Please Note: This draft management plan contains preliminary proposals that are subject to change and therefore may not necessarily reflect the position of the Ministry of Environment. At the conclusion of the planning process, a revised management plan will be approved by the Ministry.

Skaha Bluffs Park

Management Plan

Draft- September 2015

BRITISH COLUMBIA | BC Parks

Cover Page Photo: Dick Cannings

All photos contained within this plan are credited to BC Parks (unless otherwise stated).

Once approved, this document will replace the Skaha Bluffs Interim Management Direction Statement (2010).

Skaha Bluffs Management Plan

Approved by:

_____ _____

John Trewhitt
Regional Director
Kootenay Okanagan
BC Parks

Date

_____ _____

Brian Bawtinheimer
Executive Director
Conservation, Planning and Aboriginal Relations Branch
BC Parks

Date

_____ _____

Linda Hannah
BC Regional Vice President
Nature Conservancy of Canada

Date

_____ _____

John Shields
Director of Operations
The Land Conservancy of BC

Date

Acknowledgements

This section of the management plan will be completed following consultation and engagement with interest groups, governments and the general public.

Plan Highlights

The management plan for Skaha Bluffs Park draws focussed attention on the significant role this park has in protecting wildlife species and habitat, and providing unparalleled recreational opportunities such as rock climbing and hiking. Key elements of the management plan include strategies to:

- Continue to allow for rock climbing activities within the Goal 2 section of the park. There will be no rock climbing or climbing route development allowed on Sub Lot (SL) 18.
- Continue to undertake thorough inventories of species and ecosystems within all areas of the park. This includes monitoring (e.g., for changes in movement corridor behaviour) of wildlife species (e.g., Bighorn Sheep, rare reptiles- snakes), particularly those considered 'at risk'. Work with government and non-governmental partners to achieve this objective.
- Limit human interference with lambing, wintering or migration routes located within the park. Seasonal closures of select portions of the park to the general public may be employed to assist in the protection of essential Bighorn Sheep habitat and minimize disturbance.
- Through close collaboration with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO), ensure management of adjacent Crown land (e.g., McTaggart-Cowan/nsek'tniw't Wildlife Management Area) is consistent with the overall objectives of the park.
- Management decisions related to Bighorn Sheep will be made in collaboration with the Wildlife Branch (MFLNRO), the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC BC), and in consultation with First Nations and stakeholder groups. Within the former Skaha Conservation Area (SL 18) this will include determination of appropriate level of hunting/guide outfitting activities to ensure achievement of 'conservation objectives' and minimize threat to 'conservation target' viability (both NCC conservation tools).
- Where consistent with conservation objectives outlined in this plan, provide for continued access to recreational activities (e.g., hiking, horse riding, mountain biking, hunting, rock climbing, wildlife viewing and nature appreciation) in areas appropriate for such use.
- Explore opportunities to broaden visitor experience to include facilities which support those with physical challenges.
- Assess the feasibility of the construction of a climbers meeting 'hub' that contains a covered shelter and day use facilities (e.g., picnic tables, kiosks) that is located close to the lower bench parking lot (Intensive Recreation Zone).
- Identify cultural heritage values and ensure continued access for First Nations traditional uses, subject to conservation, health and safety concerns.
- Draw on historical hydrological data, ongoing monitoring systems (e.g., Long Term Ecological Monitoring) inside and outside the park and projections of climate change effects to develop long-term hydrological forecasts for the park, with particular reference to potable water sources, key aquatic habitats for species at risk, etc.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Plates

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Management Plan Purpose

The purpose of this document is to guide the management of Skaha Bluffs Park. This management plan:

- articulates the key features and values of the park;
- identifies the types and levels of management activities;
- determines the appropriate levels of use and development;
- establishes the long-term vision and management objectives to be met; and,
- responds to current and predicted future threats and opportunities by defining a set of management strategies.

1.2 Planning Area

Skaha Bluffs Park (489 hectares) is located on the southeast perimeter of the City of Penticton (population 43,313) and on the east side of Skaha Lake (Figure 1). The park is situated just outside the municipal boundaries of the city, and as such, resides within the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen. It is contiguous with the much larger (6,373 hectares) McTaggart-Cowan/nsek'tniw't Wildlife Management Area.

Access to the park is via Lakeside Road alongside Skaha Lake between Penticton and the village of Okanagan Falls. A short public road, known as Smythe Drive, leads to the park boundary and then turns into Gillies Creek Road; this narrow paved road within the park ends at two paved parking lots (one located on a lower terrace/bench and another on an upper bench).

The landscape of the park is dominated by a series of north-south gneissic cliffs interspersed with deep canyons. These stepped cliffs are recognized world-wide as a premiere rock climbing destination.

While the park is predominantly dry, Gillies Creek flows through the southern portion of the park for approximately four kilometres towards Skaha Lake. This creek's riparian corridor is known to contain two provincially red-listed ecological communities. There is also a year-round wetland area known as Sora Pond, a locally important habitat for waterfowl and amphibians, and a drinking-water source for many species. Other landscape features of the park include grassland benches and gently sloping open forest which contain many vegetation communities that are considered 'at risk' both provincially and federally.

With the neighbouring McTaggart-Cowan/nsek'tniw't Wildlife Management Area, Skaha Bluffs Park contributes to enhanced protection of habitat for wildlife, including Bighorn Sheep, in a region of the province where significant agricultural and residential development pressures exist. Skaha Bluffs Park's natural and recreational features add to the diversity of values found in other South Okanagan provincial parks and protected areas, for example, Myra-Bellevue Park, Okanagan Mountain Park, White Lake Grasslands Protected Area and Vaseux Protected Area.

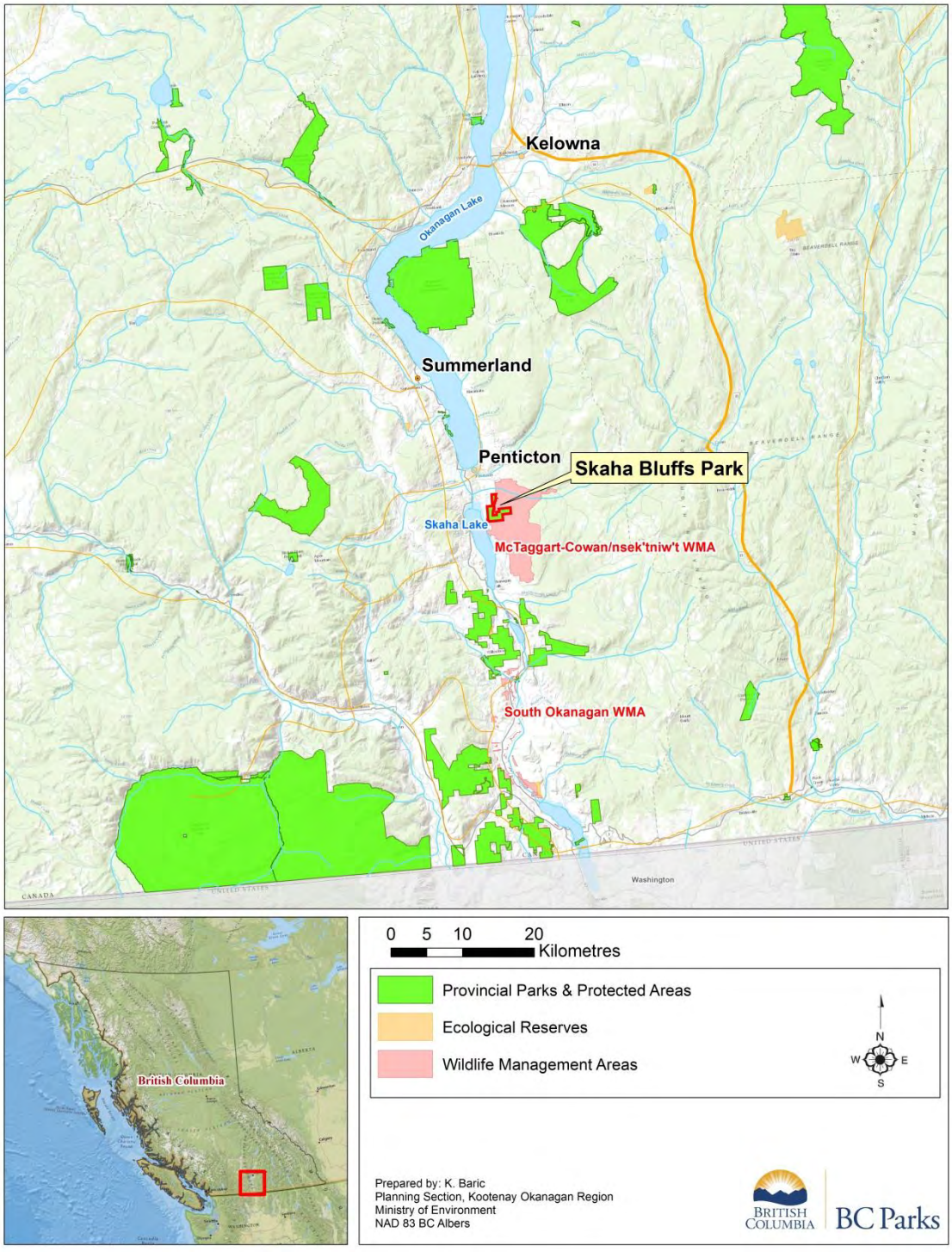

Figure 1: Regional context map of Skaha Bluffs Park.

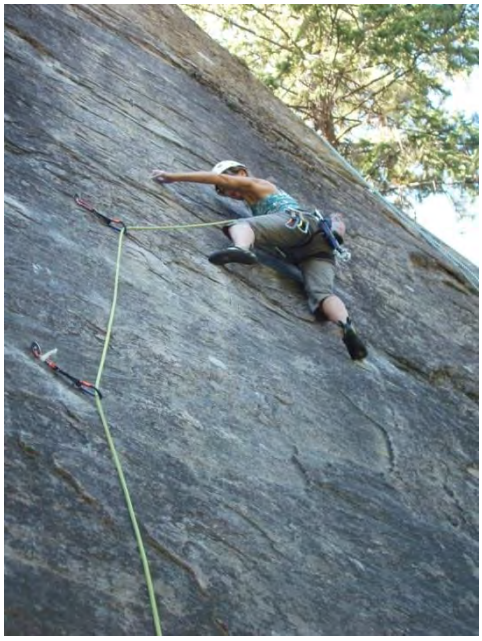

Plate 1: Rock climbing opportunities for all levels of experience are offered at Skaha Bluffs Park.

1.3 Legislative Framework

Skaha Bluffs Park (489 hectares) is comprised of two previously separate land areas (see Figure 2). One component was the privately-owned Sub Lot (SL) 18 property. The SL 18 property (310 hectares) was secured through a private land acquisition which involved the collaborative efforts of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, The Land Conservancy of BC, the Ministry of Environment and numerous other agencies and interests in January 2008.

The northern portion of the park (179 hectares) was originally identified for protection as a Goal 2[1] site through the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan (OSLRMP). In September 2001, the government approved the recommendations of the OSLRMP. The Goal 2 site was established as a Class A park in April 2010.

A significant amount of funding ($2.3M) to complete the securement of SL 18 was facilitated through the Natural Areas Conservation Program coordinated by the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Up until park establishment, the SL 18 property was referred to as the Skaha Conservation Area.

In July 2012 with the completion of a transfer agreement between the Province and the conservation land partners on title, enabling legislation formally added SL-18 to the Class A park. The park is named and described in Schedule D of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act.*

Class A parks are dedicated to the preservation of their natural environments for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public.

[1] The OSLRMP protected area recommendations consisted of 22 Goal 1 (larger areas for ecosystem representation) sites and 27 Goal 2 (smaller areas for protection of special natural and recreational features) sites.

