

## **2.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **2.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

The Heritage Conservation Branch has surveyed the shoreline of Holden Lake in its entirety, and the only archaeological site is located outside the park boundaries on the east side of the Lake. This site is a petroglyph designated DgRw 40. (see APPENDIX III for information on the site)

The park land away from the lake shore has not been surveyed. However, these areas are regarded as not having a high potential as significant archaeological sites, in the opinion of the Heritage Conservation Branch.

## 2.2 HISTORICAL

One of the major industries in the area surrounding the Cedar District was coal mining. Coal mining in the Nanaimo area was started in 1852 by the Hudson's Bay Company. The last coal mine closed in the early 1950's. It was located in the South Wellington Area. (see Regional Context Map)

By 1860, the Cedar District's potential for farming had been identified. B.W. Pierce reported that with the exception of the extreme northern and southern areas, the Cedar District was available for cultivation with little labour. He reported that the soil was very fertile and of good depth, and springs of good water were plentiful. The Cedar District was settled as a farming community and has remained so since. (Johnson 1958,1966)

The Pacific Coal Company Railway travelled along the west shore of Holden Lake (i.e. within Hemer Park), transporting coal from Fiddicks and the Morden Mines to Boat Harbour on Stewart Channel. Most of this right-of-way is crown-owned, and has been identified as having potential as a recreation corridor linking historic points -of-interest in the Nanaimo area (i.e. "Heritage Way", see Gillings n.d.)

### **3.0 VISUAL RESOURCE**

Hemer Park was divided into three setting units as follows, based on existing land use, terrain, and vegetative cover:

- ? The Upland Forest Unit (undulating to rolling topography; mature forest)
- ? The Holden Lakeshore Unit (lake and lakeshore vegetation)
- ? The Hemer Farm Unit (level topography; farm land use)

Significant scenic quality is often associated with lush vegetation, sloping terrain, and water bodies. Overall, Hemer Park has a relatively high level of scenic quality. The lush mature forest over its terrain contribute to this assessment. Holden Lakeshore would likely receive the highest scenic rating because of its interest potential for visitors and its diversity. Areas at the boundaries between setting units such as the Holden Lakeshore trail or the trail along the Hemer Farm fence (i.e. edges or ecotones), have greater diversity and complexity, and thus have a greater level of scenic quality.

IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE

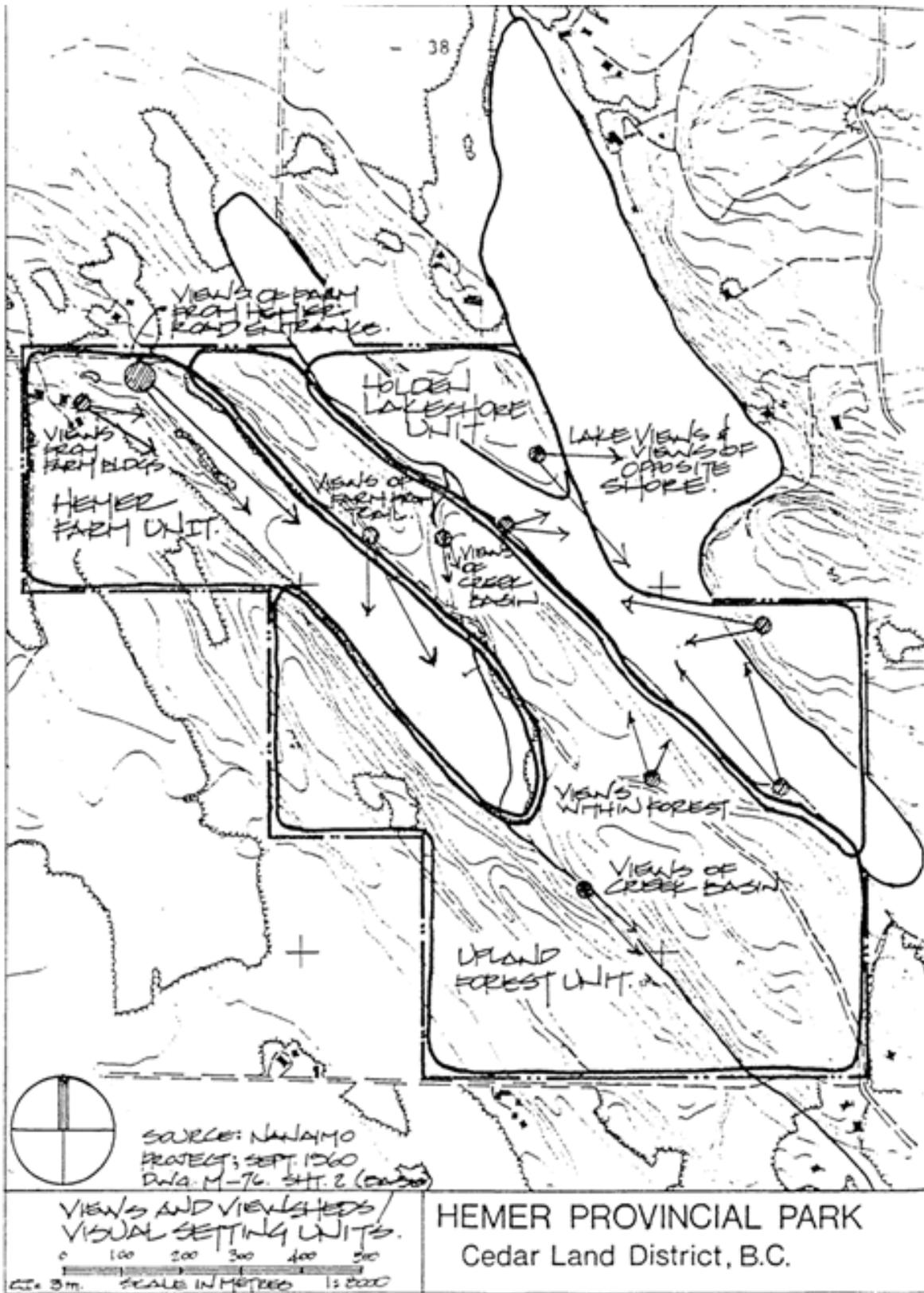
Views and viewsheds were identified. (see Views and Viewsheds/Visual Setting Units Map) The views of Holden Lake from the shoreline trail are considered to be of the highest scenic quality within the park. Another important view is that from the Hemer Farm house, looking east and south over the cultivated fields of Hemer Farm. The Hemer residence is located on the ledge overlooking the farmlands in the basin below. The forest covers the hills sloping down on either side of the basin. From this vantage point, the relationship between the upland forest and the farm components of the park is well-displayed.

Landscapes are capable of absorbing changes (i.e. disturbance) to varying degrees. Visual absorption capability is a measure of the ability of a landscape to absorb alteration of its physical character without damage to its scenic quality. The Barratt (1980) assessment of the visual absorption capability of the Cheakamus River - Whistler corridor, identified three factors important in determining visual absorption capability as follows: slope class, vegetative pattern diversity, and soil productivity.

Slope is the most significant visual absorption capability factor. Steep slopes, that is, slopes greater than 60% have low absorption capability, where as gentle slopes, that is, 0-30% have high VAC. An unbroken canopy cover has low VAC. Broken or open landscapes with color and species variety have inherently high VAC.

Soil productivity or site class, reflects vegetation growth and thus regeneration potential. Land of high growing capacity revegetates early and through quick green up, it has high visual absorption capability. Conversely, poor soil conditions reflect slow green up and low VAC.

While the slopes at Hemer Park are gentle, the dense cover in the upland forest unit and the generally low soil productivity (i.e. CLASS 5-6 Land Capability for Agriculture) contribute to a low level of visual absorption capability. Thus, the upland forest zone could withstand very little clearing before having a detrimental effect on scenic quality.



## 4.0 ANALYSIS

### OPPORTUNITIES

#### NATURAL RESOURCES:

- ? Hemer Park has a high climatic suitability for outdoor recreation during the summer season from June to August, and an average to above average suitability during the transition season of April, May, September, and October.
- ? Most of the geological formations in Hemer Park offer solid bearing for structures. The parent material does not impede the movement of water or roots.
- ? Most of the soils in Hemer Park are well-drained, a positive feature in building facilities like trails.
- ? The majority of slopes in Hemer Park fall with the 0-15% slope classes, and are buildable.
- ? The Holden Lake bottom drops off sharply from the waters edge, and lends itself to activities like shoreline fishing and boat launching/landing.
- ? While Hemer Park contains a variety of plant associations reflecting various soil and moisture regimes, and management practices, the majority of the park is vegetated with coniferous forest representative of the Douglas Fir - Salal - Oregon Grape Association.
- ? The wildlife populations supported by Hemer Park and adjacent (i.e. contiguous) forested areas (i.e. about 330 hectares) are likely restricted to bird and small mammal species.
- ? Several species of fish were found in Holden Lake during a B.C. Ministry of Environment Survey in 1959.

#### VISUAL RESOURCES:

- ? Hemer Park has a relatively high level of scenic quality. Areas such as the Holden Lake shoreline trail or the trail along the Hemer Farm fence have greater diversity and complexity of landscape elements (i.e. vegetation, land/water) and thus have higher levels of scenic quality.

