

Kootenay District

**MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
STATEMENT
May, 1999**

**for Purcell Wilderness Conservancy
Provincial Park - East Addition**



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

Ministry of Environment
Lands and Parks
BC Parks Division

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Purpose of Management Direction Statements

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

PURCELL WILDERNESS CONSERVANCY PROVINCIAL PARK - EAST ADDITION

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

I. Introduction

A. Setting and Context (Figure 1)

The Purcell Wilderness Conservancy (PWC) is located in the Purcell Mountains of southeastern British Columbia between the communities of Invermere and Cranbrook and northeast of the City of Nelson. It is one of a number of large protected areas in the Kootenay region.

The east addition extends from Findlay Creek in the south to Toby Creek in the north (Figure 2). Combined, the existing Conservancy and the east and west additions total 198,183 ha. They maintain the environmental, wilderness and recreational integrity of the largest intact ecosystem in southeastern BC. The east addition provides core wilderness connectivity that is critical to the long term viability and diversity of the entire Purcell Wilderness Conservancy. It includes the unroaded middle portions of the drainages of Findlay Creek, Dutch Creek (including Ben Abel Creek drainage), and Toby Creek (above the mineral claims at Jumbo Creek junction).

This park was proposed for protection under the Protected Areas Strategy and Commission of Resources and Environment process. The area received Class A provincial park status on July 12, 1995 under the *Park Amendment Act, 1995*, following the recommendations of the East Kootenay Land Use Plan.

The 1,990 ha Findlay Creek Corridor was designated under the *Environment and Land Use Act* to allow a possible future corridor to access the Middle Fork mineral development if necessary. It will be managed by BC Parks “as if it were a park under the *Park Act*”. Road access will be approved only if and when a mine development permit is issued. The present wide corridor will be reduced to a small right-of-way once it can be surveyed.

II. Protected Area Attributes (Figure 2)

A. Conservation

- includes a virtually undisturbed area that maintains core wilderness critical to the long term viability and diversity of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy
- the size and location create very high value for biodiversity
- contains provincially significant biogeoclimatic subzone/variant Kootenay Dry Mild Interior Douglas-fir (IDFdm2) Subzone and contributes to the gap in the Dry Cool Montane Spruce (MSdk) Subzone within the East Purcell Mountains (EPM) Ecoregion
- provides important habitat for grizzly bear and mountain goat, extensive summer range for mule deer and for a globally significant population of elk
- supports population of black bear, moose, Pileated Woodpecker and Westslope cutthroat trout
- contains important riparian habitat

