

MANAGEMENT PLAN

February, 1999



for Marble Range and Edge Hills
Provincial Parks



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Environment,
Lands and Parks
BC Parks Division

Marble Range and Edge Hills
Provincial Parks

MANAGEMENT
PLAN

Prepared by
BC Parks
Cariboo District
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**Marble Range and Provincial Park
Edge Hills Provincial Park**

MANAGEMENT

PLAN
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PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Cariboo Chicotin Land Use Plan

- The management plan for Marble Range and Edge Hills Provincial Parks was developed with the direct involvement of Clinton and area residents, and through public review of a draft plan.
- These parks are two of seventeen protected areas created by the Cariboo Chilcotin Land Use Plan and park objectives are drawn, in part, from direction provided by the regional plan.
- The parks are surrounded by a Special Resource Development Zone which is intended, among other functions, to help protect integrity of the parks.
- Marble Range and Edge Hills Parks will be managed as wilderness parks to protect the ecosystem and outdoor recreation attributes, and particularly to conserve wildlife habitat and resident populations of California bighorn sheep and mule deer.

Management of Natural and Cultural Values

- Management focus is on the maintenance of natural plant communities and their contributions to summer and winter wildlife habitat.
- A vegetation management plan will be prepared that includes a wildfire management plan, a weed control plan, an overall livestock grazing strategy and a disease and insect management strategy.
- BC Parks will work with the Ministry of Forests to manage livestock grazing within the parks through range use plans and park use permits. The regional plan identifies grazing as a permitted activity.
- A long-term plan for wildlife will be prepared in collaboration with BC Environment that addresses requirements for information, habitat management and species populations. The regional plan specifies that hunting is a permitted activity.
- Cultural values in the parks, including an area of historic settlement and use by the Shuswap people, will be protected. Settlement sites will be identified so that their integrity can be maintained.

Management of Outdoor Recreation

- Visitors will continue to be able to pursue traditional outdoor recreation activities consistent with the wilderness character of the parks, including hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, photography and nature appreciation.
- Recreation activities will be monitored for their potential impacts on natural values, particularly on wildlife ranges and populations, and on cultural values.
- Levels of recreational guiding will be monitored and assessed to minimize impacts from commercial operations. Commercial recreation operations will be managed through park use permits to ensure that levels of activity and user awareness are consistent with management objectives for the parks.
- An informal network of trails will continue to be the only access within the parks. The unroaded character of the parks will be maintained.

Values on Adjacent Lands

- Several areas on the periphery of the parks are important for their recreational or ecological values, requiring special attention within sub-regional plans, or as possible candidates for future park completion.
- The Cariboo Chilcotin Land Use Plan states: *With regard to Marble Range Protected Area, the mineral tenure holder on the west side, Continental Lime, has indicated that it would be prepared in the future to relinquish any tenures not required for its operations. The area involved could then be added back to the protected area.*



Plate 1: Limestone ridges typical of the Marble Range

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Marble Range and Edge Hills Provincial Parks were established in July 1995 as a result of the protected area recommendations contained in the Cariboo - Chilcotin Land Use Plan (CCLUP), and were among 17 protected area designations in the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Although these parks were established to protect their dominant ecological values, a commitment was made that activities such as recreation, cattle grazing, hunting, trapping and backcountry tourism should continue.

Marble Range and Edge Hills Provincial Parks are located approximately 170 kilometers south of Williams Lake in south central B.C., just west of the community of Clinton. Map 1 shows park locations. These small parks (Marble Range at 17,920 hectares and Edge Hills at 11,882 hectares) lie adjacent to each other and are separated by the Jesmond Road corridor.

Marble Range and Edge Hills protect important habitat for mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and California bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*), and include a wide elevation range from sagebrush grasslands to alpine tundra conditions.

Central to the management of these parks is the protection of wildlife populations and their habitats. Consequently, these areas are managed as wilderness areas that are not regularly serviced or patrolled, with activities restricted primarily to wilderness-based day use and no-trace camping.

