

ST. MARY'S ALPINE PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

February 2003

Approved by:


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ST. MARY'S ALPINE PROVINCIAL PARK Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Primary Role

The **primary** role of St. Mary's Alpine Provincial Park is to protect alpine plant and animal species and habitat within the Central Columbia and Eastern Purcell Mountains eco-sections. The park also contains unique geological formations such as massive granite protrusions and extensive talus slopes that complement its remoteness and inaccessibility. The majority of the provincial park is at an elevation of over 2,100 metres (7,000 ft) and contains 32 pristine alpine lakes. Although significantly smaller in area when compared to the neighbouring Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Park, St. Mary's Alpine provides essential winter and summer range for the endangered mountain caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*).

Secondary Role

The **secondary** role is to provide multi-day non-mechanized backcountry recreation opportunities in a pristine wilderness setting. Park visitors have the opportunity to view and appreciate rich geophysical and biological diversity without encountering high volumes of people. Hunting for selected species is permitted only in an open season as described in the *Wildlife Act* (Schedule 4).

Known Management Issues	Response
Resource extraction and road development in adjacent Dewar and White Creek drainages have: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) decreased available old growth forest habitat. 2) improved/enhanced motor vehicle access. 	Maintain liaison with forest licencees (i.e. Tembec Inc.) and review adjacent cut-block proposals and road layout. Recommend prompt road deactivation/closure and encourage forest practices that reduce habitat fragmentation.
Increased popularity of the entire St. Mary's and Dewar Creek drainages has increased the potential impact on the pristine/wilderness aspects of the park.	Promote no-trace camping ethics.
Despite lengthy road access and remote wilderness location, day use within the park is becoming more popular with inexperienced and ill-equipped park visitors.	Convey to park users that St. Mary's Alpine is suited only for experienced backpackers with strong route-finding skills and that single day hiking trips are not advisable.

Known Management Issues	Response
<p>Implications of commercial/recreational pressures <i>inside</i> the park on nearly extirpated mountain caribou population</p> <p><i>Peripheral</i> commercial and recreational use and its impact on remaining mountain caribou population.</p>	<p>Further research and monitoring of mountain caribou populations. Restrict commercial or recreational uses that may impact remaining population.</p> <p>Work with Caribou recovery team to maintain caribou habitat and populations.</p>

Zoning

The entire park is zoned Wilderness Recreation (9,317 ha).

Conservation

Representation -ecosection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The majority of the park (99.3%) is situated in the Central Columbia Mountains (CCM) Ecosection with a small portion (0.7%) in the Eastern Purcell Mountains (EPM) Ecosection. The CCM ecosection is well represented (18.85%) in the protected areas system. St. Mary's Alpine contributes 3.06% (9,256 ha) of the overall protected area representation of this ecosection. Major contributors to the representation of this ecosection are Goat Range (26%) and the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy (35%).
-biogeoclimatic subzone/ variant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 biogeoclimatic zones are present (ATunp , ESSFwm, ESSFwmp, ICHmw 2). The most significant, however, are the ESSFwm and wmp which account for 98.7% of the park. Both of these subzones/variants are well represented in the protected areas system (13.7% and 14.2% respectively). St. Mary's Alpine is the second largest contributor (35.6%) to the ESSF wmp in the protected area system; Purcell Wilderness Conservancy (West) contributes 37%.
Special Feature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	32 alpine lakes on remote plateau, many of which drain into spectacular waterfalls, some exceeding 150 meters in height.
Rare and Endangered Values	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inventory has not been undertaken Performed, but potential species include: grizzly bear (b), wolverine (b), great blue heron (b), American bittern (b), bobolink (b), Lewis's woodpecker (b), fisher (b), mountain caribou (r).
Scientific/ Research Opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mountain Caribou Recovery Plan.

Recreation

Representation		
-backcountry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Untouched wilderness setting with difficult access. Challenging multi-day backpacking and mountaineering.
-destination	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.
-travel corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forest Service Road access only.
-local recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.
Special Opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wilderness appreciation without high volumes of people. Opportunity to view naturally functioning ecosystems.
Education/ Interpretation Opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trailheads equipped with template backcountry ethics and no-trace camping information.

Cultural Heritage

Representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Within the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Traditional Territory. Identified as an area of hunting and gathering.
Special Feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	No special features have been identified within the park.

Other Management Considerations

Other designations	<input type="checkbox"/>	No other designations.
Relationship to other PAs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Northern and north-east park boundary shared with Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Park.
Co-operative Management Arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	No cooperative management arrangements at this time.
Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	No partnerships at this time.
Vulnerability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Increased visitation because of

local community growth and tourism (i.e. Kimberley) may contribute negatively to the park's unspoiled wilderness.

Adjacent logging and road development encourages ease of access.

Relationship to other strategies



Mountain Caribou Recovery Strategy

Area: 9,317 ha



Date of Establishment: May 18, 1973.

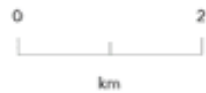
Zoning Map - St. Mary's Alpine Provincial Park



Projection: Albers Equal Areas
Datum: NAD83



 Wilderness Recreation
 Protected Area Boundary



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