

Kootenay Region

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

September, 2004

**for James Chabot
Provincial Park**



Ministry of Water, Land
and Air Protection
Environmental
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James Chabot Provincial Park Approvals Page

Foreword

This management direction statement for James Chabot Provincial Park provides management direction until such time as a more detailed management plan may be prepared. The park was designated to allow for public day use access to the shores and beachfront of Lake Windermere, as well as to create opportunities for nature appreciation in a foreshore and wetland habitat. Furthermore, the park provides a seasonal refuge to many avian, vertebrate, and invertebrate species, some of which are rare or endangered.

Approvals:

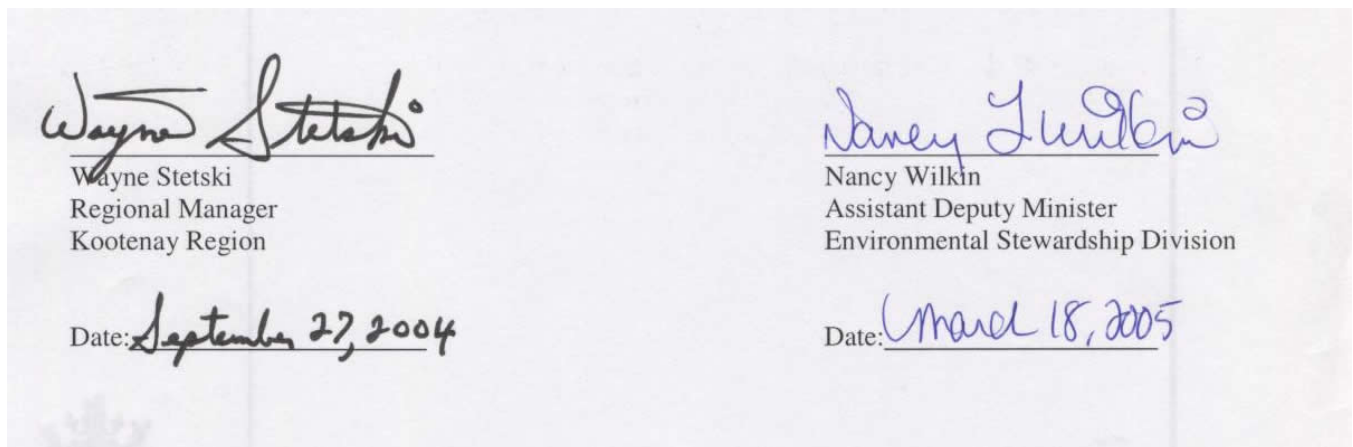


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James Chabot Provincial Park Management Direction Statement

Introduction

Purpose of the Management Direction Statement

Management direction statements (MDS) provide strategic management direction for protected areas that do not have a full management plan. MDS do not necessarily negate the need for future more detailed management plans. Management direction statements also describe protected area values, management issues and concerns; a management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies; and directional statements from other planning processes. While strategies may be identified in the MDS, the completion of all these strategies is subject to funding and funding procedures. In addition, all development associated with these strategies within the park is subject to the Environmental Stewardship Division's Impact Assessment Policy. This management direction statement is intended to provide direction and guidelines for managing James Chabot Provincial Park for the foreseeable future.

Context

- James Chabot Provincial Park is 14 hectares in size, located within the borders of the Southern Rocky Mountain Trench Ecoregion and more specifically the East Kootenay Trench Ecoregion. The park encompasses 0.5% of the protected areas land base that lies within this ecoregion and is part of the internationally significant Columbia wetlands ecosystem.
- The park provides day use beach activities for residents of Invermere and surrounding communities, as well as tourists visiting the Columbia Valley. It is located 3 km west of Hwy 93/95 on the north end of Lake Windermere (Figure 1).
- The East Kootenay Regional District manages 2 Regional Parks (Wycliffe, Tie Lake) that offer similar day use amenities. These regional parks are located within 150 km of James Chabot Provincial Park.
- The District of Invermere provides one day use area (Kinsmen Park) 2 km south of James Chabot Provincial Park along the western shores of Lake Windermere.
- The park possesses special recreation features that are in demand in the East Kootenay, being one of the few public vehicle accessible waterfront areas on the north end of Lake Windermere. Complementing this ease of access are facilities which support a wide range of recreational (land and aquatic) opportunities.
- Within the framework of the Protected Areas Strategy, James Chabot Provincial Park contains special habitat features that support known species at risk.
- The park was designated by Order in Council # 584 in 1979. It was originally named Athalmer Beach after the local community, but renamed James Chabot Provincial Park in 1989 to honour former Parks Minister James Chabot (serving 1978 - 1982).

