



Kakwa Provincial Park Management Plan

Newsletter #6
November
2006

Feedback from the Draft Management Plan

This newsletter summarizes the public and stakeholder response to the Kakwa Provincial Park Draft Management Plan. The Draft Management Plan was released in May 2004, and was made available to the public via a summary mailout and through the B.C. Government website (see the website address at the end of this newsletter). Stakeholders and interest groups were invited to respond to and comment upon it by means of the *Kakwa Draft Management Plan Review: Comment Sheet*, which was also made available on a government website and by mailout. The closing date for comments to the Draft Management Plan was November 30, 2004.

In total, 113 written submissions were received by BC Parks. Of the 113 respondents to the comment sheet survey, 51 were from British Columbia residents or organizations, 61 were from Alberta, and one response was received from two individuals in the U.K. In most cases, the responses were from individuals who represented only themselves. In some cases, however, a single individual presented the position of an entire club or organization with an unknown number of members (usually environmental or recreational organizations and clubs). The categories with the highest percentage of agreement were the Vision Statement, Hiking / Backpacking, Horse Use and Access Management, respectively. The categories registering the highest disagreement were Snowmobiling, Park Zoning and Hunting, respectively (although in the case of hunting, the number disagreeing – 47.7% – was slightly less than the number agreeing). A summary of the comments can be found at:

www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/planning/mgmtplns/kakwa/kakwa.html

Although the survey results do not constitute an authoritative vote or set of directives regarding the content of the Kakwa Provincial Park Draft Management Plan, BC Parks values the input of all stakeholders and survey respondents. The park management planning process requires that plans are developed with public input, and all input is carefully reviewed and considered prior to the completion of the final plan. Through public input and comment, valuable information is obtained on numerous values, which increases the relevancy of the plan.

Snowmobiling in Kakwa Provincial Park

When the Draft Management Plan was sent for public review in 2004, 89% of respondents agreed with the Vision Statement for the park, which is to provide outstanding wilderness recreational opportunities within a context of ecological integrity. However, when it came to park zoning for snowmobiling, only 32% of the respondents agreed with the plan – either because the zoning was too prescriptive or not prescriptive enough. A total of 17.5% of the Park was proposed for snowmobile access in the Draft Management Plan.

Kakwa Park provides outstanding winter recreational opportunities for snowmobilers and non-motorized winter users – both in the open, undulating terrain of the valley bottoms and in the alpine areas. The park also provides important winter habitat for mountain goats and the most northerly population of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. In April, caribou migrate into the park from their wintering sites in Alberta.

Although two adjacent alpine areas in Kakwa (Mt Sir Alexander and Mt Ida) are extremely popular recreational destinations for both motorized and non-motorized users, access is hazardous. Therefore, a recommendation of the plan is that all backcountry users (motorized and non-motorized) undertake formal backcountry safety training (recognized by the Canadian Avalanche Association) prior to visiting the alpine areas of the park.

A facilitated meeting was held in Prince George on June 24, 2005 to see whether any agreement could be achieved on snowmobile zoning for the park. Invited participants included: BC Snowmobile Association, Prince George Snowmobile Club, Swan City Snowmobile Club, Prince George Backcountry Recreation Society, Alpine Club of Canada, Fraser Headwaters Alliance, a conservation biologist, the author of the Kakwa Background Document, an avalanche expert and a faculty member from UNBC who is an expert on ecological integrity/protected areas.

Although considerable follow-up work was undertaken by staff, and a Best Management Practices for Snowmobiling was developed, very little progress was achieved on the zoning. The one exception was the agreement to close the Jarvis Lakes area, to protect wetland habitat, in exchange for snowmobile access to the alpine.

After several follow-up meetings were held, the Mt Sir Alexander and Mt Ida zoning issue continued to be extremely contentious between the motorized and non-motorized recreational communities. Therefore, after careful review of all information provided, the following decisions regarding snowmobile use in Kakwa Provincial Park have been made and will be implemented in the 2006/2007 winter season.

