

9.2.3 Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation is an important component of management of Stikine Country Protected Areas. Visitors to the protected areas expect a high quality wilderness experience with few encounters with other users. Knowledge of outdoor recreation use levels within Stikine Country Protected Areas is limited at present for unguided visitors, which is partly because of self-registration at remote access points. Better user information would assist protected area managers in detecting changes in use patterns and in determining appropriate use levels.

Currently, issues of overcrowding or unacceptable impacts on natural or cultural heritage values caused by outdoor recreation use are few. However, as in most major protected area systems, use levels are expected to increase over time and, as a result, impacts to natural, cultural heritage, or outdoor recreation values may occur.

Current use levels in Stikine Country Protected Areas are relatively low, estimated at about 900 visitors per year, including all activities associated with commercial and public recreation. First Nations traditional use levels are not included in this estimate. Over the next 20 years, demand for outdoor recreation is expected to increase. At the same time, First Nations traditional activities are expected to increase as First Nations reconnect with protected areas in their traditional territories.

General management direction for outdoor recreation applies to all outdoor recreation activities, including hunting and angling. See sections 8.5.3 and 8.6 for management direction on levels of harvest for hunting and angling respectively.

9.2.3.1 General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Outdoor recreation management will focus on providing a range of outdoor recreation experiences in a wilderness setting. Experiences will range from facility-based outdoor recreation near Highway 37 to recreation experiences where quiet and solitude prevail. Recreation use must not compromise the ecological values of the protected areas, and must respect cultural heritage values. Appropriate outdoor recreation activities include camping, picnicking, hiking, mountaineering, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, horse travel, hunting, photography, nature appreciation, cultural heritage appreciation, wildlife viewing, fishing, cross-country skiing, ski touring and snowshoeing. Some of these activities will be restricted to certain areas. Limited snowmobile use will continue in support of First Nations' traditional uses, trapping and camp maintenance for guide-outfitters. In general, commercial and public opportunities (except hunting and angling which are regulated under the *Wildlife Act*) will be in balance where use levels are limited. Competitive outdoor recreation events are considered inappropriate for these protected areas. Protected area values described in this management plan will guide authorizations for other outdoor recreation activities.

The priority for increased use will be for non-motorized, non-mechanized and low impact activities that have minimal impact on natural and cultural values and on the wilderness qualities of the Stikine Country Protected Areas System. Despite relatively low use levels overall, localized high use areas will be carefully managed and use will be curtailed if necessary. Maximum levels of use or carrying capacities will be established over time in consultation with

affected user groups for specific activities and /or for specific portions of the protected areas system. In the interim, maximum numbers of commercial opportunities for various activities are established in Section 12 of the plan.

Objectives and Strategies

To provide high quality wilderness recreation opportunities to backcountry visitors.

- Monitor levels of use and visitor satisfaction to determine if use limits or other controls need to be implemented.
- Collect more detailed information on outdoor recreation use levels and trends.

To ensure that outdoor recreation activities do not have unacceptable impacts on the fish and wildlife populations, cultural heritage values, plant species and plant communities at risk, other vegetation, and physical features in the Stikine Country Protected Areas System.

- Monitor the impacts of outdoor recreation activities and facilities on natural and cultural heritage values and implement measures to reduce unacceptable impacts if necessary.
- Conduct site assessments to determine if campsite locations conflict with cultural heritage values.
- Designate campsites, if needed, to avoid impacts on sensitive sites.
- Educate protected area visitors on minimal impact/no trace camping techniques.
- Implement regulations/guidelines as appropriate.
- Maintain group sizes at current levels to ensure a quality outdoor recreation experience and curtail site damage. Group sizes for parties in the field currently do not exceed ten persons including all guides and employees, except for river rafting or canoe trips where group size can be up to 15 people, including all guides and employees. Upon application and approval by Environmental Stewardship Division, group size for individual trips may be increased if a commercial operator employs an approved fulltime interpreter delivering an approved program, for a large family group, or occasionally for an approved trainee.
- Work with First Nations and users to develop strategies to reduce or eliminate damage where outdoor recreation use impinges on First Nations' traditional uses or cultural heritage sites.