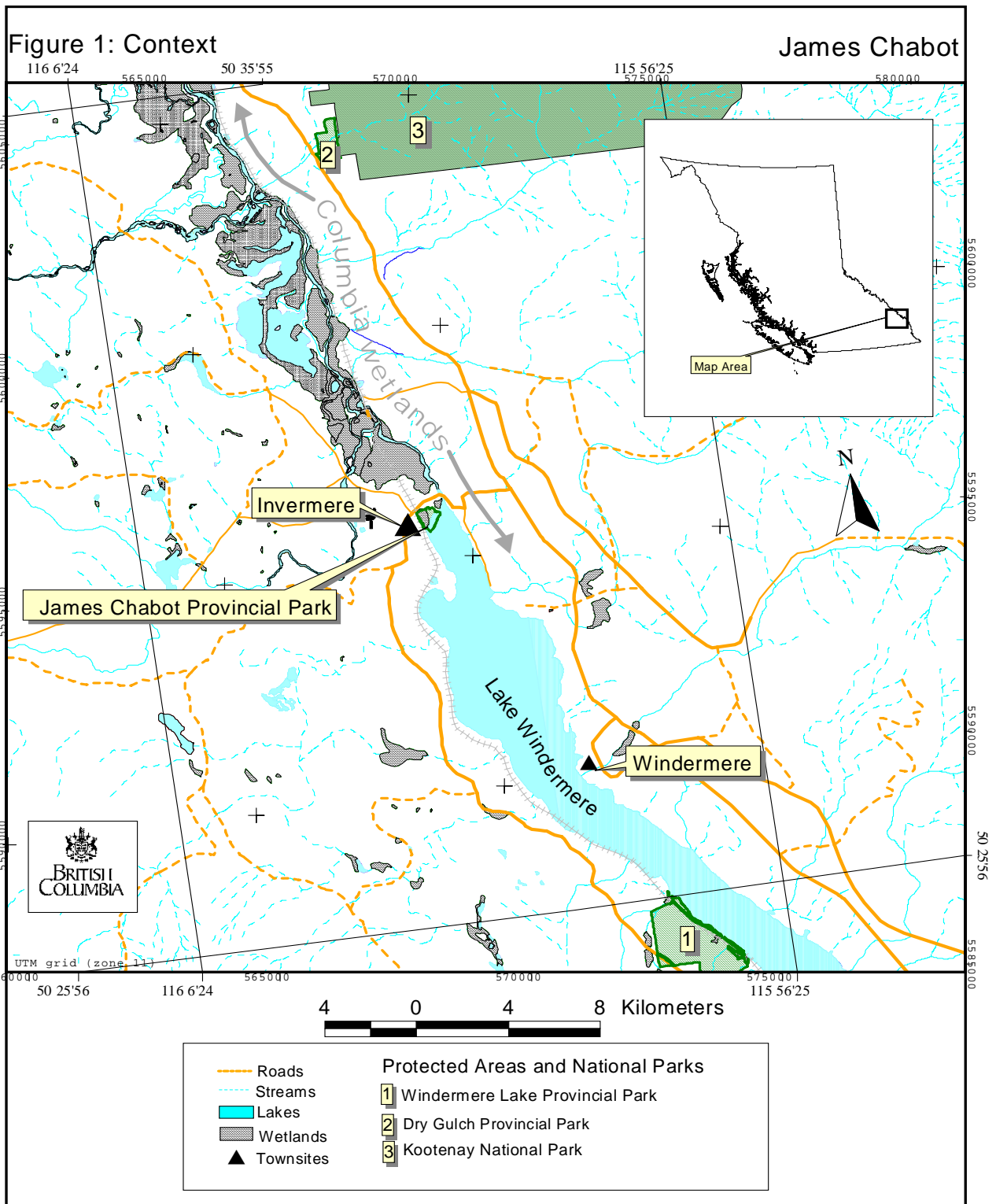