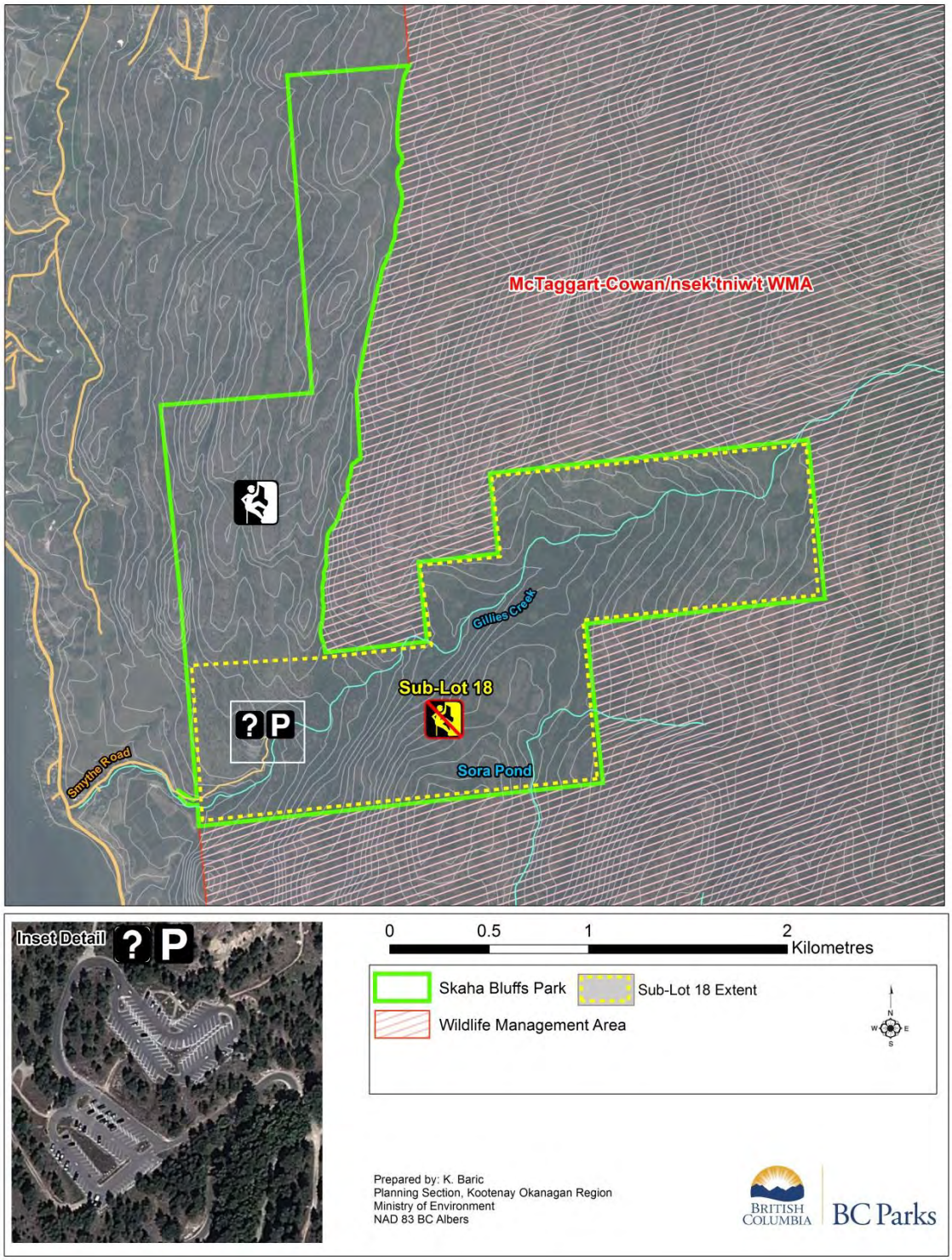

Figure 2: Attributes map of Skaha Bluffs Park.

1.4 Management Commitments/Agreements

Land Use Planning Direction and Recommendations

The Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP provided specific management direction for each proposed protected area identified in the LRMP document, and general management direction for all of the protected areas. The specific direction for Skaha Bluffs Park (original Goal 2 site) is provided below. There is also additional direction for Resource Management Zones (RMZ) in the LRMP (see Appendix 2). Skaha Bluffs falls within the Derenzy Bighorn Sheep Habitat RMZ. The McTaggart-Cowan/nsek'tniw't Wildlife Management Area forms a subset of the RMZ. Specific management direction from the Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP relevant to Skaha Bluffs Park (original Goal 2 site) within the context of the Derenzy Bighorn Sheep Habitat RMZ is as follows:

- The primary purpose of this Skaha Bluffs Goal 2 site is for rock climbing.
- To restrict rock climbing to the Skaha Bluffs Goal 2 site.

Transfer Agreement/Covenant (Nature Conservancy of Canada and The Land Conservancy of BC)

A transfer agreement was signed in February 2012 by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC BC) and the Province that outlined that SL 18 would be managed as a Class A park and placed under the sole ownership and administration of the Province (as represented by the Ministry of Environment- BC Parks). As part of the legal requirements of the transfer, TLC BC and the NCC have an obligation to monitor management of SL 18.

A registered and legally binding covenant held by NCC and TLC BC on title for SL 18 contains various provisions for protecting the land in perpetuity, for the continued protection of the flora, fauna, and natural features, and to enhance and maintain the recreational and cultural heritage values of SL 18 for park purposes. The NCC and TLC remain active partners in the short and long-term management of the park, through mechanisms provided in both the transfer agreement and the registered covenant.

1.5 Relationship with First Nations

The Province and First Nations governments are working toward a new relationship based on respect, recognition and accommodation of aboriginal title and rights. The provincial protected areas system contains cultural and natural values that are significant to First Nations. Some parks are important as sources of natural medicines and foods, or as sacred sites.

The land established as Skaha Bluffs Park is located within the consultative areas of the four bands of the Nlaka'pamux Nation (Cook's Ferry, Nooaitch, Coldwater and Siska) and four bands of the Okanagan Nation Alliance (Okanagan, Lower Similkameen, Penticton and Upper Nicola).

The management plan encourages the expansion of relationships between BC Parks and these First Nations in a number of areas to ensure that management of the park considers their traditional uses and values. The management plan will not limit subsequent treaty negotiations, although none of the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) or Nlaka'pamux member bands are currently in the treaty process.

1.6 Relationship with Communities

BC Parks maintains a close relationship with the City of Penticton and the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen to ensure the local communities' needs are considered and, where appropriate, addressed within the management of the park.

There is considerable economic benefit to local communities as the park attracts a high volume of visitors from outside the area. At least two local climbing businesses use the park for rock climbing instruction which adds economic diversity to the local community. Since its establishment, the park has been host to a climber's festival and other events.

The City of Penticton and other local communities benefit from increased tourist and local expenditures that directly result from rock climbing activity at Skaha Bluffs (e.g., length of stay, accommodation, and retail purchasing associated with outdoor equipment). In addition, the local guide outfitting business for hunting adds economic diversity to the local communities.

Plate 2: The lower bench parking lot at the time of acquisition in 2008 (left) and fully constructed in 2015 (right).

The local chapter of the Climbers Access Society and Skaha.org liaise with BC Parks operations staff on a variety of climbing related issues. The increasing popularity of the park for hiking and mountain biking has prompted BC Parks to coordinate trail management on the SL 18 portion of the park through a volunteer agreement with the South Okanagan Trail Alliance.

Plate 3: A climber's festival in 2011 held within the park.

Plate 4: The lower bench parking lot at full capacity (month of May).

1.7 Adjacent Land Use

Urban development associated with the City of Penticton is located immediately west and north of the park. One active grazing tenure (RAN077332) exists on Crown land to the east of the park (see Figure 3). The Crown land base outside of the park falls within the BC Timber Sales (BCTS) 'Skaha' operating area. BCTS does not have any proposed cut blocks or any recently sold timber licences in the vicinity of the park.

The McTaggart-Cowan/nsek'tniw't Wildlife Management Area is located to the east, northeast and southeast of the park. Land designated as agricultural land reserve (primarily private land) occurs west of the park.

There is a 'motor vehicle closed area' (for the purposes of hunting) to the north, east and south of the park boundary, mainly residing with the confines of the McTaggart-Cowan/nsek'tniw't Wildlife Management Area. The park is located within a larger trapping territory (TR0809T020) and guide outfitter territory (certificate no. 800755); however, there is currently no active guide outfitting or trapping occurring within the park.

1.8 Existing Permits and Authorizations

Permits within the park are predominately for commercial recreation, focused on providing client-based guiding for rock climbing activities. There are two research permits held within the park, these are vegetation/species at risk monitoring and inventory. A permit for a liquefied petroleum gas line and power line also exists.

Table 1: Current Park Use Permits in Skaha Bluffs Park.

Permit Type	Permit Holder
Commercial Recreation	Association of Canadian Mountain Guides
Commercial Recreation	Thompson Rivers University
Commercial Recreation	Skaha Rock Adventures
Commercial Recreation	Yamnuska Inc.
Commercial Recreation	School District No. 6
Commercial Recreation	College of the Rockies
Commercial Recreation	Mountain Skills Academy Inc.
Commercial Recreation	Hoodoo Adventure Company Ltd.
Commercial Recreation	Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance
Research	University of British Columbia
Research	Birchdale Ecological Ltd.
Land Use Occupancy	Fortis BC*

*At the time of writing of this management plan, the land use occupancy permit for Fortis BC was in the process stage.

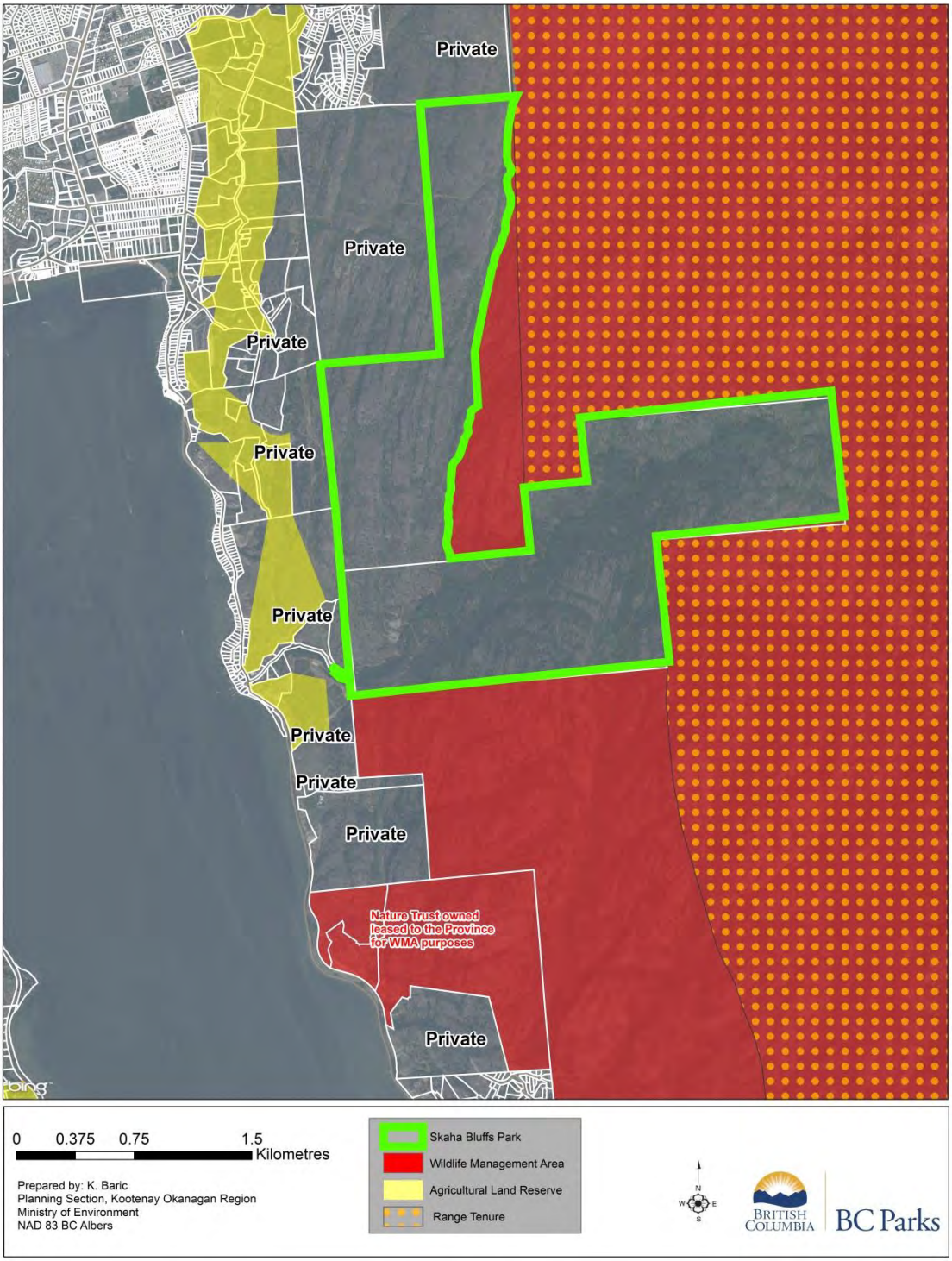

Figure 3: Map of land use/ownership adjacent to Skaha Bluffs Park.