The *Park Act*, *Park Amendment Act, 1997* and the Park and Recreation Area Regulations provide the legal framework for the management of these parks. Amendments to the *Park Act* in 1995 and the *Park Amendment Act* in 1997 allow the range of activities that were approved in the CCLUP, but that were not previously permitted under the *Park Act*. Both Marble Range and Edge Hills Parks are included in Schedule D of the *Park Act, Chapter 344, 1996*.

The legal descriptions of the boundaries of Marble Range and Edge Hills Parks can be found in *Appendix A*.

1.1 The Management Planning Process

This *management plan* has been prepared by BC Parks to guide park management over a 10-20 year term. Under the direction provided by the *Park Act*, the *Park Amendment Act, 1997* and the Park and Recreation Area Regulations, a management plan sets out objectives and actions for conservation, development, interpretation and recreational use. A management plan relies on information relating to such things as natural resources, cultural activities, current recreation uses and activities occurring on surrounding lands. The process for preparing a plan involves analysis of the overall goals of the park, patterns

of use, management objectives, and possible sources of conflict among park policies. Through the process, various options for managing the park are assessed for their ability to reach a balance between protecting the natural values from damage and managing human uses of the area. In the larger parks, the park area is broken down into management units to apply a variety of objectives and actions on the land base.

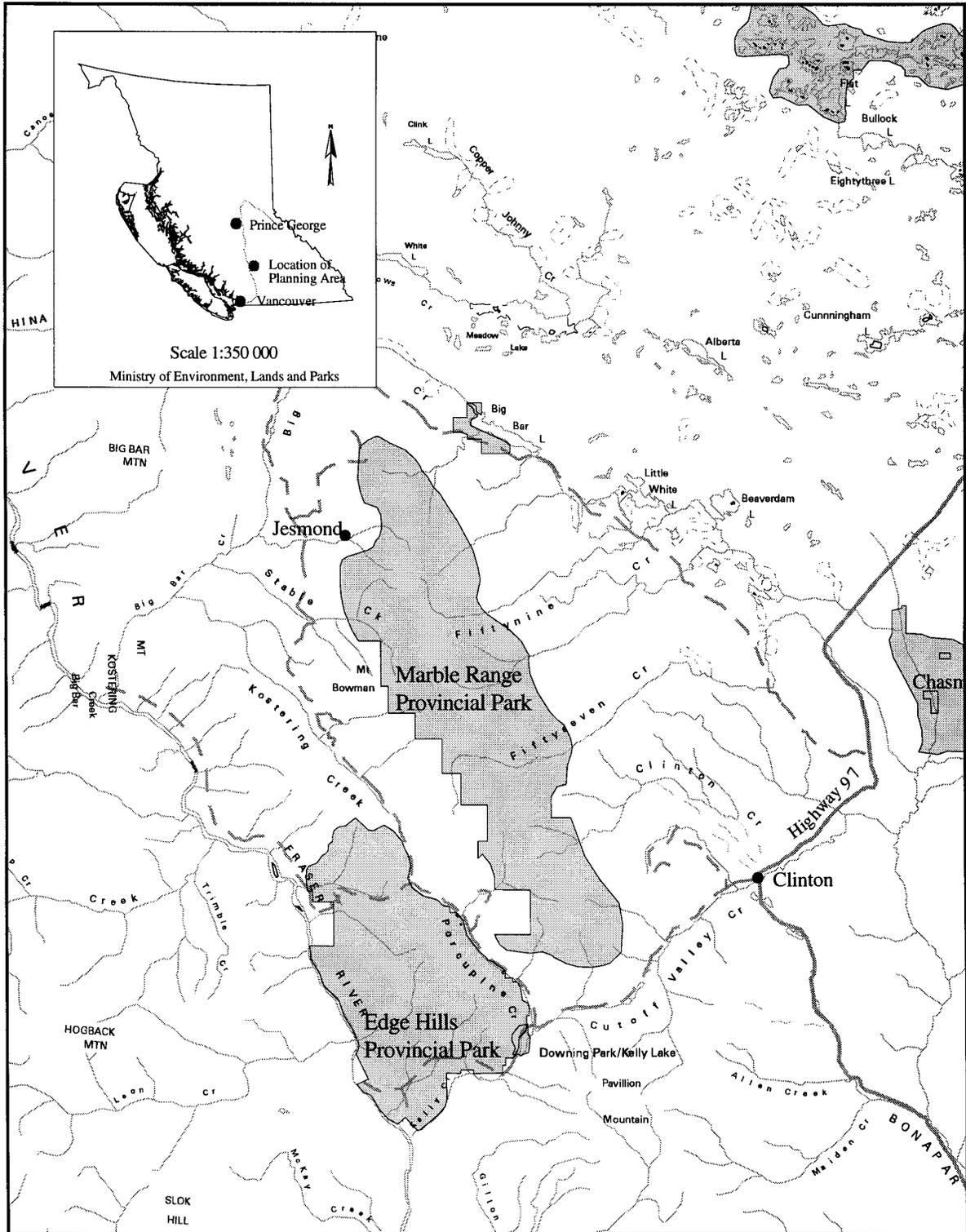
A management plan not only establishes long-term management direction for a park, but also deals with immediate issues. This means that a plan must contain numerous statements describing management actions to be undertaken. Since BC Parks cannot carry out every task at the same time, the plan must also rank the priority of the management actions.