## CONSTRAINTS

### NATURAL RESOURCES:

- ? Hemer Park has an average to below average climatic suitability for outdoor recreation during the winter season from December to February.
- ? The smoke discharge from the Harmac Pulp Mill has a medium to low level of impact on outdoor recreation at Hemer Park.
- ? The geological formations in Hemer Park limit flexibility in servicing structures.
- ? Some of the soils in the Hemer Farm area are very poorly drained organic soils. These soils require specific construction practices to be buildable.
- ? The majority of lands in Hemer Park have a low capability for agriculture. This capability assessment was included as an indicator of soil productivity and vegetation recovery potential.

(Note: Peepre (1983) reported that the carrying capacity of the Douglas Fir - Salal - Oregon Grape Association is considered high because of the natural resilience of the shrub layer. The coniferous trees in this association have lower growth potential because of low soil fertility, low water holding capacity, and rapid internal drainage)

- ? Most of the surface soils (i.e. upper 25 cm) in Hemer Park have severe soil erosion potential in an unvegetated state. (i.e. during construction)
- ? Virtually all of Hemer Park has severe to very severe soil constraints affecting septic tank effluent absorption. Successful operation of conventional absorption fields will likely not be possible, thus requiring alternate sewage treatment and disposal systems, or restricted levels of use.

### VISUAL RESOURCES:

- ? The upland forest and Holden Lake setting units in Hemer Park are considered to have low visual absorption capability (i.e. ability to absorb alteration) because of the dense vegetation pattern, and the low soil productivity.

## D. LAND TENURES, OCCUPANCY RIGHTS, AND JURISDICTIONS

Hemer Provincial Park is a CLASS "A" Provincial Park, 93 hectares in area which was established on May 8, 1981. The Park was made possible through a donation of land by the Hemer Family. Administrative information for the park area is as follows:

- ? **NTS Map:** #92G4/W
- ? **Park Region:** Vancouver Island
- ? **Regional District:** Nanaimo
- ? **Land District:** Cedar
- ? **Islands Trust:** N/A
- ? **Mines District:** Nanaimo
- ? **F/W Management Unit:** 1-5
- ? **Highway Region:** 6
- ? **Park District:** Arrowsmith
- ? **Electoral District:** Nanaimo
- ? **Assessment District:** 4
- ? **School District:** 68
- ? **L.T.O.:** Victoria
- ? **District Forester:** 19 - Parksville
- ? **Highway District:** Nanaimo

Other Park status information is as follows:

- ? **Section 6 Lands (Park Act):** N/A
- ? **Miscellaneous:** N/A

Resource Conservation:

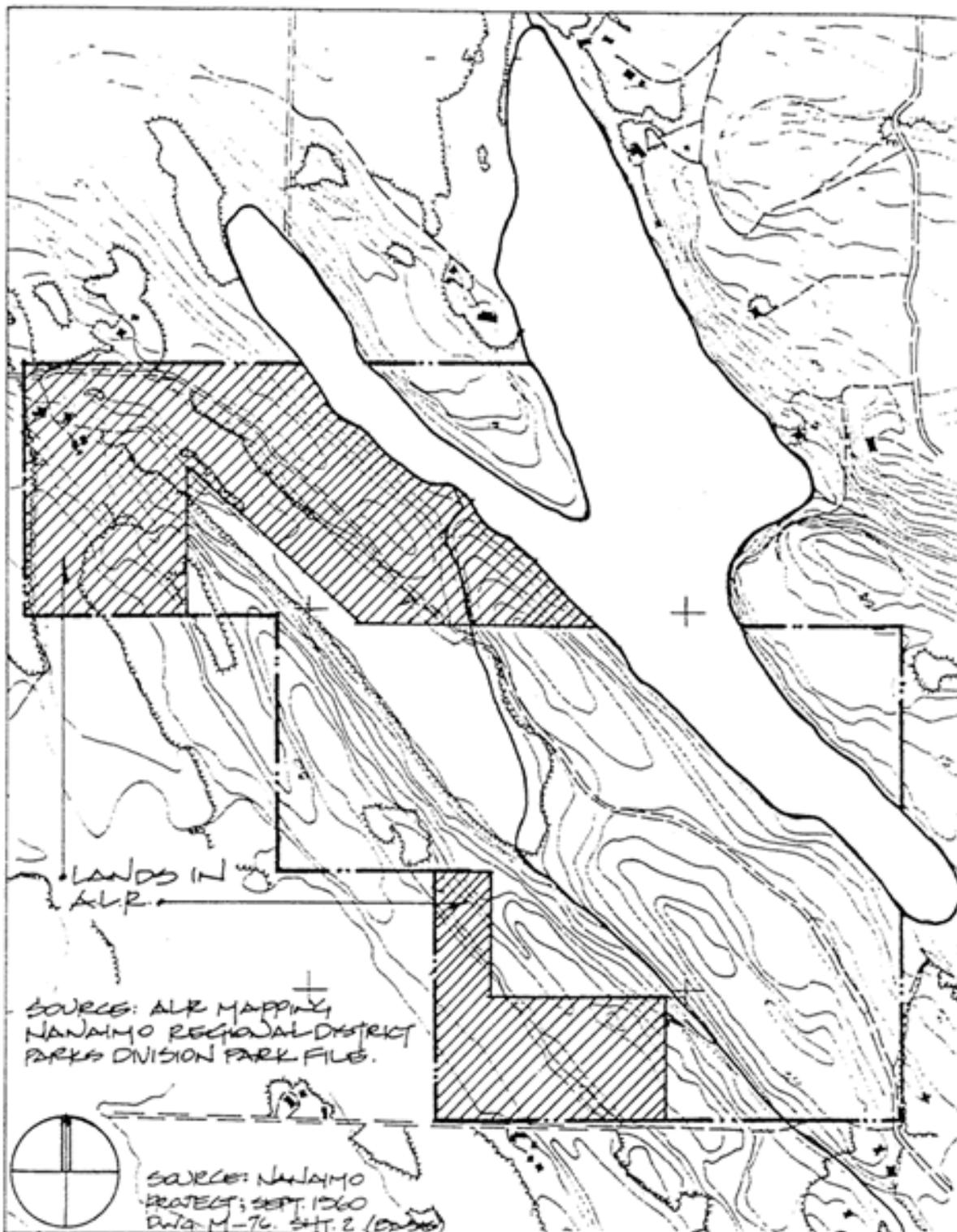
- ? **ALR:** Partial (see A.L.R. Lands Map)
- ? **Archaeological sites:** N/A (see Part I, C., 2.1)
- ? **Ecological reserves (established):** N/A
- ? **Ecological reserves (proposed):** N/A
- ? **Wildlife management reserve or project:** N/A

Encumbrances:

- ? **P.U.P.(s):** N/A
- ? **Mineral claims:**

The B.C. Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources advised that the disposition of subsurface mineral rights for land in Hemer Park are as follows: (see Ownership of Subsurface Mineral Rights Map)

- ? Section 11 Range 3 - Crown owns the minerals.
- ? Section 12 Range 3 - Mayo Holdings owns the minerals except in Parcel B which the Crown owns.
- ? Section 13 Range 3 - Mayo Holdings owns minerals in the west portion of this block except in Parcel B which the Crown owns.
- ? Section 13 Range 2 - Mayo Holdings owns the minerals in the east 40 acres of this block except in parcel B which the Crown owns.



AGRICULTURAL LAND  
RESERVE LANDS.

0 100 200 300 400 500  
SCALE IN METRES 1:2000

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The Ministry confirmed that no mineral claims or coal licences have been issued under the Mineral Act. A Petroleum and Natural Gas Permit has been issued in this area, but Hemer Provincial Park was excluded. (see Appendix IV: Letter from Energy Mines, and Petroleum Resources)

The current information on the Hemer Provincial Park file (Park and Outdoor Recreation Division, Ministry of Lands, Parks, and Housing) regarding charges and reservations on titles is as follows: (see Charges and Reservations on Land Titles Map)

- ? Parcel A (DD20044-N) of Section 13, Range 2 and of Sections 11, 12, and 13, Range 3, except out of said Section 11, Range 3, that part included within the boundaries of Plan 9785 and except out of said Section 13, Range 2, that part included on Ministry of Highways Plan 61-J-2A6, Cedar District.

**C of T: J115321**

**Charge No: 85918-G:** Exceptions & Reservations

Held by: E & N Rly. Co.

Covers: That part of Parcel A within Section 11, Range 3.

