values and present important outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities. The presence of the Stikine River and its large tributaries places the Stikine Country Protected Areas System in a special position concerning the international scope of its opportunities. For example, visitors to Stikine Country Protected Areas may participate in river rafting, motorboating, canoeing, kayaking, angling and wildlife viewing experiences. Only the Muskwa-Kechika protected areas offer the wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities found in the Stikine Country Protected Areas. Similarly, visitors can find opportunities to wilderness trek, backpack, mountain climb, tour with professional guides, snowshoe and ski tour. Complementing the wilderness and backcountry outdoor recreation activities are the existing and potential frontcountry outdoor recreation activities and facilities found within Stikine River and Kinaskan Lake provincial parks and the Highway 37 corridor.

2.3 Protected Area Roles

2.3.1 Conservation

The primary conservation role that all Stikine Country Protected Areas fulfill is to protect a representative example of a naturally functioning ecosystem that includes large-scale disturbances such as fire, and a viable, diverse, large mammal predator-prey system, consisting of caribou, Stone's sheep, mountain goat, moose, grizzly bear, black bear, and wolf, and to protect special geologic features and animal and plant species and plant communities at risk. Special geologic features include the Grand Canyon of the Stikine River, the Mount Edziza composite shield volcano and associated post-glacial cinder cones, thermal springs phenomena and associated rare plant communities. Special aquatic features include the only fully protected area in British Columbia enclosing contiguous streams, large rivers and lakes believed to support the blue-listed bull trout in the full diversity of its life histories (Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park, Stikine River Provincial Park, Pitman River Protected Area and Chukachida Protected Area combined), and rainbow trout only fish systems in all of Tatlattui Provincial Park and in the Kakiddi Lakes chain in Mount Edziza Provincial Park.

The Stikine Country Protected Areas System represents mountains, alpine plateaus and northern boreal forests within the Southern Boreal Plateau and Stikine Plateau ecoregions including the following biogeoclimatic zones and subzones: Alpine Tundra (AT); Boreal White and Black Spruce (BWBSdk1); Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir (ESSFwv); Spruce-Willow-Birch (SWB) and Sub-Boreal Spruce (SBS). The Cassiar Ranges, Tahltan Highland, Northern Skeena Mountains and Eastern Skeena Mountains ecoregions are also represented but to a lesser extent.

Each protected area contains specific conservation roles.

- Mount Edziza Provincial Park and the proposed Mount Edziza Protected Area's conservation role is to protect and preserve internationally significant special geologic features including the Mount Edziza composite shield volcano, the post-glacial cinder cones, thermal springs phenomena (including plant species and plant communities at risk), brilliant coloured lava strata, blocky and columnar basalt formations, canyon formations and rare sediments.
- Stikine River Provincial Park's conservation role is to conserve the special geologic features contained in the Grand Canyon of the Stikine River, plant species and plant communities at risk; and the river environment with its special aquatic features including fish, wildlife and vegetation.
- Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park's conservation role is to protect internationally significant wild land mountain and plateau landscapes, large mammal populations, superb river, lake and small waterbody environments and intact vegetation communities.
- Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve's primary conservation role is to conserve an intact, undisturbed wilderness environment for Stone's sheep, mountain goat, caribou and grizzly bear. The ecological reserve also acts as a special benchmark for scientific research and education purposes.
- Tatlattui Provincial Park's conservation role is to conserve an intact, relatively undisturbed wilderness mountain environment and to protect large mammal populations, river, lake and small waterbody environments; and intact vegetation communities.

- Chukachida Protected Area's and Pitman River Protected Area's conservation role is to protect important low elevation forested and wetland habitat for moose, and wildlife migration corridors.

2.3.2 Cultural Heritage

Stikine Country Protected Areas' cultural heritage role is to protect known aboriginal and non-aboriginal cultural heritage sites including sites such as Caribou Hide, Metsantan, Cold Fish Lake, obsidian quarry sites, portions of the Dominion Telegraph Trail and the Tahltan Eagle.

The cultural heritage role of each protected area is as follows.

- Mount Edziza Provincial Park's cultural heritage role is to protect and preserve provincially significant Tahltan Nation obsidian quarry and archaeological sites, First Nations legend sites; the Tahltan Eagle; and portions of the Dominion Telegraph Trail.
- Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park's cultural heritage role is to protect and conserve provincially significant First Nations village sites at Caribou Hide and Metsantan; First Nations archaeological and legend sites; non-aboriginal fur-trade sites; traditional trails; historic trails; and famous landmarks such as Cold Fish Lake cabins.
- Stikine River Provincial Park, Pitman River Protected Area and Chukachida Protected Area's cultural heritage role is to protect and conserve First Nations village, archaeological and legend sites; pre and post-contact historic routes and trails; and sites associated with pioneer, fur trade and guide-outfitting sites.
- Tatlatui Provincial Park's cultural heritage role is to protect and conserve First Nations archaeological and legend sites, historic trails, and sites associated with pioneer and guide-outfitting historic sites.

2.3.3 Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

The Stikine Country Protected Areas' tourism and outdoor recreation role focuses on providing backcountry recreation experiences in a vast, mostly unroaded wilderness region containing mountains, alpine plateaus, low elevation boreal forests and navigable rivers, where signs of human activity are few. Few places in British Columbia and Canada rival the diversity of landscapes, intact wild land ecosystems, large and small mammal wildlife populations, non-consumptive and consumptive outdoor recreation opportunities and special cultural heritage values that exists in this region. Significant outdoor recreation wilderness experiences include the Spatsizi River and Stikine River wilderness canoe and rafting routes, multi-day backpacking and horseback riding trips along historic trails, and wilderness-based hunting and angling. Other outdoor recreation opportunities offered in this wilderness setting include ski touring, kayaking, dog sledding and snowshoeing, with jet boats acceptable as a method of transportation in Stikine River Provincial Park, Pitman River Protected Area, Chukachida Protected Area, and portions of Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park. The lack of road access to most areas means people gain access to outdoor recreation opportunities primarily by using floatplanes and motorboats. Vehicle access outdoor recreation opportunities exist at the Highway 37 Bridge crossing in Stikine River Provincial Park and at trailheads to the Grand Canyon of the Stikine River.

Specific outdoor recreation and tourism roles for each protected area are as follows.

- Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park's outdoor recreation and tourism role is to present internationally significant backcountry recreation opportunities in a vast plateau, mountain and river valley wild land setting. The park contains publicly used trails, cabins

and non-permanent outdoor recreation facilities complemented by private sector guide-outfitting services and facilities. The park offers hunting and fishing opportunities as well as non-consumptive outdoor recreation opportunities including photography, river rafting, canoeing, kayaking, trekking, cross-country ski touring, wildlife viewing and **nature and human history appreciation.**

- Mount Edziza Provincial Park provides backcountry recreation opportunities ranging from backpacking in volcanic alpine tundra to camping in wilderness forest, lake and river environments. The park also offers hunting and fishing and wildlife viewing outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Stikine River Provincial Park's outdoor recreation and tourism role is to present frontcountry recreation opportunities in a river valley setting, and, together with Pitman River Protected Area and Chukachida Protected Area, internationally significant backcountry recreation opportunities in a river valley, mountain and canyon wild land setting, with limited facilities. The three backcountry protected areas offer hunting and fishing opportunities as well as non-consumptive outdoor recreation opportunities including dispersed camping, photography, river rafting, canoeing, kayaking, trekking, cross-country ski touring, wildlife viewing and nature and human history appreciation. Stikine River Provincial Park also offers frontcountry day use opportunities.
- Tatlatui Provincial Park's outdoor recreation and tourism role is to present and protect provincially significant backcountry recreation opportunities in a mountain, river, lake and alpine tundra setting. The park contains limited outdoor recreation facilities and wilderness-oriented private sector guide-outfitting services and facilities and offers hunting and fishing opportunities, as well as non-consumptive outdoor recreation opportunities including photography, canoeing, trekking, cross-country ski touring, wildlife viewing and nature appreciation.

2.3.4 Education and Research

All Stikine Country Protected Areas play an important education and research role within the British Columbia Protected Areas System.

