

Vancouver Island Region

MANAGEMENT
DIRECTION
STATEMENT

September 2003

for Nimpkish Lake
Provincial Park



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Water Land
and Air Protection
Environmental Stewards
Division

Nimpkish Lake Provincial Park Approvals Page

Forward

Nimpkish Lake Provincial Park was established to protect representative ecosystem of very wet Coastal Western Hemlock ecosystem in the Nahwitti Lowlands, and to protect significant fish habitat.

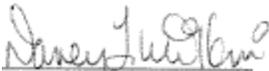
This management direction statement for Nimpkish Lake Provincial Park provides management direction until such time as a more detailed management plan is prepared.

Approvals



Dick Heath
Regional Manager

Date: Oct. 29/03



Nancy Wilkin
Assistant Deputy Minister

Date: March 31/04

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Introduction

Purpose of the Management Direction Statement

Management direction statements (MDS) provide strategic management direction for all protected areas that do not have an approved management plan but do not negate the need for more detailed management plans in the future. Management direction statements include protected area values; management issues and concerns; and priority management objectives and strategies. The implementation and completion of all these strategies to resolve management issues is subject to available funding. In addition, all development associated with these strategies, is subject to BC Parks Impact Assessment Policy within the protected areas.

Context

Nimpkish Lake Provincial Park is located on northern Vancouver Island, at the southwest end of Nimpkish Lake, approximately 32 km south of Port McNeill, in the regional district of Mount Waddington. The park comprises the southernmost east-facing slopes of the Karmutzen Range and contains most of Tlakwa Creek drainage, excluding the crown-owned forest land and the privately owned District Lot 266, south and east of Tlakwa Creek.

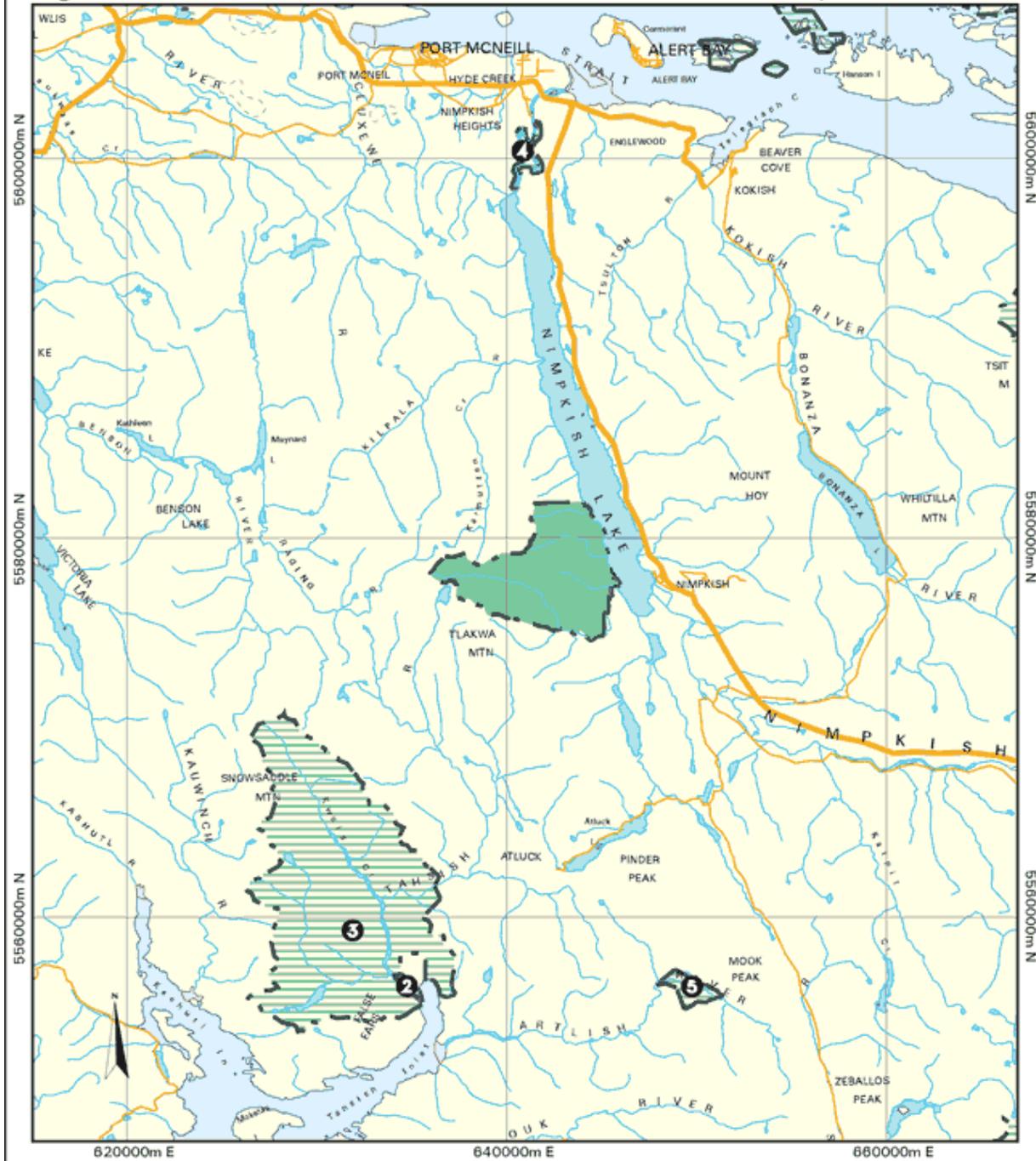
The 3,950 ha park protects significantly under-represented habitat in the Northern Island Mountains ecosection. Making up the majority of the Tlakwa Creek watershed, the park contributes provincially significant wildlife and salmon spawning habitat. The remote and rugged character of the park provides additional wilderness recreation opportunities.