BC Parks prepares management plans with a high degree of public involvement. The general public and special interest groups have opportunities to provide comments to BC Parks through a variety of means, including public meetings, workshops and reviews of written materials. In the case of Marble Range and Edge Hills, a group of local residents, the Clinton and District CORE Group, provided land use recommendations to the CCLUP, including proposals for protection of the Marble Range and Edge Hills areas. BC Parks has worked closely with the Clinton and District CORE Group to prepare a vision statement and management objectives for the parks, forming the foundation for the management plan. The flowchart in Figure 1 shows the general stages of management plan preparation.

This management plan consists of nine main sections:

- 1) an introductory section that provides background and context for the creation and management of these parks;
- 2) a description of the contribution of the parks to the provincial protected areas strategy and the vision for these park areas;
- 3) an explanation of park management zones that describes how different areas of the parks will be managed;
- 4) a description of the natural and cultural values of the parks and their respective management objectives and strategies;
- 5) statements of objectives and strategies for managing outdoor recreation opportunities and access to the parks;
- 6) a description of peripheral areas of importance because of their contributions to values and activities within the parks;
- 7) a communications strategy for these parks for the near future;
- 8) a listing of priority management activities and plan implementation considerations that should be undertaken in the short-term (over the next 5 years); and
- 9) a series of appendices that contain information relevant to the plan.

Map 1. Locations and Features



A public meeting was held
in Clinton to organize a public workshop.
October 29, 1996

A public workshop involving
Clinton and area residents sought advice on park vision,
objectives and management strategies.
December 1996

BC Parks prepared workshop results in a
management planning format .

A second public workshop reviewed a proposed
vision statement and management objectives and strategies, and
made necessary changes; results provided interim park
management direction and were used as key components of
a draft management plan.
February 1, 1997

The 1997 summer field season was used to
augment the information base for the parks.

BC Parks prepared a draft management plan for
broad public review.
October 1997

A public workshop reviewed the draft management
plan prior to its general circulation.
November 30, 1997

Broad public and agency review of the draft management plan.
January & February 1998

Review and approval by Inter Agency Management Committee
and Regional Resource Board.

Using the advice received, BC Parks completes the
management plan for Marble Range and Edge Hills Parks.
March 1999

1.2 Relationship With Other Land Use Planning

1.2.1 Regional Context and Direction from the CCLUP

Working directly with the people of the Cariboo-Chilcotin, the provincial government developed a land use plan for the region in October 1994. The Cariboo-Chilcotin Land Use Plan (CCLUP) addresses long-standing concerns about the stability of resource supplies and subsequent effects on the region's economy and job security. It also sets out management strategies for sustaining the integrity of the region's natural environment, including the creation of protected areas such as Marble Range and Edge Hills Parks.

