

SOOKE MOUNTAIN PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

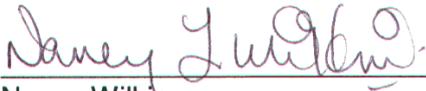
September 2003

Approved by:



Dick Heath
Regional Manager
Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: Sept. 6/03



Nancy Wilkin
Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: Jan. 15/04

SOOKE MOUNTAIN PROVINCIAL PARK Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Primary Role

The **primary** role of Sooke Mountain Provincial Park is to protect conservation values as part of a larger wildlife and greenbelt corridor. The rugged rocky hills, lakes, forested slopes and the watershed for a tributary of the Sooke River were set aside in 1928 to protect wildlife, wilderness and scenic values close to Victoria.

This 450-hectare mountain park was one of the earliest provincial parks established on southern Vancouver Island and is part of the extensive Sooke Hills greenbelt. It fulfills a significant conservation role in protecting threatened ecosystems such as Garry oak and rocky outcrops and is one of the largest areas in the region for protecting large predator/prey habitat including Roosevelt elk, gray wolf and cougars. Grouse, songbirds and hawks are found throughout the park. The creek and moist valley forest provides valuable habitat for amphibians, reptiles and birds. The park protects some of the watershed for the important fish-bearing Sooke River.

Secondary Role

The **secondary** role is to provide recreation opportunities in a wilderness setting. Sooke Mountain is a popular site for wildlife viewing, wilderness hiking, fishing, mountain biking and horseback riding. The park is undeveloped, has no public access and has no maintained hiking trails. It is now part of a larger wilderness corridor and will be part of a comprehensive management planning process to determine the type and extent of recreational activities that may occur in the park.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Role of the park in the Capital Regional District (CRD)'s Sea-to-Sea Blue/Green belt initiative	➤ Participate in the CRD planning process to develop a management plan for Sea-to-Sea Blue/Green belt initiative. Use this process to investigate the opportunity to transfer the park to the CRD.
Unknown natural and cultural values	➤ Work with academic institutions, the CRD and local First Nations to complete natural and cultural assessments.
Poorly understood park boundaries on the ground	➤ Mark park boundaries with signs at key locations.
Environmental damage from mountain biking, dirt biking, horseback riding, and ATV and 4x4 use, uncontrolled campfires and littering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monitor existing use and document impacts to park values. ➤ Work with the CRD and private land holders to close 4x4 access in order to address the impacts. Permit walk-in camping. ➤ Work with user groups to implement interim strategies.

Zoning

The entire park is zoned **Natural Environment** subject to a management plan being completed by CRD Parks.

Conservation

Representation
- ecosection

- Sooke Mountain Provincial Park contributes minimally (0.3%) to the representation of the Leeward Island Mountains Ecosection which has 16% protected provincially. The park's contribution ranks 3rd out of 22 protected areas representing this ecosection. Strathcona (96.6%) and Strathcona-Westmin (2.1%) parks are the major contributors.

- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant

- Sooke Mountain Provincial Park contributes 2.35% to the representation of the Coastal Western Hemlock (CWHxm2) variant which has only 4.13% protected provincially. The park's contribution ranks 8th out of 30 protected areas representing this variant.

Special Features

- Part of a large wilderness corridor that protects lakes, watersheds, wildlife habitat

Rare/Endangered Values

- Potential blue-listed Roosevelt elk habitat; other rare values are unknown at this time

Scientific/Research Opportunities

- Ecological inventories, impacts from recreational use on parks, conservation biology and wildlife corridors

Recreation

Representation

backcountry
destination
travel corridor
local recreation

- Not Applicable
 Not Applicable
 Not Applicable
 Popular site for hiking, fishing, mountain biking, horseback riding, camping. ATV and 4x4 use and dirt biking are not appropriate uses in the park.

Special Opportunities

- None known at this time

Education/Interpretation Opportunities

- Potential for offsite information

Cultural Heritage

Representation

- The T'Souke First Nations traditionally hunted and gathered food plants in this area. The park was originally used as a destination wilderness area by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, with a lodge at Shield Lake.

