



# Morice Lake Park Management Plan

September 2010



BCParks

Cover photo – M. Parminter, BC Parks.

Morice Lake Park  
Management Plan

**Approved by:**



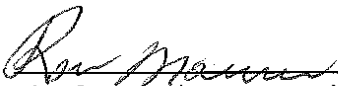
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Scott Benton  
Executive Director  
Parks and Protected Areas Division

May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010

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Date



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Chief Woos (Roy Morris)  
Cas Yex (House)  
Gitdumden (Clan)  
Wet'suwet'en Territory

August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010

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Date



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Chief Caspit (Stanley Morris)  
On behalf of  
Chief Goohlat (vacant)  
Yextsowiten (House)  
Gilseyhyu (Clan)  
Wet'suwet'en Territory

Sept 2/10

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Date



# Acknowledgements

The development of the Morice Lake Park Management Plan was a joint initiative between the Ministry of Environment, Parks and Protected Areas Division, and the Office of the Wet'suwet'en. Brandin Schultz coordinated the management planning process for the Ministry of Environment, with the assistance of Mike Neto and Rick Heinrichs, whom represented the Ministry of Environment on the management planning team. Francois Depey and David Dewit represented the interests of the Office of the Wet'suwet'en on the management planning team, and gathered and summarized cultural knowledge and information from members of the Wet'suwet'en Nation with the assistance of Karen Plasway. Deborah Cichowski of Caribou Ecological Consulting and Adrian de Groot of Drosera Ecological Consulting assisted in community consultation, and drafted and revised the management plan based on direction from the management planning team. Johann Pfalz of Eclipse GIS produced the maps in the management plan.



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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This management plan:

- establishes long-term strategic direction for Morice Lake Park;
- sets out a vision for the future state of the park;
- addresses current issues affecting that long-term vision; and,
- guides day-to-day park management.

## 1.2 Planning Area

Morice Lake Park covers 52,430 ha and is located in west-central British Columbia, approximately 70 km southwest of Houston (Figure 1).

The park is one of seven parks and protected areas resulting from the Morice Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and associated government-to-government discussions with the Office of the Wet'suwet'en. Other nearby protected areas include: Atna River Park adjacent to the west, Neníkëkh/Nanika-Kidprice Park adjacent to the southeast, Nadina Mountain Park 25 km to the northeast, Burnie-Shea Park 20 km to the northwest, Burnie River Protected Area 15 km to the northwest, Nadina Mountain Park 30 km to the west and Old Man Lake Park 80 km to the northeast. These moderate to large backcountry parks were established to increase representation of regionally significant ecosystems, to provide opportunities for unroaded wilderness recreation, and to protect cultural heritage resources<sup>1</sup>.

Other nearby protected areas include: Morice River Ecological Reserve 40 km to the northeast, Topley Landing and Red Bluff parks 110 km to the northeast, Babine Mountains Park 80 km to the northeast, Uncha Mountains Red Hills Park 90 km to the east, and Tweedsmuir Park 60 km to the southeast.

Morice Lake Park includes all of Morice Lake and most of the area surrounding the lake to the height of land (Figure 2). Recent forest harvesting was conducted in some areas surrounded by the northeastern part of the park; these sites, including roads to access the sites, are currently excluded from the park. The park has very high fish values and was proposed by the Wet'suwet'en Nation to protect water quality and fish habitat values in the lake and downstream. Morice Lake is in the headwaters of the Morice River, one of the most important salmon and steelhead rivers in the Skeena basin. The lake provides important rearing habitat for the Nanika River Sockeye Salmon stock and has resident populations of Rainbow Trout, Lake

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<sup>1</sup> Cultural heritage resources, as defined by the Wet'suwet'en, include cultural heritage features and sites such as culturally modified trees, cultural depressions, symbolic markers, artefacts, gravesites, home places, gathering places and traditional use sites (e.g., for fishing, hunting, tool manufacturing, food processing, etc.).

Trout, Burbot, Kokanee and blue-listed Dolly Varden. The upper reaches of the Morice River provides important spawning habitat for Chinook Salmon. Forests in the park reflect a transition from interior types in the east, to coastal types in the west. The park also contains good quality Grizzly Bear habitat, riparian and wetland ecosystems, rare whitebark pine ecosystems, and blue-listed Bull Trout. The high fisheries values in Morice Lake Park are integral to the Wet'suwet'en people, indicated by the many archaeological sites occurring along the lake.

The park lies in the Lhudis Bin and C'iniggit Neníkëkh house territories within the Wet'suwet'en territory (Figure 3). The Lhudis Bin house territory is in the house of Cas Yex ("Grizzly House") that belongs to the Gitdumden (Bear/Wolf) clan. The C'iniggit Neníkëkh house territory is in the house of Yextsowiten ("Thin House") that belongs to the Gilseyhyu (Big Frog) clan. (See Section 1.7 for a description of the Wet'suwet'en clan and house system). There are numerous Wet'suwet'en sites in the park, including an old village site, campsites, and trails.

Access to the park is by the Morice River Forest Service Road from Houston. Morice Lake Park lies within the Morice Timber Supply Area of the Nadina Forest District. Recreational use in the park includes camping, boating, canoeing, hiking, fishing, wildlife viewing, hunting and snowmobiling. A road accessible 18-unit campground is located on Morice Lake.

The park borders Atna River Park to the west, and Neníkëkh/Nanika-Kidprice Park to the east. The area to the south and northeast of the park is in the Morice Range/Nanika Lake No Timber Harvesting Area; the area to the north is in the Gosnell/Thautil Resource Management Zone, where the emphasis of management is to maintain high biodiversity, fish, Grizzly Bear and water quality values; and, the area to the northeast is under general management direction (Morice LRMP 2007). A number of mineral claims lie adjacent to the northeast and southwest boundaries of the park. A major drill program for molybdenum (Lucky Ship) is operating near the Nanika River between Kidprice Lake and Morice Lake. There is also a large property (New Moon) in the Morice Range area south of the Atna River and west of Morice Lake.

A detailed account of available information for Morice Lake Park can be found in the Morice Protected Areas Background Report (Ronalds and Jaward 2008). This background report is available on the BC Parks website.

### 1.3 Legislative Framework

Morice Lake Park was established as a "Class A" park in July 2008 by the *Protected Areas of British Columbia (Conservancies and Parks) Amendment Act, 2008*. The park is named and described in Schedule D of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*. Its management and development are directed by the *Park Act*. Section 8 of the *Park Act* directs that any interest in land in a park must be authorized by a park use permit. Section 9 directs that most uses of a natural resource in a park must be authorized by a park use permit.