The final winter zoning includes:

- 23.25% of the park will be zoned as Nature Recreation (snowmobiling permitted) from Dec. 1 – April 15/30 (an increase of 5.75% from the Draft Management Plan)
- 76.75% of the park will be zoned as Wilderness Recreation/Conservation where no motorized access will be available.

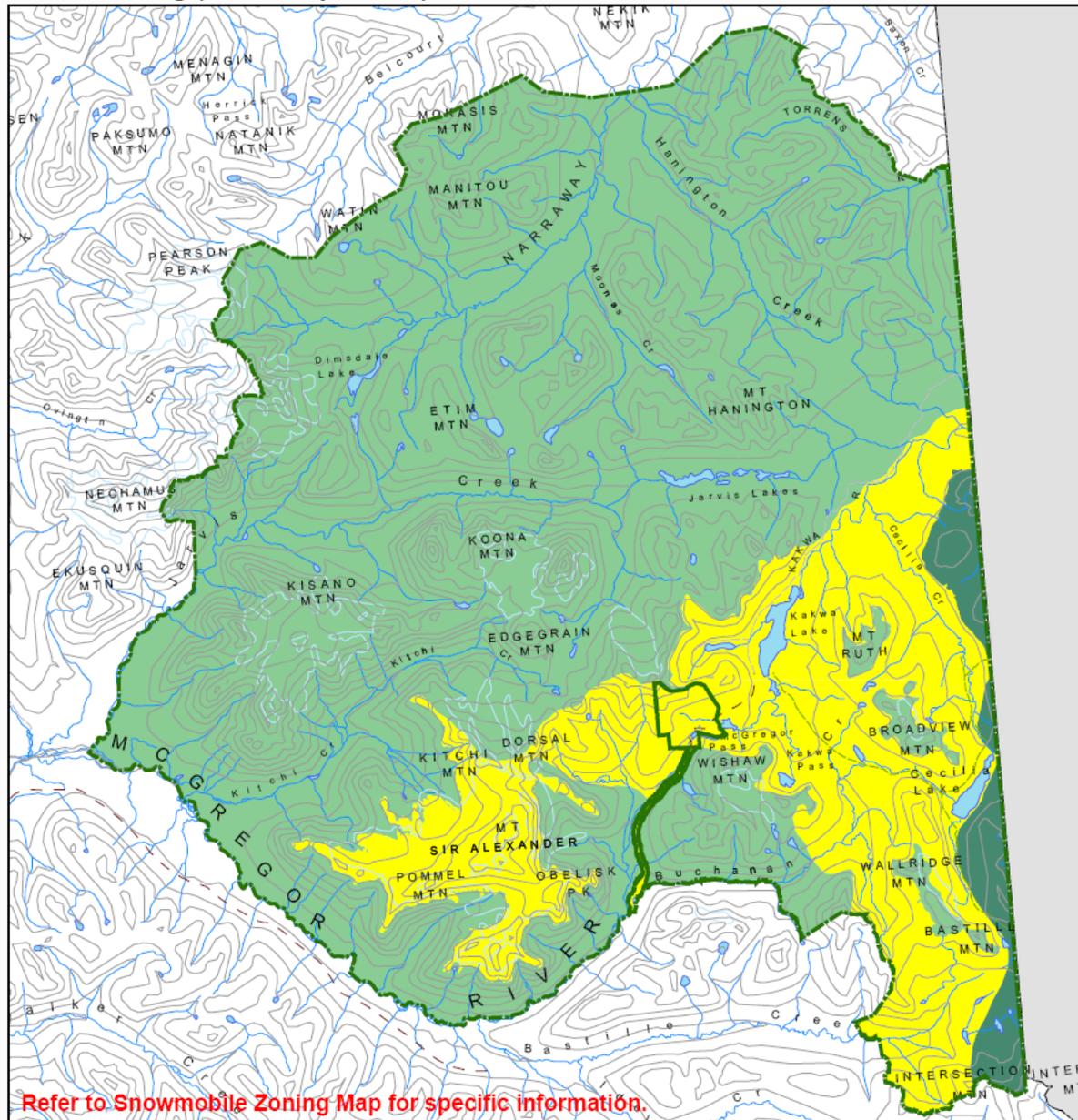
Details of the winter zoning include (see map on last page):

- Open Mt Sir Alexander to snowmobiling from Dec. 1 to April 15.
- Jarvis Lakes and Mt Ida areas will be open to non-motorized use.