1.9 Management Planning Process

An Interim Management Direction Statement (IMS) for the park was approved in March 2010. Subsequent to the approval of the IMS, both the Goal 2 site and the former Skaha Conservation Area were formally established as Class A park and consolidated into one management entity.

The 2015 Skaha Bluffs Park Management Plan will serve to replace the management direction provided in the earlier IMS and discuss management issues/opportunities that have arisen since.

The draft plan will be available for feedback from public and interest groups and will be shared with First Nations government as part of the consultation process. In addition, local government and provincial government agencies will be provided an opportunity for comment.

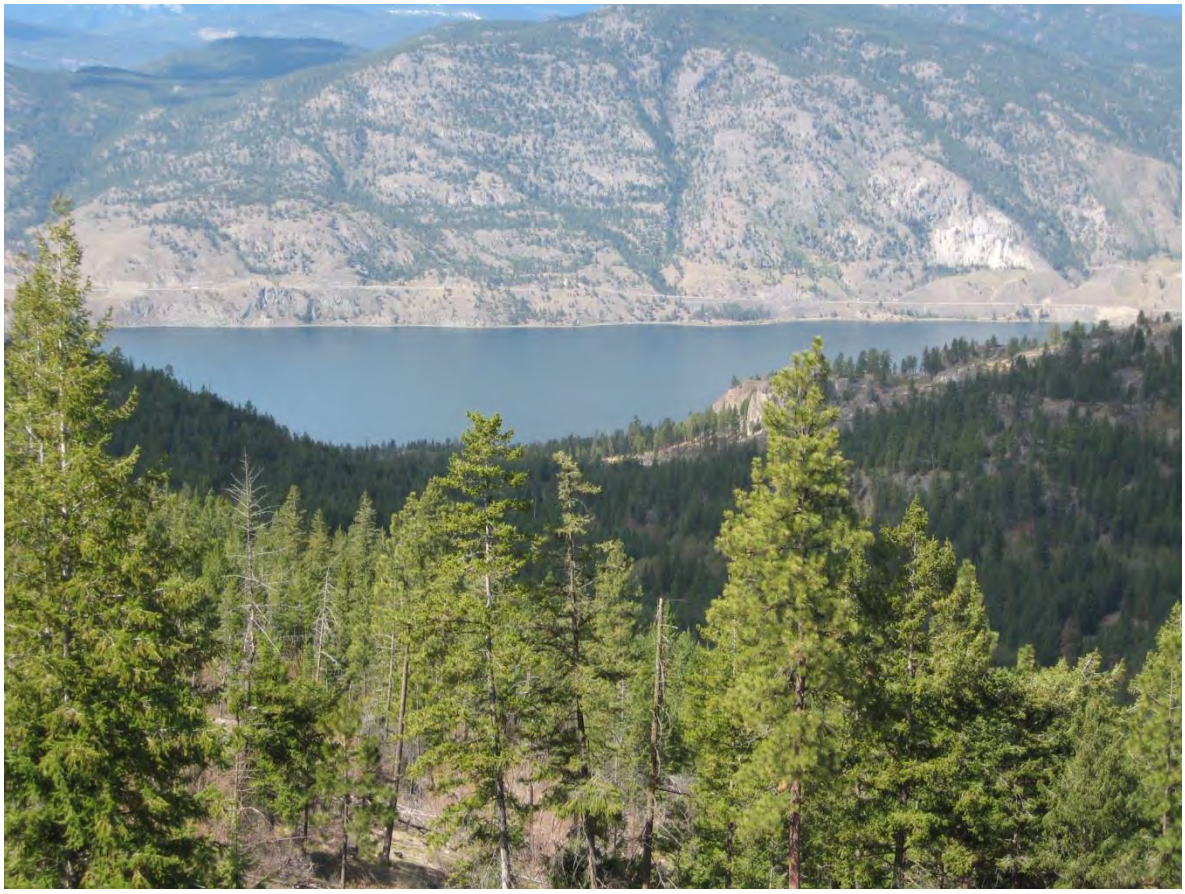

Plate 5: A view of Skaha Lake from the eastern extent of Skaha Bluffs Park.

2.0 Values and Roles of the Protected Area

2.1 Significance in the Protected Areas System

One of the primary roles of Skaha Bluffs Park in the protected areas system of British Columbia is its protection of a world-class rock climbing area (located on the former Goal 2 site). The addition of SL 18 (the former Skaha Conservation Area) has further enhanced the accessibility of the climbing area on the former Goal 2 site while creating a larger area of park land base that is home to a wide range of species. Many of these flora and fauna species which are considered 'at risk' reside in two of the most under-represented biogeoclimatic subzones in the provincial protected areas network- that of the Ponderosa Pine (Okanagan very dry hot variant) and Interior Douglas-fir (Okanagan very dry hot variant) biogeoclimatic subzones.

The recent establishment of the McTaggart-Cowan/nsek'tniw't Wildlife Management Area highlights the important role this rugged and scenic landscape plays in protecting essential habitat in the Northern Okanagan Basin Ecosection, an ecosection that is witness to one of the fastest growing areas of development in the province.

2.2 Biodiversity and Natural Heritage Values

Biogeoclimatic Zone Context and Habitat Types

Situated at the convergence of three ecosections, the Northern and Southern Okanagan Basin and the Northern Okanagan Highland ecosections, the biogeoclimatic subzones/variants represented within Skaha Bluffs Park are PPxh1 (Ponderosa Pine – Okanagan very dry hot variant), IDFxh1 (Interior Douglas Fir – Okanagan very dry hot variant), and IDFdm1 (Kettle Dry Mild variant). The Ponderosa Pine and Interior Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zones listed above are two of the four biogeoclimatic zones in B.C. that are of conservation concern. The Ponderosa Pine zone is ranked S2/S3 (Imperilled/Vulnerable) and the Interior Douglas-fir zone is ranked S3 (Vulnerable). Provincially, the biogeoclimatic subzones in this protected area (PPxh1, IDFdm1 and IDFxh1) are under-represented within the protected areas system. However, because of its small size, the park only serves to slightly increase provincial representation of these biogeoclimatic zones. The Northern Okanagan Basin Ecosection is also under-represented in the protected areas system. The park increases provincial representation of this ecosection to a small degree.

The physiography of the park has a direct effect on the variety of habitats found here. Rugged terrain (i.e., cliffs, crevices, outcroppings and talus), Ponderosa pine open forest, wetlands, riparian and the grasslands that occur on the shallow-soiled terraces, combine to provide a variety of essential habitat types. These habitat types include escape terrain, winter range, breeding habitat, migration corridors, hibernacula, denning, and foraging areas.

Grassland terraces in the western portion of the park are remnant examples of this habitat type. The majority of the grassland terraces outside of the park along the east side of the Okanagan basin have been impacted by agricultural and residential development. The terraces are dominated by the PPxh1 site series 4 (ponderosa pine – bluebunch wheatgrass). The vegetation is in good condition with far fewer invasive plants than is typical for this site series throughout its

range in B.C. It is therefore an excellent example of this rare vegetation type, which is poorly expressed elsewhere on the property.

Terrestrial ecosystem mapping has been conducted for the broader landscape in which the park is situated. This mapping has revealed a high degree of both red- and blue-listed ecological communities spatially located within the park (see Figure 4), some of which overlap in the same land area.

Wildlife trees (trees with special habitat characteristics) are a common feature in the park. Over 70 species of vertebrates in British Columbia are known to be critically dependent on wildlife trees. These wildlife trees support a number of cavity nesters in the park.

The dry, lower elevation forests, comprised mainly of ponderosa pine and interior Douglas-fir, form a mosaic of habitat types along with the grasslands, rugged terrain and riparian areas. The park also contains vestiges of past glacial activity, such as large rock fissures, bedrock scarring and erratics.

Plate 6: Bighorn Sheep utlize the park in all seasons.

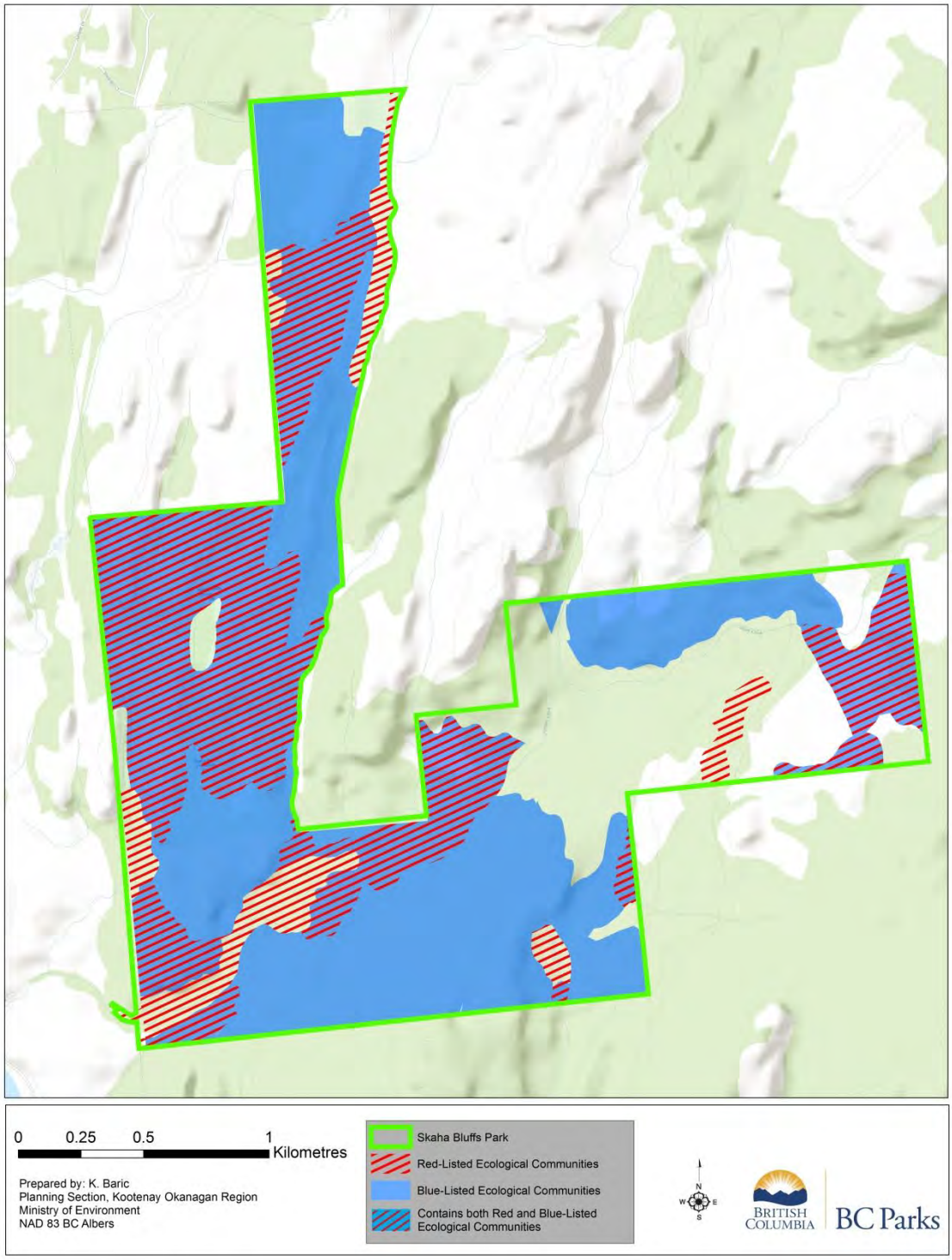

Figure 4: Map of the red- and blue-listed ecological communities within Skaha Bluffs Park.