For all Stikine Country Protected Areas, the research role is to present a protected boreal landscape relatively free of human disturbance as a benchmark, where natural ecosystem processes continue with minimal intervention; and to provide a diversity of mountain, plateau and river valley landscapes for the study of large mammal populations, predator-prey systems, freshwater aquatic systems, plant and animal species and plant communities at risk, and geologic features (e.g. volcanic features in Mount Edziza Provincial Park) and the effects of non-industrial human use on these environments and plant and animal species. Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve performs an especially significant research role by presenting a protected landscape that allows natural ecological processes to unfold, providing a benchmark to measure the effects of human use that occurs in other areas; and conserving rare and threatened plant and animal species for scientific research and medicinal applications.

The education role of Stikine Country Protected Areas is to provide an outdoor classroom environment for studying terrestrial and aquatic boreal ecosystems and geological features. The protected areas system also provides opportunities for First Nations to share information on culture, origin stories, place names, sustenance practices, values and beliefs.

3 Vision for the Stikine Country Protected Areas System

3.1 What is a Vision Statement

A vision statement establishes what we, as a society want to see for a protected area over decades and even centuries (i.e. a description of its future state). Clearly defining the long-term vision helps to guide short-term management direction. The vision statement is an important guide when reacting to changing demands for outdoor recreation or when incorporating new approaches to conservation or cultural heritage management.

3.2 Vision Statement

Stikine Country Protected Areas are one of the most remarkable and special group of wilderness areas on earth where nature prevails and people who enter find the spectacular surroundings and naturally functioning ecosystems to be a continuous gift, a treasure to carry with them forever. Conservation of natural and cultural heritage values is the management priority of the Stikine Country Protected Areas System.

Ecosystems, comprised of the natural diversity of plants, animals and processes that support them, evolve within a natural range of variability. Intact large mammal predator/prey systems centred in Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness and Mount Edziza provincial parks embody the significance of this wilderness area in a global context.

Cultural heritage features continue to exist in a natural setting with some features restored for traditional, historic or interpretive purposes.

The landscapes, as they have in the past for First Nations, support cultural, spiritual, recreational and economic activities for all British Columbians in harmony with wilderness values.

The Stikine Country Protected Areas represent part of the heartland of the Tahltan people and one aspect of their cultural and spiritual lives.

First Nations exercise their aboriginal and treaty rights. First Nations have a strong sense of reconnection to and stewardship of their traditional territories within protected areas and carry out traditional uses and cultural programs for the benefit of First Nation communities. Traditional use sites and trails and archaeological sites are well documented and protected from adverse impacts.

Visitors to Stikine Country Protected Areas are respectful of the natural and cultural heritage values and experience internationally significant wilderness recreation and wilderness tourism opportunities. Outdoor recreation opportunities are primarily wilderness-based but include a range of opportunities from limited serviced frontcountry camping to low impact activities in wilderness areas where solitude and quiet prevail.

Management of Stikine Country Protected Areas fully involves First Nations, local communities and other British Columbians. The current Tahltan/Environmental Stewardship Division

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committee has evolved into a strong partnership where Tahltan interests and pursuits are clearly recognized and accommodated.

First Nations and local communities are key beneficiaries of employment and economic opportunities provided by the protected areas. These local groups actively participate in balancing economic benefits with the need to maintain ecological and cultural heritage integrity for the long term. Dease Lake, Telegraph Creek and Iskut serve as gateway communities for regional, national and international visitors.

Ongoing information and education programs maintain a high level of public understanding and support for the protected areas, including a visitor centre located in one of the communities along Highway 37.

The Stikine Country Protected Areas System provides world class opportunities to learn and appreciate First Nations cultures.

Activities, facilities, use levels and access are carefully managed to ensure that ecosystems and cultural heritage values remain intact and exceptional wilderness visitor experiences are maintained.

Management of Stikine Country Protected Areas is supported by comprehensive inventory and research and relies on both First Nations traditional knowledge and timely scientific projects.

Managers are proactive in responding to potential adverse impacts and pressures on the protected areas system and use adaptive management and precautionary principles.

Management of Stikine Country Protected Areas respects and is coordinated with management regimes outside the system. Coordination focuses on adjacent areas that provide wildlife habitats for populations resident in the protected areas system, landscape connectivity and access.

4 Managing Stikine Country Protected Areas and their Ecosystems

4.1 Managing the System of Protected Areas

Individually, Stikine Country Protected Areas contain special wildlife, vegetation, geologic, cultural and outdoor recreation values. As a system, they protect a broad range of values and provide an exceptional opportunity to manage large-scale ecosystem dynamics in a relatively natural setting. For example, a large fire may affect a large portion of Pitman River Protected Area but will have a much smaller effect on the entire group of Stikine Country Protected Areas.



Figure 2. Cold Fish Lake, Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park.

Conservation of natural and cultural values is the management priority in Stikine Country Protected Areas. As a system, Stikine Country Protected Areas focus on protecting natural and cultural heritage values while offering a range of outdoor recreation opportunities where they do not conflict with protection of natural or cultural values. This allows Environmental Stewardship Division to meet both components of its protected areas' mandate – conservation and recreation – within the Stikine Country Protected Areas System, rather than just within each protected area individually.

Management of Stikine Country Protected Areas will also be based on the precautionary principle, adaptive management, and both scientific and traditional knowledge.

Implicit in the precautionary principle is that all parties with an interest in managing the land base (i.e. government agencies, First Nations, commercial operators, stakeholders, NGOs [non-governmental organizations] and the public) have a responsibility to take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize damage to the environment. Where uncertainty exists regarding the effect of management actions, protecting the resource should be the primary consideration. Lack of scientific certainty on impacts should not be used as a reason for not taking action to protect the environment.

In adaptive management, management policies and strategies are implemented and evaluated with a high degree of emphasis on learning about the response of the system to management. Adaptive management is simply “learning by doing” (Walters and Holling 1990). Nyberg (1998) proposed the following working definition for adaptive management:

“Adaptive management is the systematic process for continually improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of an operational program. Its most effective form – “active” adaptive management – employs management programs that are designed to experimentally compare selected policies or practices, by evaluating alternative hypotheses about the system being managed. The key characteristics of adaptive management include:

- *Acknowledgement of uncertainty about what policy or practice is “best” for the particular management issue;*
- *Thoughtful selection of the policies or practices to be applied;*
- *Careful implementation of a plan of action designed to reveal the critical knowledge;*
- *Monitoring of key response indicators;*
- *Analysis of the outcome in consideration of the original objectives; and*
- *Incorporation of the results into future decisions.”*

Although some baseline information is currently available on the structure and function of natural and cultural features in Stikine Country Protected Areas, management direction and strategies in this plan are often based on a limited understanding of their impacts, especially long-term impacts. Throughout this management plan, the precautionary principle is applied when risks to natural and cultural values are high and impacts from management strategies may take a long time to determine. Adaptive management is applied when risks are lower and effects can be assessed in a shorter time (i.e. a few years).

The following definition of traditional knowledge has been adapted from “A Protocol Agreement between the Kaska Nation and The British Columbia and Yukon Chapters of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society” as referenced in the Draft Tahltan Land Stewardship Plan for the Tahltan (Stikine) Country Protected Areas (see Section 5.2). Traditional knowledge means a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and beliefs transforming by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by traditional, educational and cultural transmission. Traditional knowledge is about the relationship of human beings with one another and their environment including songs, stories, designs, dances, language, ceremonies and ways of doing things that reflect First Nations heritage, history, culture, ethics, creativity, spirituality and sovereignty of First Nations People in their traditional territory.

4.1.1 General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Combined, Stikine Country Protected Areas offer a wide range of natural, cultural and outdoor recreation features representative of northern boreal landscapes. Environmental Stewardship Division will manage Stikine Country Protected Areas as a system of protected areas rather than as individual protected areas. Environmental Stewardship Division will apply its protected areas' conservation and recreation mandates to the system as a whole, with conservation of natural and cultural values as the management priority; outdoor recreation activities will be provided where they do not conflict with natural and cultural values. Management of the Stikine Country Protected Areas will be based on both scientific and traditional knowledge. The precautionary principle will be applied when scientific information is lacking, risks to natural and cultural values are high and impacts may take a long time to assess. Adaptive management will be applied when scientific information is lacking, risks to natural and cultural values are lower and impacts may be assessed over a shorter time period.

Objectives and Strategies

To conserve natural and cultural heritage values in Stikine Country Protected Areas while allowing appropriate outdoor recreation activities to occur.