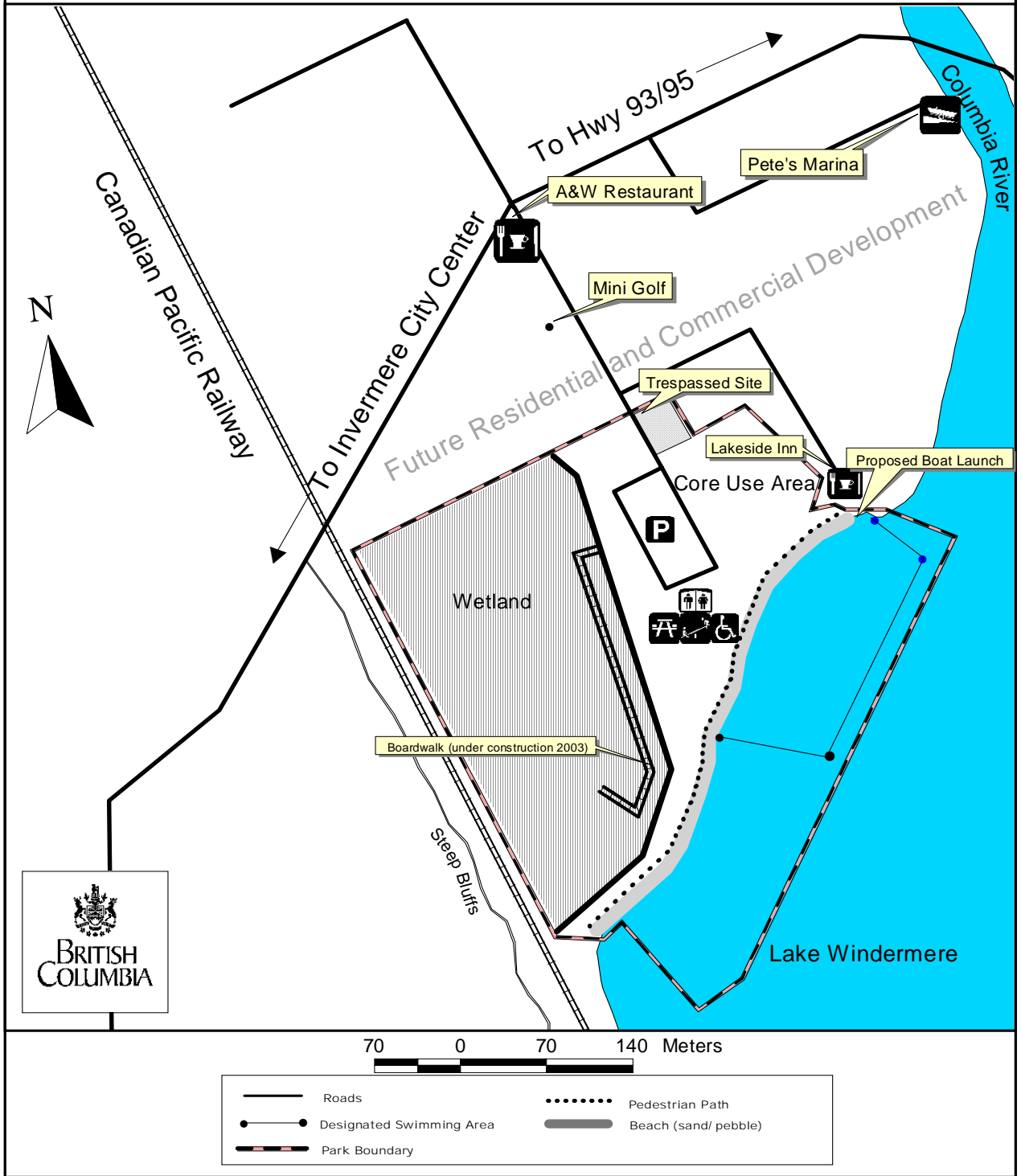