The plan also calls for the investigation of a process to manage the numbers of snowmobilers using the park in order to maintain a high quality backcountry riding experience. BC Parks will work to establish a desired daily quota for use (currently at approximately 200-300 machines per day) and mechanisms to implement that quota. This may include, but is not limited to, user fees.

Winter Zoning (Dec 1 - Apr 15/30)

Kakwa Park

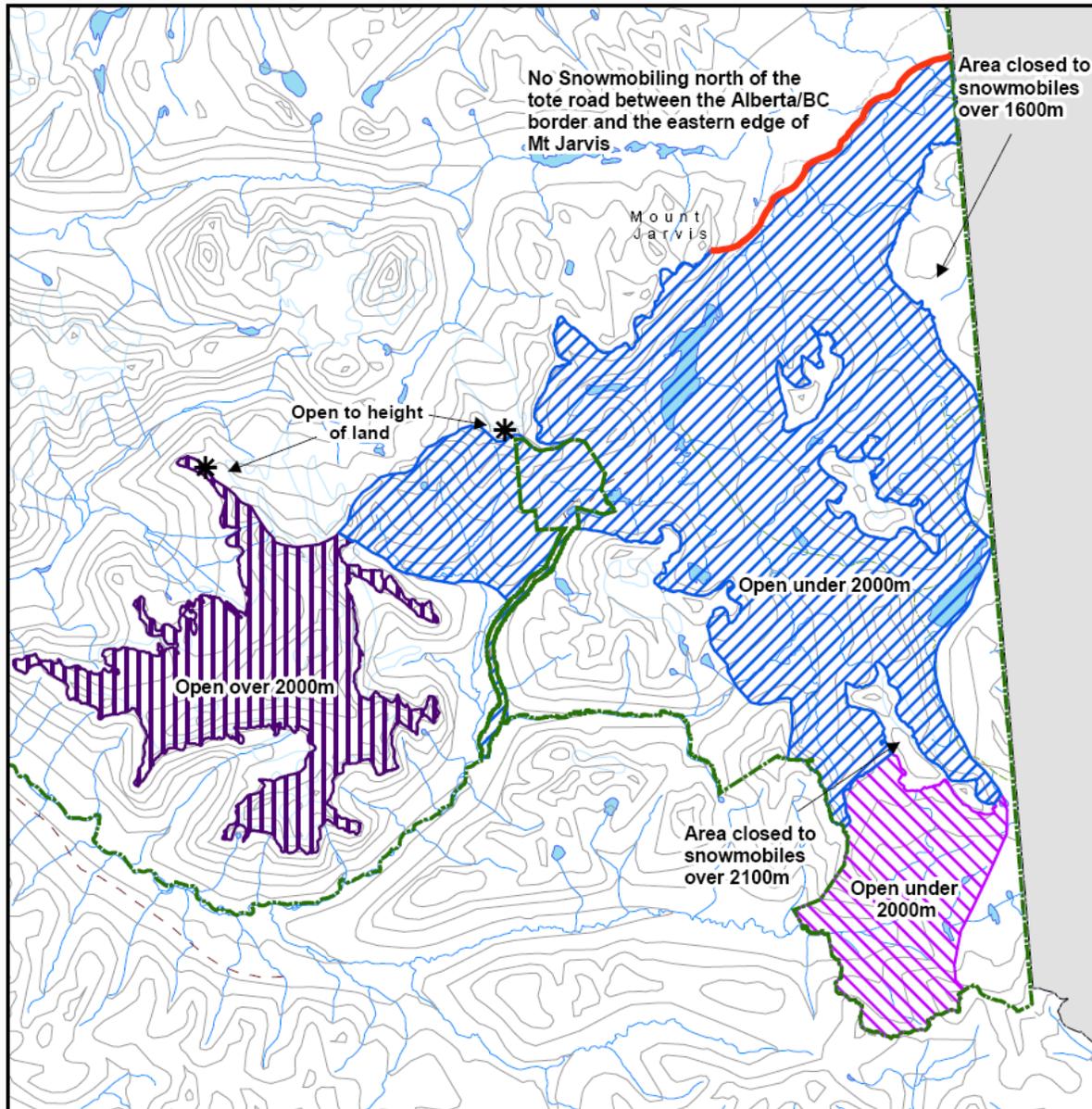


Refer to Snowmobile Zoning Map for specific information.

<p>Projection: UTM Zone 10 Datum: NAD83</p>	<p>Legend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilderness Conservation Wilderness Recreation Nature Recreation Parks and Protected Area Boundary 	<p>Produced for: Ministry of Environment</p>
<p>Produced in July 2006 for Ministry of Environment by ILMB, Corporate Information Services</p>	<p>1:275,000 0 0.9 1.8 2.7 3.6 4.5 Kilometers</p>	<p>Produced by:  Integrated Land Management Bureau Corporate Information Services Filepath: q:\wlap\parks\kakwa_zone\kakwa_winter_zone_25jul06.mxd Projection/Datum: Albers Equal Area Conic Datum NAD83 Date Created: July 25, 2006 Created by: CO</p>

Snowmobile Zoning (Dec 1 - Apr 15/30)

Kakwa Park



Legend		Statistics	
	Open under 2000m (except as noted) Dec 1 - Apr 30	Kakwa Park Area	172,414 HA
	Open under 2000m (Dec 1 - Apr 15)	Open Dec 1 - Apr 15	4,610 HA or 2.67%
	Open Over 2000m (Dec 1 - Apr 15)	Open Dec 1 - April 30	26,634 HA or 15.44%
	Protected Area Boundary	Over 2000m Dec 1 - Apr 15	7,142 HA or 4.14%
	Tote Road		

<p>1:200,000</p> <p>0 6 12 18 24 30 kilometers</p>	
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<p>Produced for:</p> <p>Ministry of Environment</p> <hr/> <p>Produced by:</p> <p> BRITISH COLUMBIA</p> <p>Integrated Land Management Bureau Corporate Information Services</p> <p>Filepath: q:\wlap\park\kakwa_zone\winter_snowmobile_zone_17jul.mxd Projection/Datum: Albers Equal Area Conic Datum NAD83 Date Created: July 17, 2006 Created by: CO</p>