- Identify and map important natural and cultural heritage values and develop strategies to conserve those values.
- Identify appropriate outdoor recreation activities and focus those activities in areas where they are compatible with natural and cultural heritage values.

To apply the precautionary principle and adaptive management where appropriate.

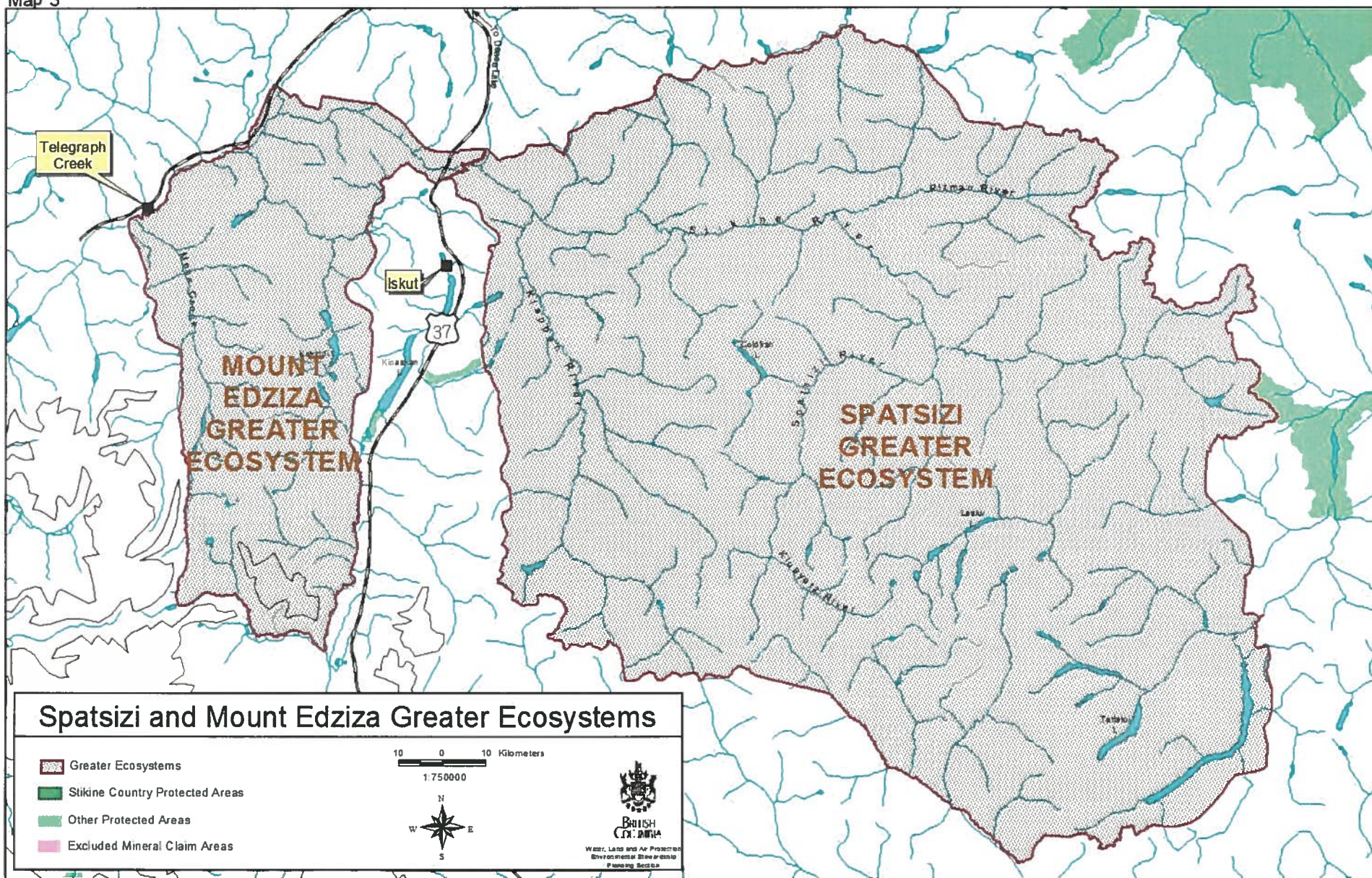
4.2 Managing Ecosystems within Stikine Country Protected Areas

An ecosystem can be defined as all living and non-living components of an environment and the processes that link them in time and space. Because ecosystems include the processes that link ecosystem components, they are inherently dynamic; ecosystem structure will change as processes act on them. Although this concept does not define the size of an ecosystem, it is important to include a spatial scale for management purposes. Ecosystems may be small or large depending on the limits used to define them; small or local scale ecosystems (e.g. a wetland complex) may be components of larger or regional scale ecosystems (e.g. a caribou herd's annual range). Since many ecosystem components and processes (e.g. wildlife, fire, forest insects) do not recognize administrative units such as protected areas, regional-scale ecosystems usually extend beyond protected area boundaries.

For Stikine Country Protected Areas, ecosystem structure and function in individual protected areas will be managed within the context of two regional-scale Greater Ecosystems (Map 3):

- the Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem; and,
- the Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem.

Map 3





Map 3. Spatsizi and Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystems.



These two “Greater Ecosystems” are based primarily on the distribution and range of the two woodland caribou populations in the area (the Spatsizi caribou population and the Mount Edziza caribou population) but ecosystem function includes all ecosystem components; other significant wildlife ranges and connectivity between the two Greater Ecosystems are also considered. Protected areas west of Highway 37 fall within the Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem; protected areas east of Highway 37 fall within the Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem. The boundaries of the two “Greater Ecosystems” are ecologically based and are not administrative boundaries. Within each Greater Ecosystem, BC Parks’ policies and management authority apply only to the protected areas.

Although defining geographic boundaries around an ecosystem places artificial limits on the extent of the ecosystem (i.e. organisms freely cross any geographically defined boundary and home ranges for many organisms straddle the boundary), geographic boundaries help define an area of interest for ecosystem features for management purposes. The boundaries of the two “Greater Ecosystems” should be considered only a guideline with respect to the extent of an ecosystem.

The Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem was defined using radio-collared caribou locations, inventory information, and local knowledge. It contains over 95% of the radio-collared caribou locations from the Spatsizi caribou population and represents an area large enough to support a viable large mammal predator-prey system. However, the range of many large mammal species, especially moose, grizzly bear and wolf, are contiguous with areas outside the Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem.

The Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem was defined using inventory information and local knowledge. It includes the known ranges of the Mount Edziza caribou population, the Mount Edziza and Stikine River Canyon mountain goat populations, the Mount Edziza Stone’s sheep population and Stone’s sheep habitat adjacent to the south. The Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem focuses on mountain dwelling ungulates confined to the Mount Edziza massif and the Grand Canyon of the Stikine River. Populations of moose and large carnivores (i.e. grizzly bear, black bear, wolf and wolverine) in this system are contiguous with areas outside of the Greater Ecosystem.

4.2.1 General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Ecosystem management in Stikine Country Protected Areas will focus on maintaining natural ecosystem structure (living and non-living components) and function (processes linking components) in time and space and will provide a context for all other management direction. Management strategies will consider natural changes including climate change and its effects on natural disturbance processes and distribution and abundance of ecosystem components. Humans are considered an important component of the larger ecosystem. The Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem and the Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem provide a framework for ecological management within Stikine Country Protected Areas. Ecological issues in protected areas and portions of protected areas west of Highway 37 will be managed as one unit within the context of the Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem. Similarly, ecological issues in protected areas and portions of protected areas east of Highway 37 will be managed as one unit within the context of the Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem.

4.3 Managing Ecosystems within the context of the Broader Landscape

Although Stikine Country Protected Areas protect significant portions of the Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem and the Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem, administrative boundaries do not restrict wildlife populations as animals will move beyond protected area boundaries. Natural disturbance factors such as fire and forest insects are also not restricted by administrative boundaries. Management regimes outside of protected areas will influence protected area values, and management regimes within protected areas will influence values outside the protected areas. Although the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Region is currently relatively undeveloped, future industrial developments may result in increased access to protected areas and changes to vegetation structure surrounding protected areas.

The Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem and Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem identify areas adjacent to Stikine Country Protected Areas where management activities may influence natural and cultural values centred within the protected areas. Appendix 4 lists features found adjacent to protected areas that are important for natural and cultural values centred within Stikine Country Protected Areas, and specific issues and concerns associated with those features. Because the Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem is largely defined by the distribution and range of the Mount Edziza caribou herd, the greater ecosystem boundary generally corresponds to protected area boundaries.