Figure 2: Protected Area Attributes

James Chabot



Protected Area Attributes

Conservation

- Adjacent wetlands support habitat for numerous avian, reptilian, mammalian and insect species, many of which are becoming increasingly rare or endangered.
- In the global context, wetland ecosystems are extremely susceptible to environmental degradation because they are both difficult to replace or restore and have been subjected to human alteration over the last hundred years.
- The important marsh/wetland component of the park is one habitat that provides fine-scale species diversity within the Columbia Basin and contains five ecosystem units (bulrush - cattail, bulrush - marsh arrow grass, beaked sedge - swamp horsetail, cottonwood - spruce- dogwood, and trembling aspen – dogwood - bluegrass).
- Fish species resident in Lake Windermere include trout (bull, rainbow, cutthroat), kokanee, and whitefish. Two species, bull trout and chiselmouth (none collected since 1957), are blue listed (species of special concern) by the provincial Conservation Data Center (CDC). See Appendix I for the entire list of red and blue-listed species that may be present in the park.
- Potentially occurring reptiles and amphibians that are currently listed by CDC are the northern leopard frog (red listed) and the painted turtle (blue listed).
- Eight rare vascular plants are found outside of the park in similar habitats to those inside the park.
- Two rare bird species that have the potential to occur in the park (observed within similar wetland habitat outside of park boundary) are the great blue heron and the American bittern.
- The Columbia Wetlands have been reputed to contain a high diversity¹ of dragonflies. One red-listed invertebrate species (*Argia vivida*) has the potential to occur in the park.

Recreation

- The day-use beach provides access for windsurfing, canoeing, kayaking, swimming and sunbathing. Activities such as swimming are segregated from boating activities (motorized) by a designated swimming area approximately 50 metres from the shoreline, which is gently sloping from shallow to greater depths. No lifeguards are stationed in the park.
- Canoeing and kayaking are often associated with the nearby Columbia River and users frequently skirt the designated swimming area, traveling to points beyond the park boundary. Windsurfing is primarily an open water activity (facilitated by strong southwesterly winds) and participants are able to use the park's foreshore as a launching area.
- Grass and maintained sand areas complement the volleyball court, picnic areas, and children's adventure playground located in the core use area. The beach area is

¹ Dragonfly inventory in James Chabot Provincial Park by the Royal BC Museum (Cannings 1982/83). Total of 41 species.

covered with coarse pebble/ sand substrate that is not maintained. A small gravel pathway travels in an east - west direction along the border between the grass and beach area. The path gradually becomes indistinct on the western fringes of the park. A concrete ramp into the water provides access for individuals in wheelchairs.

- Fishing on Lake Windermere often occurs beyond the beach area or from the adjacent private dock situated at the Lakeshore Inn.
- Commercial Services and retail establishments immediately adjacent to the park offer a variety of amenities to park users.
- Nature appreciation and wildlife viewing are most often associated with the marsh habitat to the northwest of the core use area. Marsh and wetland habitat provides park users an opportunity to observe a variety of indigenous plant and animal species throughout the year.
- A 350 m long elevated boardwalk was recently construction which allows pedestrians to view wildlife and appreciate the wetland complex within the park. The boardwalk is part of a much greater initiative by the Columbia Rivers Greenways Alliance to link natural habitat and green spaces along the Columbia River. The project (including the James Chabot boardwalk) has been funded solely by grants and in-kind donations of labour and materials.

Cultural Heritage

- The area now known as Athalmer and the north end of Lake Windermere were known to have sustained large numbers of First Nations encampments during the pre-colonial period. These settlements were frequented during salmon runs along the Columbia River. The runs are now extinct because of dams on the lower reaches of the river.
- The park is located within close proximity to the salmon beds along the Columbia River, known traditionally as “Kwataqnuq,” meaning, “where the water leaves the lake.”