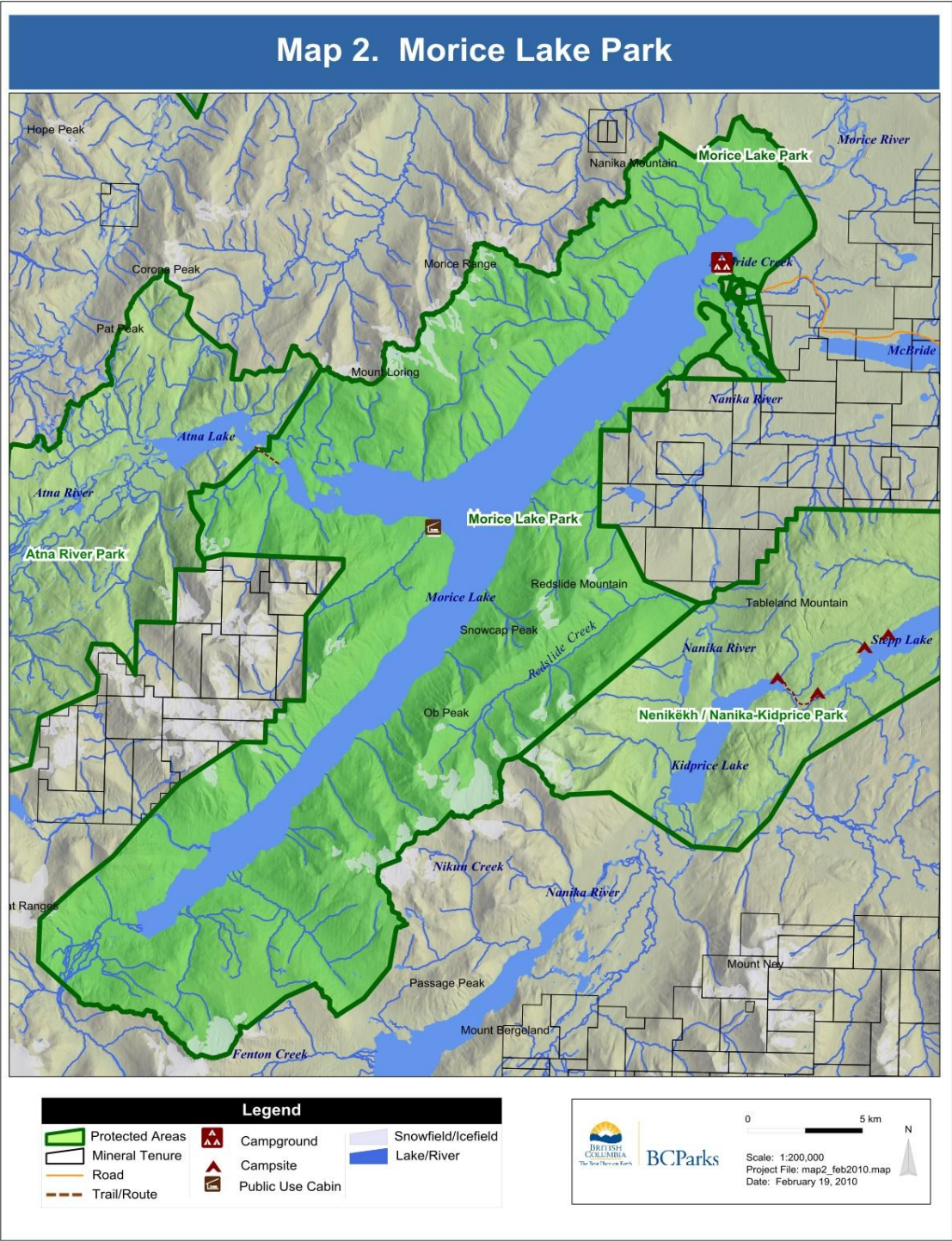


Figure 2: Map 2 – Morice Lake Park

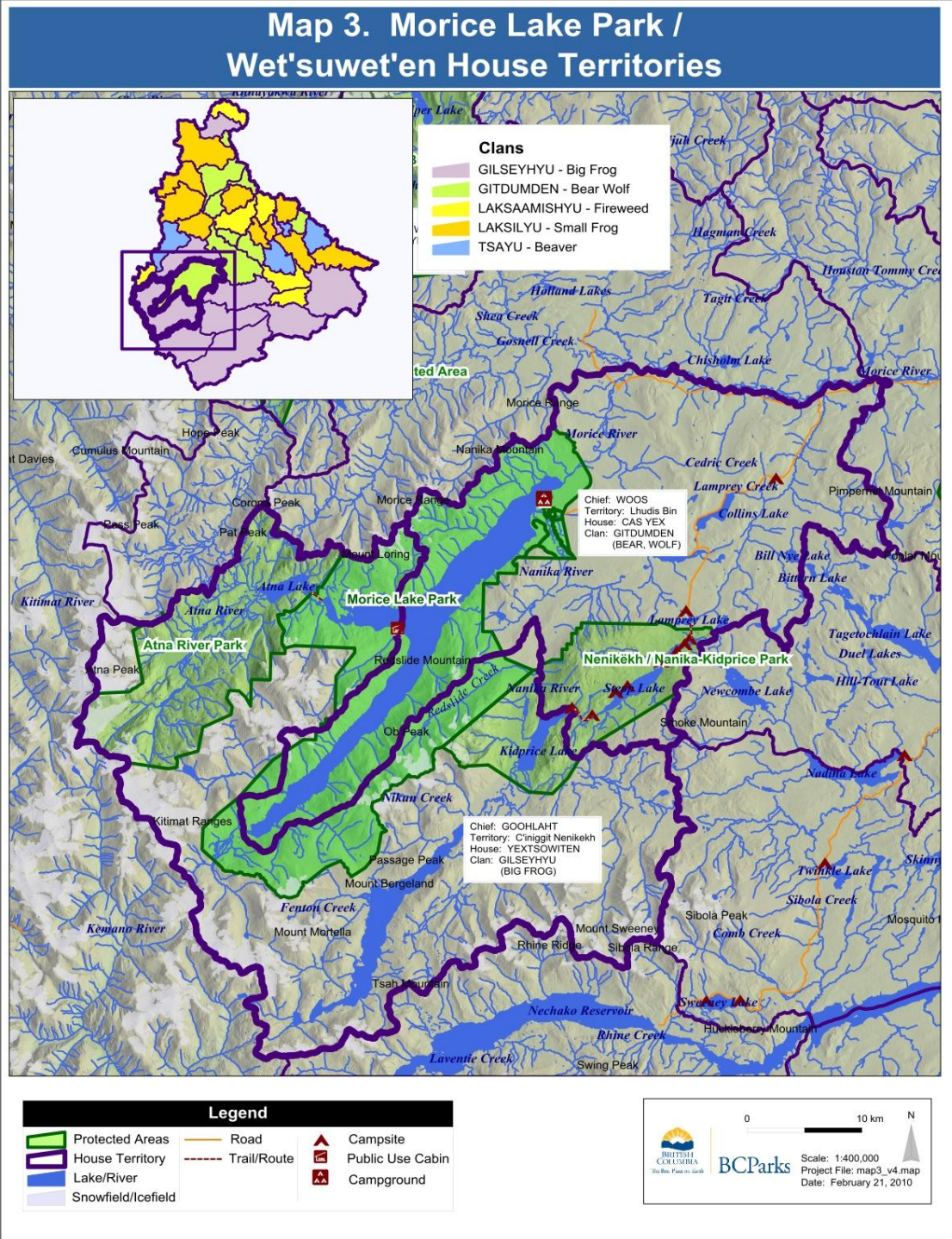


Figure 3: Map 3 – Morice Lake Park/Wet'suwet'en House Territories

## 1.4 Obligations and Agreements

Morice Lake Park was established as a result of the recommendations of the Morice LRMP process and subsequent government-to-government processes with First Nations, which concluded in 2007. Appendix 1 contains management direction from the Morice LRMP for the park.

General management direction for all new protected areas includes:

- maintaining the conservation, recreation and cultural heritage values and features for which the protected area was established;
- completing management plans with First Nations and public participation;
- continuing existing eligible tenures (i.e., trapping, guiding, commercial recreation) and hunting and angling opportunities;
- maintaining existing access routes (e.g., trails and traditional trails) within the protected area;
- maintaining existing access opportunities for First Nations, guide outfitters, trappers and other tenure holders where motorized opportunities have been restricted; and,
- identifying and protecting archaeological sites, special sites, traditional use (past and present) and heritage trails (First Nations and pioneer).

The Morice LRMP also provided the following area specific goals for Morice Lake Park:

- protect as a pristine wilderness area;
- conservation of ecosystem integrity, rare plant communities and wildlife habitat;
- conservation of First Nations' cultural spiritual and heritage values; and,
- opportunities for education and interpretation of natural and cultural features.

The specific management intent of the park is to:

- conserve the wilderness condition, unique ecological values and highly important cultural and spiritual values through education and compatible recreational and tourism uses.

Other specific management direction for Morice Lake Park from the Morice LRMP includes:

- maintaining cultural and heritage features and values; and,
- maintaining natural and ecological features.

The Morice LRMP also provides direction on motorized uses. Summer motorized use is not permitted in the northwestern portion of the park. Motorized restrictions apply to land-based activities and do not include aircraft access or motorized boat use.

The western half of Morice Lake Park lies within the Caribou Habitat Management Area and all of Morice Lake Park lies within the Morice Water Management Area, as identified in the Morice LRMP. Management direction for the Caribou Habitat Management Area focuses on identifying habitat and limiting disturbance from development activities on caribou.

Management direction in the Morice Water Management Area focuses on developing a water monitoring program and an area based water management plan to provide the maximum practicable water quality.

## **1.5 Existing Tenures and Facilities**

Morice Lake Park lies almost entirely within hunting guiding territory 609G006, with a very small portion in the northeastern part of the park in hunting guiding territory 609G003. The park lies entirely within trapline territory 609T022; there are two trapline cabins, one at the south end of Morice Lake, and one just south of the Nanika River. One angling guide uses Morice Lake, two angling guides use the Morice River, and two angling guides use the Nanika River. The Water Survey of Canada operates a hydrometric station at the outlet of Morice Lake and the Ministry of Forests and Range has a radio communications tower along the northern boundary of the park, just northwest of the outlet of Morice Lake.

## **1.6 The Planning Process**

The management plan for Morice Lake Park was developed together with management plans for six other parks and protected areas (Atna River Park, Burnie-Shea Park, Burnie River Protected Area, Nadina Mountain Park, Nenikëkh/Nanika-Kidprice Park, Old Man Lake Park) that were established as a result of the Morice LRMP process and associated government-to-government processes with First Nations. All seven parks and protected areas fall within the Wet'suwet'en territory. Draft management plans were developed co-operatively with the Office of the Wet'suwet'en and were based on: management direction from the Morice LRMP, park values (natural, cultural, and recreation), discussions with Ministry of Environment staff, discussions with stakeholders, and public input. Discussions with stakeholders and bi-monthly meetings with the Office of the Wet'suwet'en were initiated in September 2008. Public input into the management plans was solicited through open houses that were held in Smithers on October 28, 2009 and in Houston on November 2, 2009. In the fall of 2009, draft management plans were also available for review on the BC Parks website for 30 days.

## **1.7 Collaborative Working Relationship with the Office of the Wet'suwet'en**

This management plan reflects the results of a joint park management planning initiative within Wet'suwet'en territory between representatives of the Office of Wet'suwet'en and the BC Government. The parties were committed to working together in a spirit of mutual respect, understanding, and co-operation in a government-to-government manner. The recommendations for the management plan were collaboratively developed and based on achieving consensus.

## Wet'suwet'en Matrilineal and Hereditary Chief Systems

“People of the lower drainage”, the Wet'suwet'en, have been living in this part of the continent since time immemorial. The Wet'suwet'en territory covers 22,000 km<sup>2</sup> and the Wet'suwet'en people are highly dependent on many types of fish and wildlife in the area.

The Wet'suwet'en people have a matrilineal system and are socio-politically structured by the clan. There are five clans:

- Gilseyhyu (Big Frog);
- Gitdumden (Bear/Wolf);
- Laksaamishyu (Fireweed/Killer Whale);
- Laksilyu (Small Frog); and,
- Tsayu (Beaver).

Each clan has two or three houses, which are kin-based groups also known as Yikhs. There are 13 houses in total, each an autonomous collective that has jurisdiction over up to six defined geographical areas known as house territories, for a total of 38 house territories in the Wet'suwet'en territory. Every Wet'suwet'en person belongs to the clan and house group of their mother (matrilineal). A Wet'suwet'en person cannot marry another person of his or her own clan.