As recommended in the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan, the area was designated Class A Provincial Park on July 12, 1995 for its high ecological, wildlife and recreation values.

The park is within the traditional territory of the 'Nāmgis First Nation which has a long and diverse history associated with the area in and around Nimpkish Lake Provincial Park. The 'Nāmgis First Nation has asserted its Aboriginal rights and title to Nimpkish Lake Park, and has identified it as an area of interest in its negotiation of a treaty under the British Columbia Treaty Commission process.

Figure 1: Context

Nimpkish Lake Park



<p>Projection: UTM Zone 9 Datum: NAD83</p> <p>This is a visual representation only and should not be used for legal purposes.</p> <p>Produced in Oct 2003 for Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection by MSRM, Decision Support Services</p>	<p> Subject Area</p> <p> Other Protected Areas</p> <p> Highway</p> <p> Road</p> <p>0 4 km</p>	<p>Other Provincial Protected Areas</p> <p>1 Lower Tsitika River Park</p> <p>2 Tahsish River Ecological Reserve</p> <p>3 Tahsish Kwois Park</p> <p>4 Lower Nimpkish River</p> <p>5 Artlish Caves Park</p>	
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Figure 2: Protected Area Map

Nimpkish Lake Park



Protected Area Attributes

Conservation

- Addresses Goal 1 of the PAS, representativeness, by contributing 36% (1194 ha) of the protected habitat within the under-represented (4.9%) Coastal Western Hemlock very dry maritime variant 2 (CWH xm2) biogeoclimatic zone in the Northern Island Mountains (NIM) Ecosection.
- Adds 7% (947 ha) to the protected habitat in the Coastal Western Hemlock very wet maritime variant 1 (CWH vm1), of which a total of 7 % is protected
- Adds 7% (844 ha) of the CWH vm variant 2, of which 7.9% is protected.
- Also makes a contribution of 5% (931 ha) to the Mountain Hemlock moist maritime variant 1 (MH mm1), of which 12.5% of the total is protected.
- Addresses Goal 2, special features, by contributing notable fish, wildlife and old-growth forest habitat, as well as significant geologic features.
- Contains high quality salmon-spawning habitat in the lower reaches of Tlakwa Creek. Adds to salmon populations in Nimpkish Lake and the Lower Nimpkish River.
- Contributes 3% to the protected deer winter range habitat in the NIM Ecosection, of which 6.4% is protected.
- Protects old-growth forest, particularly along the lake and eastern slopes of Karmutzen Mountain. Habitat contains Amabilis fir, Douglas-fir, Western hemlock, and Yellow cedar. Mature second growth forests along the Tlakwa drainage date from early railway logging in 1928.
- Includes karst topography which is visible along the shoreline as a line of limestone which appears to cross Nimpkish Lake. Caves are not found.
- May have habitat for marbled murrelets and goshawk.

Cultural Heritage

- Encompasses an ancient 'Nāmgis village which was used at different times of the year for fishing, hunting and other resource harvesting
- Includes a portion of important cross-Island trade route which leads to Kyuquot Sound by way of Tahsish River, Atluck Lake and Nimpkish Lake.
- Protects culturally-modified trees (CMTs) within the park. Canoe-log trees are located on steep slope, immediately outside the park.
