

Strathcona Park – Park Values Statement

Strathcona Park was established in 1911 making it the first provincial park in British Columbia. The park protects some of the last unspoiled wilderness on Vancouver Island. Located almost in the center of Vancouver Island, Strathcona Park extends across a variety of ecosystems, is easily accessible and provides a diversity of recreational opportunities.

Conservation Values:

Protecting representative examples of three Biogeoclimatic Zones, Alpine Tundra, Coastal Western Hemlock, and Mountain Hemlock, Strathcona Park can be considered one of the most diverse parks in British Columbia. Numerous natural features are contained within the park including; the Golden Hinde - Vancouver Islands highest peak at 2,200 metres; the Moyeha River Valley - a complete and protected watershed from alpine to ocean; Della Falls, which at 440 metres has the largest vertical drop of any falls in Canada, and the Comox Glacier, which first attracted explorers to the area and has spiritual significance to First Nations. The park is equally diverse geologically, with magnificent volcanic formations; fossil filled limestone layers and outstanding examples of karst topography. The park also protects a variety of rare or endangered flora and fauna such as Marbled Murrelets; White tailed Ptarmigan, the Northern Goshawk, the Olympic Onion, and the Salish Daisy.

Recreation Values:

Primarily providing one of the best opportunities on Vancouver Island for backcountry activities, the easy access to alpine areas and its two vehicle accessible campgrounds make this park an international destination. The diverse topography, supports various levels of hiking from short day hikes through to novice, intermediate and advanced backpacking treks. The rugged mountains offer both intermediate scrambles and technical climbs for the more experienced. Strathcona Park also provides one of the only vehicle accessible subalpine areas in the province. The diverse frontcountry options include fishing, boating, camping and subalpine/alpine nature appreciation.

Cultural Values:

Strathcona Park lies within lands traditionally used by the Laichwiltach, Campbell River, Comox, Opetchesaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht and the Ahousaht First Nations. The area was valued spiritually and used for gathering herbs, hunting, cedar bark collection, and as a trade route from the west to east coasts. The Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition, led by Dr. Robert Brown, became the first group of Europeans to penetrate Vancouver Island's Wilderness in 1864. Settlers had begun settling the Comox Valley two years prior to the Brown party reaching Comox Lake. Numerous expeditions followed in search of valuable resources. In 1910 the Ellison expedition set out into the Vancouver Island Wilderness in hopes to prove the area had recreation use potential. The expedition was successful leading to the proclaiming of Strathcona Park in 1911.