Each extended family has a 'dinize' (man) or 'tsakze' (woman) chief who is responsible for making important decisions and settling disputes. Hereditary chiefs are entrusted with the stewardship of a territory by virtue of the hereditary name they hold. It is the responsibility of a head chief to ensure that the house territory is managed in a responsible manner so that the territory will always produce enough game, fish, berries and medicines to support the subsistence, trade and customary needs of house members. All hereditary titles or names, which belong to specific house groups, are given out at feasts or potlatches.

The chief's name is closely linked to the house and survives the death of a chief. The name is passed on to the next house chief that earns the responsibility by demonstrating commitment to the nation, the clan, and the house and through participation in the feast system. Becoming a chief is a lifelong process. Feasts or potlatches have long been recognized as the Wet'suwet'en form of governance.

## 1.8 Community Involvement

The village of Houston, 70 km to the northeast of the park, is the closest community to Morice Lake Park. Many residents who live in Smithers, Telkwa and Burns Lake also share an interest in the management of this area. The park lies within Wet'suwet'en Territory; therefore, representatives of the Wet'suwet'en people in particular, will play a key role in the management of Morice Lake Park, due to their strong cultural ties and interest in maintaining the conservation values. The park is also located within the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District.



Ongoing engagement and outreach with local communities will be required to ensure that residents are aware of, and supportive of, Morice Lake Park. This will include continued dialogue with residents in the local area and any provincial and/or local interest groups or local governments who have expressed interest in the park.

Interests will be addressed through ongoing outreach activities associated with management operations. Collaboration, along with community outreach activities, will help to increase First Nation and non-aboriginal community awareness and engagement in management of this park.

## 2.0 Values and Roles of the Park

### 2.1 Significance in the Protected Areas System

Morice Lake Park is significant in the parks and protected areas system because it:

- protects the headwaters of the Morice River, one of the most important salmon and steelhead rivers in the Skeena basin; headwaters are sacred to the Wet'suwet'en as they were the homes of their ancestors and need to be protected for generations to come and while many perceive this area a wilderness, Wet'suwet'en have lived here for thousands of years;
- protects high value fish habitat and blue-listed Dolly Varden, Bull Trout and Cutthroat Trout;
- significantly contributes to the protection of the moist cool subzone of the Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir biogeoclimatic subzone (ESSFmk);
- significantly contributes to the protection of the Bulkley Ranges Ecosection and three poorly represented biogeoclimatic subzones/variants within that ecosection (SBSmc2, ESSFmc, ESSFmcp);
- protects rare whitebark pine ecosystems; and,
- protects part of a much larger park complex that includes Atna River and Neníkëkh/Nanika-Kidprice parks.

### 2.2 Values and Roles

#### Biological Diversity and Natural Values and Role

##### **Values**

##### *Large Relatively Intact Ecosystem Complex*

Morice Lake Park protects a remote area with ecological values largely unaltered by human disturbance. The significance of this ecological feature is compounded by the fact that Morice Lake Park is part of a larger park complex of 90,531 hectares.

Due to its size and remoteness, Morice Lake Park provides important ecosystem services (the benefits that people receive from ecosystems) that include clean water, natural flood control, carbon storage, air purification, nutrient cycling, food, biodiversity, recreation, aesthetic experience and spiritual experience. The park plays an important role in regulating water quality, water temperature, and release of spring melt waters, which is important for both fish habitat and downstream water users.

Water sampling was conducted in Morice Lake Park in 2008. Although final results are not yet available, water quality is consistent with a relatively pristine watershed.

### *Ecosystem Representation*

The east side of Morice Lake Park lies within the Bulkley Ranges Ecosection (19,584 ha) and the west side in the Kimsquit Mountains Ecosection (32,900 ha). The park contributes 28% and 10% respectively to the representation of those ecosections. The Bulkley Ranges Ecosection is poorly represented (5.3% of the ecosection in protected areas); therefore, Morice Lake Park contributes significantly to the protection of the Bulkley Ranges Ecosection in the province.

Morice Lake Park contains seven biogeoclimatic subzones/variants (Table 1) and contributes to the protection of three biogeoclimatic subzones that are not well represented in the Bulkley Ranges Ecosection. Morice Lake Park also contributes significantly to the protection of the Engelmann Spruce – Subalpine Fir moist cool (ESSFmk) and moist cool parkland (ESSFmkp) biogeoclimatic subzones. Morice Lake Park, together with Neníkèkh/Nanika-Kidprice Park and Atna River Park protect over 43% of all the ESSFmk currently protected in the provincial protected areas system.

**Table 1: Biogeoclimatic Zone Representation**

Biogeoclimatic (BEC) subzone		Area of BEC in Morice Lake Park (ha)	Total Area of BEC Protected in Province (ha)	% Total Area of BEC Protected in Province Contributed by Morice Lake Park	% BEC Protected in Province
Coastal Western Hemlock wet, subarctic, Montane variant	CWHws2	7 635	100 937	8%	16%
Sub-boreal Spruce moist, cold, Nechako variant	SBSmc2	4 564	275 562	2%	13%
Engelmann Spruce – Subalpine Fir moist, cold	ESSFmc	2 311	263 495	<1%	23%
Engelmann Spruce – Subalpine Fir moist, cold parkland	ESSFmcp	992	46 441	2%	19%
Engelmann Spruce – Subalpine Fir moist, cool	ESSFmk	12 702	73 369	17%	41%
Engelmann Spruce – Subalpine Fir moist, cool, parkland	ESSFmkp	4 163	22 902	18%	40%
Boreal Altai Fescue Alpine	BAFA	10 034	839 357	1%	27%
Fresh Water (in all subzones)		10 061	436 424	2%	16%
Total		52 462 <sup>1</sup>			

<sup>1</sup> Total area is calculated using GIS; therefore, it differs slightly from the legal area

In the Bulkley Ranges Ecosection, only 4.6% of the Sub-Boreal Spruce moist cold, Nechako variant (SBSmc2), 4.4% of the Engelmann Spruce - Subalpine Fir moist cold (ESSFmc) and 8.1% of the Engelmann Spruce Subalpine Fir moist cold parkland (ESSFmcp) are represented in protected areas. Morice Lake Park contributes 48.6%, 33.6% and 28.0% respectively to the protection of those biogeoclimatic subzones in the Bulkley Ranges Ecosection.

## *Old-Growth*

The forest cover in Morice Lake Park is a mix of subalpine fir, hemlock and pine, with alpine at higher elevations. Over 90% of the forested landscape in the park is old forest (>140 years old).

## *Species and Ecological Communities of Conservation Concern*

Predictive Ecosystem Mapping (PEM) analysis predicts the occurrence of three plant communities of conservation concern in the park:

- Amabilis fir-western redcedar/oak fern (CWHws2/04) (blue list)<sup>2</sup>;
- Lodgepole pine/kinnikinnick (CWHws2/02) (red list); and,
- Sitka spruce/salmonberry wet subarctic (CWHws2/07) (blue list).

Both whitebark pine trees and whitebark pine ecosystems (ESSFmk/02) are blue-listed and also occur in the park. In general, while whitebark pine stands on dry rocky sites are more common, whitebark pine stands on coarse parent materials are very rare. The southwestern portion of Morice Lake Park contains regionally rare coastal old-growth forest.

Mountain pine beetles are present in the park and are killing both mature lodgepole pine and whitebark pine. White pine blister rust (an alien invasive pathogen introduced to British Columbia in the 1920s) is also killing whitebark pine trees; young trees are more susceptible to white pine blister rust than older trees. Seed caching by Clark's Nutcrackers is the primary dispersal mechanism for whitebark pine. The primary food source for Clark's Nutcrackers is whitebark pine seed, which they cache for winter; therefore, the mountain pine beetle epidemic could result in declines in Clark's Nutcracker populations. Some Grizzly Bears also feed on whitebark pine seeds in Clark's Nutcracker caches.

## *Fish and Wildlife Habitat*

Morice Lake is in the headwaters of the Morice River, one of the most important salmon and steelhead rivers in the Skeena basin. Morice Lake provides important rearing habitat for Nanika River Sockeye Salmon and has resident populations of Rainbow Trout, Lake trout, blue-listed Dolly Varden, and small populations of Burbot and Kokanee. Morice Lake also contains Steelhead Trout, Mountain Whitefish, and blue-listed Bull Trout and Cutthroat Trout. The Morice River below Morice Lake is extremely high value fish habitat for multiple species and includes key spawning habitat for Chinook Salmon and a core year-round holding and feeding area for Bull Trout. Important habitat for Bull Trout is also located on Redslide Creek. The Office of the Wet'suwet'en is concerned with low annual returns of the Morice-Nanika Sockeye Salmon stocks.

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<sup>2</sup> Blue list = list of ecological communities, and indigenous species and subspecies of special concern in B.C. Red list = list of ecological communities, and indigenous species and subspecies that are extirpated, endangered or threatened in B.C. (<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/atrisk/faq3.html#1>).

Morice Lake Park provides important habitat for wildlife that live in and around the park. The park contains good quality Grizzly Bear habitat. Avalanche chutes are important during early spring and salmon spawning areas are important during the fall. The park also contains Mountain Goats, Moose and deer<sup>3</sup>. Caribou have been observed in this park.

### ***Role***

The conservation role of Morice Lake Park is to protect: water quality, fish habitat and fish populations at the headwaters of an important salmon and steelhead river; wildlife (Grizzly Bears, Mountain Goats, Moose, deer, Caribou); habitat for wildlife within the park and the adjacent land-base of the Morice River watershed; biogeoclimatic subzones poorly represented in the Bulkley Ranges Ecosection (SBSmc2, ESSFmc, ESSFmcp); ecosystems in the ESSFmk biogeoclimatic subzone; old-growth forests; and, rare whitebark pine ecosystems. It is also part of a larger park complex, which will play an important role in maintaining connectivity as species and ecosystems move and evolve with climate change.