**Charge No: 373811-G:** Under-surface Charge

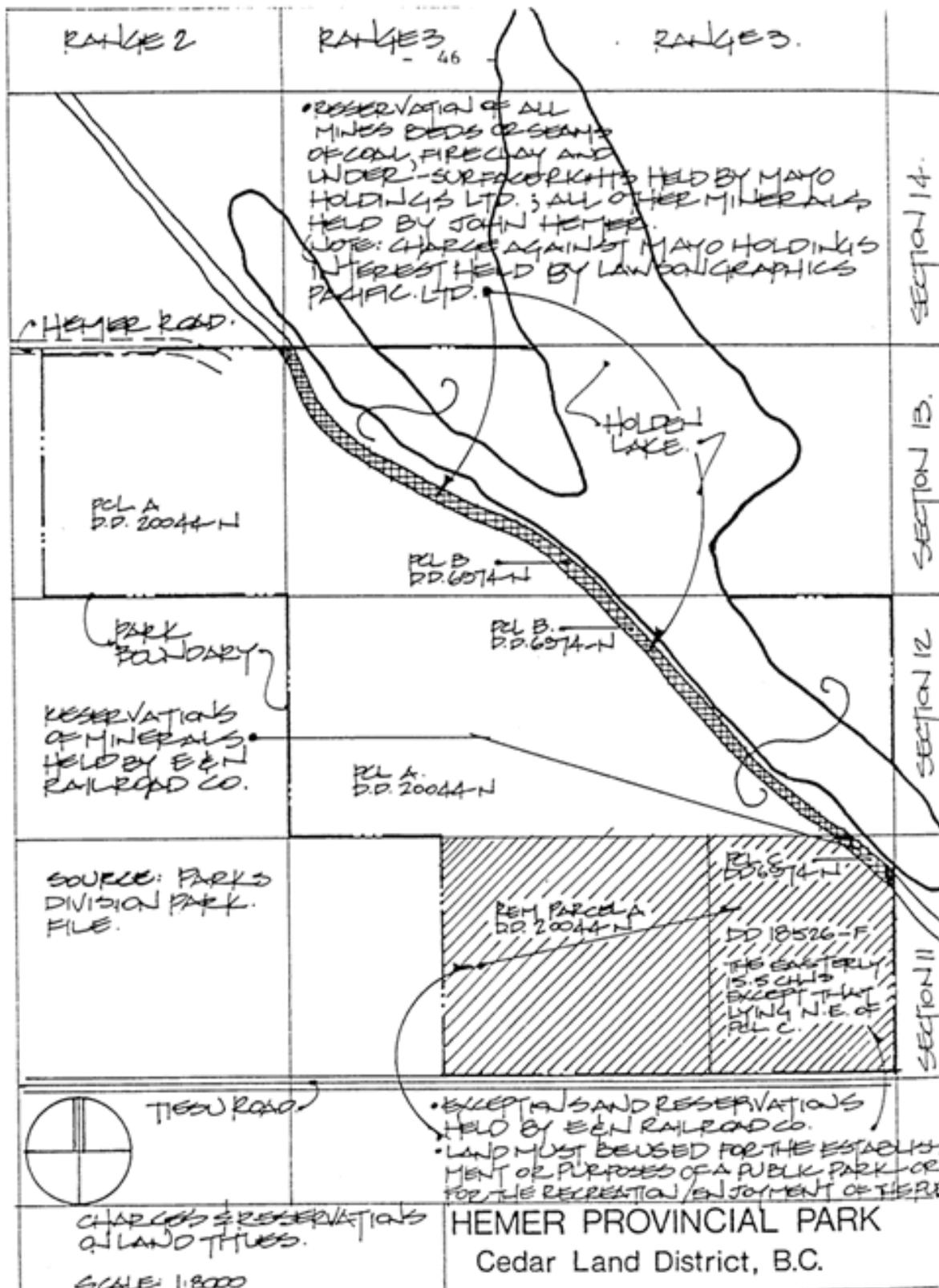
Held by: Mayo Holdings Ltd.

Covers: All of Parcel A, except that part within Section 11, Range 3.

**Charge No: J117161:**

The land must be used for the establishment or purposes of a public park for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

- ? The easterly 311.8 meters (DD 18526-F) of Section 11, Range 3, except that part lying northeast of Parcel C (DD6974-N) and except Parcel C (DD6974-N), Cedar District.



**C of T: J115322**  
**Charge No: 83956-G:** Exceptions & Reservations  
 Held by: E & N Rly. Co.

**Condition: J117162:** The land must be used for the establishment or purposes of a public park for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

? Parcel B (DD6974-N) of Section 13, Range 2 and of Sections 12 and 13, Range 3, Cedar District.

**C of T: 84290-W**  
**Charge No: 53397-G:** Reservation of all mines, beds or seams of coal, fireclay, and under-surface rights.  
 Held by: Mayo Holdings Ltd.

**Charge No: 53406-G:** Reservation of all other minerals.  
 Held by: John Hemer

**Charge No: J82945:** Against Mayo Holdings Ltd. interest under 53397-G  
 Held by: Lawson Graphics Pacific Ltd.

? Parcel C (DD 6974-N) of Section 11, Range 3, Cedar District.

**C of T: 84290-W**  
**Charge No: 53407-G:** Reservations of minerals, etc.  
 Held by: E & N Rly. Co.

The discrepancy between these sets of information occurs along the old railroad right-of-way (i.e. Parcel B; D.D.6974-N). Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resource files show this area as Crown-owned, while the Parks Division files show this area as coal rights being held by Mayo Holdings and all other mineral rights being held by John Hemer.

- ? **Water Rights:** N/A
- ? **Permits/Leases:** N/A
- ? **Shore Leases:** N/A
- ? **Boarding Restrictions:** N/A
- ? **Air Navigation Orders:** N/A
- ? **Forest Tenure (s):** N/A
- ? **Trapping:** N/A
- ? **Guiding/Outfitting:** N/A
- ? **Rights of Way:** N/A

The northern edge of the Vancouver Island natural gas pipeline right-of-way cuts through the southern portion of Hemer Park. (see Ownership of Subsurface Mineral Rights Map) The natural gas pipeline project is currently on hold and this information is provided for reference only.

- ? **In Holdings:** N/A
- ? **Informal Tenures (including life tenancies):** Life occupancy granted to Hemers 80-10-08.

The conditions of Miss Violet Hemer's life occupancy are as follows:

- ? She is granted life occupancy of her permanent residence and use of the land as long as she continues to reside on the property, that is, the land used for farming.
- ? She is granted the use of the existing home site on the property and to replace at her discretion and her expense, any of the existing structures which may be destroyed by fire or other causes.

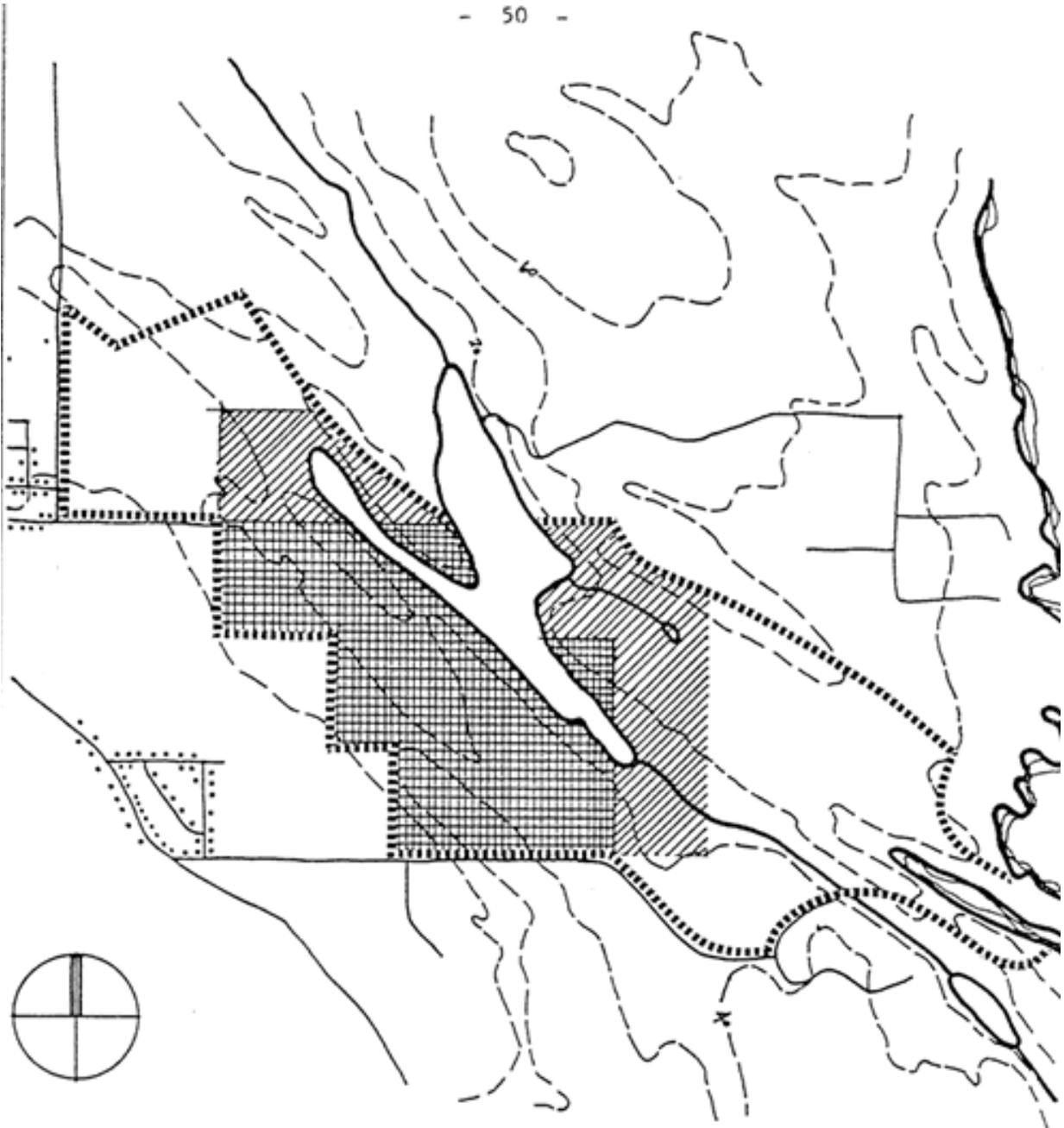
- ? She is granted the right to collect firewood for her personal use by cutting dead, dying, or down timber on the property.