Currently, most of the areas next to Stikine Country Protected Areas are unroaded; however, mining and forestry developments could result in potential new roads. Access routes will depend on the location and type of the extracted resource. Industrial interests could develop access routes to several areas adjacent to Stikine Country Protected Areas. These include routes to Shaft and Galore creeks west of Mount Edziza Provincial Park; Mount Edziza Resource Management Zone (formerly the Mount Edziza Recreation Area) east of Mount Edziza Provincial Park; the Bowser Basin in the upper Klappan and Skeena rivers; and areas north east of the Stikine River near the Pitman and Chukachida rivers. Forest harvesting in the Klappan River drainage has been deferred for 15 years, but development is possible after that time. The Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP directed that mining road access could be constructed through the Mount Edziza Protected Area (proposed), Pitman River Protected Area and Chukachida Protected Area with specific provisions. These potential changes in adjacent land use and the resulting access could affect values in those protected areas.

Two significant areas identified adjoining Stikine Country Protected Areas are the McBride River area and the Mount Edziza Resource Management Zone. Mount Edziza Provincial Park and Mount Edziza Protected Area (proposed) surround the Mount Edziza Resource Management Zone, formerly the Mount Edziza Recreation Area, except on its eastern flank. It is an integral component of the Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem but was excluded from the park because of its potential mineral values. Access to this area and its management will substantially influence natural and cultural values in Mount Edziza Provincial Park. The McBride River area includes important winter range for the Spatsizi caribou population. Access to, and forest harvesting and mining activities in this area will influence the Spatsizi caribou population, centred within Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness, Stikine River, and Tatlatui provincial parks.

Stikine Country Protected Areas also provide some connectivity to other protected areas in northern British Columbia. Connectivity is important for maintaining the exchange of migrating and dispersing wildlife between those protected areas. The Chukachida Protected Area provides an undisturbed low elevation connection between Stikine Country Protected Areas and Finlay-Russel Park and Protected Area, which lies adjacent to the east. The Pitman River Protected Area also provides an undisturbed low elevation connection between Stikine Country Protected Areas and high value wildlife habitat to the northeast. Although not adjacent to Pitman River Protected Area, Denetiah Park, Denetiah Protected Area and Dune Za Keyih (Frog-Gataga) Park and Protected Area lie approximately 30 kilometres to the northeast.

4.3.1 General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Although the Stikine Country Protected Areas System contains significant areas of natural and cultural heritage values, additional areas adjacent to the system contain features important to some of those values. Management of those features will influence natural and cultural values centred in the Stikine Country Protected Areas System. Environmental Stewardship Division will continue to participate in management planning on lands next to Stikine Country Protected Areas to identify possible impacts on protected area values and to promote protected area values. Environmental Stewardship Division, Parks and Protected Areas Section will respect the management regimes outside the protected areas, including the need and appropriateness of industrial activities such as forest harvesting and mineral extraction, and will seek to minimize and mitigate potential effects on protected area values.

Objectives and Strategies

To coordinate with other agencies, First Nations, commercial operators and the public to minimize impacts on Stikine Country Protected Areas' values caused by activities on adjacent lands within the Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem and Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem.

- Work with other agencies and commercial interests to minimize and mitigate impacts of current and potential commercial activities and associated access in adjacent areas on natural, cultural heritage and outdoor recreation values of the Stikine Country Protected Areas System.
- Work with the Ministry of Energy and Mines during planning and development activities on lands outside of protected areas in the Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem and Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem to minimize and mitigate impacts on protected area natural, cultural heritage and outdoor recreation values.
- Work with the Ministry of Forests to minimize and mitigate impacts of forest harvesting practices and associated road building on natural, cultural heritage and recreation values on lands adjacent to the Stikine Country Protected Areas.
- Work with other agencies and First Nations in vegetation management planning exercises on adjacent lands (i.e. landscape unit planning) within the Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem and Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem to promote compatibility of vegetation management objectives with those for Stikine Country Protected Areas, while respecting management regimes outside the protected areas system.
- Consider management objectives on adjacent lands when implementing Stikine Country Protected Areas vegetation management activities.

- Manage fires and forest insects near protected area boundaries in consideration of values adjacent to the protected area.
- Work with the Ministry of Forests to establish habitat management objectives for areas adjacent to the protected areas that are known to be used by protected area wildlife.
- Work with First Nations, other agencies and the public to minimize and mitigate impacts of activities outside protected areas on the large mammal predator-prey system centred in protected areas within the Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem and Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem.
- Ensure protected area objectives are considered in hunting and trapping regulations in areas adjacent to Stikine Country Protected Areas System within the Spatsizi Greater Ecosystem and Mount Edziza Greater Ecosystem.
- Cooperate with other agencies, First Nations and resource industries to maintain regional connectivity for wide ranging large mammal species.

4.4 Managing Smaller Protected Areas in the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP Planning Area

This management plan does not include some smaller protected areas located in the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP Planning Area. These include the Ningunaw River Ecological Reserve; one frontcountry protected area - Kinaskan Lake Provincial Park; and ten backcountry protected areas - Border Lake, Choquette Hot Springs, Great Glacier, Iskut River Hot Springs, Lava Forks, Ningunaw, Spatsizi Headwaters, Todagin South Slope, and Tuya Mountains provincial parks and Craig Headwaters Protected Area. In addition, another frontcountry protected area, Boya Lake Provincial Park, is located just north of the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine Planning area on Highway 37.

Frontcountry protected areas in the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP Planning Area (including Boya Lake Provincial Park) provide opportunities for more accessible outdoor recreation activities and provide a venue for delivering interpretive information on Stikine Country Protected Areas' values. Frontcountry and backcountry protected areas in the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP Planning Area protect natural, cultural heritage and recreation values and complement those values represented within the Stikine Country Protected Areas System covered in this management plan. Individual management direction statements guide management of these smaller protected areas.

4.4.1 General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Management of frontcountry protected areas in the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP Planning Area and Boya Lake Provincial Park complements Stikine Country Protected Areas by providing more accessible outdoor recreation opportunities and interpretation venues not available in the Stikine Country Protected Areas System. Backcountry and frontcountry protected areas in the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP Planning Area and Boya Lake Provincial Park will be managed to conserve natural, cultural and outdoor recreation values. Ningunaw River Ecological Reserve will be managed to conserve natural and cultural values. All backcountry protected areas created through the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP will follow management guidelines provided in the LRMP.

5 Managing with First Nations

5.1 First Nations

Stikine Country Protected Areas lay within the traditional territories of two First Nations groups, with some overlap between territories. The Tahltan Band Council and the Iskut First Nation (collectively called Tahltan Nation) claim traditional territories over all Stikine Country Protected Areas. The asserted traditional territory of the Kaska Dena Council covers Tatlatui Provincial Park, a portion of the eastern part of Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park in the Chapea Creek and Metsantan Creek area, and all of the Chukachida Protected Area, where it overlaps with the Tahltan traditional territory.

A BC Parks/Tahltan Protected Areas Committee has been established and held 6 to 8 meetings leading to the preparation of this management plan.

In 1982, existing aboriginal rights were recognized and affirmed in Section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. Court decisions have clarified the nature of existing aboriginal rights, and, as a consequence, redefined the legal relationship between the Government of British Columbia and aboriginal peoples. In short, government activities cannot infringe upon existing aboriginal rights unless proper justification exists. In addition, the 1997 Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Delgamuukw* discusses aboriginal title, adding new factors that government officials must consider during consultation with First Nations.

The Province has an obligation to consider aboriginal interests in decision-making processes that could lead to impacts on those interests. This obligation, fulfilled in most instances through consultation, has been enforced by the courts to ensure that provincial decision-makers consider aboriginal interests appropriately, before there is a court determination that those interests amount to existing aboriginal rights and/or title.

The importance of proper consultation is illustrated in two recent landmark rulings. The BC Court of Appeal held that the provincial government has a duty to properly consult First Nations, pre-treaty, before proceeding with development on potential treaty settlement land (Taku River Tlingit First Nation v Ringstad et al., and Haida Nation v Ministry of Forests and Weyerhaeuser). Such cases clearly highlight the importance of undertaking proper consultation.