Significance in the Protected Area System

- Special Recreational Features:
 - Within the entire East Kootenay region, only a small number of public parks provide full amenities for day-use and offer a variety of land and aquatic activities for park visitors.
 - One of the few public vehicle accessible beaches and waterfront areas on Lake Windermere.
 - Provides a unique opportunity for park visitors to experience wetland habitat while providing maintained facilities for picnicking, children’s activities, and outdoor recreation on both land and water.
- Special Natural Features:
 - Adjacent wetland habitat supports a wide variety of indigenous species (some listed as rare under CDC ranking – see Appendix 1) representative of the East Kootenay Trench Ecosystem.
 - The marsh area contains five ecosystem units, indicating the area provides very high fine-scale habitat diversity.

- Within the Columbia Basin, wetland ecosystems are extremely susceptible to commercial development, residential and industrial expansion. Global warming and water reservoirs (such as the Libby and Mica Dams) compound the threats to these areas by the alteration of historic water table levels.
- Cultural Heritage Significance
 - The Ktunaxa people have traditionally used the area encompassing James Chabot Provincial Park both in historic times and in the pre-historic era.
 - As most of the park is highly disturbed by development and land fill it is uncertain what, if any, cultural heritage values may still be present below the soil surface.

Land Use, Tenures and Interests

Access

Travel 3 km west of Highway 93/95, then turn left at the intersection of Third Avenue and Highway 801R in the community of Athalmer. A short entrance road leads to two paved parking lots with a capacity for 171 vehicles.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- Maintenance and daily operations are contracted to a park facility operator. Two special events are allowed on an annual basis through park use permits (PUP) issued to the Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association of Canada and the Windermere Loop Triathlon.

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- There is residential and commercial development within the Athalmer area, in which a significant portion is the responsibility of Lake Windermere Resort Ltd. Much of the land base around the park boundary is being prepared for building by pre-loading (up to 3 metres of infill placed on natural substrate).
- Immediately outside the park boundary are restaurants (fast food, pub and fine dining) and a mini golf facility (along main entrance road). Patrons of the nearby Lakeside Inn are able to view the entire beach area of the park and a dock located on this property provides a viewscape of Lake Windermere.
- Water vessels on Lake Windermere influence the park greatly and the close proximity of a public boat launch (Pete's Marina) on the west bank of the Columbia River creates additional water traffic to the east of the park.
- The Canadian Pacific Railway has a major right-of-way west of the park boundary.
- Neighbouring residents have incorporated the park to act as a travel corridor (existing trail along beachfront), in lieu of using roadways to access the Invermere city centre from the Athalmer area.

First Nations Interests

- Management of the park will require ongoing consultation with the Ktunaxa Nation.
- It is the request of the Ktunaxa Kinbasket Tribal Council that the Chief and Council of both the Columbia Lake Indian Band and Shuswap (Secwepemc) Indian Band be consulted with reference to any future management planning of the park.

Other Agency Interests

- District of Invermere
 - Development Services (provides Environmental Stewardship Division with development plans for the surrounding area and outlines those which may positively or negatively impact the park. Overseer of the Lake Windermere Management Committee/Society)
 - The District also has an interest in locating a boat launch/marina within the park.
- East Kootenay Regional District (governs mandate of the Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan)
- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
 - water protection, monitoring and reporting
 - enforcement of applicable acts and regulations
- Land and Water British Columbia Inc. (responsibility for adjacent Crown land tenures²).
- Land Reserve Commission (coordination with local governments regarding adjacent land reserves)
- Ministry of Health Services
 - Public Health Protection Branch (ensures continual water quality testing in Lake Windermere)
- Ministry of Transportation (maintenance of access right-of-ways, roadway signage)

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

The following groups are representative of the local residents, tourism and community supporters who promote various recreational and environmental attributes of the area.

- *Columbia Valley Green Way Alliance*
 - Interest: The Columbia River Greenways Alliance is a collaborative organization whose mission is to develop a network of linear corridors of open natural spaces that maintain the wildlife habitat and recreational legacy of the region and enhance the ecological, economic, and community well-being of the Upper Columbia Valley. They are currently constructing a boardwalk within the park to enhance the public's appreciation of the wetland habitat.

² Public land external yet within close proximity to James Chabot Provincial Park is located immediately adjacent the CPR right-of-way (west of park boundary) and the area encompassing the public boat launch facility at Pete's Marina.