Figure 1 - Regional Context Map

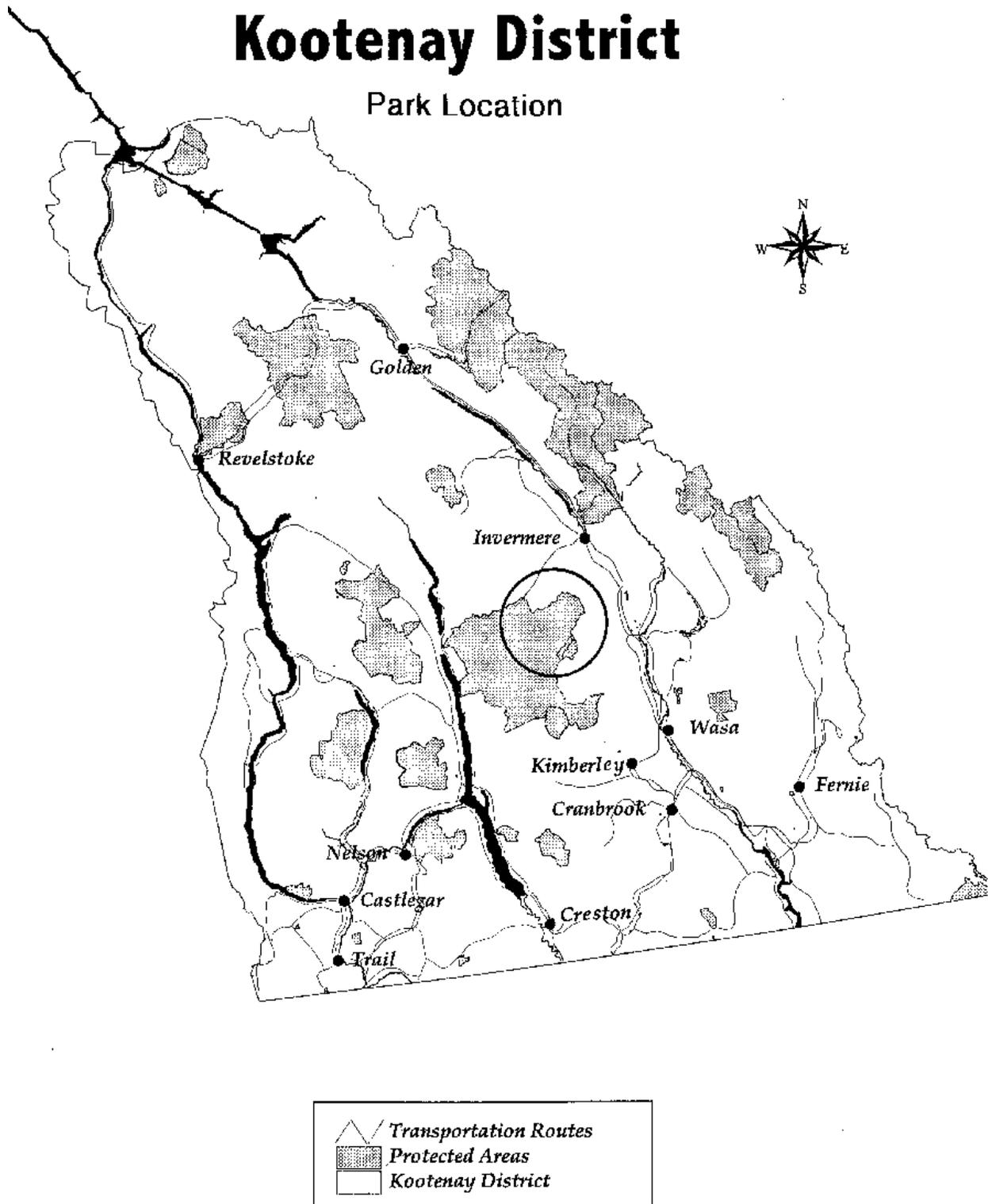
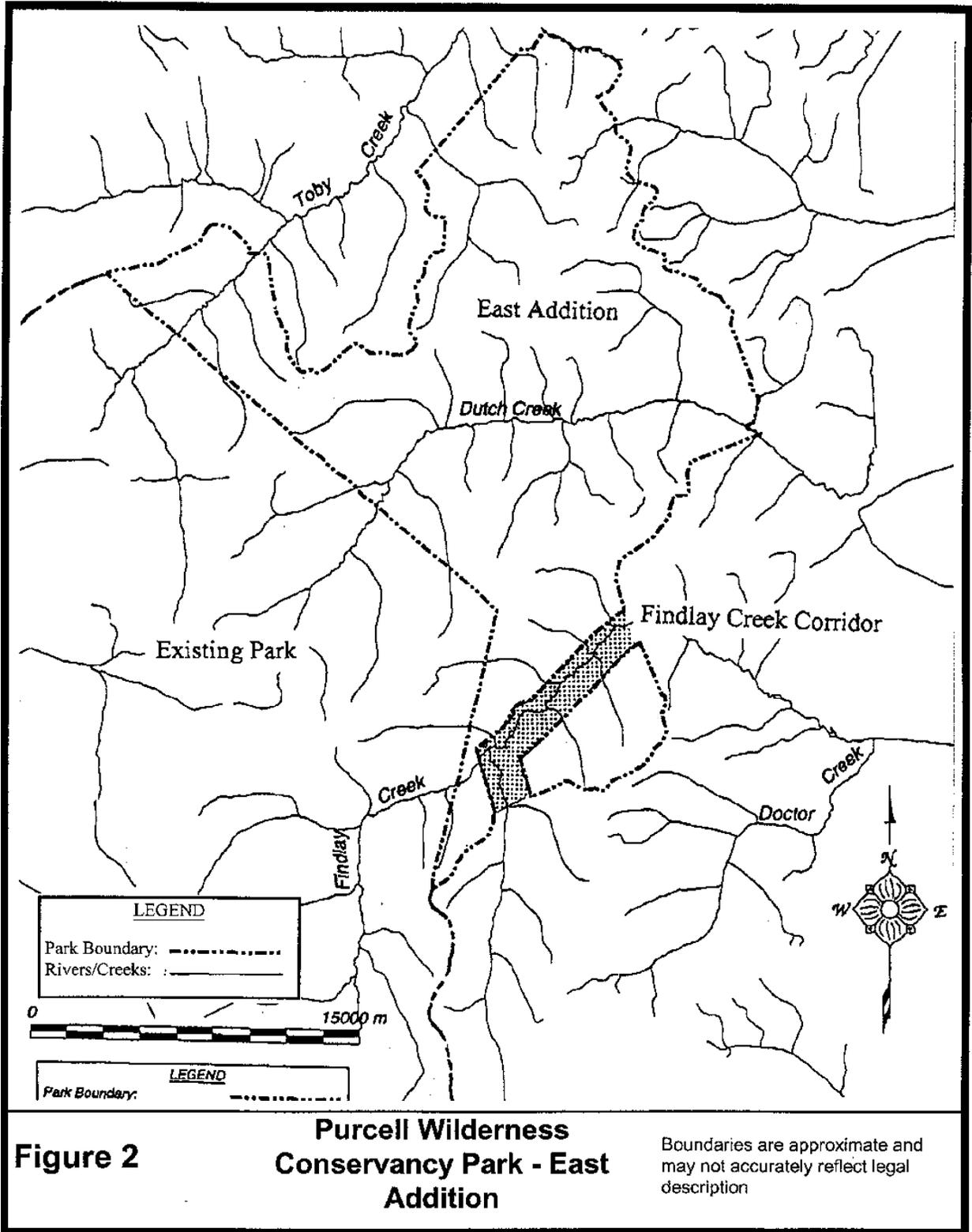


