

Regional and Provincial Context

Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park is an integral part of a larger park ecosystem as well as an important part of the regional and provincial economic system.

The Park does not play a major part in satisfying provincial recreation or conservation goals of BC Parks. It is, however, an important contributor to Strathcona Provincial Park's achievement of its recreation and conservation goals. Once integrated into the surrounding Strathcona Provincial Park, the industrial nature will diminish and natural values will be enhanced. The Park will act as a buffer for the wilderness areas in Strathcona Provincial Park.

Conservation Role

Approximately 26% of the Park has been modified by wildfire, mining and reservoir clearing activities. Much of the Park, about 74%, remains in a relatively natural state including Lower Myra Falls, some intact stands of valley bottom old growth and the forested slopes above the mine site. Special features of note are the riparian areas of the Thelwood valley important to Roosevelt Elk and also beaver (a species which is uncommon in the Park) and the mouth of Thelwood Creek which is used by Trumpeter Swans. Conservation of these special features will be an important management objective for the Park.

The lower portion of Thelwood Creek has spawning beds for rainbow trout, Dolly Varden, char and cutthroat trout. These spawning areas are essential to maintaining the fishery of Buttle Lake, a key recreational resource of Strathcona Provincial Park. Protection of these spawning areas will be a critical management objective for the Park.

Recreation Role

The Park has several important recreation opportunities. The recreational values are focused on Myra Creek and Falls and these natural features provide a destination and opportunities for day hiking, picnics and fishing. Tours of the mine provide an educational experience.

Vision Statement

The vision statements for Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park look to a time when the Park will be added to Strathcona Provincial Park. The statements serve to define the nature of the Park at that time and will guide the application of short term actions to achieve the long range goal of full re-integration with Strathcona Provincial Park.

- a) Conservation - When the mine is closed, the reclamation and decommissioning process will be well advanced. Through a process of progressive reclamation, the disturbed areas of the mine site will gradually be returned to as natural a state as practicable. Control

systems will be in place to ensure environmental quality standards are met. While passive systems (those requiring no regular human or machine activity) are preferred because they are not intrusive and more consistent with park objectives, the regular presence of staff will likely be required to monitor and maintain pollution control systems, where required.

The conservation value of Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park will increase as the area is reclaimed. The area will become an important buffer to the wilderness and provide key habitat for a growing herd of Roosevelt Elk in the Thelwood Valley

- b) Recreation - As the process of progressive reclamation proceeds and active mining ceases, recreation use will dominate the Park. Trailheads to the upper Myra Valley, Tennent Lake and Phillips Ridge will be well used. The road to Jim Mitchell Lake will be maintained as far as the Bedwell Lake Trailhead. Use of the trailhead established at the site of the old Thelwood powerhouse and the loop trail to Cream Lake will continue to grow. The self-guiding nature trail to the beaver ponds of the lower Thelwood Valley will become a popular day use destination. Conflict with wildlife will remain a concern. Monitoring and census of wildlife will be required to ensure recreational use does not impact wildlife. Non-invasive monitoring and census will be a part of the regular operations of the Park.
- c) Myra Falls Operations of Westmin Resources Ltd. - The mineral leases located in Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park on which Westmin is operating have been explored for the past 76 years and mined since 1966. Recent exploration successes indicate a continuation of mining operation for the foreseeable future.

The ultimate goal is to return this area to Strathcona Provincial Park, reclaimed and rehabilitated as much as practically possible, so that it will become part of the larger Strathcona Provincial Park. Westmin's role in this endeavour will be to conduct its operations, including restoration of disturbed areas, in a manner that recognizes the Park's wilderness and recreational qualities and to work with BC Parks in protecting these resources for the enjoyment of present and future generations.