## **Cultural Heritage Values and Roles**

### ***Values and Uses***

Morice Lake is the headwater for the Bulkley River. The Wet'suwet'en of today and of previous generations stressed the importance of water, believing "water is the source of all life, without water we would not be here today". The areas around the headwaters were the homes of Wet'suwet'en ancestors; they lived and walked these lands and protected them for the generations to come. There are numerous Wet'suwet'en sites in the park, including an old village site, campsites, and trails.

### ***Role***

The cultural heritage role for Morice Lake Park is to provide a "connection to place" for the Wet'suwet'en Nation. Cultural heritage on the land is the essence of the Wet'suwet'en identity. Connection to place can be achieved through protecting significant cultural heritage values and resources, supplying food for sustenance, providing cultural education, exercising traditional activities, and linking to the land through job opportunities and management of the park.

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<sup>3</sup> Mule Deer are the primary species of deer in this area; however, White-tailed Deer and the Black-tailed subspecies of Mule Deer may also be present.

## Recreation Values and Roles

### ***Values***

Recreational activities in Morice Lake Park include motorized and non-motorized boating, road-accessible camping, canoeing, fishing, wildlife viewing, hiking, mountaineering, hunting and snowmobiling.

Morice Lake provides road accessible camping and boating opportunities in a largely wilderness setting. There is an 18-unit campground at the northeastern end of Morice Lake. Facilities at the campground include pit toilets, picnic tables, metal fire rings, and a boat launch. Motorized boating is permitted on Morice Lake but strong winds on the lake can make boating difficult.

Atna Bay is a popular destination with waterfalls on the Atna River between Atna Lake and Morice Lake. There is also a portage trail between Morice Lake and Atna Lake. There are a few informal campsites along the lake, as well as a public use cabin near the mouth of Atna Bay.

Fishing is a popular activity on the lake. Angling restrictions are in place on the Morice River to protect spawning salmon and other species. There is no fishing near the outlet of Morice Lake to Gosnell Creek from January 1 to September 30 and no fishing for salmon at any time. The Morice River is a Class II water from September 1 to October 31 and a steelhead stamp is mandatory during that time. Bait is not permitted and angling from boats is not permitted from August 15 to December 31.

### ***Role***

The recreation role of Morice Lake Park is to provide water-based recreational opportunities such as boating, camping, canoeing, fishing and wildlife viewing, and hunting opportunities in a pristine wilderness setting.

## 3.0 Management Direction

### 3.1 Vision

Morice Lake Park conserves a pristine lake and associated drainages at the headwaters of a provincially significant salmon river. The clean waters provide important habitat for salmon and other fish species. Grizzly Bears, American Black Bears, Moose and Mountain Goats thrive in the low elevation forested and mountain habitats. The Wet'suwet'en people maintain and use the park's resources for social, ceremonial and cultural activities. Recreational users enjoy boating on Morice Lake, camping, scenic views, wildlife viewing, angling and hunting in a wilderness setting.

### 3.2 Management Issues, Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

#### Biological Diversity and Natural Environment

##### ***Management Issues/Interests:***

- The Morice River below Morice Lake is extremely high value fish habitat for several species. Current regulations are in place to control angling in this area, but the effectiveness of these regulations is unknown.
- There is interest in restoring the Sockeye Salmon run size to former levels.
- The park contains high value Grizzly Bear habitat. Recreational use could result in negative human-bear interactions.
- Mountain pine beetles and white pine blister rust are affecting whitebark pine stands. Mountain pine beetle attack affecting mature whitebark pine trees could result in declines in Clark's Nutcracker populations.
- There is no ground-based information on the location or state of species and ecological communities of conservation concern in the park. Recreational use of the park could negatively impact species and ecological communities of conservation concern.
- Development on the landscape surrounding the park will continue to alter adjacent habitat and access. Forest harvesting is occurring east of the park and could potentially affect park values, including wildlife that use areas both within and outside of the park. Mineral claims near the southwest and northeast boundaries of the park could result in new access and on-going exploration and development may affect water quality, visual quality and ecological values.
- Recent forest harvesting was conducted in some areas surrounded by the northeastern part of the park. These sites, including roads to access the sites, are currently excluded from the park. Consideration should be given to adding these lands to the park.
- Pre-existing cutblocks within the park have outstanding silvicultural obligations and road deactivation requirements.

- Global climate change will continue to alter weather patterns, hydrology, and vegetation, with resulting effects on fish, wildlife and human activity. Potential effects of climate change include: melting glaciers and a resulting long-term reduction in water supply; reorganization of ecosystems including potential new ecosystems; changes in wildlife ranges including the possibility of extirpation of wildlife from the park or park complex; and, increased likelihood of wildfire and forest insect epidemics.

Goal	Objective	Management Strategies
A contiguous park land base	Lands currently excepted due to logging cutblocks and roads within Morice Lake Park are added to the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Ministry of Forests and Range and licensees to ensure cutblocks and logging activities are complete.</li> <li>▪ Add excepted logging cutblocks and roads to the park once operations are complete.</li> </ul>
Intact water quality and other park values	Outstanding silvicultural obligations and road deactivation plans are consistent with park management objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Ministry of Forests and Range and licensees to ensure outstanding silviculture obligations and road deactivation plans are consistent with park management and Morice LRMP objectives, and implemented in a timely manner.</li> <li>▪ Assess creeks crossed by roads for fish habitat and ensure that road deactivation does not impact fish passage.</li> </ul>
	The carbon footprint from park operations is minimized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measure carbon footprint of park activities (both management and visitor activities).</li> <li>▪ Minimize greenhouse gas emissions from park management actions.</li> <li>▪ Use “green” technology for designing and developing new facilities where feasible.</li> <li>▪ Convert existing facilities using “green” technology where feasible where feasible.</li> </ul>
	Effects of climate change on park values are better understood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summarize/evaluate potential effects of climate change on park weather, hydrology, vegetation, fish and wildlife based on existing information.</li> <li>▪ Use the summary to determine appropriate actions for managing climate change impacts.</li> <li>▪ Encourage research/monitoring of the effects of climate change on park values and ecosystem functioning.</li> </ul>
	The public, industry and communities are aware of the ecological services and benefits that the park provides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Highlight the ecological services and benefits that this park provides for downstream users, communities and industry (i.e., on park signs, in brochures, in newspapers, on the BC Parks website, etc.).</li> </ul>
	Access management planning adjacent to the park considers park values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support and participate in developing an interagency access management plan (Morice LRMP objective) in areas adjacent to the park.</li> </ul>
	Forest harvesting activities and related access on neighbouring lands have minimal impacts on park values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Ministry of Forests and Range and forest licensees to minimize the effects of forest harvesting activities and related access on adjacent lands on park values.</li> </ul>
	Mineral exploration and development activities and related access on neighbouring lands have minimal impacts on water quality and other park values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources and mineral exploration and mining companies to ensure that any new access to mineral claim areas or ongoing exploration and development has minimal impact on water quality and other park values.</li> </ul>
	Water quality is protected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Morice Watershed Management Protection Area Team to establish water quality monitoring for the outlet of Morice Lake.</li> <li>▪ Track the progress of the Morice Watershed Management Protection Area Team. Support activities conducted by the team including monitoring water quality and implementing riparian management for harvesting adjacent to the park along</li> </ul>



Goal	Objective	Management Strategies
		the Nanika River.
Healthy fish populations and fish habitat	High value fish habitat is protected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess extent of mountain pine beetle attack around high value habitat areas (i.e., Morice River at and downstream of outlet; sockeye spawning areas) and mitigate effects where necessary.</li> <li>Identify potential effects of recreational activities on important habitats.</li> </ul>
	Fish populations are at or higher than current levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess effectiveness of current angling regulations on the Morice River.</li> <li>Work with other divisions of the Ministry of Environment to ensure angling regulations are appropriate and enforced, to assess angling use levels, and to assess options for restoring the Sockeye Salmon population.</li> </ul>
Healthy wildlife populations and habitat	Grizzly Bears and American Black Bears continue to occupy Morice Lake Park and interactions with humans are avoided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct bear hazard assessments for current facilities and trails.</li> <li>Reduce potential for bear-human interactions where necessary.</li> <li>Conduct bear hazard assessments for facilities and trails proposed in the future.</li> <li>Support access management initiatives to conserve Grizzly Bears in landscape units adjacent to the park.</li> </ul>
Naturally functioning species and ecological communities of conservation concern	Species and ecological communities of conservation concern are viable and are protected from human disturbance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess current facilities and trails for impact on or overlap with species and ecological communities of conservation concern.</li> <li>Re-route trails and remove facilities where possible to avoid negative impacts to species and ecological communities of conservation concern.</li> <li>Avoid species and ecological communities of conservation concern for any future proposed facilities and trails.</li> </ul>
	Whitebark pine is represented on the landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the Ministry of Forests and Range to identify the extent of mountain pine beetle attack and white pine blister rust in whitebark pine stands.</li> <li>When assessing whitebark pine ecosystems, distinguish between those that occur on dry rocky slopes and those that occur on coarse parent materials.</li> <li>Identify potential whitebark pine ecosystems on coarse parent materials, and work to minimize any disturbance to those sites.</li> <li>Support research on the function of whitebark pine ecosystems, including the status, diet and dynamics of Clark's Nutcrackers following the mountain pine beetle epidemic.</li> <li>Collect rust resistant whitebark pine seed and plant whitebark pine trees where viable and feasible.</li> <li>Monitor the status of any new strategies for maintaining whitebark pine stands and consider applying those strategies where possible.</li> <li>Consider prescribed fire for managing/conserving whitebark pine stands where appropriate.</li> </ul>
Naturally functioning and resilient ecosystems and processes	Park lands are not isolated from the larger ecosystem in which they are embedded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify important links between ecosystems within the park and areas outside the park.</li> <li>Work with adjacent land managers to maintain connectivity between the park and the broader landscape.</li> </ul>