To enhance the backcountry visitors' awareness of First Nations and pioneer cultural heritage, natural history, wildlife etiquette, and bear encounter avoidance techniques.

- Employ educational programs to increase visitor awareness of natural and cultural history, and bear avoidance, where feasible.

To minimize conflicts between outdoor recreation users.

- Monitor visitor satisfaction of outdoor recreation user groups and develop strategies to minimize conflicts between recreation user groups, if required.

9.2.3.2 Backcountry Hiking and Mountaineering

The gentle relief of the plateaus in Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness and Mount Edziza provincial

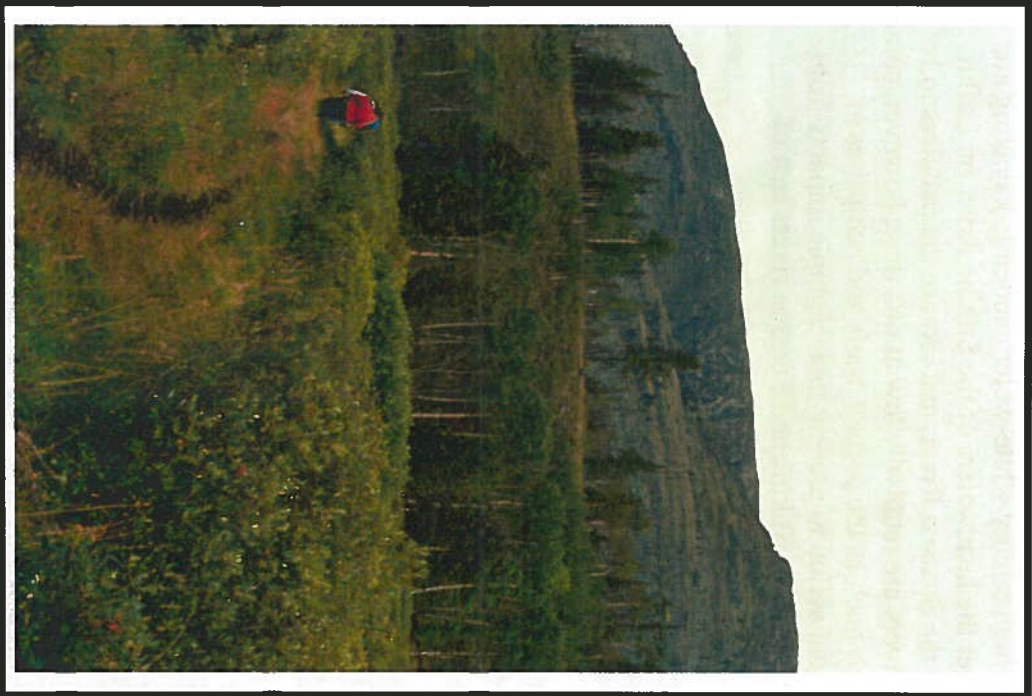


Figure 19. Hiking in Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park.

parks provides opportunities for wilderness backcountry hiking within these protected areas. More adventurous hikers and mountaineers may prefer the rugged terrain of the Eaglenest Range in Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Park and the Spectrum Range and the Mount Edziza massif in Mount Edziza Provincial Park. The difficult access to the protected areas means that most hiking parties that enter the protected areas do so for multi-day trips. The remoteness of the protected areas from population centres and local highways restricts the number of users.

Visitors commonly use several routes and trails within Stikine Country Protected Areas. These routes and trails are not well developed or marked, so good map reading and navigation skills are essential. The hiking season can be extremely short in the area because of the persistence of snow accumulations into the summer and the arrival of new snow in early autumn. Storms can bring significant snowfalls at any time of year so visitors need to be prepared for all conditions.

General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Backcountry hiking and mountaineering will continue and emphasis will be placed on providing high quality wilderness experiences to visitors without unacceptable impacts on natural and cultural heritage values.

