

Skeena District

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

July, 2000

for Driftwood Canyon
Provincial Park



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Environment
Lands and Parks
BC Parks Division



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MEMORANDUM

HIGHWAY 16 PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENTS - BINDER APPROVALS PAGE

Forward

This binder contains 11 management direction statements developed by BC Parks. These protected areas are all long established, some parks existing since the early 1950s. The 11 management direction statements provide strategic direction for these protected areas. Protected areas' roles, strategies and objectives will not change extensively over time. Management actions, implemented through operations plans, however, will change as priorities, funding and support resources come available.

- Diana Lake Park
- Driftwood Canyon Park
- Ethel F. Wilson Park
- Kleanza Creek Park
- Lakelse Lake Park
- Pendleton Bay Park
- Prudhomme Lake Park
- Red Bluff Park
- Ross Lake Park
- Seeley Lake Park
- Tyhee Lake Park

Approved by:

Hugh Markides
District Manager
Skeena District

Date: 6 July 2000

Denis O'Gorman
Assistant Deputy Minister
Parks Division

Date: 2000-07-17



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Introduction

Purpose of Management Direction Statements

Management Direction Statements provide strategic management direction for all protected areas that do not have a full management plan. MDS do not negate the need for future, more detailed management plans. Management Direction Statements also describe protected area values, management issues and concerns; management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies; and, directional statements from other planning processes.

Setting and Context

Driftwood Canyon Park covers 23 ha of the Bulkley River Valley, on the east side of Driftwood Creek, 10 km northeast of Smithers (area population ~12,000 (Regional Location Map)). Driftwood Road reaches the park entrance 10-km from Highway 16. The park lies within the asserted traditional territory of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation.

The park, donated by the late Gordon Harvey in 1967, contains internationally significant Eocene fossil beds, with fossilised plants, invertebrates, fish and birds embedded in lacustrine shale. Fossils have been collected from the outcrops for decades; the agreement between the Province and the park donor stipulated that the fossil beds would remain open to the public. A small creek-side picnic area makes the park an attractive day-trip for local residents and travelers along the Highway 16 corridor. The park is promoted in travel guides. Tyhee Lake Park, 16-km southeast of Smithers on Highway 16, provides lakeshore recreation and full-facility camping opportunities. Nearby Babine Mountains Park provides wilderness recreation activities.

Protected Area Attributes

Conservation

- internationally-significant Eocene fossil beds: most northerly site in North America with fossilised Eocene insects; fossils also include ancestral salmon, trout and suckers, including "*Eosalmo driftwoodensis*"
- site of ongoing paleontological research
- remnant Bulkley Basin Ecosection (high priority, underrepresented ecosection); SBSdk (dry cool sub-boreal spruce subzone; underrepresented biogeoclimatic subzone)

Recreation and Tourism

- very popular picnic site
- history of fossil collection
- excellent potential for interpretation
- featured in travel guides

Cultural Heritage

- cultural features have not been identified to BC Parks

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- protects outstanding paleontological feature, unique in the BC Parks system
- provides unique recreation and interpretative opportunities for regional residents and travelling visitors

Figure 1 – Context Map

Figure 2 – Park Map

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

Driftwood Road borders the park about 10-km northeast of Highway 16. A foot trail to the fossil outcrops across the creek begins in the small parking lot.

Existing Tenures

- Driftwood Road runs through the southwest corner of the park

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- 4 picnic tables, 15 parking stalls
- pit toilets (one wheelchair accessible)
- bridge and 300 metre trail to fossil beds; viewing platform

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- private land lies west (Section 13, east half of southwest quarter; DL 4765), east (Section 13, southeast quarter) and north (Section 13) of the park
- a gravel quarry (Section 12, File #0280680) lies west of the south end of the park
- crown tenures lie to the south of the park (Section 12)
- Babine Mountains Provincial Park lies 2.5 km away

First Nations Interests

- part of the asserted traditional territory of the Wet'suwet'en
- Aboriginal Rights will be honoured and protected subject to conservation and safety concerns
- Wet'suwet'en staff have indicated the plan is acceptable to the Wet'suwet'en Chiefs following a review of the draft plan and a meeting with BC Parks staff.

Other Agency Interests

- BC Environment has an interest in the fish in Driftwood Creek
- Ministry of Tourism, Small Business and Culture, Archaeology Branch, has an interest in the fossil beds
- Regional District of Bulkley Nechako has an interest in regional tourism

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- recreational users: picnickers, fossil collectors
- local residents: Smithers, Telkwa communities
- Driftwood Foundation
- paleontologists
- educational and research institutions, including regional schools and colleges

Role of Driftwood Canyon Park

The primary role of Driftwood Canyon Park is to protect the internationally significant Eocene fossil beds situated along Driftwood Creek. Several research projects have investigated the park's fossilized fish, insects and plants. Incidentally, the park protects a tiny remnant (23 ha) of underrepresented dry cool sub-boreal spruce (SBSdk) ecosystems within the Bulkley Basin Ecosession.