- *Lower Lake View Community Association*
 - Interest: promoting the community use and appreciation of James Chabot Provincial Park and encouraging sustainable development in the area.
- *Wings Over the Rockies*
 - Interest: an annual Spring event that promotes the rich diversity and populations of bird species in the Columbia Valley.
- *Columbia Valley Field Naturalists*
 - Interest: The Columbia Valley Field Naturalists Society is dedicated to the conservation and enjoyment of the Columbia Valley's wildlife and natural habitats. The CVFN are enthusiastic participants, volunteers and hosts during the Wings Over the Rockies Bird Festivals.

Park Role Statement

The primary role of James Chabot Provincial Park is to allow for public day use access to the shores and beachfront of Lake Windermere. The park provides residents and out of province visitors the opportunity to recreate in a serene lakefront setting, in an otherwise highly developed and commercialized centre.

A secondary role of the park is to provide nature appreciation and wildlife viewing opportunities in a foreshore environment and wetland habitat. Furthermore, the park serves as a natural buffer between adjacent commercial/residential development and Lake Windermere. The park also provides a seasonal refuge to many avian, vertebrate, and invertebrate species, some of which are rare or endangered.



Photo: View south toward Windermere Lake across one of the wetland sections in the park. Private commercial building is in the upper left with the park day use beach/picnic area in the upper right.

Management Commitments and Issues

Management Direction from Previous Planning

James Chabot Provincial Park is not mentioned in the Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan or Implementation Strategy, but some management direction for the park has been proposed through a planning process under the direction of the District of Invermere. The Lake Windermere Management Strategy, drafted in February 2001, addresses development and use of Lake Windermere including suggestions for development and expansion of James Chabot Provincial Park.

Management Issues

Theme	Issue
Adjacent Private Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The District of Invermere's Official Community Plan consists of major development surrounding the park (e.g., Lake Windermere Resort). As a result, there may be impact on social carrying capacity, existing park facilities and wetland habitat.
Boat Access to Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The park has been identified as one of the best sites to develop a boat launch. A boat launch in the park would help resolve water access issues at other parts of the lake but there are safety concerns for swimmers and conservation issues related to development.
Facility Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concentrated use in peak season has impacted facilities (picnic tables, turf, and sprinkler system). Park visitor comments identify dissatisfaction with copious amounts of geese (<i>branta canadensis</i>) fecal matter along beachfront
Wetland Habitat Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial and recreation development (existing or proposed) pose a risk to remaining aquatic and terrestrial habitat. The lake: supports nesting osprey; habitat for endangered birds; is part of the Pacific flyway; possesses high numbers of insect species (order <i>Odonata</i>); and retains two blue-listed (vulnerable) species of fish.

Management Direction

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

Objective	Strategy
Maintain recreational and tourism values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance/repair existing facilities to accommodate increased future visitor use. • Continue analyzing visitor satisfaction on an annual basis and apply information to assess carrying capacity of the park. • Assess feasibility of boat launch locations within the developed portions of the park boundary. Continue to provide safe water access to Lake Windermere (non-motorized).
Conserve natural qualities of the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain undeveloped wetland for conservation purposes. • Monitor progress of adjacent commercial and residential development for potential impacts on park integrity. • Future park development should incorporate appreciation and understanding of natural surroundings (interpretive signage).
First Nations uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with First Nations to determine traditional uses of the site and ensure access for traditional uses (once confirmed).

Consultation and Future Planning

Planning and management of the park will conform to the intent and direction set forth in the Protected Areas Strategy. The Environmental Stewardship Division is accountable for planning, administration and management of the park through the application of the *Park Act* and other applicable laws, policies and regulations. The Environmental Stewardship Division will coordinate with other agencies, the District of Invermere, various public stakeholders, and First Nations as required.

Zoning Plan

The Environmental Stewardship Division uses zoning as a tool to assist in the planning and management of a provincial park. In general terms, zoning divides a park into logical units for management. It applies uniform and consistent management objectives based on natural, cultural and recreational values, and existing and projected patterns of access and recreation use in relation to specific conservation goals. The zones reflect the intended land use, the degree of human use, level of management and development

permitted. The spectrum includes five zoning options: Intensive Recreation, Nature Recreation, Special Feature, Wilderness Recreation and Wilderness Conservation.