Radio collaring/ tracking and visual inventories indicate that the park protects important travel corridors in all directions. The park retains critical Bighorn Sheep range (for ewes, young of the year and sub-adults during the winter and early spring, summer and fall rut), and is a keystone segment of the north-south migration corridor. Also, the Gillies Creek drainage is one of the few accessible east-west riparian corridors along the east side of Skaha Lake. Riparian areas in the park provide suitable habitat for the red-listed Lewis's Woodpecker and Western Screech Owl *macfarlanei* subspecies. Gillies Creek contains examples of two red-listed ecological communities (Douglas-fir – water birch / Douglas maple and black cottonwood/water birch). Other, more common, avian species include Clark's Nutcracker, Pygmy Nuthatch, the White-throated Swift, Canyon Wren, Great Horned Owl, Red Crossbills, Vesper Sparrow, Nashville Warbler and Cassin's Finch.

Plate 7: A lone Bighorn Sheep utilizing the escape terrain within the park.

Plate 8: A cougar captured on a wildlife camera located within the park.

Sora Pond[2], a half hectare wetland, exists about midway up the southern portion of the park. This pond is important for waterfowl and amphibians, and provides year round drinking water (which is an uncommon occurrence within the park) for numerous species. A number of small ephemeral ponds exist in the park that provide breeding habitat for amphibians, and are zones of high diversity and productivity, providing forage for insectivorous species that live and breed in the park.

Plate 9: Sora Pond located in the upper reaches of Gillies Creek

The McTaggart-Cowan/nsek'tniw't Wildlife Management Area is adjacent to the park, which augments the park's wildlife habitat and connectivity values. Additionally, The Nature Trust of BC (TNT) has purchased conservation land less than one kilometre to the south of the park. The TNT property is connected to the park area by Crown land. Collectively these lands conserve and provide habitat connectivity for wide ranging species of predators including Cougar, Coyote, and Bobcat; and prey such as Bighorn Sheep, White-tailed Deer, and Mule Deer.

[2] Sora Pond is not a gazetted name for this wetland.


Plate 10: Cup Clover and Flat-Topped Broomrape are two red-listed plant species found within Skaha Bluffs Park. Photo credit Ryan Batten.

Numerous species and ecological communities have been documented within the park (see Table 2). Table 2 is not a comprehensive list of at-risk species present as inventories are currently being developed. A Conservation Risk Assessment (CRA) is in place for the park.[3]

Table 2: List of Species and Habitat (considered at risk or ranked by the Conservation Framework) within Skaha Bluffs Park.

Species	Status			Record in park	Framework Conservation Framework[4] (Priority)
	Provincial[1]	COSEWIC[1]	SARA Schedule		
Birds					
Canyon Wren	Blue	Not at Risk	N/A	Confirmed	CF4
Peregrine Falcon *anatum*	Red	Special Concern	Listed	Unconfirmed	CF2

[3] The Conservation Risk Assessment is the BC Parks database for knowledge about the ecological values within a given park, the means for tracking threats to conservation and management actions, and an assessment of the conservation design for a park.

[4] The Conservation Framework is a science based provincial tool to guide conservation action on priority species and ecosystems of conservation concern (http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/conservationframework/)

subspecies					
Western Screech Owl *macfarlanei* subspecies	Red	Endangered	Listed	Confirmed	CF1
Common Nighthawk	Yellow	Threatened	Listed	Confirmed	CF 2
Violet green swallow	Yellow	N/A	N/A	Confirmed	CF2
Gray Flycatcher	Blue	N/A	N/A	Likely; not confirmed	CF2
Lewis's Woodpecker	Red	Threatened	Listed	Confirmed	CF2
Flammulated Owl	blue	Special concern	Listed	Likely; not confirmed	CF2
Mammals					
Bighorn Sheep	Blue	N/A	N/A	Confirmed	CF3
Fringed Myotis	Blue	Data Deficient	Listed	Confirmed	CF3
Spotted Bat	Blue	Special Concern	Listed	Confirmed	CF2
Western Small-footed Myotis	Blue			Confirmed	CF3
Townsend's big-eared bat	Blue			Confirmed	CF 2
Little Brown Bat	Yellow	Endangered		Confirmed	CF5
Pallid Bat	Red	Threatened		Likely, not confirmed	CF2
California myotis	yellow			Confirmed	CF2
Silver haired Bat	Yellow			Confirmed	CF2
Reptiles/Amphibians					
Gopher Snake *desertcola* subspecies	Blue	Threatened	Listed	Confirmed	CF2
Night Snake	Blue	Endangered	Listed	Confirmed	CF1

Racer	Blue	Special Concern	Listed	Confirmed	CF2
Western Rattlesnake	Blue	Threatened	Listed	Confirmed	CF2
Rubber boa	Yellow	Special concern		Confirmed	CF1
Western Skink	Blue	Special Concern	Listed	Confirmed	CF1
Great Basin Spadefoot	Blue	Threatened	Listed	Likely; not confirmed	CF1
Western Toad	Yellow	Special Concern	Listed	Confirmed	CF2
Tiger Salamander	Red	Endangered	Listed	Likely; not confirmed	N/A
Plants					
Cup clover	Red			Confirmed	CF2
Flat-topped broomrape	Blue			Confirmed	CF2
Invertebrates					
Sagebrush tiger beetle	Blue			Likely; not confirmed	CF2
Dark Salt Flat Tiger Beetle	Red	Endangered	Listed	Likely; not confirmed	CF1
Ecological Communities					
Bluebunch wheatgrass – arrowleaf balsamroot	Blue			Confirmed	CF2
Douglas-fir – ponderosa pine / pinegrass	Blue			Confirmed	CF2
Douglas-fir – water birch / Douglas maple	Red			Confirmed	CF1
Black cottonwood/ water birch	Red			Confirmed	CF 1
Ponderosa pine / bluebunch	Blue			Confirmed	CF2

wheatgrass – Idaho fescue				
Ponderosa pine / bluebunch wheatgrass – rough fescue	Blue		Confirmed	CF2
Ponderosa pine / red three-awn	Blue		Confirmed	CF2

Plate 11: The Western Screech Owl has been known to nest in the riparian areas of Gillies Creek.

Plate 12: Western Rattlesnakes can often be nestled amongst crevices on established climbing routes within the park.

Fire Maintained Ecosystems

Historically, the park landscape and surrounding area has been witness to several forest fires since the early 1920's (see Figure 5), and the forest cover has changed in density and configuration since the early 1930's (see Figure 6). The 1969 and 1994 (Garnet) wildfires were human caused.

Wildfire (human caused or lightning caused) is a process that has shaped the forest and grassland plant communities of Skaha Bluffs Park and surrounding area. Fire will undoubtedly continue to play a role in shaping the forest/grasslands characteristics over the coming decades.

Plate 13: Landscape alteration is still visible from the 1994 Garnet Wildfire.

Plate 14: Past glacial activity is evident on the landscape within the park, as shown by these erratics.

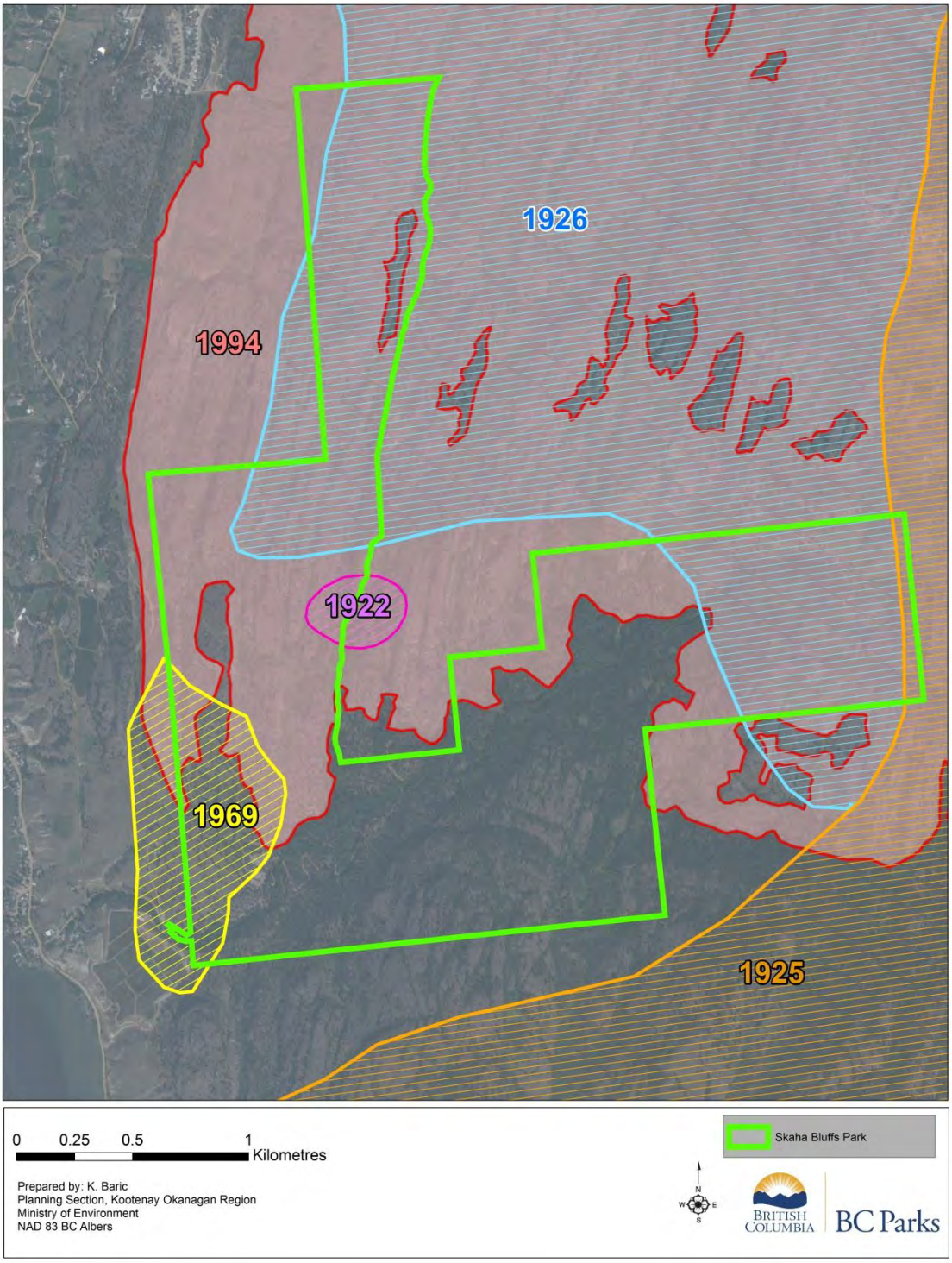

Figure 5: Map of the fire history (polygon extent) that has affected the land base over several decades in the vicinity of Skaha Bluffs Park.