The benefit of the life occupancy commitment may not be transferred or assigned. If such an event occurs, the commitment will terminate.

? **Major Additions and Boundary Adjustments**

Park additions and boundary adjustments for Hemer Park should be reviewed in the future, in light of the findings of the upcoming Sub-System Plan for this area. The addition of lands contiguous with the Park around the northwest arm and the southern tip of Holden lake could provide a land base to expand recreation opportunities and raise the provincial significance of the Park. Further, these additions would help to preserve the integrity of the shoreline of Holden Lake.

The proposed park additions map identifies desirable lands for park expansion. Further, the map identifies higher and lower priority areas for addition to Hemer Park.



- ..... EXTENT OF EXISTING PARK AND PROPOSED PARK ADDITIONS.
-  EXISTING PARK
-  HIGHER PRIORITY ADDITIONS
-  LOWER PRIORITY ADDITIONS.

PROPOSED PARK ADDITIONS.

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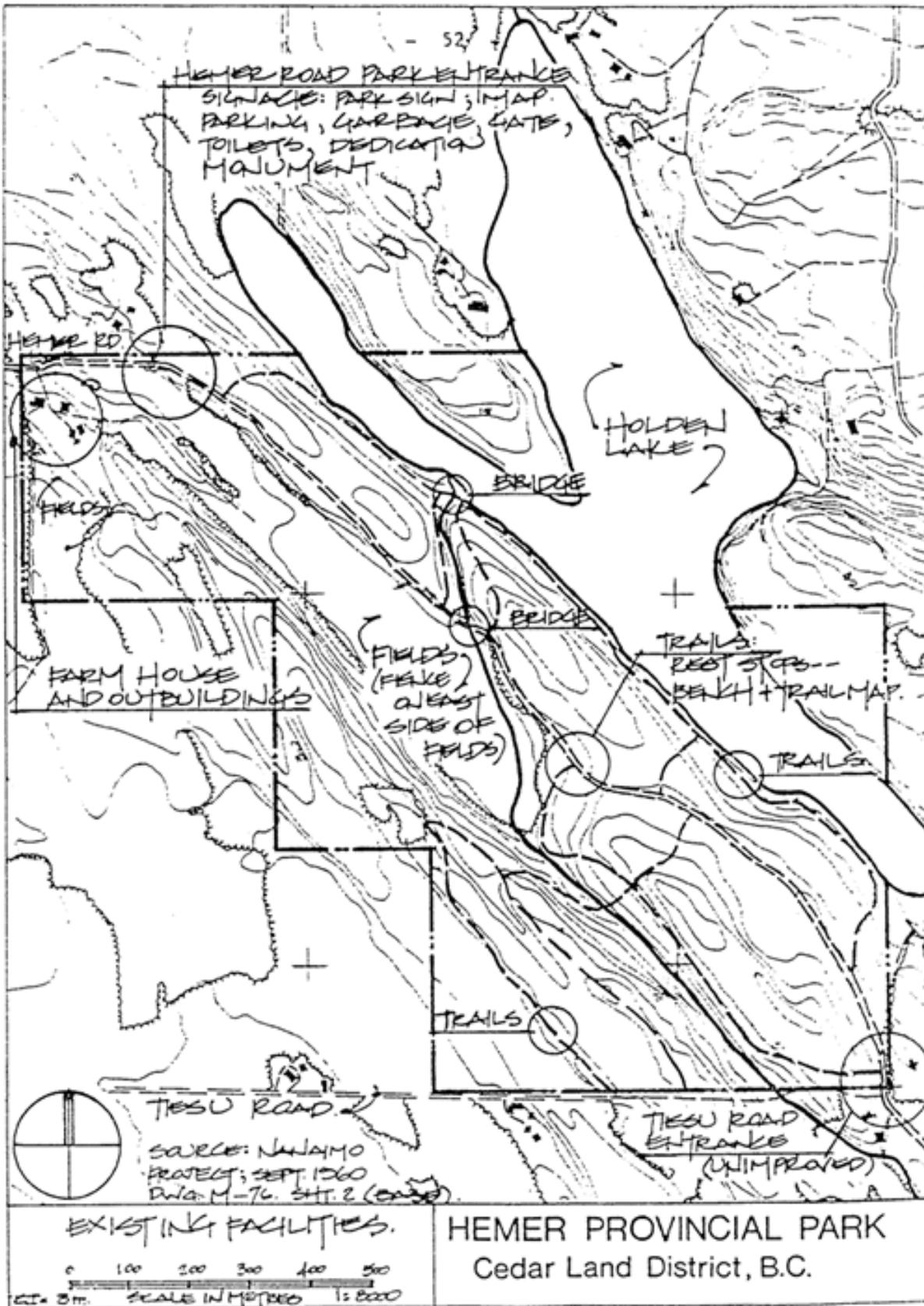
HEMER PROVINCIAL PARK  
Cedar Land District, B.C.

**E. EXISTING FACILITIES**

Hemer Park has the following facilities in place: (see Existing Facilities Map)

- ? Upland Forest:  
Trails, benches, trail maps (7), pit toilets (2), bridges (2).
- ? Hemer Road Entrance:  
Parking lot (8 spaces), shelter with park map (1), garbage can, access barrier, dedication monument.
- ? Holden Lakeshore:  
Trails, benches.
- ? Hemer Farm: (off-limits to public)  
House, barns and other out-buildings, fencing.

Existing facilities are appropriate to a day-use destination park in a natural environment setting. Facilities are in good condition.



## F. MARKET ANALYSIS

### 1.0 EXISTING USE

A limited amount of day use attendance data was gathered for Hemer Park during 1983 and 1984. The results of these surveys are, as follows:

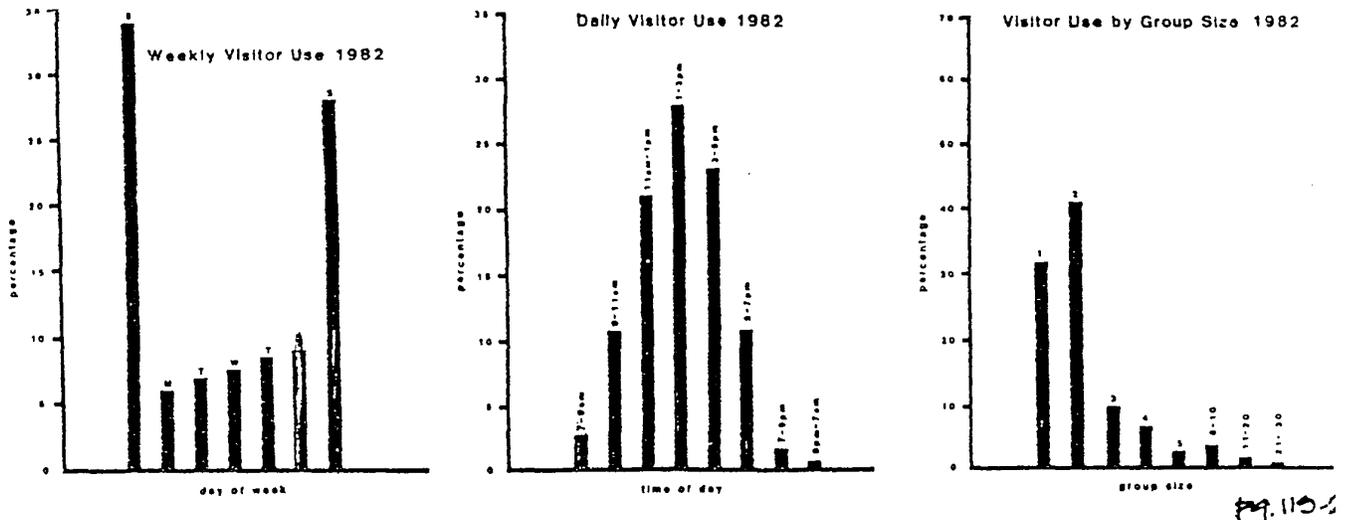
	Day-use Attendance (in parties)*	
	1983	1984
JANUARY	-	527
FEBRUARY	-	479
MARCH	-	574
APRIL	-	618
MAY	-	701
JUNE	370 (1/2 month only)	663
JULY	630	671
AUGUST	587	640
SEPTEMBER	550	239
OCTOBER	562	243
NOVEMBER	478	698
DECEMBER	341	407
<hr/>		
TOTAL -	3,718	6,258

(Note: 3.5 people per party)

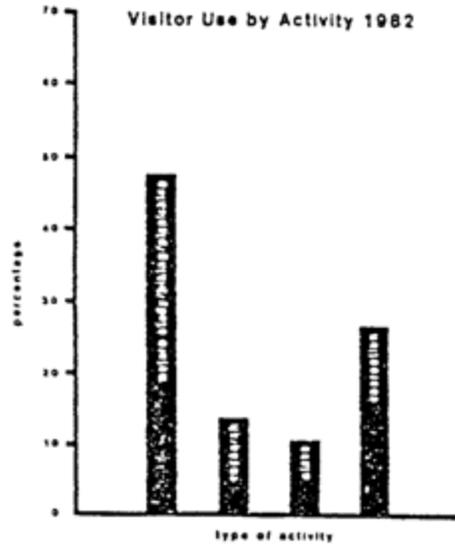
Source: Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division.