Special Features

- None known at this time

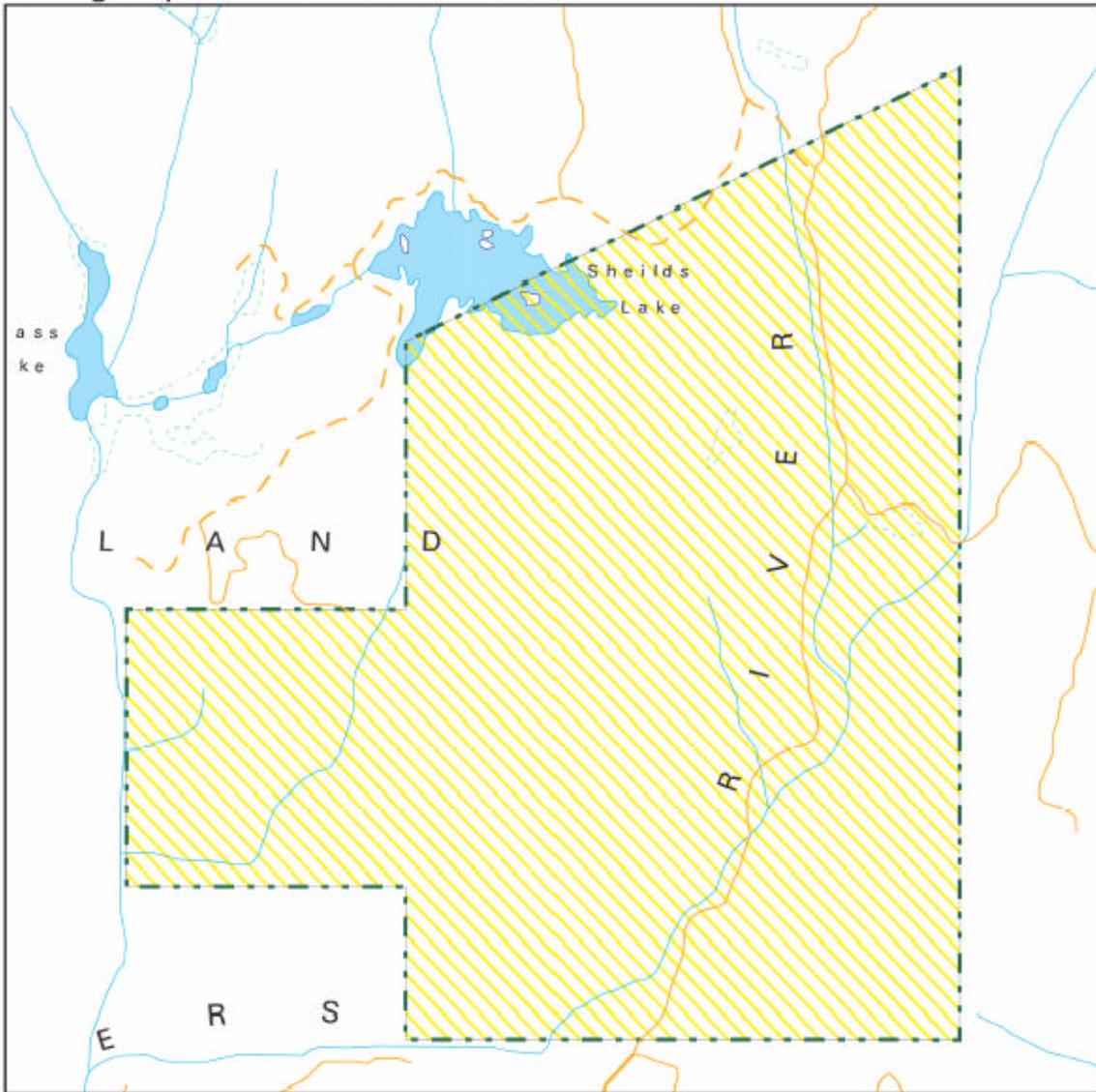
Other Management Considerations

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Other Designations | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not Applicable |
| Relationship to other PAs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Part of a system of protected areas on Vancouver Island. Part of the Sea-to-Sea Blue/Green belt corridor with other provincial parks such as Goldstream and Gowlland Tod parks, and the Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park Reserve. |
| Co-operative Management Arrangements | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not Applicable |
| Partnerships | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | CRD Sea-to-Sea Blue/Green belt initiative |
| Vulnerability | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Park is vulnerable to increasing recreation use and unauthorized uses , as well as becoming part of a higher profile park area |
| Relationship to other Strategies | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Sea-to-Sea Blue/Green belt corridor strategy; CRD Master plan |

Area: 450 hectares

Date of establishment: June 25, 1928

Zoning Map - Sooke Mountain Provincial Park



Projection: Albers Equal Areas
Datum: NAD83



 Natural Environment
 Protected Area Boundary



Produced in Apr 2003 for
Ministry of Water, Land and Air
Protection by MSRM, Decision
Support Services

This is a visual representation
only and should not be used for
legal purposes.