Driftwood Canyon Park also serves an important recreational role, offering unique nature-viewing opportunities and an attractive creekside picnic site-the park is listed prominently among sites to visit in regional travel guides. Finally, Driftwood Canyon Park provides important educational and interpretive opportunities to learn about the importance of leaving fossils

Management Commitments and Issues

Direction from Previous Planning

Driftwood Canyon Park has been managed as a Class A Park since 1967. Annual Management Plans provide year-to-year direction.

Management Issues

The following management issues require attention:

Theme	Issue
Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">falling rocks may endanger visitors collecting fossils
Protecting ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">fossil collecting removes natural resources from the park and makes them unavailable for scientific researchtravel guides promote the park for fossil collecting, increasing pressure on the resourcesediment contribution to Driftwood Creek could impact downstream fish spawning habitat
Protecting recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">recreational fossil collecting is traditional in local communities
Protecting cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">identification of cultural features is required
Park operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">potential to provide disabled access to park
Unauthorised activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">fossil removal contravenes the Park Act

Management Strategy

The following table describes management strategies to deal with outstanding issues raised. In addition, figure 1 contains a list of acceptable land and resource uses for this park.

Priority Management Objectives	Priority Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure Driftwood Canyon Park is safe for public use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Public Safety Plan including warning signs, maintenance of fencing preventing access to the northern outcrop, provisions for rock scaling and tree removal when necessary, park closure under dangerous conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> protect the park's natural values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare Fossil Information Summary, documenting fossils found to date, their current location, relevant reports and contacts Continue investigating the significance of Driftwood fossils; allow fossil collection for research purposes with agreement that BC Parks receives inventory lists and copies of all reports Manage fossil removal: develop Fossil Management Plan aiming to minimise recreational fossil collection; include plans to improve interpretation at the park, to educate local residents and travelers about the importance of leaving the resource <i>in situ</i> Reduce promotion of the park as a collection site Minimise sediment contribution to Driftwood Creek during facility construction and maintenance activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> protect the park's recreational values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow recreational opportunities while ensuring public safety and protecting natural values Focus on preventing fossil collection from the undisturbed outcrops and allowing collection from the loose talus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> protect the park's cultural heritage values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and collate existing information on cultural heritage values; prepare Cultural Features Information Summary in conjunction with the Wet'suwet'en
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide appropriate day-use facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider improving disabled access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide information to the public about the park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop interpretative signs for viewing platform Develop educational messages about the value of leaving fossils <i>in situ</i> for local schools and media Discuss problems of fossil collection with tourist agencies Maintain in-park handout focussing on public safety, interpretation and the importance of the fossil beds

Consultation and Future Planning

BC Parks will discuss the Fossil Management Plan with local communities, the Smithers Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture. BC Parks will continue to build a relationship with the Wet'suwet'en.

The priority for preparing a management plan for Driftwood Canyon Park is ranked as low.

Preliminary Zoning

The picnic and parking area is zoned as Intensive Recreation. The remainder of the park is zoned as Special Feature (Figure 3 - Zoning Map).

Figure 3 - Zoning

Appendix– Activity/Use Matrix for Driftwood Canyon Park

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptable Uses
Aboriginal Rights	Y
Hunting	N
Fishing	Y
Trapping	N
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational gold panning/rock hounding	N2
Utility corridors	N
Communication sites	N
Horse use/pack animals	N
Guide outfitting (hunting)	N
Guide outfitting (fishing)	N
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Guide outfitting (river rafting)	N
Cat-assisted skiing	N
Ski hills	N
Commercial recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility-based)	M
Backcountry huts	N
Water control structures	N
Fish stocking and enhancement	N1
Road access	Y
Off-road access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road access (motorised)	N
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorised water access	N
Aircraft access	N
Fire management (suppression)	Y
Fire management (prescribed fire management)	N
Fire management (prevention)	Y
Forest insect/disease control	M
Noxious weed control	M
Exotic insect/disease control	M
Scientific research (specimen collection)	Y
Scientific research (manipulative activities)	M

Y = allowed subject to conditions identified in the management direction statement or management plan

M = may be permitted if compatible with protected area objectives

N = not allowed

N1 = allowed for expressed management purposes only

N2 = present and allowed to continue, but not normally allowed