- Includes a significant early logging railway with remnants remaining along upper Tlakwa Creek.
- Includes early hatchery site located on Willow Creek.

Recreation and Tourism

- Offers backcountry camping, hiking and mountaineering on the crest of the Karmutzen Range to/from Karmutzen Mountain (1,426 m).
- Provides opportunities for guided hunting and angling.
- Provides scenic vista for Vancouver Island highway corridor.

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- Contributes significant amount of habitat in three under-represented biogeoclimatic zones in the Northern Island Mountains Ecosection, particularly in the CWH xm1 zone, but also in the CWH vm1 and CWHvm2.
- Assists in the adequate representation of habitat within the Mountain Hemlock mm1 zone
- Protects important anadromous fish habitat, contributing to fish populations in Nimpkish Lake and Lower Nimpkish River.
- Protects valuable wildlife habitat including deer winter range.
- Provides guided and individual wilderness recreation opportunities.

Land Uses, Activities and Interests

Access

- By boat from Nimpkish Lake via the boat launch at Canadian Forest Products recreation site at Kim Creek (three kilometres from Nimpkish Service Station located half way between Woss and Port McNeill on Highway 19).
- By logging roads which terminate near the park boundary and provide moderate to strenuous walk-in access for backcountry hiking. These roads are within Canadian Forest Products TFL 37 and include: Tlakwa Creek; Upper Tahsish River; Kilpala; and Karmutzen Creek.
- No established trails are within park but access along the lower Tlakwa Creek may be gained by old forest roads from the Atluck Creek area and hatchery access.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- Trapline license TR0111T806.
- Guide Outfitter territory

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- Traditional First Nation food and resource harvesting
- Hunting and angling
- Trapping
- Mountaineering

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- Surrounded by TFL #37, Kingcome PSYU. Canfor is the forest tenure holder in Tlakwa Creek drainage and undertakes commercial thinning and harvesting outside the park boundary.
- Traditional First Nation food and resource harvesting.
- Boating, fishing and boardsailing recreation on Nimpkish Lake.
- In vicinity: Canfor recreation sites, across Nimpkish Lake from park and on Anutz Lake

First Nations Interests

- Within the traditional territory of 'Namgis First Nation, and is subject of negotiations in the BC Treaty Process
- Protection of cultural heritage sites such ancient village, CMTs, and early fish hatchery.

- Recognition of current and traditional use in park and surrounding area included significant trade and commerce routes, important food and resource harvesting.
- Continued access to important food and resource harvesting area, including salmon harvesting
- Pursuing management of the park

Other Agency Interests

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada - salmonid habitat of Tlakwa Creek.
- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Science, Allocation, Fish and Wildlife Section - biodiversity objectives, health of fish and wildlife populations, administration of traplines and guide outfitting territories.
- Ministry of Forests - adjacency issues of access, visuals and connectivity.