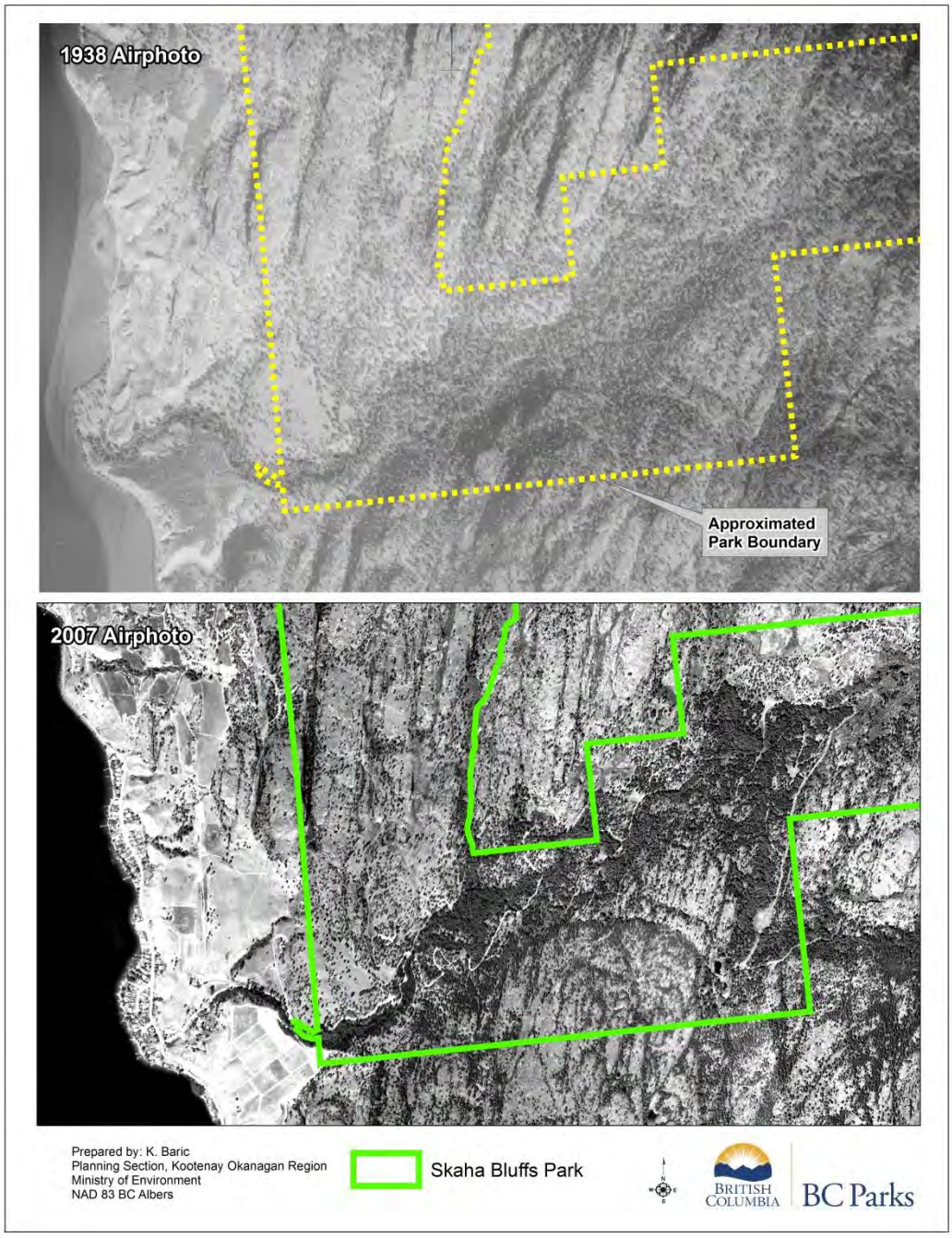

Figure 6: Airphoto comparison of a portion of Skaha Bluffs Park and surrounding area.

2.3 Cultural Values

Aboriginal Cultural Values

Prior to colonial times, the area was frequented by First Nations. A traditional travel route is located west of and through a portion of the park. Several registered archaeological sites have been recorded along this traditional travel route, outside of the park boundary. Although there are no registered archaeological sites within the park boundary, pre-contact use of the area is highly probable. The Okanagan Nation has several place names associated with the park such as *t̓uʔikən* (Skaha Bluffs) – which translated means “the large crack that appears on the side of the mountain at the bluffs”. The crack runs north and south, parallel to Skaha Lake.

Prior to park infrastructure development, a 2008 archaeological assessment of the access road and parking lot areas did not result in any archaeological findings. In 2010, the Okanagan Nation (Syilx) conducted an Aboriginal Interest and Use Study for the park.

Plate 15: Pictographs are located near the park boundary along a pre-colonial First Nations travel route.

Skaha Bluffs were traditionally used and continue to be used by the Syilx people for plant harvesting. A variety of plants, including medicines, berries, and roots, were harvested at the bluffs. The Traditional Ecological Knowledge group of the Syilx has indicated that access to the bluffs is important for cultural purposes and the livelihood of the Syilx people. For many years, access to harvesting was limited because of private land blocking traditional access routes.

First Nations education and interpretation (for First Nations youth and students) takes place within the park and there are opportunities for cross-cultural training that would be facilitated by First Nations.

The adjacent McTaggart-Cowan/nsek'tniw't Wildlife Management Area is also important to the Penticton Indian Band who provided a Syilx language name for the site. The word, ns'k'niw't, is roughly translated from the Syilx language as "a gash on the side." The name refers to the portion of the trail used by First Nations winding up and alongside a steep walled canyon south of the Skaha Bluffs for travel, trade, and to access medicine gathering areas.

Non-aboriginal Cultural Values

The park contains vestiges of turn of the century agricultural and forestry practices. A former culvert water system was in place in the early 1900's and remnants of the system's infrastructure are still in place (e.g., concrete junction boxes). The water system was use to irrigate agricultural fields that once resided on the terraces below the park. Gillies Creek Road was most likely put in place to facilitate logging activities in the upper reaches of SL 18. Today, the road is impassible for vehicle traffic (except for all terrain vehicles utilized for park operations) beyond the yellow gate below the main parking lot area.

2.4 Recreation Values

Rock Climbing

The area is a world-renowned recreation destination for rock climbing enthusiasts, specifically 'sport climbers'.[5] The collection of gneissic[6] cliffs that are known as "Skaha Bluffs" contain numerous established climbing areas, with routes that range from entry-level to expert climbs, providing a variety of climbing experiences for area residents and visitors.

The bluffs are unique to the area, containing several long canyons trending north-south, lined with rock walls up to 80 metres in height. Impressive fortress-like stone formations, with deep ravines, give the area a primeval quality. These areas had long been a popular destination for rock-climbing enthusiasts, but the addition of SL 18 legalized and secured the public access to the climbing areas on Crown land after many years of unofficial status. There is no rock climbing permitted on SL 18.

Plate 16: Massive granite walls beckon rock climbers.

[5] Sport climbing is a form of rock climbing that relies on permanent anchors and bolts fixed to the rock.

[6] Banded, or layered, metamorphic rock.

Hiking

An established trail network in and around the rock climbing areas as well as up the Gillies Creek corridor provides intermediate and advanced level hiking access (see Figure 7). These trails provide nature and recreation enthusiasts with panoramic views of the Okanagan Valley, the City of Penticton and Skaha Lake. Wildlife viewing is often a key component of hiking activity within the park, as Bighorn Sheep can be readily observed within close proximity of trails emanating from the parking area.

Plate 17: Parks staff extending the rock stairs along the Red Tail trail.

Mountain Biking

The popularity of mountain biking has grown considerably since the establishment of the park. Currently, there are four multi-use trails on the SL 18 portion of the park that attract mountain bikers throughout the year. Many of the trails link to other trails on Crown land within the adjacent wildlife management area (see Figure 7). The management intent of SL 18 is the protection species and ecosystems; as such, no further trail development is being considered at this time.

Facilities

The park contains two large parking lots located at the terminus of the 850 metre access road that travels up the Gillies Creek corridor. Two kiosks and two pit toilets are located at the lower bench parking lot (75 vehicle capacity), and one kiosk and two pit toilets are located at the upper bench parking lot (96 vehicle capacity). Within the climbing areas of the park there are three pit toilets and one composting toilet.

Plate 18: The composting toilet located within a high use climbing area of the park.

Plate 19: Trails leading from the two parking lots are located on an easy grade and suitable for families.

Plate 20: Higher elevations in Skaha Bluffs Park offer spectacular views of Okanagan Lake.

Plate 21: Most trails within Skaha Bluffs Park are single track and are shared by wildlife (e.g., a Rubber Boa located not far from a trail edge).

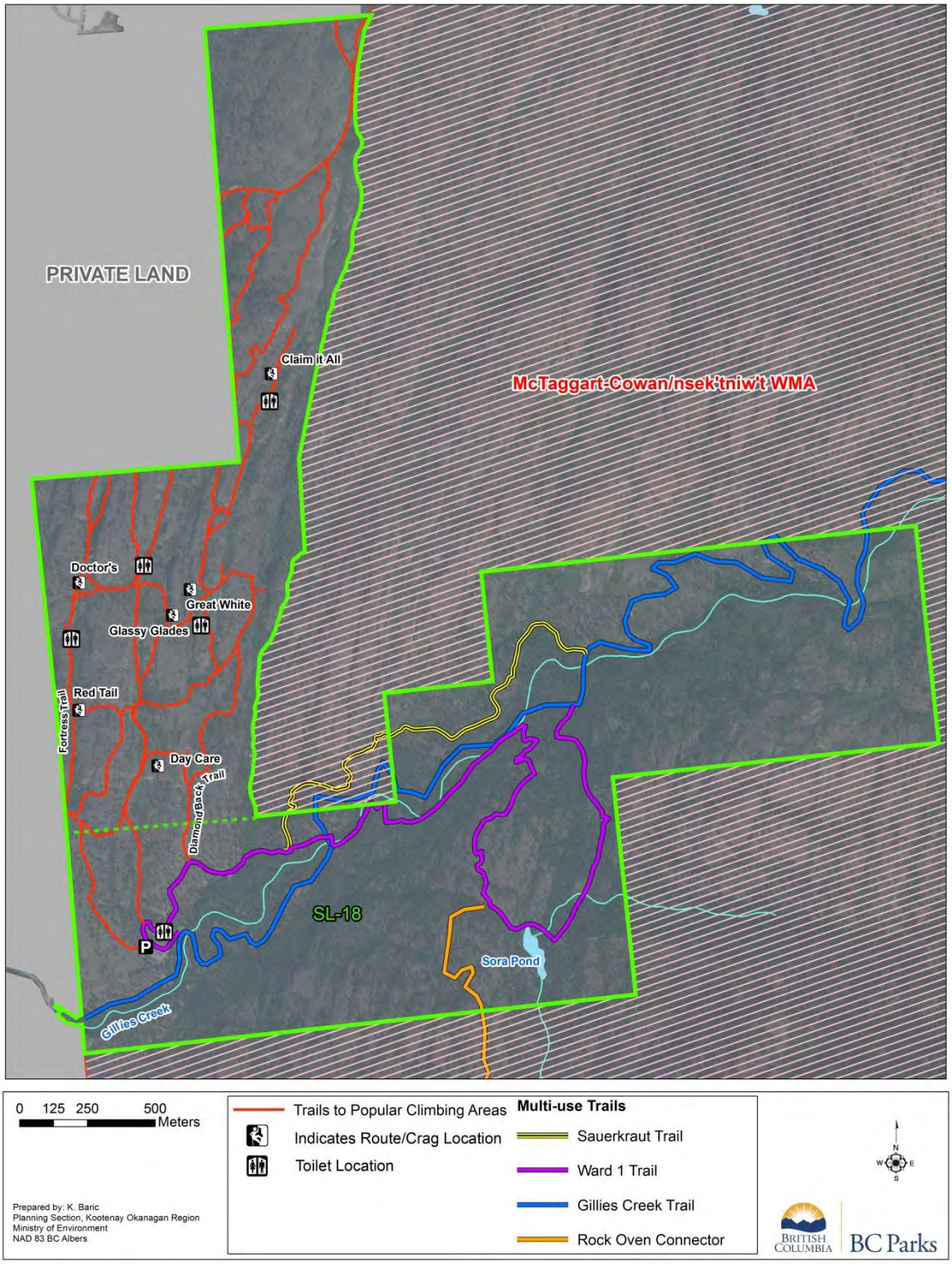

Figure 7: Map of the recreational trails within Skaha Bluffs Park.

2.5 Research and Education

Starting with the securement of SL 18 by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, The Land Conservancy of BC, and the Province, the Nature Conservancy of Canada embarked on a comprehensive baseline inventory which focussed on ecological and anthropogenic conditions of SL 18 (the former Skaha Conservation Area). This document continues to provide excellent information on species occurrence for wildlife and vegetation.