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Kakwa – Willmore Interprovincial Park

As mentioned in the Draft Management Plan, work has been undertaken to establish an Interprovincial Park between B.C.'s Kakwa Provincial Park and Alberta's Kakwa Wildland and Willmore Wilderness provincial parks.

The British Columbia – Alberta Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Regarding Declaration of Interprovincial Parks was signed on April 28, 2006. Kakwa – Willmore Interprovincial Park was subsequently declared on the same date and becomes the first interprovincial park between these two provinces.

The umbrella British Columbia – Alberta MOU lists a number of areas in which the two provinces would cooperate in their park management efforts. This includes the establishment of an interprovincial park cooperating committee that would coordinate joint efforts on:

- ❖ Data and information sharing
- ❖ Resource protection
- ❖ Planning and management
- ❖ Marketing and promotion
- ❖ Visitor services
- ❖ Facilities and programs
- ❖ User fees and permits
- ❖ Compliance
- ❖ Operations (e.g., personnel exchanges, joint meetings, and joint training opportunities)

The complete MOU can be found at:

www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/planning/mgmtplns/kakwa/kakwa.html

Approved Kakwa Provincial Park Management Plan

A copy of the approved plan, which was signed on Nov. 17, 2006 can be found at:

www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/planning/mgmtplns/kakwa/kakwa.html

On behalf of BC Parks, thank you for your participation, contributions and patience in achieving a management vision for Kakwa Provincial Park.