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Gwa'ni Hatchery – salmonid enhancement within the Nimpkish watershed
- Owners of adjacent properties (Canfor and lakeside private inholding Lot 226).
- Canfor – adjacent TFL
- Community of Woss
- Trappers
- Guide outfitters
- Outdoor recreationist.
- Rod and Gun clubs
- Environmental groups concerned about protected areas management

Role of the Park

The **primary** role of Nimpkish Lake Park is to protect ecologically significant habitat of two under-represented ecosystem types -- the Northern Island Mountains Ecosection and the Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone, including three of its variants. With 3,950 hectares, the park protects almost the entire Tlakwa Creek watershed, part of the Nimpkish Lake shoreline, and mostly mature second growth conifer forest with some old growth along the lake and eastern slopes of Karmutzen Mountain. The forests of amabilis fir, Douglas-fir, western hemlock, and yellow cedar have high ecological value as they contribute to large and small predator-prey systems, provide winter range habitat for deer, and have high potential nesting and foraging habitat for the red-listed marbled murrelet and a subspecies of northern goshawk. The park also protects high quality salmonid spawning habitat in the lowest reaches of Tlakwa Creek, contains examples of karst topography, and protects two blue-listed alpine plants.

The **secondary** role is to offer backcountry wilderness recreation opportunities and to provide a scenic viewscapes from the Vancouver Island Highway. The steep forested slopes of the Karmutzen Range that frame Nimpkish Lake contain opportunities for backcountry camping, hiking and mountaineering, as well as guided hunting and angling. Although the lake itself is excluded from the park, opportunities exist for swimming, windsurfing, boating, freshwater fishing, and kayaking/canoeing when the water is calm. Across the lake from the park on the southeastern shore, camping facilities are available in the Nimpkish

Lake Recreation Site (Canfor), which is a well-maintained recreation site with picnic tables, a boat launch, and walk-in campsites.

The **tertiary** role is to protect part of traditional First Nation trade routes across Vancouver Island. The park is culturally significant to the ‘Namgis First Nation.

Management Commitments and Issues

Management Direction from Previous Planning

The Crown-owned portion of Tlakwa Creek watershed and most of the east-facing slopes of the Karmutzen Range were recommended in the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan for Protected Area designation in June 1994. This recognized the area’s very high conservation and recreation resource values. The Regional Protected Areas Team ranked the larger area as very high both in terms of conservation and recreation.

A final technical review of the boundaries by the Protected Areas Boundary Adjustment Team (PABAT) excluded committed forestry lands while retaining lands of ecological significance. This includes the protection of a large representative sample of the Northern Island Mountains Ecosection, including low-elevation forest types, and areas of high scenic value on a provincial tourist route. PABAT recommended that wildlife habitat in the Tlakwa Creek watershed be emphasized

Management Issues

Theme	Issue
Knowledge of values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of information on natural, recreation and cultural values.
Protection of cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing recreation use and lack of knowledge and appreciation of First Nation’s cultural heritage may result in removal or destruction of cultural features and artifacts.
Relationship with First Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited communication with ‘N<u>a</u>mgis First Nations has restricted the mutual understanding and cooperation to protect and manage important cultural, ecological and recreation features.