The CCLUP provides five land use zone designations for resource lands that describe the management intent based on intensity of use: Enhanced Resource Development, Special Resource Development, Integrated Resource Management, Settlement Lands and Protected Areas.

Protected Areas

Marble Range and Edge Hills Parks are zoned as protected areas under the CCLUP and were subsequently designated as Class A provincial parks. The CCLUP provides a number of directives for management of values and activities within these protected areas, in addition to those provided by protected area legislation and regulations, including:

- o a protected area is land on which the dominant ecological values should be protected and that uses, such as recreation, livestock grazing, hunting, trapping and backcountry tourism, will be allowed
- o mineral and placer tenures are not compatible within protected areas; mining tenures fully within park boundaries will be extinguished and fair compensation paid to tenure holders
- o hunting and trapping will continue
- o commercial tourism and recreation can be permitted, where appropriate, recognizing the need for protection of special natural values and the provision for public, non-commercial recreation
- o existing approved levels of cattle grazing will be maintained by zone; specific management requirements and opportunities for enhancement can be addressed in subsequent management plans
- o the maximum level of animal unit months of grazing in protected areas is set at the level authorized as of October 24, 1994
- o no private land will be included in protected areas.

Marble Range SRDZ

Marble Range and Edge Hills Parks are surrounded entirely by Crown lands zoned as Special Resource Development Zones (SRDZ) by the CCLUP. The Special Resource Development Zone is an area where “significant fish, wildlife, ecosystem, backcountry recreation and tourism values exist”. These low intensity areas recognize the sensitive nature of certain lands outside protected areas that contribute a range of values including: natural resource conservation and maintenance; resource development and extraction; commercial and non-commercial recreation and tourism; and fishing, trapping and hunting.

Broad management objectives have been defined for each SRDZ. Resource development activities in these zones will be carried out in a manner that respects sensitive natural values. In the Marble Range SRDZ, which encompasses both Marble Range and Edge Hills Parks, mining, agriculture, timber harvesting, tourism, wildcraft/agro-forestry, fishing, hunting and recreation activities will have access to the zone. Activities to enhance forest productivity, grazing, fish and wildlife resources, and tourism opportunities will occur on a site-specific basis.

The CCLUP describes the Marble SRDZ as providing a buffer around Marble Range and Edge Hills Parks. It calls for the following management regime in the Marble Range SRDZ:

Grazing

- ◆ maintain the currently authorized level of animal unit months by range unit

Botanical Forest Products

- ◆ maintain road access to 50 percent of the zone, with access to the remainder being walk-in off permanent roads

Tourism

- ◆ promote tourism development and focus tourism use on the backcountry areas identified in the recreation targets (see below)
- ◆ maintain the quality of the viewshed surrounding existing tourism operations
- ◆ develop a network of trails linking tourism developments with the backcountry areas in the Marble Range

Mining

- ◆ maintain access to 100 percent of the area outside of those portions reserved from this activity (for example, protected areas)
- ◆ maintain the mine development objectives of Continental Lime
- ◆ adjust protected area boundaries to exclude mineral and placer tenures on the periphery of the parks
- ◆ consider adding mineral tenure areas on the west side of Marble Range Park to the park, if these are relinquished in the future by Continental Lime

Recreation

maintain 40 percent of the zone in backcountry condition; this figure includes high elevation portions of the Marble Range and areas adjacent to the Fraser River

- ◆ maintain the visual quality in the low elevation portions of the Marble Range and the Fraser River Valley (including Edge Hills Park)

Fish and Wildlife

- ◆ manage the Fraser River mainstream banks for salmon stocks through riparian area protection and controls on the rate of timber harvesting
- ◆ manage for biodiversity targets according to the regional biodiversity strategy and the Forest Practices Code
- ◆ maintain riparian habitats through the establishment of riparian management zones on all streams, lakes and wetlands as specified under the Forest Practices Code and Riparian Guidelines
- ◆ manage for California bighorn sheep, moose (*Alces alces*), fur-bearer, species at risk and other sensitive habitats within the areas identified as riparian buffers, recreation areas, mule deer winter range and lakeshore management areas, and throughout this zone under the biodiversity conservation strategy
- ◆ establish landscape units which include both the SRDZ and adjacent park areas, and manage in conjunction with the park areas to maintain representational values
- ◆ maintain mule deer winter range values through modified timber harvest regimes over approximately 18 percent of the forest in this zone
- ◆ maintain community watershed values over the Clinton Creek Community Watershed
- ◆ inventory and manage for rare limestone plant associations