Ongoing monitoring and species inventory has occurred within the park since its establishment, with particular emphasis on “at risk” species such as Bighorn Sheep, reptile and bat species.

The park holds great potential to explore a variety of research and education projects, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Focused study of Bighorn Sheep that utilize the park and what influences the high recreational use may be having on critical lambing areas and behaviour.
- Species at risk study and monitoring.
- Public education and scientific research on the park’s unique geological history; and,
- First Nations cultural/traditional use (spanning from pre-historic to contemporary).

Plate 22: Research and monitoring is a key element of management within Skaha Bluffs Park (Photo credit left- Lucy Reiss, photo credit right- the Nature Conservancy of Canada).

2.6 Climate Change

Protected area management objectives typically aim at sustaining traditional or current representative ecosystems and species, but may be thwarted by climatic changes that continue to alter the ecology of the area more rapidly than anticipated. Such alterations may be subtle, but more dramatic natural disturbances such as wildfire, insects and disease are also likely to increase in frequency and severity.

Ultimately, changing temperature and precipitation regimes in a particular area will alter the historical complement of plant and animal species, affect water supplies and potentially change traditional recreational use patterns. With the ongoing effects of human land use activities outside protected areas already applying pressures on both 'at risk' and representative species and ecosystems, ecological inventory and monitoring work at the park level can help inform land managers about the effects of climate changes in the absence of intense human land use. Park managers must better understand to what extent climate change effects can or should be tempered within parks to help natural systems adjust to support species that might otherwise be naturally extirpated or to mitigate possible negative impacts on recreational use and public safety.

Climate change may noticeably affect the current natural systems within Skaha Bluffs Park. Changes projected over the next fifty years include:

- general warming, particularly in winter, and higher winter precipitation;
- increased frequency and severity of natural processes such as wildfires, forest insect infestations and droughts;
- changes in hydrology, including the reduction of snowpack at higher elevations and the timing of peak flows and low-water events;
- increase in weedy species that outcompete native vegetation in drought conditions;
- extirpation of some plant and animal species, for example, those in ecological pockets such as microclimates, or at the limits of their range; and,
- changes in ecosystem composition and structure.

Maintaining healthy resilient ecosystems plays a key role in providing refugia for indigenous flora and fauna species and maintaining ecosystem function as climate continues to change and species adapt. As species home ranges shift due to climate change, Skaha Bluffs Park can be a baseline indicator for the surrounding areas with human land use and 'stepping stone' for species movement where development in the Okanagan valley typically forms a barrier.

3.0 Management Direction

3.1 Vision Statement

This Vision Statement describes the future state and management regime that is desired for Skaha Bluffs Park over the next 25 to 50 years. The park vision provides long-term direction for park managers, while aiding them in making decisions regarding current issues. It is based on prevailing environmental and socio-economic attitudes concerning protected areas. It is, however, dynamic and conceptual and therefore allows for change due to evolving ideas regarding conservation and recreation and evolving ecosystems due to climate changes.

Skaha Bluffs Park continues to represent the best of what the Okanagan landscape has to offer. On one end of the spectrum the park provides for the protection of a variety of habitats and species within a highly sensitive, and increasingly rare, grassland ecosystem. These species include the magnificent Bighorn Sheep, as well as a host of other flora and fauna considered 'at risk' in the province. More than ever, the park serves as an important ecological benchmark in an era of climate change stressors and intensified adjacent land use activity and development. Management direction, particularly for the SL 18 portion of the park, which was a private land purchase, continues to be closely coordinated with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and The Land Conservancy of BC.

Equally significant is the role of 178 hectares of the park as a premier rock climbing destination for British Columbians and visitors. Proactive and coordinated management with climber representatives has enabled diversified climbing opportunities. Additional recreational experiences have also become very popular such as hiking, mountain biking, and nature appreciation. Continued outreach, education and interest group collaboration have maintained ecological values so that species and habitat values, as well as visitor experiences, have not deteriorated over time.

The park serves an essential role in the cultural, spiritual and traditional connection and practices of the Okanagan (Syilx) First Nation and Nlaka'pamux First Nation. First Nations have been present in the region for thousands of years and, through a positive relationship with BC Parks, their connection to, and their use of, the park continues to flourish.

3.2 Management Objectives and Strategies

3.2.1 Biodiversity and Natural Heritage Values

There is baseline ecological information (e.g., current species inventory, ecosystem mapping and invasive plant inventory) available for the former Skaha Conservation Area (SL 18), but this information does require updating and can be enhanced through further research.

The former Goal 2 portion of the park has limited baseline ecological information; however, some study and research has been ongoing within the park such as monitoring of Bighorn Sheep movement, snake hibernacula and bat use and roosting locations.

Obtaining up to date information will allow better management of park values during projects such as trail development, creating new/upgrading facilities and when new permit applications or proposals come forward. This information can also lead to better management of visitor use to minimize impacts on park values.

Currently, the park does allow for dogs on leash. However, over the past several years, the popularity of the park has brought with it an increased number of dogs. Numerous signs and compliance and enforcement efforts are ongoing, but the trend is that dogs are continually observed off leash within the park. Dogs can be highly disruptive to native fauna (e.g., Bighorn sheep, snake species) and if venturing off trail can damage sensitive vegetation.

Management Objectives	Management Strategies
Conserve biodiversity and natural heritage values.	• Continue to undertake thorough inventories of species and ecosystems within all areas of the park. This includes monitoring (e.g., for changes in movement corridor behaviour) of wildlife species (e.g., Bighorn Sheep, rare reptiles- snakes), particularly those considered 'at risk'. Work with government and non-governmental partners to achieve this objective. • Do not allow any development in Special Feature Zones (with particular emphasis on the environmental valuable resource area detailed in SF1). • Amend the *Park, Conservancy and Recreation Area Regulation* to include Skaha Bluffs Park as a park that prohibits aircraft arrivals and departures. • Continue to allow for rock climbing activities within the Goal 2 section of the park. There will be no rock climbing or climbing route development allowed on SL 18. No further hiking/mountain biking trail is contemplated for the SL 18 portion of the park. • Develop and implement an Ecosystem Management and Restoration Plan with emphasis on attempting to maintain historical and restoring native riparian and grasslands values, managing for fire-maintained ecosystems and controlling invasive plant spread. Use and build upon existing baseline ecological data. • Coordinate with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) on their efforts to maintain healthy Bighorn Sheep populations consistent with the goals, objectives and actions of the South Okanagan Valley Bighorn Sheep Recovery Plan (2002).

	• Limit human interference with lambing, wintering or migration routes located within the park. Seasonal closures of select portions of the park to the general public may be employed to assist in the protection of essential Bighorn Sheep habitat and minimize disturbance. • Monitor recreational impacts on priority species and ecosystem values. • Subject to direction contained within an Ecosystem Management and Restoration Plan, balance conservation values with recreational activities; develop a carrying capacity framework that considers limits of acceptable change* especially in high use recreation areas. *(*The Limits of Acceptable Change process focuses on human-induced impacts to the environment. Recreation researchers developed this process to determine how much human-induced change is acceptable over a specific land area.)* • Through close collaboration with the MFLNRO, ensure management of adjacent Crown land (e.g., McTaggart-Cowan/nsek'tniw't Wildlife Management Area) is consistent with the overall objectives of the park. • Prevent unauthorized motor vehicle use of trail routes and non-designated roads by gating access points, posting appropriate signage, and utilizing enforcement and compliance tools. • Continue to rehabilitate/restore damaged areas and protect from incidental off-road vehicle use. • Ensure incidental cattle trespass is dealt with promptly. • Through Park Use Permit provisions, ensure the Fortis gas line and power line right of ways are monitored and mitigate any habitat/vegetation disturbances associated with these structures and their maintenance. • Monitor wildlife mortality associated with increased visitor use of park access (i.e., paved parking lot and upgraded road entrance). Support initiatives that reduce wildlife mortality where observed. Ensure maintenance of passive speed deterrents that have been incorporated into the road design and post signage to alert visitors to wildlife crossing. • Management decisions related to Bighorn Sheep will be made in collaboration with the Wildlife Branch (MFLNRO), NCC and TLC BC, and in consultation with First Nations and stakeholder groups. Within the former Skaha Conservation Area (SL 18) this will include determination of appropriate level of hunting/guide outfitting activities to ensure achievement of 'conservation objectives' and minimize threat to 'conservation target' viability (both NCC conservation tools). • To avoid potential conflicts between domestic animals and wildlife, monitor and enforce visitor compliance with mandatory dog on-leash park regulation (*Park Act: Park, Conservancy and Recreation Area Regulation*, section 19). • Should dog off leash infractions continue to increase, closures may be invoked (either seasonal closures or all-year round).

3.2.2 Recreation Values

Despite its small size, the park is a backdrop for many recreational activities. Visitors to the park number in excess of 75,000 per year. Although a vast majority of the use is from rock climbers, other activities such as hiking and mountain biking are growing in popularity in the park. With such high levels of use, ensuring a balanced approach (and segregation of activities) is required so that the visitor use experience and park values are not compromised.

Management Objectives	Management Strategies
Maintain recreation values and opportunities.	• Utilize park zoning to avoid user conflict (i.e., linear hike-in only corridors for rock climbing visitors). • Where consistent with conservation objectives outlined in this plan, provide for continued access to recreational activities (e.g., hiking, horse riding, mountain biking, hunting, rock climbing, wildlife viewing and nature appreciation) in areas appropriate for such use. • Explore opportunities to broaden visitor experiences to include facilities which support those with physical challenges. • Monitor visitor access and parking areas and develop strategies to avoid congestion, safety concerns and impacts to grasslands and sensitive areas. • Due to safety issues with snow/ice, continue with seasonal closures of the main paved access road (Gillies Creek Road) between early December to the beginning of March. • In cooperation with the local climber community, develop a Rock Climbing Stewardship and Opportunities Strategy for the Goal 2 portion of the park. • Assess the feasibility of the construction of a climbers meeting 'hub' that contains a covered shelter and day use facilities (e.g., picnic tables, kiosks) that is located close to the lower bench parking lot (Intensive Recreation Zone). • Ensure the public is well informed of risks associated with rock climbing and hiking in rugged terrain. • Ensure park users are aware through signage and outreach (e.g., BC Parks website) that access to adjacent private lands requires permission of the land owner. • Monitoring strategies for guide/outfitting will be established according to Provincial/Regional protocols. The guide outfitter will require a park use permit if operating within the park and be required to provide annual reporting of activities. The guide outfitter cannot create or use accommodation- spike camps/permanent camps or motorized conveyances to aid in hunting activity. • For climbing-related activities, ensure consistency with the BC Parks Public Safety and Security Risk Assessment and prepare a safety and rescue plan in conjunction with the local RCMP, Provincial Emergency Program and Emergency Health Services.

3.2.3 Cultural Values

Pre-contact travel routes are known to have passed through the park and there is high probability that cultural sites and previously unrecorded archaeological sites exist within the park.

Management Objectives	Management Strategies
To protect cultural heritage values existing within the park and to manage collaboratively with First Nations.	• Work with First Nations to inventory cultural heritage values (e.g., encourage traditional use studies). • If cultural sites are located and in consultation with First Nations, utilize Special Feature/Cultural zoning, buffer any identified First Nations traditional use archaeological sites from current recreation activities. • Emphasize the importance of protecting and enhancing 'traditional use management and techniques'. • Identify cultural heritage values and ensure continued access for First Nations traditional uses, subject to conservation, health and safety concerns. • Develop interpretation opportunities, where appropriate, that emphasize the importance of the area to First Nations but respect the sensitivity of cultural values. Encourage First Nations contribution to interpretation signage/information at identified locations (e.g., kiosks/trail heads).

3.2.5 Climate Change

It is apparent that global climate change will continue to alter weather patterns, hydrology and species composition, with resulting effects on ecosystem processes, fish and wildlife habitats, and on all human activity. At the protected area level, ongoing monitoring of key environmental elements and the rate at which they may be changing can help managers to identify and assess management options. Such efforts within the park will maximize opportunities and minimize negative climate change impacts within the park.