Figure 1

NTS

Figure 2 - Park Reference Map



B. Recreation

- nationally significant wilderness recreation values for hunting, fishing, horse use and wildlife viewing
- important area for two-season commercially guided hunting and recreational wilderness activities
- heli-skiing occurs in a small area
- provincially significant recreation fishing values in the Ben Abel Lake area

C. Cultural Heritage

- route over Hamill-Toby creeks used by Shuswap Nation; became known as Earl Grey Trail after its use in 1911-1912 by a Canadian Governor General
- heritage cabin built for Earl Grey
- no recorded information on First Nations traditional use or artifacts

D. Significance in Protected Areas System

- high conservation values - further expands the largest intact ecosystem in the southern part of the province; one of the most significant areas for wildlife in Western Canada; very high biodiversity with high concentrations of elk, grizzly bear and mountain goats comparable to values in the National Parks of the Rocky Mountains
- very high wilderness recreation values
- important provincial cultural heritage values

III. Land Use, Tenures and Interests

A. Access

- area is unroaded but good gravel roads in proximity to east addition (along Toby Creek, to Whitetail Lake in Dutch Creek and within 5 km of the boundary in Findlay Creek) one of the most significant areas for wildlife in Western Canada;
- horse trails up each major valley
- potential road corridor along the Findlay corridor, which is currently unroaded but has been designated by an Order-in-Council under the *Environment and Land Use Act*

B. Existing Tenures

- guiding License No. G0106947 Territory No. 0426G001
- License No. G0106953 Territory No. 0426G002
- License No. G0106936 Territory No. 0426G003
- trapping License No. RT119050 Territory No. 0426T001
- License No. RT118971 Territory No. 0426T003
- License No. RT119079 Territory No. 0426T004
- heli-skiing License No. 401670

C. Existing Land Use, Activities and Facilities

- heli-skiing interests in one basin of Dutch Creek
- trails in each main valley
- two guide outfitter camps in Dutch Creek; another at the Findlay-Frying pan junction
- Earl Grey cabin, a historic site
- informal campsites at various locations

D. Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- heli-skiing
- timber development
- mineral exploration

E. First Nation Interests

- two First Nations tribal councils (Ktunaxa/Kinbasket and Shuswap) have included the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Park within their asserted traditional territory
- while direct consultation with tribal council representatives on this management direction statement was requested limitations of time and resources have prevented First Nations from participating
- however this management direction statement provides a foundation upon which continued relationships between BC Parks and First Nation tribal councils are based

F. Other Agency Interests

- BC Environment (BCE) - biodiversity objectives; health of wildlife populations; administration of traplines and guide outfitting tenures
- Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture (STC)- opportunities for viable commercial tourism
- Ministry of Forests (MOF) - adjacent recreational activities; grazing; adjacency issues such as access, visual quality, connectivity
- Heritage Conservation Branch - Earl Grey Cabin
- Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) - Findlay Corridor
- BC Assets and Lands Corporation (BCAL) - commercial heli-skiing tenure management

G. Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Purcell Advisory Committee
- horse users
- hikers
- heli-ski
- trappers
- guide outfitters
- hunters and anglers
- environmental groups concerned about protected area management
- potential mine developer
- heritage conservationists

IV. Management Commitments and Issues

A. Management Direction from Previous Planning

- although a management plan for the Purcell Wilderness Area (Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Master Plan) was developed in 1991 prior to the eastern addition, it can provide some direction in the management of the addition areas
- existing tenures for guide outfitting, trapping, and heli-skiing will continue under Park Use Permits
- natural occurrences such as fires, insects and forest diseases will be managed as in other parks through consultation and joint action by BC Parks and Ministry of Forests