Protection of park values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possible impacts of adjacent forest harvesting, particularly directly across Tlakwa River.• Potential impact of activities on adjacent private land and loss of ecosystem integrity without acquisition of private land.• Possible impact from resource users in area due to lack of clear park boundaries and lack of fire management program.• Lack of ecosystem integrity given protection of only a portion of Tlakwa watershed and no protection of significant lake and marsh.
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Management Direction

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

Objective	Strategy
Build a strong relationship with First Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with ‘N̓amgis First Nation to identify interests for park management and for treaty. • Work closely with the ‘N̓amgis First Nation in the development of a management plan when that occurs. • Meet with ‘N̓amgis on a regular basis to keep them apprised of park management, seek advise, assist in cultural heritage initiatives, and increase cultural awareness and appreciation.
Protect the park’s ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with Canfor, Ministry of Forests and ‘N̓amgis First Nation, develop plan to protect the ecological Park values of the Tlakwa drainage from potential impacts of adjacent resource extraction, e.g. siltation, blowdown, introduced species. • Consult DFO and Science, Allocation, Fish and Wildlife local salmon enhancement group and Gwa’ni and Woss hatcheries regarding co-management strategies and issues for salmon stocks in Tlakwa Creek. • Develop fire management plan. • Provide signage and educational materials to ensure private resource harvesters are aware of park boundaries, and potential impacts of their activities. • Seek to acquire Tahsish Lake, a marsh area near Anutz Lake and the remainder of the Tlakwa drainage, particularly private lot 266 were included in the park.
Knowledge of values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather research and inventory data on park and park values (protected areas catalogue).
Protect recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider value of adding DL 1136 as wind-surfing beach for park. • Encourage Ministry of Transportation to develop viewpoint on Highway 19 with interpretive signs. • Additional significant recreation opportunities would exist if Tlakwa Mountain was included in the park.
Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information and signage regarding hazards of water travel on Nimpkish Lake.

Consultation and Future Planning

Environmental Stewardship, BC Parks is the managing agency for protected areas within the province and is responsible for planning, administration and management of Nimpkish Lake Provincial Park.

- Development of Management Plan, with the 'N̓amgis First Nation, public, industry and agency input, to further define acceptable uses, use levels and zoning and to ensure the integrity of important habitats and species.
- Management Plan is a low priority for this park.

Zoning Plan

Wilderness Recreation Zone – covers the entire park (3,949.8 hectares). The objective of this zone is to protect scenic values and to provide for backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment. It is designed for large natural areas where ecological processes are uninfluenced by human activity, and where there is a low level of use confined to specific primitive facilities, which are not generally visited on a day use basis. Trails and minimal facilities that support the backcountry recreation use may be developed, while minimizing use impacts on the wildlife and wilderness values of the area. The main management concern is encouraging backcountry use while keeping impacts below levels that will impair park resources or significantly reduce user satisfaction.

Appendix A: Acceptable Uses, Activities and Facilities in Nimpkish Lake Park

This table provides a summary of commitments made through land use planning processes with regard to acceptable uses, activities and facilities within this protected area.

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptable Uses
Hunting	Y
Fishing	Y
Trapping	N ²
Grazing	N
Rec. Gold Panning/Rock Hounding	N
Utility Corridors	N
Communic. Sites	N
Horse Use/Packing	N
Guide Outfitting-Hunting:	Y
- Fishing	Y
- Nature Tour	Y
- River Raft	N
Cat-Assisted Skiing	N
Ski Hills	N
Heli Skiing	N
Heli Hiking	M
Camping (Wilderness)	Y
Camping (Serviced)	N
Tourist Resorts	N
Back Country Huts/Guest Ranch	N
Water Control Structure	N
Fish Stock/Enhance	Y
Road Access	N
Off Road Snowmobile	N
Off Road Motorized	N
Off Road Mechanical	M
Motorized Water Access	N
Fixed wing Access	N
Fire Management:	
- Wildlife Management	M
- Prevention	M
- Presc. Fire	M
- Suppression	M
Forest Insect/Disease	M
Noxious Weed Control	M
Exotic Insect/Disease	M
Scien. Research (Specimens)	Y
Scien. Research (Manipulations)	M

Y = allowed subject to management conditions

M = may be allowed

N = not allowed

N¹ = allowed for expressed management purposes only

N² = present and allowed to continue but not normally allowed