While the nature and scope of consultation may vary, the fundamental principles of consultation are the same for all aboriginal interests contemplated by policy. Government officials must diligently and meaningfully consult with First Nations with the intention of fully considering aboriginal interests. Where a sound claim of existing aboriginal rights and/or title is made out, consultation efforts must attempt to address and/or accommodate First Nations concerns relating to the impacts of proposed activities on the aboriginal interests that it identifies or of which the Crown is otherwise aware. In practical terms, this means the quality of consultation is of primary importance and the soundness of the claim will dictate the scope and depth of required consultation. Provincial and Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection consultation guidelines provide direction to assist staff in ensuring meaningful consultation.

5.1.1 General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Environmental Stewardship Division will work with First Nations to ensure that existing aboriginal rights and title and treaty rights, where established, are accommodated and given priority consistent with court decisions. First Nations' interests will be fully considered in management of the Stikine Country Protected Areas System.

Objectives and Strategies

To ensure that ministry and government policy on consultation with First Nations is implemented.

- Consult with Tahltan and Kaska-Dene First Nations on any activities that have potential to infringe on existing aboriginal or treaty rights.
- Encourage and facilitate exercise of traditional activities by First Nations including contemporary uses such as cultural camps.
- Seek to obtain and incorporate traditional knowledge with science as a basis for management decisions.
- Fiduciary responsibilities of the Crown will be undertaken.

To work with First Nations to ensure their interests are considered in respect of the Stikine Country Protected Areas System and government partnerships are strengthened.

- Work with First Nations in responding to their interests and concern in protected area management, and to their interest in employment and economic opportunities generated by the protected areas system.
- Continue to support and implement the Agreement between BC Parks and the Tahltan Joint Councils that provides for a joint Protected Areas Committee (Appendix 5). This committee will provide advice to Environmental Stewardship Division on a wide range of issues related to planning, management and activities within areas of mutual interest.
- Work with Kaska-Dene First Nations to develop an appropriate mechanism to foster government to government relationships.
- Consult with First Nations on resource management issues.

5.2 Tahltan Land Stewardship Plan

The Tahltan Nation has prepared a draft Tahltan Land Stewardship Plan for the Tahltan (Stikine) Country Protected Areas in response to the draft Stikine Country Protected Areas Management Plan. The full text of the draft land stewardship plan is included below to indicate the perspectives, and desired direction and priorities of the Tahltan Nation but is not part of the direction in this protected areas plan. The draft Tahltan Land Stewardship Plan has not yet been ratified by the Tahltan Nation. To the extent feasible in a pre-treaty environment, the protected area management plan has been amended in recognition of Tahltan priorities for protected area management. It is anticipated that Tahltan priorities will also be discussed on an ongoing basis in the context of government to government discussion at the existing BC Parks/Tahltan Protected Areas Committee.

**DRAFT - TAHLTAN LAND STEWARDSHIP PLAN
TAHLTAN (STIKINE) COUNTRY
PROTECTED AREAS**

PART I - INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to assert Tahltan rights and authorities with respect to the management of protected areas that lie within Tahltan traditional territory. Tahltan traditional territory includes the "Stikine River and all the headwaters". The Tahltans wish to manage these protected areas co-operatively, on a government-to-government basis with the government of British Columbia. The following report summarizes our main concerns and priorities for the management of the protected areas within Tahltan traditional territory.

Context

The Stikine Country Protected Areas management plan covers a large protected areas system that is comprised of numerous parks and protected areas. The parks and protected areas within the Stikine Country Protected Areas system lie entirely within the asserted territories of the Tahltan Nation. These parks and protected areas were established without consultation with the Tahltans from 1972 to 2001.

In December 2002, BC Parks completed a draft management plan for the Stikine Country protected areas. This management plan was completed without consultation with the Tahltan Nation. In an attempt to meet consultation requirements, BC Parks provided funding in early 2003 to consult with the Tahltan Nation. The time allotted for such a large project was insufficient to conduct a thorough job. The Tahltan Nation feels that BC Parks has still not met consultation requirements.

The limited funding provided by BC Parks was utilized to begin the consultation process with the Tahltan Nation. A consultant was hired to organize and conduct community consultations. Community meetings were held in early April to obtain Tahltan issues and concerns regarding management of parks and protected areas. This report is a result of the consultation project and outlines Tahltan concerns and priorities for management of protected areas within our traditional territory. Please note, in order to meet consultation requirements, more time and funding are required to meet with the communities, individuals and families, and document their concerns, issues, priorities and visions for future management.

The Tahltans' contributions to the Stikine Country Protected Areas management plan are recognised and understood to be without prejudice to future treaty negotiations. The creation of parks and subsequent management planning are without prejudice to any existing aboriginal rights and are subject to the outcome of any treaty discussions.

PART II - VISION

The Tahltan Nation wishes to protect in perpetuity the natural and cultural environment found within the Stikine Country Protected Areas.

We seek co-management and aim to participate with the government of British Columbia on a government-to-government basis, as an equal partner in the planning and management of all parks and protected areas that lie within Tahltan traditional territory, including all those identified in the Stikine Country Protected Areas management plan; while protecting both Tahltan and Crown sovereignty.

26 *Inclusion of the Tahltan Stewardship Plan is intended to indicate the perspectives and desired direction and priorities of the Tahltan Nation, but is not part of the management direction in the protected area management plan. Inclusion of the Tahltan Stewardship Plan is without prejudice to the positions that either the Tahltan Nation or the Province may take in treaty negotiations or court proceedings.*

The Tahltan Nation will rejuvenate our stewardship and re-establish our connections to our lands. The areas have been, and continues to be, used for food gathering, fishing, hunting, trade, trapping, medicine gathering, permanent, summer and winter occupation, social, recreational, ceremonial, spiritual and economic activities.

The management plan encourages and enhances traditional cultural heritage activities and related uses by the Tahltan Nation within the park and protected areas.

The Stikine Country Protected Areas system provides world class opportunities to learn and appreciate the Tahltan culture. Parks and protected areas will be managed to protect its important and diverse natural resources and cultural heritage while providing recreational activities, including commercial activities, in balance with Tahltan interests and pursuits.

We aim to see our traditional knowledge incorporated into western science on which to base management decisions. Parks and protected area management will study, investigate and implement Tahltan sustainable management approaches and techniques.

We will increase economic development and pursue economic opportunities that present themselves within parks and protected areas. The areas have been used, and continue to be used, for economic activities by Tahltan members "...because our lives depended on our country". The Tahltan Nation will develop cultural tourism ventures in the parks and protected areas.

The Stikine Country Protected Areas, lie entirely within Tahltan traditional territory, and encompasses an area that is both unique and remarkable. The Tahltan people belong to this land. We depend on our country; it is our mother, our provider, our home, our playground, our livelihood, and protection of our country is inherent to our survival.

PART III – TAHLTAN SOVEREIGNTY

Tahltans have lived in the area of the "Stikine River and all the headwaters" (Felix Jackson's description of Tahltan lands) since time immemorial. We have originated here on this land: the Tahltan people belong to this land. The source of Tahltan inherent sovereignty is from the fact of our prior occupation; therefore, the content of Tahltan rights is the same as prior occupation – hence Tahltan sovereignty and not aboriginal rights. Tahltans have always been independent and sovereign peoples. We have our own land rights, laws and governance that have never been extinguished. Tahltan values are passed to younger generations through oral stories, observation and practice. The following declaration was signed and delivered to the government of BC in 1910:

Declaration of the Tahltan Tribe

We, the undersigned members of the Tahltan tribe, speaking for ourselves, and our entire tribe, hereby make known to all whom it may concern, that we have heard of the Indian Rights movement among the Indian tribes of the coast, and of the Southern Interior of B.C. Also, we have read the declaration made by the chiefs of the southern interior tribes at Spences Bridge of the 16th July last, and we hereby declare our complete agreement with the demands of the same, and with the position taken by the said chiefs, and their people on all the questions stated in the said declaration, and we furthermore make known that it is our desire and intention to join with them in the fight for our mutual rights, and that we will assist in the furtherance of this object in every way we can, until such time as all these matters of moment to us are finally settled. We further declare as follows:

Firstly – We claim the sovereign right to all the country of our tribe – this country of ours which we have held intact from the encroachment of other tribes, from time immemorial, at the cost of our own blood. We have done this because our lives depended on our country. To lose it meant we would lose our means of living, and therefore our lives. We are still heretofore, dependent for our living on our country, and we do not intend to give away the title to any part of same without

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Draft - Tahltan Land Stewardship Plan – Tahltan (Stikine) Country Protected Areas

adequate compensation. We deny the B.C. government has any title or right of ownership in our country. We have never treated with them nor given them any such title. (We have only lately learned the B.C. government make this claim, and that it has for long considered as it property all the territories of the Indian tribes of B.C.)