## Cultural Heritage Management

### **Management Issues/Interests:**

- The Wet'suwet'en Nation wants to ensure that cultural heritage resources are protected.
- The Wet'suwet'en Nation is interested in having a greater connection with the park, and re-establishing known historical trails and campsites that were previously used.
- The Wet'suwet'en Nation is interested in sharing in the economic benefits of the park.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Management Strategies</b>
<b>Intact cultural heritage and historical resources</b>	<b>Cultural heritage resources and historic sites are identified and protected.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Perform historical and ethnographic research, and cultural heritage field inventories if developments are proposed.</li> <li>▪ Identify threats to cultural heritage resources and implement protective measures that may include marking areas as off-limits and distributing maps of prohibited areas.</li> <li>▪ Educate rangers and Watchmen on how to identify cultural heritage resources.</li> <li>▪ Promote Wet'suwet'en language by indicating Wet'suwet'en name places (creeks, lakes, summits) on maps and other publications.</li> </ul>
<b>First Nations people reconnect with the park</b>	<b>First Nation people use the park for traditional and sustenance activities.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain opportunities for Wet'suwet'en traditional, sustenance and harvesting activities.</li> <li>▪ Work towards re-establishing historical Wet'suwet'en trails, campsites and cabins.</li> <li>▪ Increase public and Wet'suwet'en community awareness regarding traditional, sustenance use and harvesting activities.</li> <li>▪ Deliver annual community workshops that facilitate the sharing of park management issues and gather input from traditional knowledge.</li> <li>▪ Support management approaches that help maintain wildlife populations for traditional and sustenance activities.</li> </ul>
	<b>The park name is meaningful to the Wet'suwet'en Nation.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify an appropriate addition of a Wet'suwet'en name in Wet'suwet'en language to the park name.</li> <li>▪ Recommend legislation be revised to be consistent with the new park name.</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy local tourism industry</b>	<b>The park contributes to local employment, especially cultural tourism associated with the Wet'suwet'en.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage tourism operators to establish working relationships with the Wet'suwet'en and seek opportunities for mutual benefits.</li> <li>▪ Permit and support development of appropriate cultural tourism activities.</li> <li>▪ Identify and allocate appropriate tenured opportunities to assist local economic diversification, particularly local First Nations.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative park stewardship with the Wet'suwet'en Nation</b>	<b>Foster collaborative park stewardship between British Columbia and the Wet'suwet'en Nation in a government-to-government manner.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider undertaking a formal agreement for collaborative stewardship.</li> <li>▪ Engage Wet'suwet'en in operation and management of the park.</li> <li>▪ Include Wet'suwet'en in management activities and monitoring.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication of cultural heritage</b>	<b>Visitors to the park are aware of the rich cultural heritage of the park.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include cultural heritage information in interpretive materials.</li> <li>▪ Facilitate education and sharing of Wet'suwet'en culture through the use of historical names in the park.</li> </ul>

## Recreation Values Management

### **Management Issues/Interests:**

- An 18-unit campground, formerly a Forest Service Recreation Site, currently exists on Morice Lake, but facilities are not all up to BC Parks' standards. Bear caches may be required.
- Mountain pine beetles have attacked and killed lodgepole pine trees in the campground resulting in potentially hazardous trees.
- The road into the park has a history of flooding when the water table is high.
- Morice Lake is a large lake and is subject to high winds that can develop quickly, affecting boater safety.
- There is an informal trail from the campsite to the mouth of the Nanika River.
- Access to Morice Lake Park is on an industrial road with high volumes of active logging and mining traffic.
- Currently, recreation information available for Morice Lake Park is limited.
- Proposed recreational facilities in the future could potentially negatively affect other park values.

Goal	Objective	Management Strategies
Wilderness recreation opportunities in a natural setting	The campground on Morice Lake provides a road accessible wilderness camping experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess the level and type of use at the campground.</li> <li>▪ In the short-term, maintain the current facilities at the campground on Morice Lake.</li> <li>▪ Assess the condition of the campground and upgrade to BC Parks standards' when feasible.</li> <li>▪ Remove mountain pine beetle killed trees that pose a public safety risk in the camping area.</li> <li>▪ Work with the Ministry of Forests and Range to ensure that the road to the park is suitable for public motor vehicle access.</li> <li>▪ Assess the status of the trail to the mouth of the Nanika River (e.g., conditions, bear hazards, natural and cultural values); maintain, improve or re-route the trail where necessary.</li> </ul>
	Park visitors are aware of park values and recreational opportunities in the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a sign at the road accessible campground that shows the park boundary, and that discusses park values, cultural significance, risks such as winds on the lake, bear-human interactions, and travel on active industrial roads.</li> <li>▪ Provide information on recreational opportunities and visitor safety (e.g., winds, bear-human interactions, travel on industrial roads) on the brochure and website.</li> <li>▪ Provide information on the conditions of the road to access the park is on the brochure and website.</li> <li>▪ Conduct a recreational risk assessment for travel on the lake.</li> </ul>
	Existing backcountry public facilities are maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain the portage trail from Atna Bay on Morice Lake to Atna Lake to provide access to Atna River Park.</li> <li>▪ Monitor use and condition of the public use cabin on Morice Lake and conduct maintenance activities as required.</li> </ul>
	Proposed new park facilities and changes to existing park facilities comply with Ministry standards and impact assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Follow Morice LRMP direction that allows for existing tenure holders to build a new cabin if necessary when expanding their operations with due consideration for conservation, recreation and cultural heritage resources.</li> <li>▪ Follow Ministry design guidelines and conduct impact assessments for any proposed facilities or proposed changes to existing facilities.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Zoning

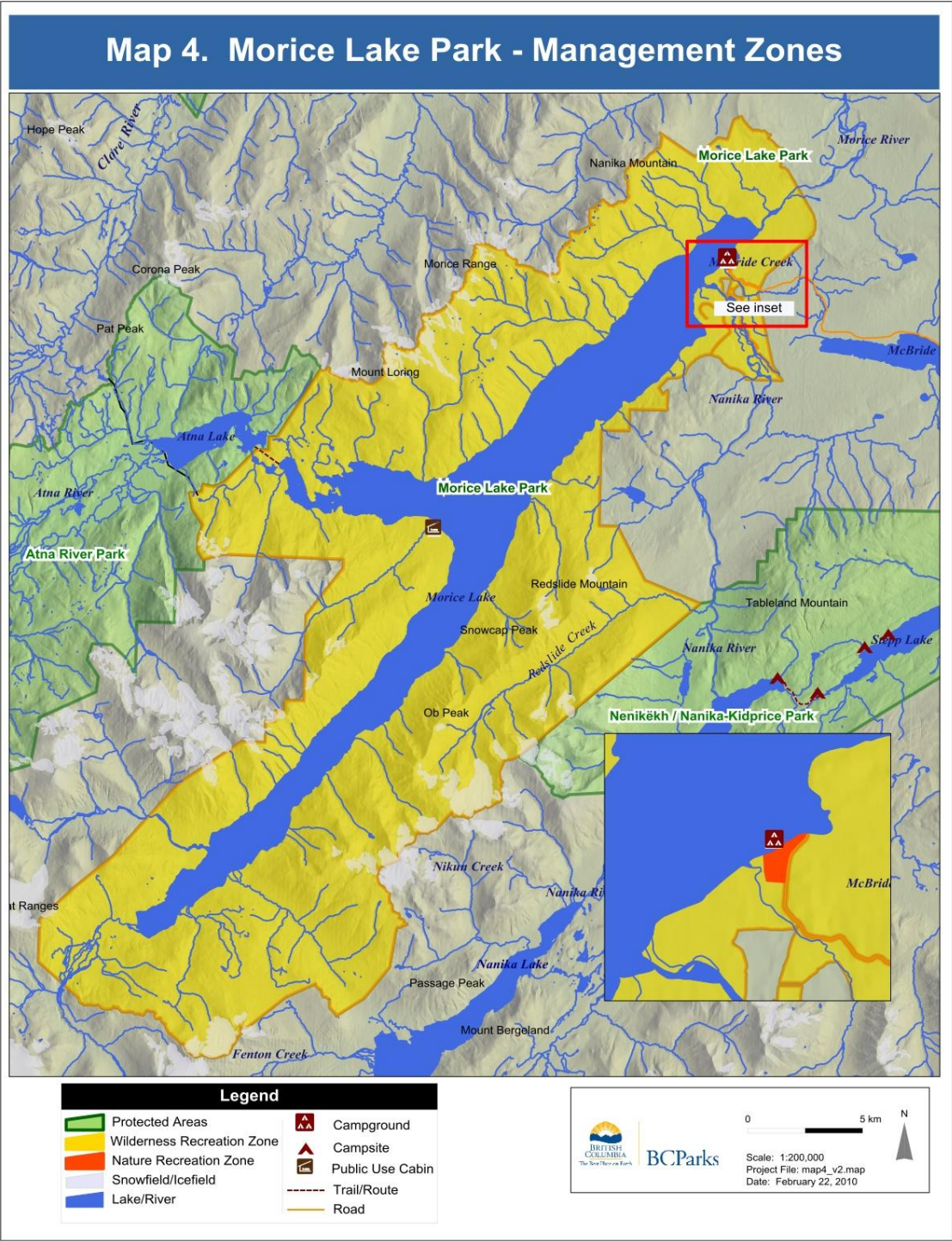
Zoning assists in the planning and management of protected areas. In general terms, zoning divides an area into logical units to apply consistent management objectives. The zones reflect the intended land use, the degree of human use desired, and the level of management and development required.