Based on limited day-use attendance figures, Hemer Park has its heaviest use in the Spring and Summer seasons from March through to August. During Spring and Summer, about 645 parties visit Hemer Park per month.

Dawson (1985) reported the following findings on weekly and daily visitor-use, and visitor-use by group site in a study of a nature reserve comparable in size to Hemer Park (112 hectares vs. 93 hectares), located about 25 minutes by car from the University of California Davis Campus.



The results of the study showed that visitor use increased through the week, and was heaviest on Saturday and Sunday. The period from 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. was the period of heaviest use through the day. The most frequent group size was parties of two, followed by parties of one and then three. An analysis of visitor use by activity showed that nature study / hiking / picnicking (i.e. nature appreciation related activities) were most frequent, followed by recreation.



Using the Dawson (1985) study results, Hemer Park has the following weekend visitor use patterns:

		PEAK USE (1 - 3 P.M.)
Sunday	55 Parties (110 People)	15 Parties (30 People)
Saturday	45 Parties (90 People)	12 Parties (24 People)

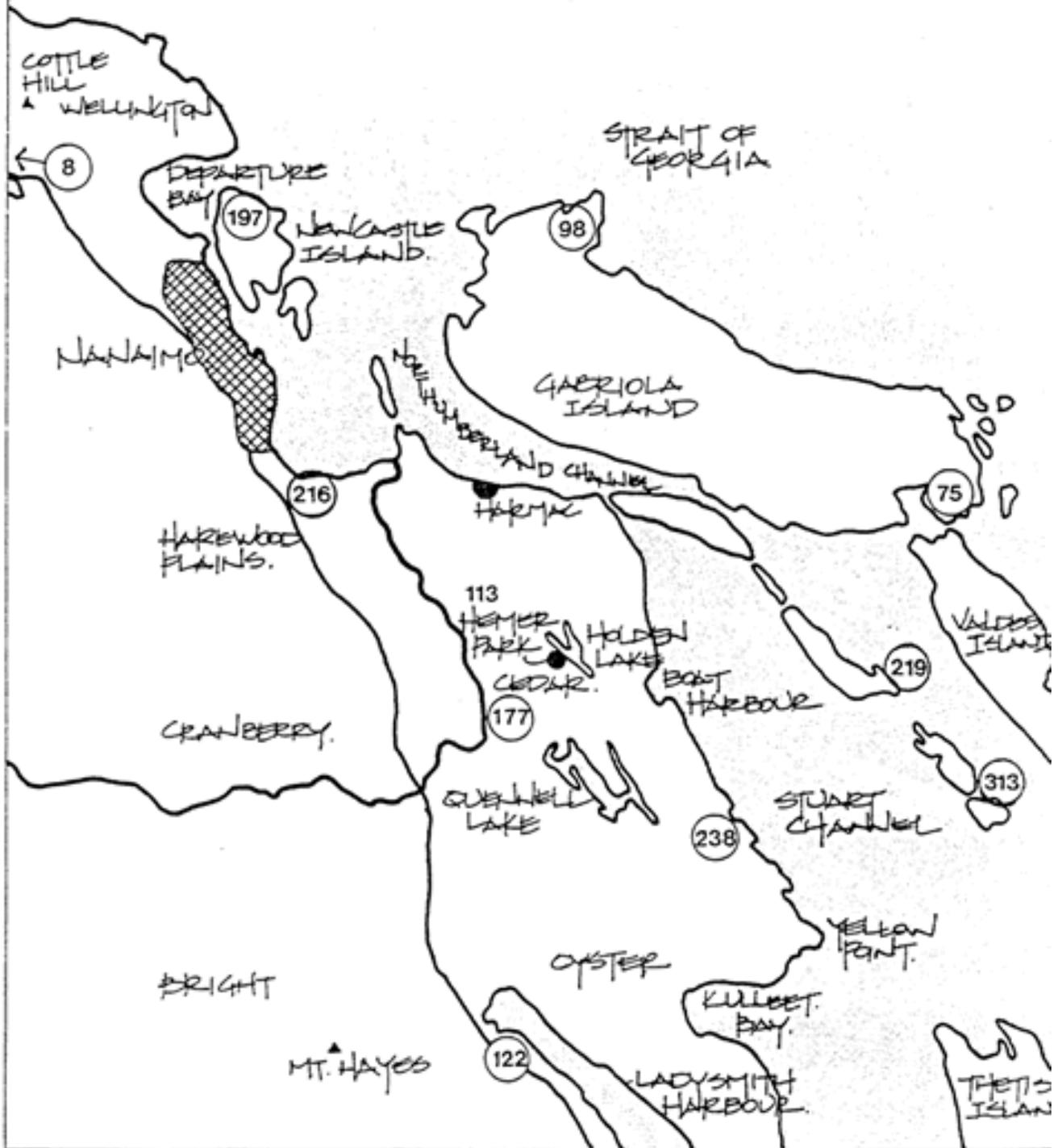
Based on a standard of 16 people per mile of trail in non-wilderness areas (Miller, n.d.), the existing trails in Hemer Provincial Park could accommodate about 50 people at any one time. Thus, the existing trail system has sufficient capacity to accommodate current levels of use.

Directions to Hemer Park along local roads (e.g. Cedar Road) are non-existent. Thus, Hemer Park has low visibility.

## **2.0 SUPPLY INFORMATION**

The attached table outlines the facilities available in provincial parks nearby Hemer Provincial Park. Vehicles/tent campsites are available at Ivy Green Park, and wilderness walk-in camping is available on Newcastle Island and at Pirates Cove on the Gulf Islands. Nearby provincial parks provide a variety of settings for picnicking, swimming, fishing, and hiking. Thus, a local orientation for Hemer Provincial Park is deemed to be appropriate.

Reference Number	Park Name	Road Access	Vehicle/Tent Campsites	Wilderness Walk In Camping	Picnicking/Day Use	Sani-Station	Swimming	Fishing	Boat Launch	Hiking
VANCOUVER ISLAND:										
8	Arbutus Grove	No								
113	Hemer	Yes						*		*
122	Ivy Green (Returned to local Indian Band)	Yes	51 Sites		*	*	*	*		*
177	Morden Colliery	Yes								
197	Newcastle Island	No		18 Sites	*		*	*		*
216	Petroglyph	Yes								
238	Roberts Memorial	Yes			*		*	*		*
GULF ISLANDS:										
75	Drumbeg	Ferry			*		*	*		*
98	Gabriola Sands	Ferry			*		*			
219	Pirates Cove	No		12 Sites	*		*	*		*
313	Whaleboat Island	No						*		



Park Location Map.

HEMER PROVINCIAL PARK  
Cedar Land District, B.C.

## **G. PLANNING ISSUES**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The overall goals for Hemer Park are as follows:

- ? To preserve and interpret a representative natural and cultural landscape of East Vancouver Island.
- ? To develop and manage the park in response to the recreation needs of local residents.

Based on this statement of purpose, and an evaluation of the preceding natural/cultural/visual resources, land tenure, facility, and marketing factors, the focal issues for the Hemer Park Master Plan are discussed as follows:

### **2.0 ISSUES RELATED TO OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Hemer Park has a local focus (i.e. regional district) in terms of its recreation opportunities, because of its size and location. Hemer can serve as a day-use/destination park for Nanaimo and Cowichan Valley Regional District residents. Further, because of its location on the Crown-owned Railroad Right-of-way to Boat Harbour, Hemer Park could be linked by a recreation corridor with other historic points-of-interest in the Nanaimo area.

The range of outdoor recreation opportunities in Hemer Park should be oriented primarily, to summer season activities, and secondarily, to transition season (i.e. Spring/Fall) activities based on climatic suitability studies. Representative activities include the following: walking / hiking, viewing, recording, picnicking, unorganized games, group camping, horseback riding, boat launching / landing, fishing from shore, and nature interpretation.

The Holden Lake bottom lends itself to activities like fishing from shore, and boat launching / landing.

Hemer Park has a relatively high level of scenic quality. Features such as views of Holden Lake, the variety of plant associations in the Park, and the bird and small mammal wildlife will attract visitors to Hemer Park.

### 3.0 ISSUES RELATED TO THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The following factors support the development potential of the Park:

- ? The majority of the soils are gravelly and well-drained and do not restrict the construction of facilities like trails.
- ? The geological formations in the park offer solid bearing for structures.
- ? The majority of slopes are considered buildable. Buildable slopes are distributed through the park so as not to overly restrict the development of a trail system. Steeper slopes will require specific construction practices (e.g. Water collection; revegetation) to be buildable.