Secondly – We desire that a part of our country, consisting of one or more large areas (to be selected by us), be retained by us for our own use, said lands, and all thereon to be acknowledged by the government as our absolute property. The rest of our tribal land we are willing to relinquish to the B.C. government for adequate compensation.

Thirdly - We wish it known that a small portion of our lands at the mouth of the Tahltan River, was set apart a few years ago by Mr. Vowell as an Indian reservation. These few acres are the only reservation made for our tribe. We may state we never applied for the reservation of this piece of land, and we have no knowledge why the government set it apart for us, nor do we know exactly yet.

Fourthly - We desire that all questions regarding our lands, hunting, fishing, etc, and every other matter concerning our welfare, be settled by treaty between us and the Dominion and B.C. government.

Fifthly – We are of the opinion it will be better for ourselves, also better for the governments and all concerned, if these treaties are made with us at a very early date, so all friction, and misunderstandings between us and the whites may be avoided, for we hear lately much talk of white settlement in this region, and the buildings of railways, etc., in the near future.

Signed at Telegraph Creek, BC, this eighteenth day of October, Nineteen hundred and ten by:

**Nanok, Chief of the Tahltans,
Nastulta, alias Little Jackson,
George Assadza, Keneti, alias Big Jackson,
And eighty other members of the tribe.**

Tahltans don't recognize BC Parks' boundaries as Tahltans still hold those lands. The Crown has never dealt with Tahltan land issue nor have they properly consulted Tahltans. Our people continue to speak: "Parks [the Crown] has no [land title] transfers signed to make it a park, hasn't been any" (Tahltan Elders community meeting, Telegraph Creek, 03 May, 2003).

"I wasn't doing anything different than what my ancestors did when they got obsidian and traded it with Nothcaw. If we made a living off the land before we still have the right to make a living off our land. We cannot take out their permits we support their system" (Willie Williams, 03 May, 2003, Tahltan Elders meeting, Telegraph Creek, BC).

PART IV - ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

The Tahltans' rights within the Stikine Country Protected Areas are recognized and affirmed in the 1982 *Constitution Act* and outlined in other court decisions recognising and affirming aboriginal rights. Future use of protected areas could have implications on aboriginal rights and must be taken into consideration in all management plans, including the Stikine Country Protected Areas plan, as well as management direction statements, for all protected areas within Tahltan traditional territory. All management plans and management direction statements for protected areas within Tahltan traditional territory will provide direction to ensure there is no infringement on aboriginal rights. Aboriginal rights are inherent, not granted rights. These rights are constitutionally protected and must take precedence over the privileges of non-aboriginals in order for the Crown to full fill it's fiduciary obligations to the Tahltan nation.

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Members of the Tahltan Nation will continue to extract and harvest the resources of the lands and water within the Stikine Country Protected Areas system for traditional, ceremonial, societal, cultural, economic and sovereign uses. These include, but are not limited to, any practices of cutting, selected trees, root digging, bark stripping, guiding, trading, hunting, trapping, fishing, berry picking, harvesting of medicinal plants, vision quests, camping, brush harvest for bedding mats, placing of caches, and other activities related to the above.

The Tahltan nation will continue to exercise our sovereignty, authority and jurisdiction as original occupiers of these lands. These include, but are not limited to, any practices of land stewardship and management; granting of trespass and harvesting rights, allocation, temporal and location conditions; habitat and population enhancement; and all other resource management decision making.

PART V - HISTORY

Pre-Contact

Clan Origins

There are 7 Tahltan clans, 3 Crow and 4 Wolf. Where the Crow clans come from is not known but James Teit wrote a story, as told to him by a Tahltan, that humans came from a tree that was giving birth (see Journal of American Folk-Lore, 1919 vol. 32, p. 216). Eva Calbreath and James Teit confirm the story that Crows originate in Tahltan lands.

"The Ravens all belonged originally to Tahltan River or some place. There a woman had three daughters. Their children commenced to intermarry, and these incestuous unions led to quarrels. Then one Raven daughter went away and settled a Nahlin [Nahlin River area], another at Tleppan [Klappan River area]. Hence arose the three Raven clans." (Teit's notes, n.d.)

Eva Calbreath says it this way, "According to the story, it seems the Crow Clan are real Tahltan and the Wolf Clan all came from different countrys [sic]". There are 4 Wolf Clans, "Nanyai woman from Wrangell, married a Tahltan; a Tagish Quon woman walked into Tahltan from far north; Glogodena woman came from the Prairie, she followed the Stikine River up to Tahltan; Tulagodena woman came from the Prairie, she met the Tahltan somewhere around Dease Lake or further down" (Eva Calbreath, as written by the Tahltan Band Council, n.d. [circa 1996]).

The rights and obligations of each Tahltan individual is based on matrilineal, we follow our mothers. The clans are independent from each other and together create a confederation of Tahltan clans. Each clan has a certain location and has occupancy rights to these lands because of common origin and long-term occupation.

The Tahltans followed a permanent seasonal round of resource procurement throughout our traditional territory. We had recognized family and shared resource areas that were regularly returned to and managed for thousands of years. During winter, our people lived in lean-to's and subsisted on their annual harvest and game such as moose, caribou, bear, groundhogs, ptarmigan, beaver and grouse. It was during winter when ceremonial activities were conducted and members worked on clothing, utensils, tools, art and design. Spring and summer saw families roaming through the lands gathering and hunting. The salmon runs were major events where numerous families would gather to harvest the salmon. This was a time for trade and gatherings. Hunting was conducted year round but the majority of it was completed during fall. The extensive network of trails, archaeological and traditional use evidence reveals that the Tahltans utilized huge areas of territory including those designated in the Stikine Country Protected Areas.

The following is an excerpt from James Teits' notes:

"The country was divided into lands of each clan, but members of other clans were allowed to hunt there if they asked the privileges, which was never refused. If people of other clans hunted there without asking permission it was resented, and the chief of the clan might tell them to get out or pay for what they had taken. Many people hunted on the grounds of other clans, but always told them they were going to hunt there and if the chief and no one objected they did so. Sometimes the grounds of a clan got in bad shape, needed rest, for game and fur were getting scarce. Then they let part or all of it rest until the game became plentiful again, maybe from 2 to 3 years, and the clan hunted on the grounds of other people. This was always arranged in a friendly way without trouble. The Indians looked well after the fur and game of the country so that should not get scarce. The chief of the clan directed the hunting and trapping so he knew where each household or individual was and saw that they did not interfere with each other and several did not trap on the same ground, as the first one there would have the best chance and all would suffer and have a poor catch. All these matters were arranged between the parties before they went out hunting and trapping. Usually each man let the chief and people know where he proposed to trap that season. Then the chief and the people arranged for all satisfactorily. The chief looked after the hunting grounds for the good of all, but did not own them, for they belonged to the tribe in common.

The chiefs of the clans made regulations concerning the hunting grounds, trapping, etc. A wolf man married to a raven woman; his children inherited the right to hunt on the father's hunting grounds, and when grown up often used the hunting grounds of the father more than those of the mother. Thus there was no real restricting concerning hunting grounds. People of both phratries could hunt at any place, although certain families preferred to go to and preponderated in certain hunting grounds."

The Tahltan Nation also have our own government; it is based on our families and clans. We had no stores, police stations, jails, government buildings or hospitals. Yet our people lived in a society that was almost crime-free and people lived peacefully. Our extended family groups are the basis of our government, our health service, our police force, our justice system, our school system, and our welfare system. Our government was organized around our family/clan system. All decisions affecting Tahltans were made through holding meetings and councils. Every Tahltan was allowed to express their views and concerns. Problems would be identified and solutions were presented collectively. Respect was shown to everyone who had something to contribute. Individual input was valued and included in both the discussion and solution. The Tahltan Nation was a cooperative society, healthy and strong.

There were no written laws in our history. The rules we lived by were taught to us during childhood, through oral stories, and are based on respect. Tahltan people respect themselves, others, all things in our world, and for our environment; this is our law. Respect is shown through offerings and following proper protocol; protocol means showing respect by asking for permission.