At one end of the spectrum, the Intensive Recreation Zone indicates a portion of a protected area that is appropriate for high levels of recreation and facility development. At the opposite end, the Wilderness Conservation Zone indicates an area of a protected area that receives the highest level of resource protection and minimal human presence. In addition, there are three other zones providing a range of conservation and use priorities – Nature Recreation Zone, Special Feature Zone and Wilderness Recreation Zone.

Most of Morice Lake Park is zoned Wilderness Recreation (53,423 ha) to protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities (Figure 4). In this zone (except on the road to the campground), motorized activities are restricted to motorized boating on Morice Lake, and snowmobiling.

The area around the campground is zoned Nature Recreation (7 ha) to provide road-accessible recreation activities.

Park zoning is consistent with Morice LRMP direction for the park area.



**Figure 4: Map 4 – Morice Lake Park Management Zones**

Table 2 defines the activities and facilities that are appropriate in the Wilderness Recreation and Nature Recreation zones in Morice Lake Park.

**Table 2: Appropriate Use Table**

Activity/Facility	Appropriate in Nature Recreation Zone	Appropriate in Wilderness Recreation Zone
<b>Biological Diversity and Natural Environment Management</b>		
<b>Activities</b>		
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	Y	Y
Fire Management (prescribed fire management)	Y	Y
Fire Management (prevention)	Y	Y
Fire Management (suppression)	Y	Y
Fish Stocking and Enhancement	M	M
Forest Insect/Disease Control	Y	Y
Noxious Weed Control	Y	Y
Scientific Research (manipulative activities)	Y	Y
Scientific Research (specimen collection)	Y	Y
Scientific Research (assessment)	Y	Y
<b>Cultural/Heritage Management</b>		
<b>Activities</b>		
Cultural, ceremonial and social uses by First Nations	Y	Y
Cultural Tourism	Y	Y
<b>Recreation Value Management</b>		
<b>Activities</b>		
Aircraft Access	Y	Y
Boating (power)	Y	Y
Boating (non-power)	Y	Y
Camping – backcountry	N/A	Y
Camping – auto accessible	Y	N
Camping – motorized boat accessible	Y	Y
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N	N
Commercial Recreation (no facilities)	Y	Y
Exotic Pack animal Use	N	N
Fishing	Y	Y
Heli-hiking	N	N
Hiking/Backpacking/Walking	Y	Y
Horse/Non-Exotic pack Animal Use	Y	Y
Hunting	Y	Y
Mechanized Off-road Access (non-motorized – i.e., mountain biking)	N	N
Motorized Off-road Access (not snowmobiles – i.e., 4x4, motorcycles, ATV)	N	N
Off-road Access (non-mechanical – dog sleds, horse sleds)	N	N
Rockclimbing	Y	Y
Skiing (downhill and cross-country – groomed runs or trails)	N	N
Skiing (helicopter or cat-assisted)	N	N
Skiing (self propelled, not groomed)	Y	Y
Snowmobiling	Y	Y
Wildlife/Nature Viewing	Y	Y
<b>Facilities</b>		
Administrative Buildings and Compounds	N	N
Backcountry Huts and Shelters	N/A	Y
Boat Launches	Y	N
Campgrounds and Picnic Areas (vehicle access and serviced)	Y	N
Campsites (other)	Y	Y
Interpretation and Information Buildings	N	N

Activity/Facility	Appropriate in Nature Recreation Zone	Appropriate in Wilderness Recreation Zone
Roads and Parking Lots	Y	N
Ski Hills and Snowplay Areas	N	N
Trails (hiking, portage)	Y	Y
Wharves/docks	N	N
<b>Natural Resource Use Management</b>		
<b>Activities</b>		
Angling Guiding	Y	Y
Filming	Y	Y
Guide Outfitting	Y	Y
Trapping	Y	Y
<b>Facilities</b>		
Communication Sites	N	N2
Utility Corridors (power/transmission lines and other rights-of-way)	N	N
Water Control Structures	N	N
Water Sampling Structures	N	N2

Y Appropriate

N Not appropriate

N1 Not appropriate except for expressed management purposes as identified in the Management Plan

N2 Not appropriate, but if the specific activity or facility existed at the time of establishment of the protected area, it is normally appropriate for it to continue

M May be appropriate

N/A Not applicable

## 4.0 Plan Implementation

### 4.1 Implementation Period

#### Implementation Resources

Implementing management strategies in this management plan will be subject to available funding. The Office of the Wet'suwet'en is currently engaged with the province in collaborative park management through an informal process. Where possible, partnerships will be developed with stakeholders and local communities to achieve specific strategies in this management plan.

#### High Priority Strategies

The following strategies were identified as high priorities for implementation for Morice Lake Park:

1. Remove mountain pine beetle killed trees that pose a public safety risk in the camping area.
2. Work with the Ministry of Forests and Range to ensure that the road to the park is suitable for motor vehicle access.
3. Conduct bear hazard assessments for current facilities and trails. Reduce potential for bear-human interactions where necessary.
4. Identify an appropriate addition of a Wet'suwet'en name in Wet'suwet'en language to the park name. Recommend that the legislation be revised to be consistent with the new park name, which contains a Wet'suwet'en name in Wet'suwet'en language.
5. Engage Wet'suwet'en in operation and management of the park and try to hire Wet'suwet'en rangers or Watchmen.
6. Deliver annual community workshops that facilitate the sharing of park management issues and gather input from traditional knowledge.
7. Support activities conducted by the Morice Watershed Management Protection Area Team including monitoring water quality and implementing riparian management for harvesting adjacent to the park along the Nanika River.
8. Work with other divisions of the Ministry of Environment to ensure angling regulations are appropriate and enforced, to assess angling use levels, and to assess options for restoring the Sockeye Salmon population.
9. Monitor the status of any new strategies for maintaining whitebark pine stands and consider applying those strategies where possible.



10. Assess the status of the trail to the mouth of the Nanika River (conditions, bear hazards, natural and cultural values); maintain, improve or re-route the trail where necessary.
11. Provide a sign at the road accessible campground that shows the park boundary, and that discusses park values, cultural significance, risks such as winds on the lake, bear-human interactions, and travel on active industrial roads.
12. Work with the Ministry of Forests and Range and licensees to ensure cutblocks and logging activities are complete. Add excepted logging cutblocks and roads to the park once operations are complete.
13. Work with the Ministry of Forests and Range and licensees to ensure outstanding silviculture obligations and road deactivation plans are consistent with park management and Morice LRMP objectives and implemented in a timely manner. Assess creeks crossed by roads for fish habitat and ensure that road decommissioning does not impact fish passage.
14. Work with the Ministry of Forests and Range and forest licensees to minimize the effects of forest harvesting activities and related access on adjacent lands on park values.
15. Work with the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources and mineral exploration and mining companies to ensure that any new access to mineral claim areas or ongoing exploration and development has minimal impact on park values.

### **Management Plan Review**

A management plan review is an internal process to identify if any changes are needed to the management plan. A management plan review looks for any necessary updates to the management plan that: are required to keep management direction current and relevant; correct the intent of a policy statement; address some error or omission; or, address a new proposal.

In order to ensure management plans remain contemporary and relevant, it is important that the entire management plan is reviewed on a regular basis. Management plan reviews should occur within a timeframe that reflects the complexities of the management issues in a protected area as well as the time and money needed to conduct the review. A review of the management plan content should be triggered by changing circumstances (e.g., circumstances such as a natural disaster or environmental change like the mountain pine beetle), and not a by a specific time period.

## 5.0 Performance Measurement

Performance will be measured using one or more indicators for each objective. Indicators are based on the strategies developed for each objective. The following table provides a list of indicators for each objective, the baseline status of the indicator, and the target to be achieved. Where possible, objectives and indicators will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine how well targets are being achieved.

Objective	Indicator	Baseline	Target
Lands currently excepted due to logging cutblocks and roads surrounded by Morice Lake Park are added to the park.	% of area (ha) of logging cutblocks added to the park	0%	100%
	% of length (km) of road added to the park	0%	100%
Outstanding silvicultural obligations and road deactivation plans are consistent with park management objectives.	% of area (ha) meeting silvicultural obligations	Information not compiled	100%
	% of length (km) of road deactivated	0%	100%
The carbon footprint from park operations is minimized.	Carbon footprint measurements	Not applicable	All activities measured
Effects of climate change on park values are better understood.	Summary of potential effects of climate change on weather, hydrology, vegetation, fish and wildlife	Zero	Summary completed
The public, industry and communities are aware of the ecological services and benefits that the park provides.	Number of newspaper articles per year	Zero	One
	Sign at campground	Zero	Sign in place
Access management planning adjacent to the park considers park values.	Participation in access management planning in areas adjacent to the park	Not applicable	100% participation
Forest harvesting activities and related access on neighbouring lands have minimal impacts on park values.	Communications established with forest licensees working in areas adjacent to the park	Not applicable	Communications established with all licensees
Mineral exploration and development activities and related access on neighbouring lands have minimal impacts on water quality and other park values.	Communications established with mineral exploration and development companies working in areas adjacent to the park	Not applicable	Communications established with all mineral exploration and development companies
Water quality is protected.	Water quality measurements (trace mineral levels, etc.)	Reference state	Reference state
	Updates from Morice Watershed Management Protection Area Team	Information not compiled	Updates from all meetings
	Water quality monitoring station at the mouth of Morice Lake	Zero	Water quality monitoring station in place and operational
High value fish habitat is protected.	Area (ha) of important habitat	Current areas	No net loss of habitat
Fish populations are at or higher than current levels.	Angling use levels	Current levels	No increase
Grizzly Bears and American Black Bears continue to occupy Morice Lake Park and interactions with	Number of negative interactions	Information not compiled	Zero
	Number of bears removed/destroyed due to	Information not compiled	Zero