The following factors limit the development potential of the Park:

- ? Organic soils in the farm area require specific construction practices to be buildable.
- ? The geological formations restrict flexibility in servicing park structures.
- ? The capability for agriculture of the park lands suggests poor soil productivity and low vegetation recovery potential. These conditions limit the recreational carrying capacity of the park. The carrying capacity is improved by the natural resilience of the shrub layer.
- ? Most of the surface soils have severe soil erosion potential in their unvegetated state, and erosion control practices must be followed during any facility construction.
- ? The severe soil constraints affecting septic tank effluent absorption requires that alternate sewage treatment and disposal systems be incorporated into public gathering facilities (e.g. a park centre).
- ? The low visual absorption capability of the upland forest and Holden Lake setting units limits development potential within the Park.

#### **4.0 ISSUES RELATED TO LAND TENURE, EXISTING PARK FACILITIES AND MARKET ANALYSIS**

Mayo Holdings Ltd. owns substantial subsurface mineral rights in Hemer Park. The B.C. Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources confirmed that no mineral claims or coal licences have been issued under the *Mineral Act*. Further, placer staking is not permitted in the Nanaimo area.

Miss Violet Hemer holds life occupancy (i.e. a life estate) in the farm area. The farm will remain off-limits to the public as long as she resides on the property.

Existing park facilities are quite compatible with the anticipated use of the Park as a predominantly day-use/ destination park for local residents, in Summer, Spring, and Autumn. Further, existing facilities are in good condition.

Based on recognized standards for trail use, the existing trails in Hemer Park have sufficient capacity to accommodate current levels of use.

Directions to Hemer Park along local roads are non-existent. Thus, Hemer Park has low visibility.

Since nearby provincial parks provide a variety of settings for picnicking, swimming, fishing, and hiking, a local orientation is seen as appropriate for Hemer Park.

In order to expand the recreation potential of Hemer Park and to preserve the integrity of the Holden Lakeshore, park additions and boundary adjustments could be considered in the future. Park boundaries could be adjusted to include land around the north-west arm and the southern end of Holden Lake.

## **PART II: THE PLAN**

### **A. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR HEMER PROVINCIAL PARK**

The purpose of Hemer Provincial Park is two-fold: Firstly, to preserve and interpret a representative landscape of the East Vancouver Island area, a representative natural landscape of the East Vancouver Island Lowlands, and a representative cultural landscape of the small-scale family farms of the Nanaimo area; and secondly, to accommodate the day-use nature-oriented recreational needs of local residents of the Nanaimo and Cowichan Valley Regional Districts.

The specific objectives for Hemer Park are as follows:

(NOTE: Facility capacity levels respond to the physical carrying capacity of the Park, the intended quality of recreational experience and the recreational opportunities in areas surrounding the Park.)

- ? To develop a park entry and park centre for Hemer Park, and thereby identify and introduce the park to visitors, and interpret the natural and cultural landscapes of which Hemer Park forms a part.
- ? To develop interpretive farm displays which explain the operation of a small-scale family farm.
- ? To develop nature interpretive displays which explain the formation of the local landscape and its various plant associations.
- ? To develop interpretive facilities that will accommodate about 60 visitors (i.e. about 2 classes of school age children).
- ? To develop picnic opportunities within the farm area for ten parties, that is about 25 visitors.
- ? To develop group camping opportunities for groups of up to 75 visitors (ie. scouts, guides), for overnight visits to the Park and the opportunity to learn a broader range of outdoor skills.

- ? To restore a 3-hectare section of bog within the farm area and allow the interpretation of this aspect of the site's geomorphological/biotic development.
- ? To refine the trail system within the Park by linking and interpreting the various biotic/physical features on site and by providing various levels of recreation challenge for park visitors.
- ? To limit use of trails to non-motorized modes of transport; to separate conflicting modes of transport (e.g. equestrian/ pedestrian), and thereby promote safety within the Park.
- ? To improve access to Holden Lake, and thereby improve the recreational potential of the Park, by upgrading vehicular access and boat launching facilities; to provide parking for ten vehicles in conjunction with boat launching and vehicular access facilities.
- ? To provide opportunities for fishing and lake-edge vegetation/ wildlife viewing along the Holden Lakeshore.
- ? To provide opportunities for picnicking along the lakeshore for 5 parties, that is about 15 people.
- ? To provide rest spots/viewpoints for boaters along the Holden Lakeshore.
- ? To assess the feasibility of acquiring land around the southern tip of the Lake and around the northwest arm of the Lake in order to expand the recreational opportunities along the Lakeshore, and to preserve the integrity of the Holden Lakeshore.

## B. ZONING

Two zones are represented in the Hemer Provincial Park: Natural Environment Zone and Development Zone. (See Zoning Map) The objective for the Natural Environment Zone is to provide for intermediate levels of outdoor recreational opportunities/use in a natural setting. Development and use within this zone are consistent with the maintenance of natural conditions.

The objective for the Development Zone is to provide for variety of facility oriented recreational opportunities. Development and use within this zone may necessitate intensive management in order to achieve a high quality of recreation and interpretation experience.

Hemer Provincial Park was divided into three units, based on existing land use and landscape character, and an appropriate zoning designation was applied, as follows:

### 1. Natural Environmental Zone

#### ? The Upland Forest: (64 Hectares)

This area of undulating/rolling terrain is covered with a mature Douglas Fir forest. A creek runs through this unit and drains into Holden Lake. The area has numerous trails which were established over a period of time by Cedar residence.

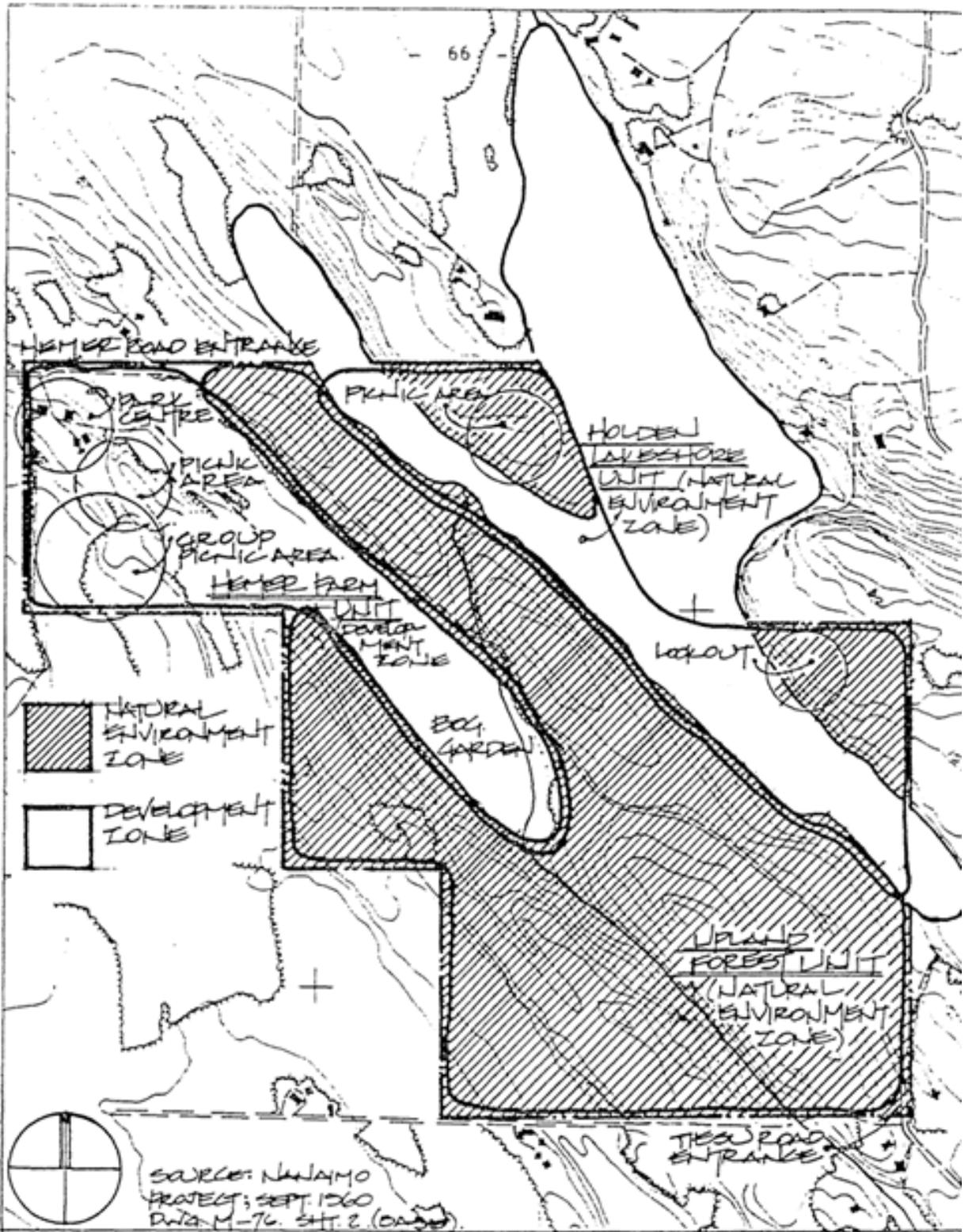
#### ? Holden Lakeshore: (14 Hectares)

The major feature of this area is Holden Lake (i.e. outside the Park). This unit includes the shoreline trail on the west side of Holden Lake, and two parcels of land on the lakeshore to the North and on the East side of the Lake.