If Tahltan laws were broken, the family or a council of Tahltan families, called Kuwegun, decided punishment. The penalty for breaking the rules depended on the seriousness of the crime. Penalties varied but included banishment, disownership, enslavement, repayment, shaming, ridicule, work chores, and death.

Tahltan traded mainly with the Tlingit and the Kaska Nations. Tahltans sometimes acted as middlemen between the Tlingit and Kaska Nations. Trade was an important part of Tahltan history.

Post Contact

Tahltan populations were greatly affected by mid-nineteenth century epidemics introduced by non-native contacts, yet we have overcome these losses. In the 1830's and again in 1848, hundreds of Tahltans died from smallpox and measles. Our numbers dropped from 2500+ in 1800 to 200 by the year 1900. Still we have survived.

Since contact, our people have been forced to change our lifestyles to fit into today's society, and still our culture has survived. Following the Cassiar Gold Rush in 1874, there were many changes in Tahltan society. Tahltans no longer lived the same lifestyle we had lived in the past. Instead, our people were forced to work for other people in exchange for wages. The Cassiar Gold Rush brought thousands of people into our lands. Glenora had a population of 3500 and it is estimated that 10,000 miners passed through there on their way to find gold.

In 1838, an employee of Hudson Bay Company Robert Campbell is the first European to make contact with the Tahltan. Upon the end of the very first visit, he records in his journal his actions when he left the valley of the Tahltan River: "...I forthwith hoisted the H.B.C. flag & cut H.B.C. & date on a tree, thus taking possession of the country for the company". This is one of the first acts of colonization, to claim the land on behalf of the Crown, to claim as if the original occupants do not exist. For an Indigenous group not to exist means the European legal concept of *Terra Nullius* guides the policy of colonization (see Curtis Rattray, Reviving Indigenous Sovereignty, 2003).

Imperial Order in Council of July 19, 1862 annexed Tahltan country, which was known as the 'Stickeen Territory', to the 62nd parallel as part of the colony of British Columbia. There was no consultation with the Tahltan people. There was no treaty signed. This act illegally allowed outsiders to trespass and set up trade in our country, with no consultation for proper permission, this continues today. The Crown in Right of British Columbia and Canada regulate and control all activities and trade in our country, as if the descendants of the original occupants do not exist. The European legal concept of *Terra Nullius* continues today to guides the policy of colonization in Canada.

The designation of parks and protected areas has altered our harvesting and land use patterns. Our people were not allowed to practice their traditional rights within their own territory. No consultation was conducted for the establishment of these parks and protected areas. Yet, in the spirit of good faith, the Tahltans' seek co-management and co-operation.

Tahltans are required to purchase, under duress, park use permits to practice traditional activities such as guiding and trapping that have been conducted prior to the assertion of Crown sovereignty and the establishment of the parks. We do so to show our good faith in co-operation and not to legitimize the Crown's asserted jurisdiction.

Families have lost homes, cabins and traplines, without compensation, as these uses did not fit within the parks and protected areas' goals and priorities.

Access to parks and protected areas are restricted, and still we occupy and utilize our lands.

Our dedication and commitment to our land is undying, unmovable and our rights cannot be extinguished. We have spiritual connection to this land; we belong to this land and will continue to pursue our spirituality within our traditional territory. The parks and protected areas within the Stikine Country Protected Areas is the traditional home of the Tahltan people. We have hunted, trapped, fished, gathered food and resources, traded resources, gathered medicines, guided non-first nations' people for hunting, fishing and hiking, and ranched in this area and will continue to do so. Tahltans have lived, died, and defended our territory since time immemorial and will continue to do so.

Our history has proven that we are a strong and determined nation. The Tahltan Nation is willing to co-operate with the government of British Columbia in the management of Stikine Country Protected Areas. Above all, protection of our land and resources are inherent to our survival.

PART VI – MANAGEMENT OF PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

Place Names

The Tahltan people have been living in the Stikine area since time immemorial. Our language and traditions tie us to the land through traditional activities and place names. The following lists a few examples of Tahltan words that have been Anglicized.

| <u>Tahltan word</u> | <u>English version</u> |
|---|------------------------|
| "Det-ze-zi" - means "red goat" | Spatsizi |
| "Done-a-hee" - name of a man who died during travel | Danahue |
| "Ed-zee-tha" - describes the sound of the rock crushing beneath your feet as you walked on it | Edziza |

These place names are only a few of numerous examples that describe our long-standing relationship between our people and the land and its resources. Our words have been Anglicized, in an attempt to extinguish our rights and to claim ownership for themselves. The Tahltan Nation has place names for all areas in our lands. The Tahltan Nation wants BC Parks to include our traditional place names on all signage, brochures, advertisements (web page), and maps for all parks and protected areas within Tahltan traditional territory.

Issues and Concerns Regarding Parks and Protected Areas

The following is a summary of issues and concerns raised by Tahltan people. These issues and concerns were voiced during community meetings held in April 2003. The following summary does not list all of the Tahltan Nations' issues and concerns. Further consultation is required to address Tahltan issues and concerns regarding parks and protected areas.

Title and Jurisdiction

- BC Parks and the provincial government have no title to the land.
- BC Parks has no authority to create parks and protected areas within Tahltan traditional territory.
- The creation of parks and protected areas within Tahltan territory without consultation and the lack of Tahltan participation in management decision-making are unconstitutional and unethical.
- The Tahltan Nation does not recognize park and protected area boundaries. This land is our traditional territory. We belong to this land.
- The Tahltan people feel it is time to stand up and fight for their land as the provincial government has taken too much of it already.
- The provincial government is selling our resources through permitting recreational activities, logging, mining, hydroelectric developments, hunting, and fishing.
- The provincial government then forces Tahltans to buy permits to log, fish, trap, etc.
- The Tahltan people fear that establishment of parks and protected areas will cause us to lose our places to hunt, fish, trap and conduct other traditional activities through land alienation.
- When parks moved in, Tahltans were forced out.
- All industry, including miners, guide outfitters, etc, must consult and request permission to trespass with the Tahltan Nation prior to extracting resources from our territory.
- Over the years, the BC government has consistently reduced quotas allotted to Tahltan guide outfitters. Throughout these quota reductions, no explanations or compensation were provided. Reducing quotas to guide outfitters in order to increase LEH permits or

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- extend open seasons is unreasonable.
- Increasing hunting pressure from non-locals raises concerns with the Tahltan Nation about how these resources are being managed, protected and allocated.

Occupancy

- Obsidian flakes and obsidian left from prior Tahltan occupation of Cold Fish Lake are present, proving Tahltan occupation before the European arrival.
- Raw pieces of obsidian have been found on the 'McEwan' trail just west of 'Cullivan Creek', illustrating that the present trail bed is the exact trail bed used by Tahltans prior to contact.
- In 1948, Alec Dennis' trapping cabin burned down in Spatsizi located in the Coldfish Lake area (Blackfox Creek) and other Tahltan members had a tent camp situated where the present camp at Coldfish Lake is located. This history proves previous occupation. Shortly thereafter, Tommy Walker built a tent camp and then cabins at this same location. The government then encouraged and allowed Tommy Walker to purchase this land. This conduct was illegal, as there was no reference to the holding that was already in place, the holding of Alec Dennis and the other Tahltan members. The provincial government provided no reference, no consultation, nor compensation to the families during this transaction.
- BC Parks has removed other Tahltan cabins within the Stikine Country Protected Areas without permission, consultation or compensation.
- Willy Williams has occupied his land, located near the Stikine River Bridge on Highway 37, since 1967, prior to park establishment. Under Tahltan laws, he is the rightful landowner of that land. Through administrative means, the BC government is trying to force this Tahltan elder off of his territory. Such administrative tactics include cancelling his lease-to-own agreement, forcing him to purchase park use permits and wood use permits, etc. Willy has worked hard to build a home, raise a family and run a business from his land, an area he occupies and uses according to Tahltan law. His family belongs to that land.
- There are several other land ownership situations within parks and protected areas that BC Parks and the Tahltan Nation must deal with. The members who are being affected by park and/or protected area establishment need to be identified. Once identified, management must decide on a course of action – provide compensation or exclude these areas from the parks and/or protected areas.
- It has been alleged that BC Parks has threatened to burn down Tahltan cabins located at 4 mile. This property belongs to Jackie Williams' family. In Tahltan tradition, Jackie Williams and his family belong to this land. This family has belonged to this land for generations. Jackie was born and raised on this land. Through Tahltan laws, Jackie Williams is the rightful owner of these lands, yet the BC government ignores this fact.
- Traditional use sites, spiritual areas need to be identified and protected.