Timber

- ◆ harvest about 42 percent of the productive forest land in this zone in a conventional manner and about 48 percent in a modified way; 10 percent should not be subject to harvesting

1.2.2 Sub-regional Land Use Planning

A primary means of implementing the CCLUP, including its targets for the Marble Range SRDZ, is through sub-regional land use planning and local planning at more refined levels of detail. Sub-regional plans (including park management plans) should be consistent with the intent of the CCLUP, while providing refinements and options not identifiable at the regional scale.

BC Parks participates directly on the inter-agency sub-regional planning team for the area surrounding Marble Range and Edge Hills (part of the 100 Mile Forest District). As a result, BC Parks staff have an opportunity to directly influence land and resource management on the periphery of the parks. A number of concerns exist with respect to management of activities adjacent to the parks that draws attention to the importance of the sub-regional planning process, including critical park concerns of (1) key wildlife species using habitat adjacent to the parks, (2) quality of visual landscapes across park boundaries that are important for visitor experience, (3) managing outdoor recreation opportunities and developments, (4)

managing access in the vicinity of park boundaries and (5) providing direction to resource development activities near the parks.

1.3 Relationships with Other Agencies

BC Parks works directly with other land and resource management agencies to address specific management issues in the parks. For example, coordination with BC Environment is required for regulating hunting and for studies of wildlife populations and habitats. To manage livestock grazing, BC Parks and the Ministry of Forests have a formal protocol arrangement by which the Ministry of Forests manages range tenures in the parks under the authority of the *Range Act*.

BC Parks staff also work directly with staff of the Ministry of Forests in managing wildfire, forest pests and diseases, and vegetation within and near the parks. Fire management and vegetation management plans for Marble Range and Edge Hills will be prepared in collaboration with the Forest Service.

Either directly, or with the help of other government agencies, BC Parks will work with industrial resource managers to ensure that resource development plans and operations reflect considerations for park management. To assist in this regard, BC Parks participates in government agency reviews of applications for tenures (permits, licenses, leases) in areas near the parks where proposed activities could affect park values or management strategies.

1.4 Relationship with First Nations

Aboriginal people have traditionally occupied and used the area in and around Marble Range and Edge Hills Parks. By virtue of this traditional use and continued presence in the region, three Shuswap First Nations assert their aboriginal rights over the area: the Whispering Pines First Nation, the Canoe Creek First Nation and the High Bar First Nation.

The people of the High Bar First Nation are located in the Clinton and Big Bar areas. The Canoe Creek First Nation is located at Dog Creek, south of Alkali Lake. The Whispering Pines First Nation reserve is on the North Thompson River about 30 kilometers north of the city of Kamloops, B.C. This Band was moved there (in the 1970's by the BC Hydro Corporation) from their traditional home at Kelly Lake, on the southeastern boundary of Edge Hills Park.

A primary concern raised by First Nations during the establishment of the CCLUP was the potential of the CCLUP to prejudice future treaty negotiations. The provincial government provided a commitment to work with First Nations on a government-to-government basis, which will be without prejudice to aboriginal rights and treaty negotiations. It is explicit in the CCLUP that future cooperative management activities would lead to a sharing by First Nations in the economic and social benefits that follow from CCLUP implementation.

Affected First Nations will be contacted directly by BC Parks and invited to participate in the preparation of this management plan. It is important that effective working relationships continue to develop between agency staff and First Nations people to ensure that the exercise of aboriginal rights is not impaired by park management activities, and that park management objectives for vegetation and wildlife are as compatible as possible with First Nation objectives.