Objectives and Strategies

To provide high quality wilderness backcountry hiking and mountaineering opportunities.

- Maintain levels of hiking and mountaineering use that are appropriate for wilderness areas through monitoring of visitor satisfaction levels and implementing use controls if necessary.

General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Canoeing, kayaking and rafting will continue as self-supported wilderness activities. Impact monitoring will continue to assess use impacts at popular sites.

Objectives and Strategies

To provide high quality private and commercial wilderness rafting and canoeing opportunities.

- Consider new commercial floatcraft outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Pending establishment of maximum use levels or carrying capacity, no more than 4 commercial trips will be permitted for each 8 day period down the Stikine and Spatsizi rivers combined, and no more than 4 commercial trips will be permitted for each 8 day period on the Kakiddi Lakes chain.
- Monitor user experiences and site impacts, and establish additional controls if needed to maintain visitor satisfaction and ecological values. Possible controls include numbers of groups, group size, trip timing, and number of trips/day.
- Provide floatcraft users with information on river etiquette for operation of floatcraft on rivers where motorboat use also occurs. Include information on river etiquette and safety while navigating through Jewel Rapids and Beggerlay Canyon.

Protected Area-Specific Management Direction

Mount Edziza Provincial Park and Proposed Mount Edziza Protected Area - Objectives and Strategies

To provide wilderness canoeing opportunities on the Kakiddi Lakes chain.

- Evaluate the potential of the Kakiddi Lakes chain as a canoe route.
- Conduct impact monitoring along the lake chain at the initial stages of visitor canoe use of this route.

Stikine River Provincial Park and Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park - Objectives and Strategies

To provide non-motorized user groups with wilderness experiences that include few interactions with motorized users.

- Encourage non-motorized users to travel at times when the chance of meeting motorboats will be minimal and provide information about motorized use to non-motorized users. (See Motorboat Use on Rivers Section 9.2.1.4).
- Maintain the non-motorized use restriction on the Spatsizi River upstream of Hyland Post from breakup to September 1. One exception is provided to allow the guide-outfitter to access Bear Camp for maintenance purposes.

9.2.3.4 Winter Recreation

Opportunities for backcountry ski touring exist in Stikine Country Protected Areas but current use is low because of the region's remoteness. Commercial operators offer trips at Hyland Post, Laslui Lake and Tatlatui Lake, and some private fly-in use of Cold Fish Lake camp occurs.

Opportunities exist to increase non-motorized winter recreation in Stikine Country Protected Areas, especially in Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park and Tatlatui Provincial Park,

where support facilities exist. Snowmobile use is currently restricted to First Nations traditional use, trapline use, camp maintenance, and outdoor recreation use on the Klastline Trail.

General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Winter outdoor recreation will be non-motorized except for on the Klastline Trail. Heli-skiing is prohibited in all protected areas in the Stikine Country Protected Areas System. Habitat mapping will be used to direct winter use to suitable areas away from important winter ranges, and impacts of winter recreation on wildlife will be monitored. Snowmobile use will continue to be restricted to First Nations traditional use, trapline use, camp maintenance, and outdoor recreation use on the Klastline Trail in the Klastline area. Limited opportunities for dog sledding will be considered in addition to traditional use of dog sledding by First Nations to exercise existing aboriginal rights.

Objectives and Strategies

To provide safe non-motorized winter recreation opportunities that do not incur unacceptable impacts on wildlife or their critical winter range.

- Map critical wildlife winter range areas and restrict access in these areas.
- Monitor the impacts of winter recreation on wildlife.
- Consider allowing a limited number of opportunities for dog sledding by permit only.
 - Initial dog sledding opportunities will be monitored for impacts to protected area values.
- Dogs used for sledding trips must be under the care of a licensed veterinarian. For each dog used for the sledding program the owner must provide, in the form of a health certificate or similar document signed by the veterinarian, evidence that the dog is:
 - free of infectious diseases of canids;
 - has a current vaccination for infectious diseases of canids; and,
 - is under a current prophylactic program for the control of internal parasites of canids.