Access

- A Tahltan member wanted to access Mt. Edziza, by private charter, to take his son to see his family's traditional area. His access was restricted as he could only fly with certain airline companies. His cost to access the park was more than doubled, as he had to fly with a company that had a park use permit and was not located in Telegraph. It is unjust to compel this Tahltan member to go out of his way and pay more than twice the cost to access his traditional territory. This is an administrative erosion of Tahltan rights to access the parks. A Tahltan accessing our own lands will not be counted towards a companies PUP quota.
- The draft management plan indicates that dog sledding will not be a permitted activity. Dog sledding is a traditional activity and mode of transportation for the Tahltan people. Transportation is an aboriginal right and is not limited by technology. Tahltan aboriginal

rights are not frozen in time and do include modern modes of transportation that allow Tahltans to access to our traditional territories.

- The draft management plan indicates that the use of horses will be restricted in some areas and limited in others. The Tahltan Nation traditionally used horses to pack gear and as a mode of transportation.

Park Use Permits

- Park use permits are issued freely and are not beneficial to the Tahltan Nation. The Tahltan Nation has not had the option to attain these commercial recreation opportunities.
- Tahltans do not require permits to conduct activities on our territory.
- Tahltans will receive funds collected for park use permits. The money will be used for training Tahltan people.
- Non-Tahltans and non-locals fill Park ranger positions. Positions that may be filled by Tahltan members or locals are given little or no opportunity to further their careers.
- Filming permits are awarded throughout Tahltan territory with no benefits to the Tahltans.
- Increasing visitation and issuance of park use permits within parks and protected areas raises concerns with the Tahltan Nation about how these activities may impact our traditional activities. The PUP conditions will state that the permittee will hire Tahltans.
- Tahltans will harvest mushrooms in our territory regardless of park boundaries and PUP.

Management

- Tahltans will assume 100% management of parks and protected areas in Tahltan territory.
- The Tahltan Nation does not validate the Agreement Between BC Parks and the Tahltan Joint Councils.
- The Tahltan will, in cooperation with BC Parks, document and practice Tahltan traditional knowledge and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK).

Current Management

As part of the, "Agreement Between BC Parks and the Tahltan Joint Councils", the parties have agreed to oversee and manage all initiatives and undertakings related to the planning, operation and management of the protected areas within Tahltan traditional territories. The parties have established protected areas committee comprised of 4 representative of the Tahltan Joint Councils and 4 representatives of BC Parks. Many Tahltans did not know of this agreement and did not receive any consultation. Therefore, the majority of the Tahltan Nation does not ratify this agreement. The Tahltan nation is re-structuring and the Tahltan Joint Council no longer represent the Tahltan. The re-structuring of the Tahltan nation is based on family representation, each family will have a representative on the Tahltan nation council table.

The current agreement is not a co-management agreement; it is simply an advisory council. At present, the Tahltans feel that this agreement has not been followed. There have been no meetings scheduled nor have any discussions taken place on the topics noted in this agreement. Yet, the Tahltans have observed that important management decisions are being made. The terms of reference and action plan have not yet been drafted. The Tahltan Nation is more than an advisory committee; we have un-extinguished inherent Indigenous Sovereignty; however, we do want to co-manage the parks and protected areas within our territory with the province of British Columbia.

The Tahltan Nation is restructuring and the Tahltan Joint Councils no longer represent the Tahltan. The restructuring of the Tahltan Nation is based on family representation, each family will have a representative on the Tahltan nation council table.

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TAHLTAN PRIORITIES FOR PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT

PART VII – CO-MANAGEMENT

The Tahltan Nation recognizes that numerous other First Nation groups have already established co-management agreements or memorandums of understanding with BC Parks regarding management of parks and protected areas. These include the Champagne-Aishlik, the Nisgaa Nation, and the Lytton First Nation to name a few. At a minimum, the Tahltan Nation will establish a Co-Management Agreement with BC Parks to manage all parks and protected areas within Tahltan traditional territory. The Tahltan Nation intends to assume complete management of these parks and protected areas within Tahltan traditional territory in the future.

It has been also acknowledged that in other agreements, BC Parks provides funding on an annual basis to employ First Nation watchmen or guardians. The Tahltan Nation would also like to see this funding opportunity in our area to hire Tahltan watchmen.

The co-management agreement may include the following topics and/or guidelines:

- Agreement will operate on a government-to-government basis.
- Board would consist of 3 Tahltan members and 2 BC Parks employees.
- Management decisions will be made in a timely manner.
- Determine total allowable fish and wildlife harvest within the parks and protected areas.
- Park and protected areas management plans.
- Access – by non-Tahltans, Tahltan, guided-visitors, etc.
- Culture and heritage – interpretation, education, signage, etc.
- PUPs – applications, award, special conditions, fees, etc.
- Facility maintenance and development (location, style/standard, renovations, etc)
- Economic opportunities for Tahltan Nation within parks and protected areas.

A Co-Management Agreement between BC Parks and the Tahltan Nation would be recognised and understood to be without prejudice to future treaty negotiations. The creation of parks and subsequent management planning are without prejudice to any existing aboriginal rights and are subject to the outcome of any treaty discussions.

PART VIII - ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

"...this country of ours which we have held intact from the encroachment of other tribes, from time immemorial, at the cost of our own blood. We have done this because our lives depended on our country. To lose it meant we would lose our means of living, and therefore our lives. We are still heretofore, dependent for our living on our country, and we do not intend to give away the title to any part of same without adequate compensation" (1910 Declaration of the Tahltan Tribe – emphasis added).

Employment Opportunities

Job opportunities

- Hire locals and Tahltan students to fill seasonal positions.
- Identify and optimize commercial, economic, training and employment opportunities for the Tahltan Nation.
- Provide sponsorship of training programs or on-the-job training.

Contracts and Tenures

- Reduce the scope on contracts to match the capacity of Tahltan businesses.
- Allow time for Tahltan businesses to develop the capacity to take advantage of economic opportunities such as park use permits and contracts.

Economic Opportunities

Park Use Permit Fees

- Park use permit fees – the Tahltan Nation would like a portion of the fees collected for the permits which allow commercial operators to conduct business on Tahltan lands.
- Park use permits – if issued to non-Tahltan, company or individual should provide some benefit to Tahltan Nation (i.e. royalties, employment opportunities, etc)
- Members of the Tahltan Nation will not pay permit fees (for trapping, guiding, mushroom harvesting, etc)
- Tahltans will have a say in the allocation and conditions of PUP.

Backcountry User Fees

- With increased visitation, the Tahltan Nation would like to consider charging users a backcountry user fee.
- If such a fee is instated, the Tahltan Nation would like a portion of these fees
- If instated, members of the Tahltan Nation will not pay backcountry user fees.
- Tahltans will participate directly in the allocation of backcountry visitation conditions.

Campgrounds

- The Tahltan Nation would like a portion of any revenue returned to the Province for the maintenance and operation of the Kinaskan Lake Provincial Park campground
- The Tahltan Nation convey our interest in the eventual maintenance and operation of the Kinaskan Lake campground
- We are interested in constructing other campgrounds – one near Stikine River Bridge and another near Telegraph Creek.

Commercial Opportunities

Presently, the Tahltan Nation is pursuing the following commercial opportunities:

1. Coldfish/Spatsizi Culture and Ethno Eco-tourism Tours

- Tours would include hiking, horseback riding, wildlife photography, culture tours, biological/geological tours, nature study, angle guiding.
- Tours would be based out of Coldfish Lake camp and educational in focus.
- Camp still open to public but tourists can pay for guided day trips.
- Longer tour packages would be available.
- Winter activities would include cross-country skiing, ice fishing, snowshoeing and dog sledding.

2. Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve Culture Tours

- Guided ethno-eco hikes into various parts of the ecological reserve.
- Tours would include photography, wildlife viewing, ridge hiking, plant identification, oral history of Tahltan Nation, nature study, TEK, etc.
- Use horses to transport clients along trails, which permit horse use within the ecological

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