James Chabot Provincial Park is separated into two management planning zones (Figure 4): Special Feature and Intensive Recreation.

Special Feature Zone: The objective of this zone is to protect and present significant natural or cultural resources, features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage values.

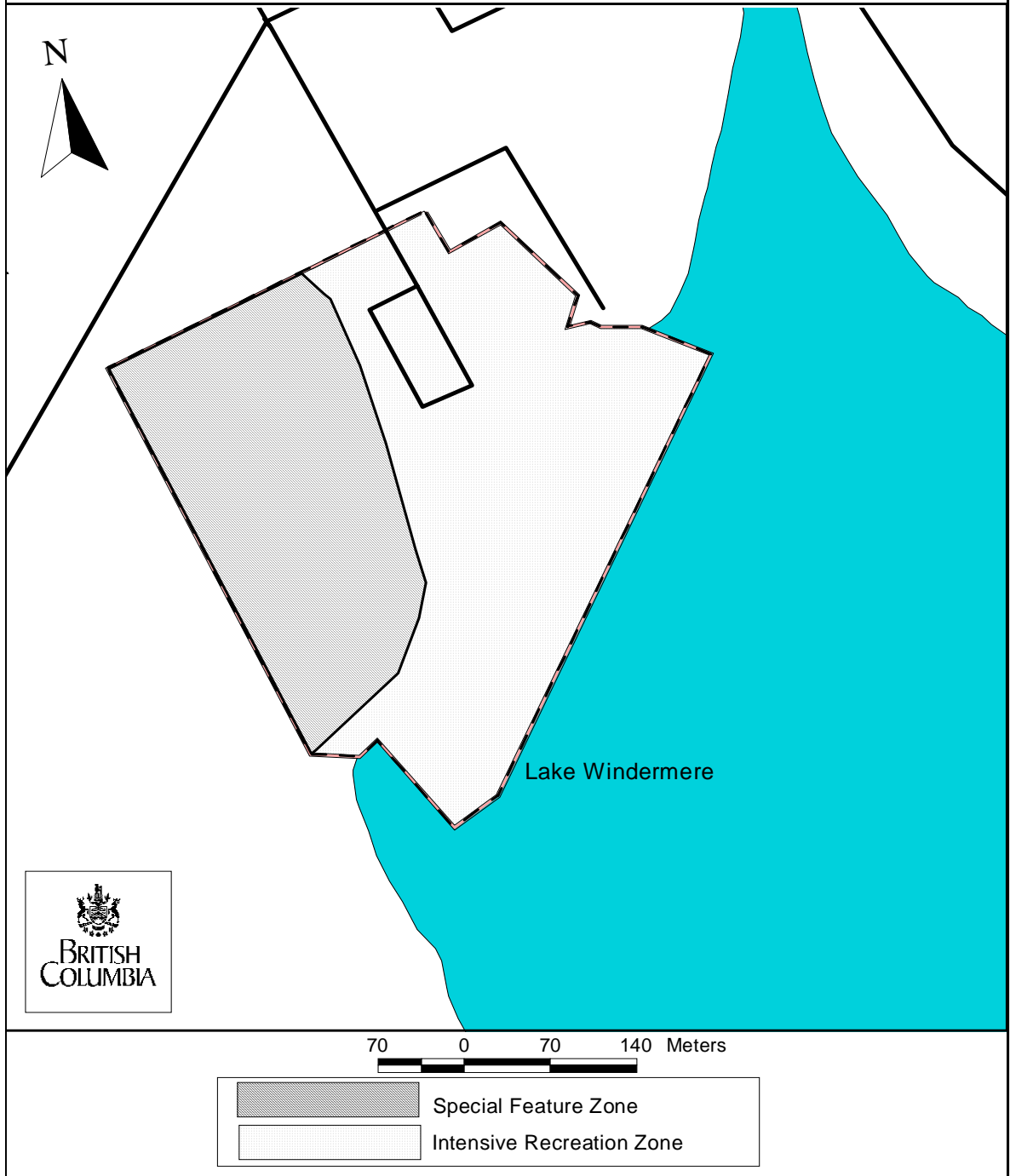
With respect to James Chabot Provincial Park, the undeveloped portion of the park exemplifies an intact wetland ecosystem, unique within the township of Invermere, which provides critical habitat for a variety of terrestrial, aquatic and avian species. Public appreciation of the wetland complex is enhanced by an elevated boardwalk (completion May 2003), which allows for unobtrusive wildlife viewing opportunities. In James Chabot Provincial Park, the Special Feature Zone encompasses 7 ha of total park area.