Protected Area-Specific Management Direction

Stikine River Provincial Park, Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park and Tatlatui Provincial Park - Objectives and Strategies

To facilitate non-motorized winter outdoor recreation activities.

- Consider new commercial non-motorized winter recreation opportunities.

9.2.3.5 Horse Use and Pack Animals

First Nations, guide-outfitters and private groups have historically used horses for transportation and as pack animals within Stikine Country Protected Areas for hunting and non-consumptive outdoor recreation trips. Other species of pack animals have not been used in these protected areas and there is concern about possible disease transmission to wildlife from other species such as llamas. Concern also exists about the impact of horses on some of the trails in the protected areas. Under existing regulations, horse users are required to have authorization from the Environmental Stewardship Division before travelling in Stikine Country Protected Areas.

- Implement a maximum group size of 14 horses for commercial operators and private users (14 horses would normally accommodate a six to eight person trip given the need for pack horses). Guide-outfitters may exceed maximum group size only at the beginning and end of the season for trailing horses in and out for the season, subject to approval in their permit.

To determine the effects of horse use on natural values.

- Evaluate areas of concentrated horse use (e.g. guide-outfitter camps) and develop strategies to minimize impacts of horse use if required.

9.2.3.6 Other Outdoor Recreation Activities

Interest in other outdoor recreation activities, such as mountain biking, may arise for Stikine Country Protected Areas in the future. Because it is difficult to plan for all future outdoor recreation possibilities, the precautionary principle will be applied where potential risk to natural, cultural heritage and outdoor recreation values exist. Stikine Country Protected Areas will remain closed to ATV use for outdoor recreation purposes.

General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Mechanized and motorized ground travel of any type, except those provided for in this management plan, are generally considered to be incompatible with the wilderness values of Stikine Country Protected Areas. Commercial or competitive sporting events and aerial sports, such as but not limited to hang-gliding and para-penting, are also considered inappropriate.

Objectives and Strategies

To prohibit mechanized or motorized uses other than motorboats and floatplanes and snowmobiles where authorized.

- Consider limited opportunities for uses such as mountain bikes adjacent to Highway 37 subject to a full impact assessment.
- Continue to prohibit ATV use in Stikine Country Protected Areas.

9.2.4 Fuel handling and storage and waste management

Motorized transportation in support of outdoor recreation activities in Stikine Country Protected Areas requires the use and storage of fuel. The remote nature of the protected areas means that fuel must be transported to and stored on site where operations are based. Propane is also used to run cooking facilities, refrigerators and lights at some of the larger base camps. Currently, the fuel storage and handling guidelines apply to only one commercial operator in Stikine Country Protected Areas (Appendix 12). No guidelines are in place for propane storage and handling.

Waste management is also a concern at some of the larger base camps where garbage and human waste is more concentrated. Waste management guidelines that apply for most permitted base camps are found in Appendix 12.

9.2.4.1 General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Guidelines will be developed to manage commercial and non-commercial fuel storage and handling and waste management in the Stikine Country Protected Areas System.

Objectives and Strategies

To manage fuel handling and storage to avoid fuel spills and their impact on the environment.

- Develop fuel handling and storage guidelines for permitted commercial operators in Stikine Country Protected Areas in consultation with user groups. At a minimum, guidelines should include direction on:
 - acceptable fuel storage containers and dispensing methods;
 - location of the fuel storage site;
 - management of empty storage containers;
 - management of full or partially full storage containers at the end of the season; and,
 - a spill kit requirement.
- Require non-commercial outdoor recreation users who handle and store fuel during their recreation activities to follow fuel handling and storage guidelines.
- Require all commercial operators who handle and store fuel to have fuel spill kits.

To manage waste to avoid impacts on the environment.

- Apply waste management guidelines to all commercial base camps.
- Develop garbage disposal guidelines for non-commercial users.
- Review the waste management requirements for users of other rivers, such as the Tatshenshini River, and adapt those waste management requirements to the Stikine Country Protected Areas System if necessary.