Objective	Indicator	Baseline	Target
humans are avoided.	negative bear/human interactions		
	Number of trail/park closures	Information not compiled	Zero
Species and ecological communities of conservation concern are viable and are protected from human disturbance.	Area (ha) of plant communities of conservation concern impacted	Information not compiled	Zero
Whitebark pine is represented on the landscape.	# locations/live trees	Current level	Current level
Park lands are not isolated from the larger ecosystem in which they are embedded.	Links between ecosystems within and outside the park	Not applicable	Links are identified
	Connectivity between the park and broader landscape	Not applicable	Discussions on connectivity with adjacent land managers are ongoing
Cultural heritage resources and historic sites are identified and protected.	Number of cultural heritage or historical resources damaged or destroyed	Not applicable	Zero
First Nations people use the park for traditional and sustenance activities.	Number of community workshops on park management and traditional use	Zero	One
The park name is meaningful to the Wet'suwet'en Nation.	Park name	Current park name	Park name that includes a Wet'suwet'en name in Wet'suwet'en language
The park contributes to local employment, especially cultural tourism associated with the Wet'suwet'en.	Presence of a relationship between the Wet'suwet'en Nation and tourism operators	Not applicable	Communication established between tourism operators and the Wet'suwet'en Nation
Foster collaborative park stewardship between British Columbia and the Wet'suwet'en Nation in a government-to-government manner.	Presence of a collaborative stewardship agreement	Not applicable	Collaborative stewardship agreement is in place
	Wet'suwet'en participation	Not applicable	Wet'suwet'en participation
	Collaborative Stewardship committee acts on implementation	Not applicable	Implementation of management plan
Visitors to the park are aware of the rich cultural heritage of the park.	Presence of interpretive materials containing cultural information	Not applicable	All appropriate interpretive materials contains cultural information
	Use of Wet'suwet'en names on park signs and materials	Not applicable	All appropriate signs and materials uses Wet'suwet'en names
The campground on Morice Lake provides a road accessible wilderness camping experience.	Campground standard	Current conditions	BC Parks standards
Park visitors are aware of park values and recreational opportunities in the park.	Sign at campground	Zero	Sign in place
Existing backcountry facilities are maintained	Atna Lake portage trail condition	Open	Open/Consistent with BC Parks standards
	Public Use Cabin	Open	Open/Consistent with BC Parks standards
Proposed new park facilities and changes to existing park facilities comply with Ministry standards and impact assessments.	Proposed facilities or proposed changes to existing facilities	Not applicable	100% with impact assessments and in compliance with design guidelines

## 6.0 References

Morice LRMP. 2007. Morice Land and Resource Management Plan. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Integrated Land Management Bureau. Victoria, B.C. 259p.

Ronalds, I., and S. Jaward. 2008. Morice Protected Areas Background Report. Prepared for Ministry of Environment, Smithers, B.C. 125p.

# Appendix 1. Management Direction for Protected Areas from the Morice LRMP

This appendix contains Section 5 from the Morice LRMP. This section is not part of a higher level plan but provides management direction guidance for new protected areas in the Morice LRMP area. The first two sections (5.1, 5.2) contain general management direction for all new protected areas, while the third section (5.3) contains park-specific management direction. Park-specific management direction is provided only for Morice Lake Protected Area (5.3.6).

## 5. Protected Areas

### 5.1 Introduction

Protected areas are managed for their significant natural, recreational and cultural heritage values. The Morice LRMP area has four protected areas that existed prior to the LRMP: Red Bluff, Topley Landing and Little Andrews Bay Provincial Parks and the Morice River Ecological Reserve. The three provincial parks focus on recreational use; the Morice River Ecological Reserve is the only pre-existing protected area with a conservation focus. The following is a brief description of these protected areas:

- Red Bluff Park (148 hectares): On Babine Lake near the community of Granisle, this park is named for the iron-stained cliffs that drop into the lake. Activities include swimming, angling or taking in the salmon enhancement projects at nearby Fulton River and Pinkut Creek. The area is also a popular stopover for boaters on Babine Lake.
- Topley Landing (Babine Lake Marine) Park (12 ha): On Babine Lake 12 kilometres east of Granisle, immediately west of the community of Topley Landing. The park, adjacent to the spawning channel on the Fulton River, has a large natural beach.
- Little Andrews Bay Marine Park (45 ha): Located on the north shore of Ootsa Lake, the park provides camping and boat access to North Tweedsmuir Park. The park protects part of the Nechako Upland ecoregion and the Ootsa Lake reservoir system.
- Morice River Ecological Reserve (358 ha): This ecological reserve was established to preserve, for research purposes, forest ecosystems representative of the western edge of the sub-boreal spruce biogeoclimatic zone.

Collaborative management agreements are to be considered between First Nations and the Province for management of new parks/conservancies.

The planning and management of new protected areas is carried out in a cooperative manner, encouraging the involvement of First Nations and parties with a key interest or stake in each area. While commercial logging, mining and energy exploration and development are not allowed in protected areas, many other existing activities can continue, subject to the management plan for each protected area.

## 5.2 General Management Direction for Protected Areas

The table below contains a set of general objectives and implementation direction that applies to all protected areas that are created as a result of this plan. Specific management direction for each protected area follows in Section 5.3. Overall, this direction will guide management of these protected areas until such time as a management plan of some form is developed for each protected area. Any subsequent management plans will be consistent with the initial management direction provided by the LRMP.

Prior to the development of these management plans, the protected area boundaries must be confirmed at an operational scale. This exercise typically involves adjustment to the boundaries that were proposed at the strategic scale during the planning process. Boundary adjustments may be the result of terrain or ecological considerations, adjacency concerns or access issues. Protected area boundaries will be established in a manner that does not constrain access to known resources or utility corridors.

### Issues:

- Loss of ecological integrity, recreational opportunities and cultural heritage values.
- Reduced opportunities for compatible economic development.
- Incremental constraints to pre-existing tenure holders
- Decrease in quotas for pre-existing tenure holders.

### Goals:

- Maintenance of ecological integrity, recreational opportunities and cultural heritage values.
- Continuation of First Nations social, cultural and ceremonial activities.
- Opportunities for compatible economic development.
- Maintenance of existing tenure conditions.

Objective	Measures/Indicators	Target
1. Maintain conservation, recreation and cultural heritage values and features within protected areas.	1.1 Completion of management plans (includes a range of planning products) for protected areas.	By 2012
	Implementation Direction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize management planning with respect to the priority resource values at risk.</li> <li>• Comprehensive management plans shall define management objectives specific to each protected area as well as acceptable uses and acceptable levels of use, zoning, and other strategies to minimize conflicts and help ensure the integrity of important protected area values.</li> <li>• Develop management plans collaboratively with the benefit of public (i.e., Morice LRMP Monitoring Committee), First Nations and inter-agency participation; incorporate direction and consider advice from the approved LRMP.</li> <li>• Encourage economic opportunities for small, locally based commercial recreation.</li> </ul>	
2. Recognize the rights and interests of existing eligible tenures and landowners within newly established protected areas.	2.1 Percent of existing eligible tenures that are retained that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible uses under the <i>Park Act</i>; and</li> <li>• Compatible with the new protected area.</li> </ul>	100%
	Implementation Direction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible tenures that are eligible to continue under the <i>Park Act</i> will be grandfathered into newly established protected areas where consistent with the management direction for each protected area.</li> <li>• Trapping, guiding and commercial recreation will be considered acceptable uses.</li> <li>• Issue 10-year tenures for trapping, guiding and commercial recreation.</li> <li>• Tenures are to be eligible for transfer.</li> <li>• Guide outfitter and trapping tenures to be re-issued under existing conditions when an area changes hands.</li> <li>• No loss of species quotas for guide outfitters, except for reasons based on biological or habitat science and in consultation with the guide outfitter.</li> <li>• Retain over time, all existing and future access routes (including new trails) and methods of</li> </ul>	

Objective	Measures/Indicators	Target
	<p>transportation (pickups, snowmobiles, horses, boats, aircraft, ATV's, dog sled) across all land use designations. Management plans for protected areas will incorporate provisions for maintenance of access (e.g., trails and traditional trail locations) to trap line areas. Recognize the existing Memorandum of Understanding between the BC Trappers Association and BC Parks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing tenure holders should be able to perform maintenance on their existing trails and cabins if necessary.</li> <li>Existing tenure holders should be able to build a new cabin if necessary when expanding their operations with due consideration for the conservation, recreation and cultural heritage values of the protected area.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Maintain ecosystem representation, abundance and integrity, and protect key resource values and natural features.</b></p>	<p>3.1 Incidence of human recreation or management practices that impact negatively on the natural resource values of the protected area.</p> <p>3.2 Number of identified red and blue-listed plants, animals and communities that are lost are negatively affected by human disturbance.</p> <p>Implementation Direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management emphasis will be placed on maintaining the ecosystems, resource values and natural features for which the protected areas were established.</li> <li>Management interventions will not significantly alter natural ecological, hydrological and geomorphic processes, except for express management purposes as defined in a protected area management plan.</li> <li>Consider forest health issues in the management of parks.</li> <li>Where any alleged conflicts involving wildlife or environmental impacts occur between recreation users, (both motorized and non-motorized), First Nations, local clubs or representatives must be involved in any process leading to the resolution to the issue, and issues must be supported by documented evidence and/or verifiable science before any proposed restrictions are applied.</li> <li>Subject to Map 7 (Motorized and Non-Motorized Recreation Access – see Section 3.2.6, Recreation) snowmobiling is permitted in these protected areas with due consideration for the conservation, cultural and recreation values of the areas.</li> <li>Facilities will be designed and managed to have the lightest “footprint” possible.</li> <li>Manage natural processes/occurrences (e.g., fires, insects, and forest disease) within park boundaries relative to their impact, both on the ecosystem within the boundaries of the protected area and on the broader ecosystem values of which the protected area is a part.</li> </ul> <p>To prevent impact to red-and blue-listed species and other habitat values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain functional habitat, cover and site-specific features for fish and wildlife species.</li> <li>Encourage human use patterns that minimize impacts on the environment (e.g., trails, boardwalks, facilities).</li> </ul>	<p>Zero</p> <p>Zero</p>
<p><b>4. Protect cultural heritage values.</b></p>	<p>4.1 Incidence of damage to, or loss of, cultural heritage values</p> <p>Implementation Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and protect archaeological sites, special sites, traditional</li> </ul>	<p>Zero</p>
<p><b>5. Recognize hunting and angling as an acceptable use within protected areas.</b></p>	<p>5.1 Percent o sustainable hunting and angling opportunities in protected areas maintained.</p> <p>Implementation Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to provide hunting and angling opportunities for First Nations, local and resident hunters, anglers and guide outfitters in protected areas, subject to hunting and fishing regulations, provincial conservation priorities and public safety.</li> <li>No loss of species quotas for resident hunters, except for reasons based on biological or habitat science and in consultation with the Hunter Advisory Committee.</li> </ul>	<p>100%</p>