- objectives and strategies of Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan Implementation Strategy (KBLUP-IS) Chpt 4

B. Management Issues

- management of habitat for wildlife species at risk i.e. grizzly bear, mountain caribou
- overuse and potential conflicts between commercial and private horse users
- management of existing and new commercial recreation activities including heli-skiing, guide outfitter hunting camps, spike and semi-permanent caches
- deterioration of the Earl Grey cabin
- forest harvesting adjacent to park boundaries
- potential impact from the proposed ski resort development in Jumbo Creek
- potential industrial access along Findlay Creek

V. Management Strategy

While key strategies or actions are identified, the completion of all these strategies is subject to funding and funding procedures. As such, strategies are ranked according to priority and completed as funding permits. As well, all development within provincial parks is subject to the BC Parks Impact Assessment Policy.

A. Priority Management Objectives and Actions

Objectives

- maintain ecosystem representation of East Purcell Mountains Ecosection
- protect mountain caribou and grizzly bear populations and habitats
- manage addition consistently with the existing Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Master Plan
- protect rare and endangered species
- maintain quality backcountry /wilderness recreation values
- manage the area to protect cultural heritage values
- honor commitments in Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan
- develop relationship with First Nations to enhance understanding and management of park values
- minimize the environmental impact of horse use and commercial recreation on park values
- ensure adjacent land uses consider park values and the potential to impact them

Actions

- work with BCE and MOF to address vegetation management for natural occurrences of fire, insect and forest diseases
- work with MOF to monitor and address overgrazing in the Toby Creek area
- work with other agencies to ensure connectivity of wildlife habitat to the park
- work with BCE to address habitat needs of species and biodiversity objectives including inventory and protection of indigenous fish
- work with BCE to inventory and manage grizzly bear and mountain caribou
- work with MEM and proponent to determine right of way if a mine development permit is issued; adjust park boundary to new right-of-way once it has been surveyed
- assess horse using BRIM; address conflicts between private users and guide outfitters over priority use and forage requirements in concert with MOF
- work with BCAL to ensure management of heli-skiing tenure considers park values

- no new commercial recreation permits will be issued until the overall management plan for the park is reviewed
- work with agencies in land use development outside park to address access, harvesting and visual concerns, including the Jumbo Creek development
- permit only non-motorized use, except for pre-existing heli-skiing
- work with Heritage Branch and Fort Steele to address the deterioration of the Earl Grey Cabin
- work with First Nations to identify traditional use and cultural values to determine management needs
- issue permits for existing trapping, guiding and heli-skiing areas

B. Consultation and Future Planning

A Master Plan for the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy was approved in 1991. This addition of the park will be managed in the interim consistently with the direction developed in the master plan with the exceptions as indicated in the management direction statement. Future review of the master plan would involve consultation with the public, First Nations and government agencies. It will help to define the long term management direction for the entire park. This is a high priority for the Kootenay District.

C. Zoning Plan

There is insufficient knowledge and understanding about this extension area to apply the BC Park Zoning Policy. The zoning policy defines in general terms the management direction for a given area of a park, including the type of uses and overall level of use and facilities in relationship to varying degrees of acceptable impacts on park values.

Appendix A

Summary Table of Land and Resource Use Commitments

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

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptable Uses
Hunting	Y
Trapping	N2
Fishing	Y
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Rec, Gold Panning/Rock Hounding	N
Utility Corridors	N
Communications Sites	N
Horse Use/Pack Animals	Y
Guide Outfitting (hunting)	Y
Guide Outfitting (fishing)	M
Guide Outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Guide Outfitting (river rafting)	N
Guide Outfitting (mountain bikes)	N
Cat-Assisted Skiing	N
Ski Hills	N
Heli-Skiing	Y
Heli-Hiking	N
Camping (wilderness)	Y
Camping (serviced)	N
Tourist Resorts	N
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	Y
Backcountry Huts	N2
Water Control Structures	N1
Fish Stocking and Enhancement	M
Road Access	N
Off-Road Access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-Road Access (motorized)	N
Off-Road Access (mechanical)	N
Motorized Water Access	N
Aircraft Access (fixed wing)	N
Aircraft Access (helicopters)	N1
Fire Management (suppression)	Y
Fire Management (prevention)	Y
Fire Management (prescribed)	M
Forest Insect/Disease Control	M
Noxious Weed Control	M
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	M
Scientific Research (collection)	M
Scientific Research (manipulation)	M

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

M = may be permitted if compatible with protected area objectives

N1 = allowed for expressed mgmt. purposes only

N2 = present and allowed to continue but not normally allowed

N = not allowed