Intensive Recreation Zone: The objective of this zone is to provide for a variety of readily accessible, facility oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.

The setting of the park along the shores of Lake Windermere affords residents and tourists to enjoy one of the few public accessible beaches and swimming areas within the lower Columbia valley. The Intensive Recreation zoning within the park is intended to reflect the current high level of day use at this site, including activities such as paddling, windsurfing, bird watching, swimming and picnicking. The facility infrastructure is highly developed (e.g., washroom and change buildings, playground, beach volley ball area). In James Chabot Provincial Park, the Intensive Recreation Zone encompasses 3 hectares of total park area.

Figure 4: Zoning

James Chabot



Appendix A: Table of Acceptable Uses, Activities and Facilities

(*outlines guidelines for managing uses, activities and facilities in the park)

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptability
Aboriginal traditional activities and uses	Y
Hunting	N
Fishing	Y
Hiking	Y
Paddling	Y
Windsurfing	Y
Bicycling	Y
Picnicking/Swimming	Y
Pet/Domestic Dogs (on leash)	Y
Adventure Playground	Y
Wheelchair Access (land)	Y
Wheelchair Access (water)	Y
Trapping	N/A
Grazing (Domestic Livestock)	N/A
Recreational Gold Panning/ Rock Hounding	N/A
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N/A
Commercial Recreation (non-facility based)	N/A
Backcountry Huts	N/A
Water Control Structures	N/A
Fish Stocking and Enhancement	N1
Road Access	Y
Off-road Access (snowmobiling)	N/A
Off-road Access (motorised)	N
Off-road Access (mechanized activities)	N
Motorized Water Access (Non -swimming Areas)	Y
Aircraft Access	Y
Fire Management (suppression)	Y
Fire Management (prescribed fire management)	N
Fire Management (prevention)	Y
Forest Insect/Disease Control	N/A
Noxious Weed Control	Y
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	N1
Scientific Research (specimen collection)	Y
Scientific Research (manipulative activities)	N

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

N/A= not applicable.

Appendix B: Red and Blue-Listed Species

(potentially occurring within James Chabot Provincial Park).

**Adapted from Conservation Data Centre Tracking Lists (Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management) and Wetlands Assessment for James Chabot Provincial Park (August 2000).*

Vascular Plants

Common Name	Species	Provincial Status	Proximity to Park
Booth's willow	<i>Salix boothi</i>	Blue listed	Athalmer
Long leaved aster	<i>Aster ascendens</i>	Blue listed	Edgewater
Nuttall's sunflower	<i>Helianthus eriopoda</i>	Red listed	Columbia wetlands
Akali plantain	<i>Plantago eriopoda</i>	Red listed	Athalmer
Stiff-leaved pondweed	<i>Potamogeton strictifolius</i>	Blue listed	Lake Windermere
Marsh muhly	<i>Muhlenbergia glomerata</i>	Blue listed	Athalmer
Pale bulrush	<i>Scripus pallidus</i>	Blue listed	Fairmont Hot Springs
Beaked spike –rush	<i>Eleocharis rostellata</i>	Blue listed	Columbia Lake

Invertebrates

Vivid Dancer	<i>Argia vivida</i>	Red listed	Fairmont Hot Springs
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Reptiles

Painted Turtle	<i>Chrysemys picta</i>	Blue listed	Columbia wetlands
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Amphibians

Northern Leopard Frog	<i>Rana pipiens</i>	Red listed	Columbia wetlands
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Birds

American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	Blue listed	Columbia wetlands
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias herodias</i>	Blue listed	Columbia wetlands

Fishes

Bull trout	<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>	Blue listed	Lake Windermere
Chiselmouth	<i>Acrocheilus alutaceus</i>	Blue listed	Lake Windermere *(not recorded since 1957)