9.3 Spiritual Values

One aspect of the vision statement is that the landscapes will “... support cultural, spiritual, recreational and economic activities...”. Spiritual values are often mentioned in management plans but rarely described or addressed with management objectives and strategies. Since defining spiritual values is difficult, within the context of wilderness conservation and recreation in Stikine Country Protected Areas, spiritual values may be considered the connection or appreciation that one feels to his/her surroundings that cannot be described in physical, intellectual or emotional terms. For First Nations, spiritual values are intimately linked with their relationship with the land. The Tahltan Nation advises that Tahltan spiritual relationship is expressed in their oral stories, which describe how people were transformed into land formations, the origin of animals and plants, or where and what Tseskeyia Cho (Crow Big) created ‘things we know today’.

Although spiritual values are difficult to define, protected area management planning still needs to at least attempt to address the spiritual connection that people feel towards the land and environment.

9.3.1 General Management Direction

Overall Direction

Spiritual values are recognized as key elements of the Stikine Country Protected Areas System and of the protected area visitor's experience.

Objectives and Strategies

To incorporate spiritual values into management in Stikine Country Protected Areas.

- Through consultation with First Nations, develop a summary of spiritual values for the Stikine Country and the British Columbia protected areas system.
- Work with First Nations to understand and define (if appropriate) their perspective about spiritual values in the Stikine Country Protected Areas System.
- Encourage management and activities that are respectful of spiritual values.
- Develop a management strategy to conserve spiritual values in the Stikine Country Protected Areas System.

10 Zoning and Managing Recreation Use in Specific Areas

10.1 Zoning

An integral part of the Stikine Country Protected Areas Management Plan is the application of the Environmental Stewardship Division’s protected areas zoning framework to all protected areas except ecological reserves. Management plan zoning assists the planning and management of provincial parks, recreation areas and *ELU Act* protected areas. The zones reflect the intended land use, degree of human use, and the level of desired management and development. The following sections provide detailed descriptions of each zone found in Appendix 13. In addition, a summary of legislation and policies for ecological reserves is also provided. The management plan zones provide the framework for which activities are allowed within management areas (see below), with special considerations for local conditions.

Four zones are applied in the Stikine Country Protected Areas System:

- Wilderness Recreation;
- Natural Environment;
- Special Feature; and,
- Intensive Recreation.

The majority of the Stikine Country Protected Areas System is zoned Wilderness Recreation (Map 5).

10.1.1 Wilderness Recreation Zone

Zone Objective: To protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment where air access may be permitted to designated sites.