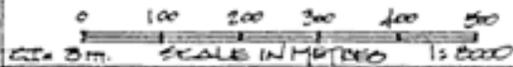
### 2. Development Zone

#### ? The Hemer Farm: (15 Hectares)

This unit is clearly identifiable as cultivated land. The Hemer family has a life estate in this portion of the Park, and they operate a small-scale farm on the property. The farm is enclosed by a fence and the area is off-limits to the public. For the term of their life estate, the Hemer Family is responsible for the care and maintenance of this portion of the Park. Physiographically, much of the farm is located in a depressional area that collected water and filled in with vegetation and now contains organic soils. The area was cleared and drained, and is now being farmed. Typical crops on organic soils in the Cedar area include oats, hay, corn, potatoes, and vegetable crops.



ZONING PLAN.



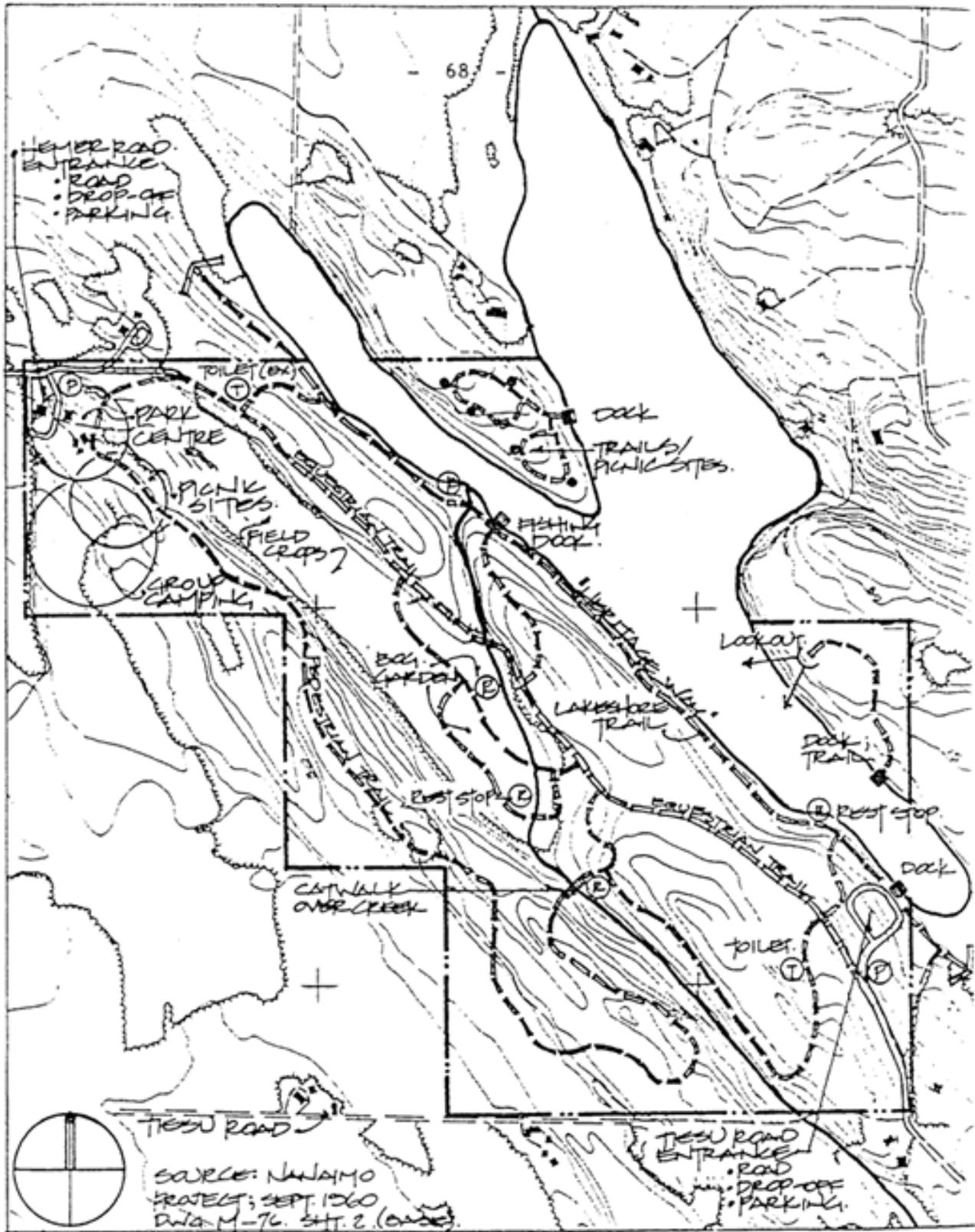
HEMER PROVINCIAL PARK  
 Cedar Land District, B.C.

## **C. DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

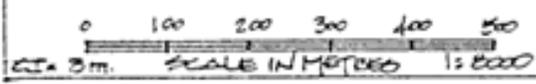
### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Hemer Provincial Park can be characterized as a natural to pastoral landscape. This natural/pastoral landscape should be preserved during the development of the Park. Park facilities should be predominantly day-use oriented, and facility capacity should be set by levels required to accommodate local recreational needs. Given a carrying capacity standard of 16 people per mile of trail (Miller n.d.), the proposed Hemer Park trail system could accommodate about 85 people at any one time.

The facilities proposed for the long-term development of Hemer Park are identified by phases in the following sections (refer to Development Map). These improvements are consistent with the Park character, and would improve the recreation potential of Hemer Park.



DEVELOPMENT PLAN.



HEMER PROVINCIAL PARK  
Cedar Land District, B.C.

## **2.0 PHASE 1**

### **2.1 THE UPLAND FOREST**

The upland forest unit is seen as a natural environment zone. The upland forests could provide an appropriate setting for intermediate levels of outdoor recreational opportunities/use. Over time, the recreational activities would remain as they are currently, and would include activities like walking/hiking, viewing, recording, horseback riding, and nature interpretation.

The trail system would connect with the park centre (i.e. Hemer Farm) and link various features within this area, such as the creek flowing into Holden Lake, and the diverse vegetation edge between Hemer Farm and the upland forest.

Interpretive displays along the trail system would point out examples of information and theories introduced at the park centre (e.g. plant associations, bedrock formation, soil development). The trail displays would be organized and designed to encourage self-guided exploration.

In addition to interpretive displays, other amenities along the trails would be developed, and include such items as trail maps (some existing), rest areas with benches at focal points (some existing), and a limited number of toilets.

Access within this zone would be limited to non-motorized modes of transportation. Further, horseback riding would be restricted to designated trails.

#### ? Current Park Entry:

- Upgrade the current entrance at the end of Hemer Road with a turnaround and additional native plantings.
- Install a turnaround and parking.
- Install a potable water supply.

## ? Trails:

- Develop/modify the existing trail system as shown on the Development Map.
- Limit access into the park off Tiesu Road; provide access at the south-east corner of the Park.
- Build a "catwalk"/bridge across the creek, as shown on the Development Map, to permit the viewing of the complex vegetation structure in this area.
- Develop interpretive displays along the trails.
- Build an additional set of toilets as shown on the Development Map, to service the boat launch area (see 2.2).
- Develop rest areas with a trail map (existing), bench, and garbage can at points shown on the Development Map.

IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE

## **2.2 THE HOLDEN LAKESHORE**

### **2.0 HOLDEN LAKESHORE**

The Holden Lakeshore is seen as a natural environment zone adjacent to and complimentary to Holden Lake. This area would provide an appropriate setting for a variety of water-oriented recreational opportunities/uses.

The purpose of this zone is to facilitate both visual and physical access to Holden Lake by providing opportunities for walking, viewing, nature observation, fishing from shore, small boat/canoe launching, and picnicking.

The major trail in this unit is existing and runs along the west shore of Holden Lake. This trail was the right-of-way for the Pacific Coal Company Railway. The trails in this unit would connect with the overall park trail system, and further could connect with a future regional trail system beyond the Park.

#### ? Road Access/Boat Launching:

- Build an access road with turnaround from Tiesu Road to Holden Lake as shown on the Development Map to improve access to the lake; provide parking alongside the roadway.
- Provide a potable water supply at the turnaround; provide a garbage can.
- Build a dock and gravelly beach area at the lake-edge to facilitate boat launching/landing.

#### ? Lakeshore Amenities

- Build a dock as shown on the Development Map along the lakeshore trail for fishing and viewing lake-edge vegetation and wildlife.
- Develop a picnic area on the land between the northern arms of Holden Lake, as a destination point for boaters:
  - Clear undergrowth; hydroseed
  - Thin overstory
  - Install 5 picnic sites
  - Build picnic shelter
  - Install a dock

- Develop a rest area/viewpoint on the parcel of land on the eastern shore of Holden Lake, as a resting place for boaters.
  - Build a dock
  - Clear a trail as shown on the Development Map
  - Develop a viewpoint
- ? Park Additions/Boundary Expansions
  - Review the feasibility of adding lakeshore land around the southern tip and the north-western arm of Holden Lake to the Park.

IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE

### **3.0 PHASE 2**

#### **3.1 THE HEMER FARM**

When the Hemer Farm portion of the Park opens to the public, it could provide an appropriate setting for a variety of facility-oriented recreational opportunities. The north-west portion of this unit (see Development Map) would form the main park entrance and park centre. The experience of entering the Park should be well-conceived and well-executed. The Hemer Farm offers a pleasing transition from the rural/agricultural countryside surrounding the Park, to its densely forested interior.

The feasibility of using the existing farm buildings for park centre functions should be explored, thereby promoting an agricultural theme for this area. The Hemer residence is located on a ledge overlooking the farmlands in the basin below. The forest covers the hills on either side of the basin. From this vantage point, the relationship between the upland forest and the farm components of the Park is well displayed. Thus, the farmhouse area offers a pleasing introduction to the Park and also displays the upland forest and cultivated valley / basin components of the Park.

IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE

The function of the Park centre would be to provide a focus, to greet and introduce visitors to the Park by interpreting the natural and cultural character of the area, and to encourage visitors to explore Hemer Park further. Nature interpretive displays could illustrate and explain such features as the geomorphological formation of the East Vancouver Island Lowlands and the plant associations of the local Coastal Douglas Fir forests. Cultural and interpretive displays could explain the operation of typical small-scale farms in the area, including animal husbandry and feedcrop production. The target group for these displays would be groups of school children, families with children and special interest groups (e.g. seniors' clubs).

Other facilities in the park centre area could include parking and washrooms. Adjacent to the park centre area, group camping and picnic facilities could help to extend and make better use of the park centre facilities. Further service yard facilities could be provided for equipment storage and stock piling bulk materials.

Adjacent to the park centre, an area for demonstrating traditional agricultural practices could be established.

The south-east portion of the Hemer Farm unit is a basin which contains organic soils. These soils have limited potential for heavy recreation use (e.g. group camping). This area is seen as having potential as a bog garden. The bog could be re-established by blocking drainage to the creek and transplanting typical plants from bogs in the Cedar area.

The park centre area could be the start of the Hemer Park trail system. Trail maps would illustrate various routes through the Park and information about features en route, like length of trail and travel time.

A visitor services plan for the Hemer Farm area and an action plan for the farm buildings is recommended. Subject to the findings of these plans, the development plan for the Hemer Farm is as follows:

? Park Entrance:

- Install park signs at the park entrance off Hemer Road, and at the intersection of Hemer Road and Cedar Road, to direct visitors to the Park.

- Re-forest the current entrance to Hemer Park at the end of Hemer Road with native plant material.
- ? Park Centre:
- Build an access road off Hemer Road to the park centre; build a drop-off area by the park centre.
  - Build a parking lot adjacent to park centre.
  - Renovate existing farm buildings if feasible to accommodate various park center functions.
  - Establish a display orchard and vegetable/herb garden
  - Build an outdoor gathering area as a "trailhead" for the parks trail system.
  - Upgrade water and sewage service to provide washroom facilities.
- ? Demonstration Area for Field Crops:
- Establish an area for demonstration of traditional agricultural practices adjacent to the park centre, to help explain the cultural heritage of the Cedar area.
- ? Group Camping and Picnic Area:
- Build a picnic shelter.
  - Maintain an area in meadow grasses to accommodate group campers; install fireplaces (i.e. pad and grate) and a group fire ring.
  - Provide 10 picnic sites.
  - Provide water and washroom facilities.
- ? Bog/Meadow:
- Restore about 3 hectares of bog; block drainage from the bog to the creek.

- Build a reinforced trail through the bog (i.e. trail to be suitable for organic soil conditions).
  - Transplant indigenous bog plant species.
- ? Trails:
- Connect the park centre with the Park's trail system.

## **D. MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

### **1.0 RESOURCES**

#### **1.1 LAND**

- ? Promote site planning and construction practices consistent with the capabilities of the Park resources to sustain long-term use.
- ? Ensure that erosion control practices are followed during any construction. Restore slopes immediately following disturbance by retaining water and revegetating with fast growing grasses (e.g. rye grass). Implement permanent revegetation strategy once slopes are stabilized.
- ? Ensure a resolution of any land tenure claims so as to preserve the integrity of the Park.
- ? Extend the recreation potential of Hemer Park, and preserve the integrity of the shoreline of Holden Lake through park additions and boundary adjustments: the feasibility of including land around the north-west arm and the southern tip of Holden Lake within the park should be reviewed. These additions would incorporate contiguous habitat within the Park, and protect it against future land use changes.

#### **1.2 WATER**

- ? Make an assessment of Holden Lake (i.e. water quality, sports fishing potential) and take steps to ensure its long-term viability.
- ? Minimize creek siltation by retaining ground cover, shrub, and tree material around the creek; avoid drainage to the creek via culverts and drainage ditches; surface drainage should be allowed to percolate slowly into forest retention areas by sheet flow.

### **1.3 VEGETATION**

- ? Monitor vegetation within the Park to assess its condition and health, and to ensure long-term viability.
- ? Re-establish past vegetation patterns where feasible (e.g. farm area -- bog garden).
- ? Minimize disturbance to natural vegetation during installation and maintenance of all park facilities; minimize the potential for blow down when facilities are sited for construction (i.e. viable retention units of 10 metres by 10 metres).

### **1.4 WILDLIFE**

- ? Promote the establishment of wildlife habitat: "feather" vegetation at edges, that is, the full range of the vegetation stages should be represented where vegetation units meet (i.e. Upland Forest and Hemer Farm).

### **1.5 CULTURAL**

- ? As a standard practice, perform basic archaeological surface survey work in areas where physical development will occur.
- ? Assess the structures in the Hemer Farm area to establish their potential for use in park centre/interpretive functions; based on this assessment, maintain the structures for future use.

### **1.6 VISUAL**

- ? Work with government ministries and agencies to establish and enforce set-back, buffering and other development guidelines, to preserve the character of the Holden Lakeshore (i.e. the eastern shore of Holden Lake).

## **2.0 PUBLIC USES**

### **2.1 RECREATION**

- ? Acceptable types of recreation in Hemer Provincial Park include the following:

Walking/hiking, viewing, recording, picnicking, unorganized games, group camping, horseback riding, boat launching/ landing, fishing from shore, and nature/cultural interpretation.

- ? Support the development of a regional trail system connecting Hemer Park with other points-of-interest in the Nanaimo area.

### **2.2 EDUCATION**

- ? Develop an interpretive program addressing the natural and cultural features of the region: develop a flexible program that is interesting to a range of visitors, and that is useable on a guided or self-guided (i.e. independent) basis.
- ? Manage park resources for research and education in conjunction with local community colleges.
- ? Provide information to visitors on how to use the Park responsibly and contribute to its efficient management.

### **2.3 RESEARCH**

- ? Implement a system of recording visitor data on a regular basis.
- ? Visitor surveys should be conducted regularly (i.e. 3-5 years).

## **2.4 VISITOR SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

- ? The Parks Division will provide all necessary facilities.
- ? Although maintenance of facilities and operation of services may be contracted, the Division should establish and enforce clear guidelines for conducting such activities consistent with the character of the Park.

## **2.5 SPECIAL AND OTHER USES**

- ? Special permits may be used as a means of securing needed parkland from adjacent areas.

## **F. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

For Hemer Park to reach its potential, further development of park facilities and amenities should be undertaken to expand recreational opportunities, attract greater visitation, and improve access within the park. The following sequence of facility development is recommended.

### PHASE I: (HIGH PRIORITY)

Given that the Holden Lakeshore offers an area of high recreational amenity, high priority should be placed on improving access to the lakeshore, and upgrading facilities along the lakeshore, as follows:

- ? An access road from Tiesu Road to Holden Lake
- ? A boat launching area including a dock and gravelly beach.
- ? A potable water supply
- ? An additional set of toilets
- ? A dock along the lakeshore trail
- ? A picnic area on the land between the northern arms of Holden Lake
- ? Signs on Cedar Road to direct visitors to the Park

### PHASE II: (MEDIUM PRIORITY)

- ? Modify the existing trail system
- ? Interpretive displays along the trails
- ? Additional rest areas along the trails

### PHASE III: (LOW PRIORITY)

A visitor services plan for the Hemer Farm and an action plan for the farm buildings should be developed. Subject to the findings of these plans, the following improvements are recommended.

- ? A park centre facility using existing farm buildings if feasible, for interpretive displays, meetings and lectures
- ? An access road, drop-off area, and parking lot to service the Park Centre
- ? Display orchard, vegetable/herb garden, and demonstration area for fieldcrops

- ? Outdoor gathering area as a trailhead for the parks trail system
- ? Group camping and picnic area
- ? Bog garden

Subject to the recommendations of the sub-system plan for the Arrowsmith Park District, the feasibility of including land around the north-west arm and the southern tip of Holden Lake within the Park should be reviewed.