Management Objectives	Management Strategies
To increase knowledge of ecological components and processes within the park and an understanding of their response to	• Conduct reconnaissance level habitat inventory and develop a species list for the park, preferably in coordination with similar efforts for the surrounding area. • Place emphasis on inventory on those areas with present or projected recreational uses and on those areas such as wetlands that may have species at risk or unusual species diversity, or may be particularly sensitive to climate change.

climate change.	• Explore the past natural disturbance interval and manage fire to avoid extreme events. • Develop adaptive strategies that allow species and ecosystems to connect across the landscape.
To improve understanding of park hydrology particularly as it relates to climate change effects.	• Draw on historical hydrological data, ongoing monitoring systems (e.g., Long Term Ecological Monitoring) inside and outside the park and projections of climate change effects to develop long-term hydrological forecasts for the park, with particular reference to potable water sources, key aquatic habitats for species at risk, etc.

3.3 Zoning Plan

This management plan uses zoning to assist in the planning and management of Skaha Bluffs Park. In general terms, zoning divides an area into logical units to apply consistent management objectives for protection of protected area values. Zones reflect the intended land use, existing patterns of use, degree of human use desired, and level of management and development allowed in the zone. Zoning provides visitors and managers with a quick visual representation and appreciation of how a particular protected area is managed. Zoning is mandatory for all protected areas except ecological reserves.

Skaha Bluffs Park is separated into three management planning zones: Intensive Recreation, Nature Recreation and Special Feature. This zoning is intended to concentrate and focus recreation use to appropriate areas which can support current and future public use without having detrimental impacts on the park's sensitive ecosystems and cultural heritage values.

Nature Recreation Zones (Polygon and Linear)

Nature Recreation Zone- Polygon (NRZ-P)

The area encompassing the Nature Recreation Zone - Polygon is approximately 179 hectares (37 percent of the park). This polygon zone encompasses the former "Skaha Bluffs" Goal 2 area (largely a climbing destination for visitors).

Nature Recreation Zone- Linear (NRZ- L)

The linear zone around the designated trails (identified in Figure 8 and 9 as Nature Recreation Zone- Linear) is 6 metres wide (3 metres each side from the centerline of the trail) and is designed to provide a buffer for the sensitive areas zoned as Special Feature. Total area of this zone is 12 hectares (2.4 percent of the park).

Objective and Management Intent

The objective of these zones (NRZ- P and NRZ- L) is to protect scenic values and to provide for appropriate recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

Although the Skaha Bluffs former Goal 2 area (zoned as Nature Recreation) is set aside primarily for rock climbing, in the future, some areas of the Nature Recreation Zone may be identified as containing sensitive values. Special Feature zoning may be applied to these areas if deemed necessary to provide enhanced protection of biodiversity.

Intensive Recreation Zones (Polygon and Linear)

Intensive Recreation Zone- Polygon (IRZ- P)

Description

The area identified as Intensive Recreation Zone- Polygon is approximately 0.9 hectares (0.18 percent of the park). The zone includes the lower bench parking lot at the terminus of the paved road and the upper bench parking lot immediately above (to the east) of the main parking lot. A small area in the Intensive Recreation Zone- Polygon below the lower bench parking lot has been identified as a feasible site for a covered picnic and day-use shelter.

Intensive Recreation Zone- Linear (IRZ- L)

This linear zone includes the paved access road along the lower reaches of Gillies Creek (i.e., Gillies Creek Road) as well as the connector road between the lower bench and upper bench parking lots. Total area for this zone is 0.6 hectares (or 0.12 percent of the park).

Objective and Management Intent

The objective of these zones (IRZ- P and IRZ- L) is to provide facilities for visitor use.

Special Feature Zones (1 and 2)

Special Feature Zone- 1 (SFZ- 1)

Description

Special Feature Zone- 1 (SFZ- 1) contains environmentally valuable resources (e.g., extensive intact grassland plant communities).

Objective and Management Intent

No development will be permitted (i.e., park administration/management or recreational facilities) within the SFZ- 1. Total area for this zone within the park is 6.5 hectares (or 1.3 percent of the park).

Special Feature Zone- 2 (SFZ- 2)

Description

The area encompassing the Special Feature Zone- 2 (SFZ- 2) represents a total of 290 hectares (59 percent of the park). This zone encompasses the full extent of SL 18 with the exception of the areas zoned as Intensive Recreation Zone- Polygon, Nature Recreation Zone- Linear, and Special Feature Zone- 1.

Objective and Management Intent

The objective of the SFZ- 2 zone is to protect significant natural and/or cultural resources, features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage values.

This area has been identified as a Special Feature in order to preserve habitat and wildlife values along the Gillies Creek corridor, grassland benches at the western end of SL 18 and the open/closed forest and steep cliff terrain of SL 18

The Gillies Creek corridor contains sensitive wetland, riparian, grassland and forest habitats and known at risk species and ecological communities (i.e., red- and blue-listed). The sensitive

grassland benches contain known at risk species and ecological communities, the middle to higher elevations of Special Feature Zone- 2 contain escape terrain critical to Bighorn Sheep. No facilities for the public will be provided in this zone and recreation opportunities are restricted to sightseeing, and nature and cultural heritage appreciation. Trail access through the Special Feature Zone- 2 is accommodated using a linear Nature Recreation zoning strategy (i.e., Nature Recreation Zone- Linear trail allowance of 6 metres). Rock climbing will not be a permitted activity within the Special Feature Zone- 2.

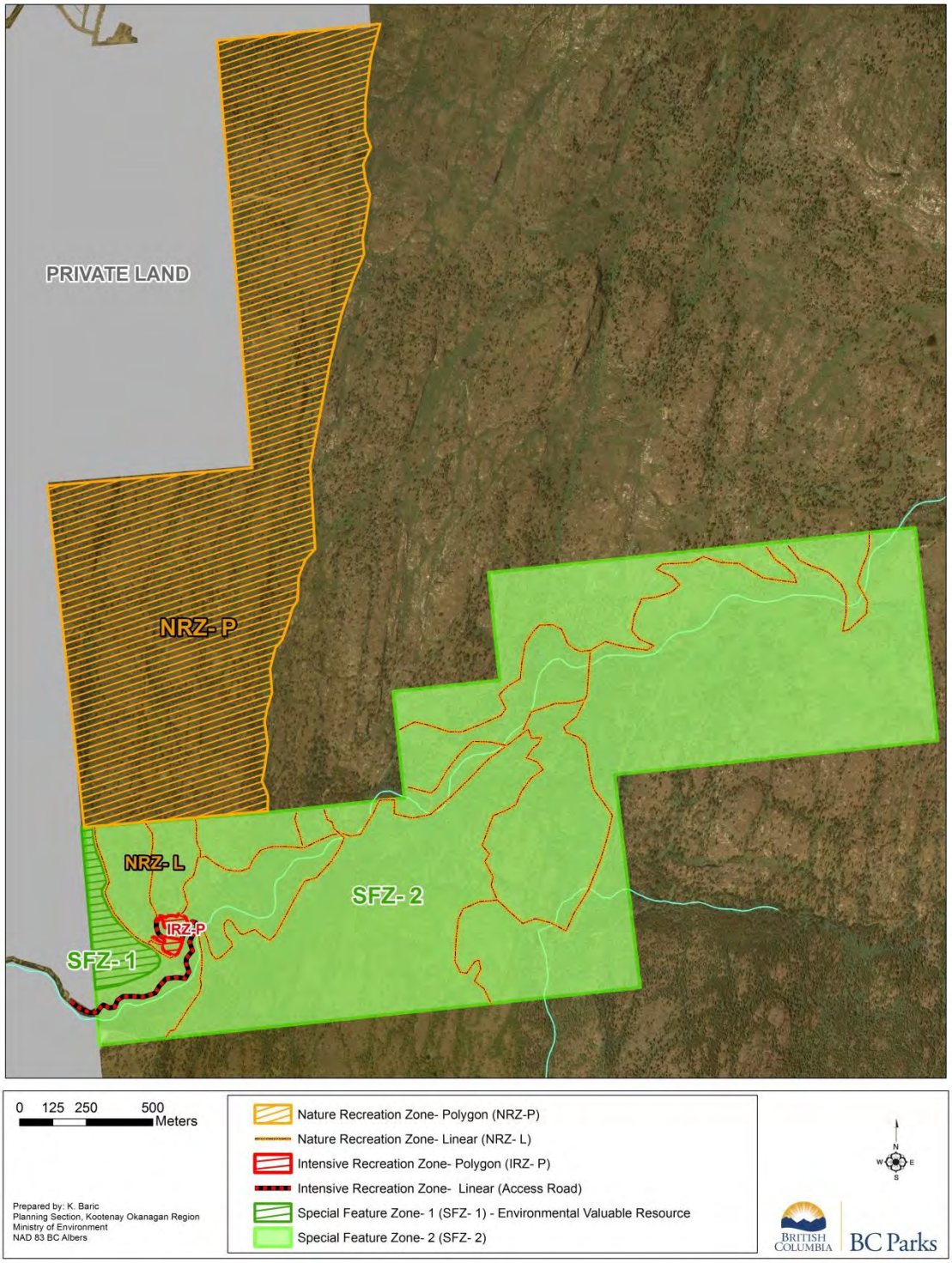

Figure 8: Zoning map of Skaha Bluffs Park.

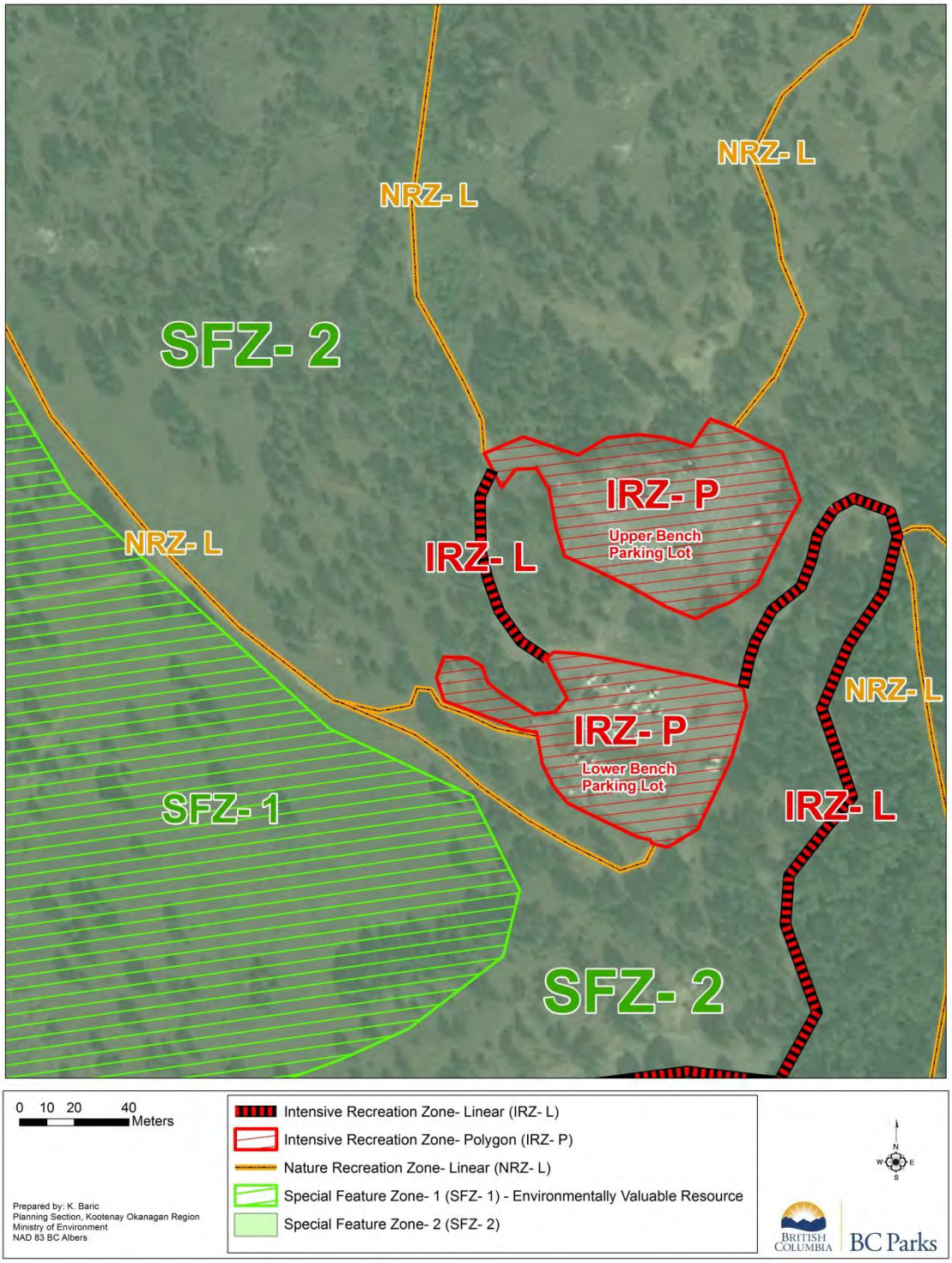

Figure 9: Detailed configuration of the zones in main parking and convergence area of Skaha Bluffs Park.