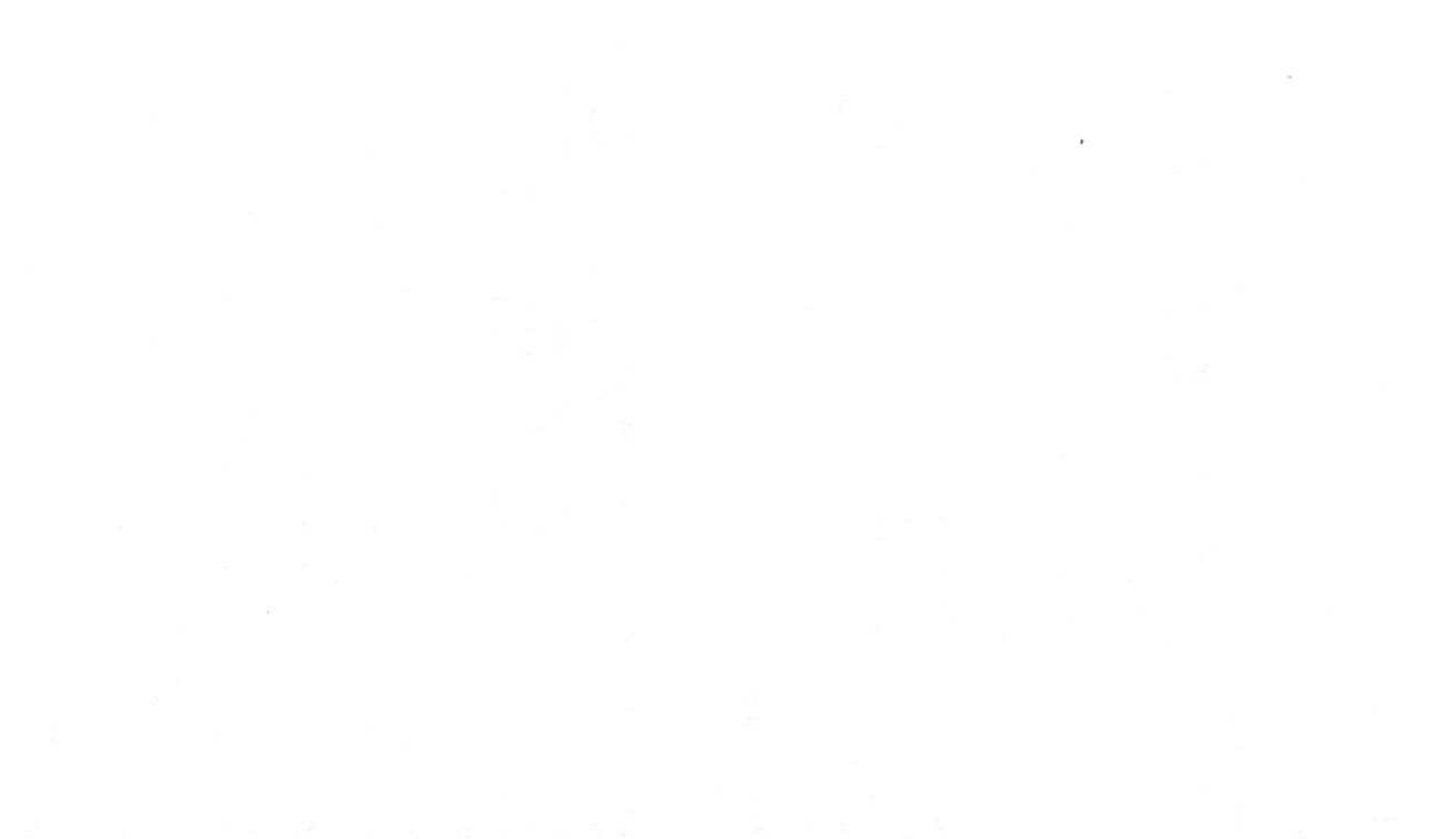
Zone Description: Covers about 1,345,100 hectares or 95.4% of the protected areas in the Stikine Country Protected Areas System. This zone includes all of Tatlatui Provincial Park and most of Pitman River Protected Area, Chukachida Protected Area, Mount Edziza Provincial Park, Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park and Stikine River Provincial Park.

Zone Management Guidelines: Oriented to protecting a pristine environment. Management actions are minimal and not evident. Managed to ensure low visitor use levels. Visitor access may be restricted to protect the natural environment and visitor experience.

Zone Facilities and Access: Facility development is minimal and is intended for user convenience and safety, and protection of the environment (e.g. trails, primitive campsites, etc.). Some basic facilities may be developed at access points (e.g. dock, primitive shelter, etc.). Access is non-mechanized access, except for low frequency air access that may be permitted to designated sites, and motorboat access in accordance with the management plan. Horse access may be permitted subject to prior approval. Foot, canoe, and raft access is permitted.



Map 5. Stikine Country Protected Areas Zoning and Management Areas.



The Natural Environment Zone applies to the water portion of most of the Stikine River, a portion of the Spatsizi River, and all of the Chukachida and Pitman rivers. This zone acknowledges the use of these rivers for motorboat use.

10.1.3 Special Feature Zone

Objective: To protect and present significant natural or cultural resources, features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage values.

Description: Applies to four areas in the Stikine Country Protected Areas System:

- Mount Edziza cinder cones and the nearby pumice fields;
- Mess Creek hot springs and tufa deposits and other hot spring sites in Mount Edziza Provincial Park;
- Grand Canyon of the Stikine River; and,
- the Metsantan Area, which includes the Metsantan and Caribou Hide village sites.