### 5.3.6 Morice Lake Protected Area

Morice Lake and Atna River are adjacent but separate protected areas. The management direction for both of these protected areas is identical (see objectives, measures and targets below). Wet’suwet’en culture is defined by the people’s relationship to the land and a strong protection interest. This holistic relationship recognizes the ecological and spiritual connection of the Wet’suwet’en to the land, water, plants animals and fish, in particular. The Atna River and Morice Lake protected areas form a large wilderness area and are the headwaters to the Morice River. The Morice River supports a significant fishery for the Wet’suwet’en; the value of these fish to the Nation cannot be overstate.

Final names of these protected areas are to be determined through discussions with the Office of the Wet'suwet'en.

### **Morice Lake**

Morice Lake is a cold, clear, high elevation lake with low organic composition and sensitivity to water quality impacts. The lake provides important rearing habitat for the Nanika River sockeye stock, as well as resident populations of rainbow and lake trout, Dolly Varden and small numbers of burbot and kokanee. The Nanika River, a key tributary to Morice Lake, supports an important sockeye spawning population as well as populations of coho, chinook, steelhead, bull trout and resident rainbow trout. Down stream from Morice Lake, the Morice River provides spawning habitat for much of the Morice chinook salmon population, as well as spawning for coho and steelhead and key habitat for bull trout and resident rainbow trout.

The high recreational values of the Morice Lake area offers a wilderness experience that is popular with plan area residents and draws people from throughout the region and the province. This wilderness lake, with its clear water and dramatically rising landscape of forests, cliffs and waterfalls, provides extraordinary views unique to the plan area. The high fish values associated with the lake make this area a destination for those seeking a wilderness fishing experience. Morice Lake is accessed by a forestry road from Houston – a public recreation site and campsite with a boat launch is located at the east end of the lake. Other camping locations can be found around the lake, including Atna Bay, popular for its emerald waters, sheltered islands and beaches.

#### **Issues:**

- Impacts to First Nations spiritual and cultural values.
- Impacts to unique ecosystems and mountain goat habitat.

#### **Goals:**

- Protect as a pristine wilderness area.
- Conservation of ecosystem integrity, rare plant communities and wildlife habitat.
- Conservation of First Nations' cultural, spiritual and heritage values.
- Opportunities for education and interpretation of natural and cultural features.

#### **Management Intent:**

Area to be managed to conserve the wilderness condition, unique ecological values and highly important cultural and spiritual values through education and compatible recreational and tourism uses.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Measures/ Indicators</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Implementation Direction</b>
<b>1. Maintain cultural and heritage features and values.</b>	1.1 Incidence of loss of cultural heritage features and values.	Zero	Manage as per the Office of the Wet'suwet'en values and intent.
<b>2. Maintain natural and ecological features.</b>	2.1 Incidence of impacts to ecosystem integrity.	Zero	Includes impacts to plant communities and wildlife habitat.



## Appendix 2. BC Parks Zoning Framework

	Intensive Recreation	Nature Recreation	Special Feature
<b>Objective</b>	To provide for a variety of readily-accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.	To protect scenic values and to provide for backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.	To protect and present significant natural or cultural resources, features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage values.
<b>Use Level</b>	Relatively high density and long duration types of use.	Relatively low use but higher levels associated with nodes of activity or access.	Generally low.
<b>Means of Access</b>	All-weather public roads or other types of access where use levels are high (see "Impacts" below).	Motorized (powerboats, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles) and non-motorized (foot, horse, canoe, bicycles). Aircraft and motorboat access to drop-off and pick-up points will be permitted.	Various; may require special access permit.
<b>Location</b>	Contiguous with all-weather roads and covering immediate areas, modified landscapes or other high-use areas.	Removed from all-weather roads but easily accessible on a day-use basis. Accessible by mechanized means such as boat or plane.	Determined by location of special resources; may be surrounded by or next to any of the other zones.
<b>Size of Zone</b>	Small, usually less than 2,000 hectares.	Can range from small to large.	Small, usually less than 2000 hectares.
<b>Boundary Definition</b>	Includes areas of high facility development in concentrated areas.	Boundaries should consider limits of activity and facility areas relative to ecosystem characteristics and features.	Area defined by biophysical characteristics or the nature and extent of cultural resources (adequate to afford protection).
<b>Recreation Opportunities</b>	Vehicle camping, picnicking, beach activities, power-boating, canoeing, kayaking, strolling, bicycling, historic and nature appreciation, fishing, snow play, downhill and cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, specialized activities.	Walk-in or boat-in camping, power-boating, hunting, canoeing, kayaking, backpacking, bicycling, historic and nature appreciation, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, river rafting, horseback riding, heliskiing, helihiking and specialized activities.	Sightseeing, historic and nature appreciation. May be subject to temporary closures or permanently restricted access.
<b>Facilities</b>	May be intensely developed for user convenience. Campgrounds, landscaped picnic or play areas, trail accommodation or interpretative buildings, boat launches, administrative buildings, service compounds, gravel pits, disposal sites, woodlots; parking lots, etc.	Moderately developed for user convenience. Permitted: trails, walk-in or boat-in campsites, shelters, accommodation buildings, facilities for motorized access (docks, landing strips, fuel storage, etc.)	Interpretative facilities only; resources are to be protected.
<b>Impacts on Natural Environment</b>	Includes natural resource features and phenomena in a primarily natural state, but where human presence may be readily visible as both recreation facilities and people using the zone. Includes areas of high facility development with significant impact on concentrated areas.	Area where human presence on the land is not normally visible. Facility development limited to relatively small areas. Facilities are visually compatible with natural setting.	None: resources to be maintained unimpaired.
<b>Management Guidelines</b>	Oriented to maintaining a high-quality recreation experience. Intensive management of resource and control of visitor activities. Operational facilities designed for efficient operation while unobtrusive to park visitors.	Oriented to maintaining a natural environment and high-quality recreation experience. Visitor access may be restricted to preserve the recreation experience or to limit impacts. Separation of less compatible recreational activities and transportation modes. Designation of transportation may be necessary to avoid potential conflicts (e.g., horse trails, cycle paths, hiking trails).	High level of management protection with ongoing monitoring. Oriented to maintaining resources and, where appropriate, a high-quality recreational and interpretative experience. 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.
<b>Example of Zoning</b>	Campground in Rath Trevor Beach Park; Gibson Pass ski area in E.C.	Core area in Cathedral Park; North beach in Naikoon Park.	Botanical Beach tidepools in Juan de Fuca Park; Sunshine Meadows

	Manning Park.	in Mt. Assiniboine Park.
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	<b>Wilderness Recreation</b>	<b>Wilderness Conservation</b>
<b>Objective</b>	To protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities, depending on a pristine environment where air access may be permitted to designated sites.	To protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide unassisted backcountry recreation opportunities, depending on a pristine environment where no motorized activities will be allowed.
<b>Use Level</b>	Very low use to provide solitary experiences and a wilderness atmosphere. Use may be controlled to protect the environment.	Very low use to provide solitary experiences and a wilderness atmosphere. Use may be controlled to protect the environment.
<b>Means of Access</b>	Non-mechanized & non-motorized. May permit low-frequency air access to designated sites; foot, canoe and horse access may be permitted.	Non-mechanized & non-motorized; foot, canoe and horse access may be permitted.
<b>Location</b>	Remote, not easily visited on a day-use basis.	Remote, not easily visited on a day-use basis.
<b>Size of Zone</b>	Large, greater than 5,000 hectares.	Large, greater than 5,000 hectares.
<b>Boundary Definition</b>	Defined by ecosystem limits and geographic features. Boundaries will encompass areas of visitor interest for specific activities supported by air access.	Defined by ecosystem limits and geographic features.
<b>Recreation Opportunities</b>	Backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, river rafting, nature and historic appreciation, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, specialized activities (e.g., caving, climbing).	Backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, river rafting, nature and historic appreciation, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, specialized activities (e.g., caving, climbing).
<b>Facilities</b>	Minimal facility development for user convenience and safety, and protection of the environment e.g., trails, primitive campsites. Some basic facilities at access points, e.g., dock, primitive shelter.	None.
<b>Impacts on Natural Environment</b>	Natural area generally free of evidence of human beings. Evidence of human presence is confined to specific facility sites. Facilities are visually compatible with natural setting.	Natural area generally free of evidence of human beings.
<b>Management Guidelines</b>	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.	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.
<b>Example of Zoning</b>	Quanchus Mountains Wilderness in Tweedsmuir Park; Wilderness Zone in Spatsizi Park.	Upper Murray River watershed within Monkman Park; Garibaldi Park Nature Conservancy Area.