PAARENS BEACH PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

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Approved by:

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Environmental Stewardship Division

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Assistant Deputy Minister
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Date: February 12, 2003
PAARENS BEACH PROVINCIAL PARK

Paarens Beach Provincial Park is 11 km west of Fort St. James, on the south shore of Stuart Lake. The main feature is a wide sandy beach. The park is 50 ha in size.

**Primary Role**
The primary role of the park is to provide camping and beach access for residents of Fort St. James and for visitors to the area. The park is very popular with residents of Fort St James.

The boat launch provides access to fishing and exploring Stuart Lake, one of British Columbia’s largest lakes. Mt. Pope and three new boat-access only provincial parks have also been established along Stuart Lake through the Protected Areas Strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Known Management Issues</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tr>
<td>Low Occupancy</td>
<td>Although marketing efforts have been directed at Paarens Beach for the past 15 years, the park still has one of the lowest occupancy rates in the system (34% in July/Aug. and 25% for the season).&lt;br&gt;As a result of low occupancy, one campground loop has been 'mothballed' beyond point of return and requires removal of table pads to enable the site to be restored to a natural state. (Both ecosection (3.65%) and biogeoclimatic sub-zone variant (4.24%) are under represented).</td>
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<td>Facility Maintenance</td>
<td>The existing campground is in poor condition – sites are overgrown, pad shoulders and roads need redefinition.</td>
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<td>Forest Health</td>
<td>Overmature aspen and cottonwood provide a potential safety risk. Complete hazard tree assessment. However, before trees are removed, a decision should be made as to the status of the campground. Otherwise, trees which are contributing to biodiversity objectives may unnecessarily be removed.</td>
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**Zoning**

Paarens Beach Park includes 2 zones:

- Intensive Recreation (provision of a variety of readily accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities) on the north side of Sowchea Road (approximately 20 ha or 40% of the park).
- Natural Environment (protection of scenic values and provision of backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment) on the south side of Sowchea Road (approximately 30 ha or 60% of the park).
CONSERVATION

Representation
• ecossection
  • Babine Upland (BAU). 3.65% of this ecossection is protected, Paarens Beach contributes 0.66%.
• biogeoclimatic subzone/variant
  • SBSdw3 – 4.24% protected. Paarens contributes 0.10%

Special Feature

Rare/Endangered Values

Scientific/Research Opportunities

RECREATION

Representation:
• backcountry
  • Some destination use by visitors to Fort St James National Historic Site.
• destination
  • Day use by local residents
• travel corridor
• local recreation

Special Opportunities

Education/Interpretation Opportunities

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Representation
  Unknown

Special Feature

OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Other Designations

Relationship to Other PAs
  Sowchea Bay, located 4 km down the road, had a July-August occupancy of 85% in 2001. July/August 3 year average of 78%. Mount Pope, north of Fort St James provides hiking opportunities. Four marine access sites were established on Stuart Lake and the Stuart River, through the Fort St James LRMP. Rubyrock, Sutherland, Francois, Carp Lake and two ERs are also located within 75 km.
Co-operative Management Arrangements

Partnerships

Vulnerability

The Conservation Risk Assessment Process identified 2 risk factors (the shape and the size of the park) for the park and rated them as moderately significant. Two stressors/threats were identified for the park: roadways and petrochemical spill/potential which were both rated as low significance.

Relationship to Other Strategies

Area: 50 ha

Date of establishment: May 8, 1972