In these four areas combined, the Special Feature Zone covers approximately 12,000 hectares or 0.9% of the Stikine Country Protected Areas System.

Management Guidelines: High level of management protection with ongoing monitoring. Oriented to maintaining resources and, where appropriate, a high quality recreational and interpretative experience. The Special Feature Zone advocates active or passive management depending on size, location, and nature of the resource. Visitor access may be restricted to preserve the recreation experience and to limit impacts.

Zone Facilities and Access: Only interpretative facilities are permitted since the intent of the zone is to protect resources. Various types of access may be permitted. Special access permits may be required.

Zoning Rationale: The Special Feature Zone contains the Mount Edziza cinder cones and the nearby pumice fields because of the delicate and vulnerable character of these landforms. The cones are comprised of unstable volcanic material often covered with a lichen crust that is easily disturbed. The pumice fields issued from the cones are easily damaged by visitor foot traffic. Special management precautions may be needed to protect these cones and pumice fields to prevent further disturbance of the type that has occurred on Eve Cone.

The Special Feature Zone is appropriate for the Mess Creek hot springs and tufa deposits, and other hot spring areas to protect the calcite deposits from potential visitor damage. These deposits are provincially significant. This zoning designation is consistent with the direction given in the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP.

The Special Feature Zone applies to the Grand Canyon of the Stikine River in recognition of its status as an internationally significant landform feature, its spectacular volcanic character and spiritual significance to the Tahltan Nation. This canyon is home to mountain goats that are vulnerable to aerial disturbance from aircraft, particularly low-flying helicopter flights. Special aircraft management procedures are needed to minimize this disturbance.

The Special Feature Zone also covers the Metsantan area, which includes the Metsantan and Caribou Hide village sites in recognition of the extremely high cultural significance of these sites

to the Tahltan Nation. The village sites contain gravesites, remnant buildings and archaeological sites. Special access management protocols will be needed to protect these sites.

10.1.4 Intensive Recreation Zone

Objective: To provide for a variety of readily accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.

Description: Covers about 2900 hectares or 0.2% of the planning area and applies to the area around the Stikine River Bridge in Stikine River Provincial Park.

Management Guidelines: Oriented toward maintaining a high quality recreation experience. Guidelines call for intensive management of resource and/or control of visitor activities. Operational facilities designed for efficient operation while remaining unobtrusive to the park visitor.

Zone Facilities and Access: This zone may be intensely developed for user convenience with campgrounds, landscaped picnic/play areas, trail accommodation or interpretative buildings, boat launches, administrative buildings, service compounds, gravel pits, disposal sites, wood lots; parking lots, etc. All-weather public roads or other types of access may be permitted where use levels are high.

Zoning Rationale: The Intensive Recreation Zone applies to the area around the Stikine River Bridge in Stikine River Provincial Park. Here public outdoor recreation use concentrates largely because of the strategic location of this site as the take-out point for rafting and canoeing trips on the Stikine River. A toilet and a crude boat launch support these uses and some camping also occurs although no designated campground exists. This zoning designation also “allows opportunities for *frontcountry tourism development in the vicinity of the Stikine bridge on Highway 37*” as directed by Cassiar Iskut-Stikine LRMP.

10.1.5 Ecological Reserves

The intent of ecological reserves is to preserve representative and special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features and phenomena. The Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve, which is surrounded by Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Provincial Park, covers 44 098 hectares and represents 3.4% of the Stikine Country Protected Areas System. Ecological reserves prohibit all consumptive uses, with scientific research and education the main activities. The Environmental Stewardship Division management zoning framework does not apply to ecological reserves.

10.2 Management Areas

This management plan divides the protected areas into management areas to allow for more specific management in portions of the protected areas that have the same zoning designation (Map 5). The large size of the Wilderness Recreation Zone, in particular, necessitated the definition of management areas. Both ecosystem (e.g. wildlife) and recreation use patterns information helped define the boundaries of the management areas.

The zone designations provide the framework for the kind of activities allowed within the management areas, with special considerations for local conditions. This section provides details