4.0 Plan Implementation

4.1 Implementation Plan

BC Parks will seek project-specific funding and partners to implement high priority strategies. Specific projects will be evaluated for their priority in relation to the overall protected areas system. Many of the initiatives contemplated are not funded as part of core BC Parks activities so jointly seeking funds with outside partners will be a key aspect of the management plan implementation.

4.2 Plan Validity Assessment and Review

In order to ensure the management of Skaha Bluffs Park remains relevant, BC Parks staff will complete an internal assessment of this management plan every 5 years at which time minor administrative updates may be identified and completed (e.g., update protected area details or maps where needed, etc.).

If the internal assessment reveals that management direction is no longer adequate, a formal review by BC Parks, First Nations and stakeholders will be completed to determine whether a plan amendment or a new plan is required. A formal plan review and amendment process would include an opportunity for public input.

Appendix 1: Appropriate Use Table

The following table lists existing and potential future uses in Skaha Bluffs Park. This is not an exhaustive list of uses that may be considered in this park.

The table is provided to summarize the uses which the management planning process has confirmed are not appropriate in the park. The table also gives a general indication of the management direction for other uses. The table must be reviewed in conjunction with the other sections of the management plan, including the role descriptions, vision, objectives and strategies.

Appropriate Use Table Legend		
N	**Not an appropriate use**	The use is not appropriate in the indicated zone. If the use currently exists but the management planning process has determined that the use is no longer appropriate in all or part of the protected area, the management plan will include strategies for ending the activity (e.g., phasing out, closing).
Y	**May be an appropriate use**	Some level or extent of this use may be appropriate in the zone(s) indicated. If the activity/use already exists, the management plan provides guidance on the appropriate level of use and may address specific restrictions or planned enhancements (e.g., capacity, designated areas for a particular activity, party size, time of year, etc.). For new or expanded uses, this symbol indicates that the use may be considered for further evaluation and approval. The appropriateness of some activities may not be confirmed until a further assessment (e.g., BC Parks Impacts Assessment Process) or evaluation process (e.g., park use permit adjudication) is completed.

	Special Feature Zone- 1	Special Feature Zone- 2	Nature Recreation Zones (NRZ- L and NRZ-P)	Intensive Recreation Zones (IRZ-L and IRZ- P)	Comments
Activities/Uses					
Aircraft Landing and Takeoff	N	N	N	N	Current regulations will need to be changed to ensure prohibition of non-commercial aircraft landing and takeoff.
Camping – designated sites	N	N	N	N	
Camping – wilderness style- undesignated sites)	N	N	N	N	
Camping – no trace (backpacking)	N	N	N	N	
Commercial recreation (facility-based)	N	N	N	N	
Commercial recreation (non-facility based)	N	Y	Y	Y	Park use permit required.
Filming (commercial)	N	Y	Y	Y	Park use permit required.
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N	N	N	N	
Hiking	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Hang Gliding and Para Gliding Launching	N	N	N	N	
Horse use/pack animals (not exotic)	N	N	Y	Y	NRZ-L and IRZ-L zones only.
Hunting	N	Y	Y	N	
Land-based mechanized activity (e.g., mountain biking)	N	N	Y	Y	Only on NRZ-L.
Land-based motorized activity (e.g., 4X4, motocross, ATV- not including snowmobiles or aircraft landings)	N	N	N	Y	Park entrance road only. Licenced highway vehicles only.
Snowmobiling	N	N	N	N	If a park use permit is issued in the future for trapping, snowmobiling is allowed only for licenced trapping purposes (NRZ-P only).

	Special Feature Zone- 1	Special Feature Zone- 2	Nature Recreation Zones (NRZ- L and NRZ-P)	Intensive Recreation Zones (IRZ-L and IRZ- P)	Comments
Skiing (backcountry-unassisted)	N	N	Y	N	Only on NRZ-L and NRZ-P zone.
Trapping	N	N	Y	N	
Facilities/Infrastructure					
Administrative buildings and compounds	N	N	N	N	
Backcountry huts and shelters	N	N	N	Y	Future day-use climbers/hikers shelter on lower bench IRZ-P only.
Campgrounds	N	N	N	N	
Interpretation and Information Buildings	N	N	N	Y	Interpretation kiosks only.
Communication sites	N	N	N	N	
Utility Corridors (power/transmission lines and other rights-of-way)	Y	N	Y	N	Existing Rights of Way only, as authorized under park use permit.
Roads and parking lots	N	N	N	Y	As identified (IRZ- P and IRZ-L). Paved entrance road will be subject to seasonal closure (winter)
Trails (hiking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking)	N	N	Y	Y	Only within NR and IR zones.

Appendix 2: Direction from the Okanagan Shuswap LRMP

Park Management Direction

The Okanagan Shuswap LRMP (OSLRMP) provided some management direction that was general to all Protected Areas covered by the LRMP. This direction is provided below (*note - some ministry names have changed since the endorsement of the plan - the following text retains ministry names at the time of the LRMP*). Direction from the OSLRMP is relevant only for the original Crown land portion of Skaha Bluffs Park (i.e., the Goal 2 site).

There are five different management categories for protected areas, as outlined in "A Protected Areas Strategy for BC": strict preservation; wilderness; cultural and heritage sites; natural environment-based outdoor recreation; and intensive recreation and tourism sites. The appropriate management category, or combination of categories will be identified for each unit.

Park Management Plans

For each protected area, a park management plan will be established as follows:

a) it will involve stakeholder groups, including all tenure holders;
b) it will involve First Nations;
c) it is to be open and inclusive (LRMP table representatives; process used in the LRMP);
d) some parks may require an ongoing multi-stakeholder monitoring committee;
e) the process will be open to the public; and,
f) management plans will have a five year term;

Each park management plan will address and/or include:

a) any development within the boundary;
b) be explicit in terms of basic management direction;
c) each park management plan will be consistent with the park management category;
d) naturally occurring impacts such as windthrow, disease, noxious weeds, flooding and fire etc.;
e) access management issues/concerns specific to that protected area, including issues related to providing access to the protected area; and,
f) those matters generally agreed to in this document that affect or impact on park management or use.

Management of Lands Adjacent to Protected Areas

1. The area immediately adjacent to a protected area boundary will be managed in accordance with the management objectives and strategies for the RMZ/SRMZ established for that area, unless specifically stated to the contrary.

2. Development planning adjacent to protected areas should not encourage windthrow within the protected area. This is not intended to preclude resource development adjacent to the protected area.

3. Development planning should avoid undesirable/unmanaged access to the protected area. Any access issues will be addressed through an access management plan, or direct discussions between Parks and the licensee or proponent of the new road.
4. It is important to note that the establishment of these protected areas should not prevent resource development activities on the adjacent land base. For example, mineral exploration and mine development can proceed adjacent to a protected area, subject to existing regulations and standards.

Management Direction for all Protected Areas

1. Logging (except for forest health reasons), mineral and energy exploration and development are not allowed in protected areas.
2. All existing liens, charges, and encumbrances other than those applying to commercial logging, mining or energy exploration and development will continue to be authorized through issuance of park use permits (PUPs). This policy recognizes all existing Land Act tenures, special use permits (SUPs), water rights, trapping licenses and other legal tenures and rights.
3. Operational activities in protected areas should be consistent with the management direction for the unit.
4. Allocation of new tenures will be subject to the direction provided by the management plan for the protected area. Proposals for new uses will respect existing uses.
5. Some protected areas will have pre-existing water licenses that may include domestic, irrigation, diversions and water storage structures. These licenses and the ability to manage them for their licensed use will be allowed to continue. Protected area management plans will allow for the continued access, maintenance and rehabilitation of water tenures.
6. Existing communications sites and utilities, such as transmission lines, pipelines and communications towers, will be allowed to continue. Protected area management plans will allow for the continued access, maintenance and rehabilitation of these facilities.
7. Water storage reservoirs within protected areas must be operated and maintained primarily for safety from structural failure.
8. Activities within protected areas are to respect conservation values, particularly the needs of red- and blue-listed elements.

Access Management Direction

1. Access management issues will be dealt with in the LRMP and subsequent park management plans.
2. Ensure that the quality, amount and timing of access are consistent with the objectives and prescribed character of the protected area. This does not apply to roads excluded from the protected area.
3. Ensure that the rights of way for roads that are excluded from protected areas are sufficiently wide enough to accommodate maintenance, realignments, management of hazard trees, etc.

4. Access for maintenance of existing water and weather data collection stations (e.g., snow courses, snow pillows, stream gauges, etc.) in new protected areas must be maintained.

Guide Outfitting Management Direction

1. As provided for under existing policy, guide outfitting is a permitted activity subject to the protected area management plan established for each protected area. This includes:
    - maintenance and construction of new facilities subject to the management plan; and,
    - any snowmobile access required to maintain guiding activities within the area.
2. Guide outfitters will be able to continue their current outfitting activities subject to the protected area management plan.
3. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a park use permit (PUP) will be required from the managing agency.
4. The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks (MELP) acknowledge guide outfitting, and the requirement it has, as an acceptable practice within future protected areas, subject to the management plan.
5. Guides will only be required to acquire one permit for operating in all protected areas within their territories within the LRMP area.
6. The continued use of trucks and/or all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) for access on designated roads and trails within a protected area will be allowed, subject to the protected area management plan.
7. The current horse grazing for the purpose of guiding and commercial backcountry recreation activities will continue in protected areas, subject to the park use permit.
8. Any new grazing tenure for horses (e.g., in conjunction with a commercial recreation operation) beyond current levels should be referred to the range tenure holder(s).
9. Any new tenure should be balanced with public recreational horse use.
10. When resident hunting opportunity exists through general open seasons or limited entry draws in a protected area, then the protected area allocation of wildlife will be consistent with the allocation policy that exists outside of the protected area.
11. The time frame for park use permits should be consistent with the timeframe for guide outfitting permits issued by MELP.

Hunting and Fishing Management Direction:

1. Hunting in protected areas to be allowed subject to the management plan, or conservation or safety concerns.
2. Fishing is allowed subject to the management plan subject to conservation concerns.
3. Fish stocking and enhancement will be allowed subject to the management plan.
4. Habitat enhancement activities are allowable subject to the management plan.
5. Wildlife transplants are allowable subject to the management plan and the existing Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks transplant policy.

Trapping Management Direction:

1. Existing tenures will be honoured. They are renewable, transferable, and the portion outside of the protected area will be eligible for re-allocation.
2. The continued use of trucks and/or all-terrain vehicles for access on designated roads and trails within a protected area will be allowed, as provided by the park use permit (PUP).
3. Trappers will only be required to acquire one permit for operating in all protected areas within their territories within the LRMP area.

Forest Health Management Direction:

1. Appropriate control measures may be undertaken to control disease, insect infestation, noxious weeds (control methods will emphasize biological and cultural control methods), and prescribed fire where this is consistent with maintaining values within and outside of the protected area, and such activities are consistent with the protected area management plan.
2. Monitoring of forest health will be ongoing within all protected areas and will be conducted through interagency cooperation. Management of insect and disease will utilize the most practical and effective techniques including but not limited to fire, trap trees, MSMA application, or fall and burn.

Objectives and Strategies:

- Manage forest health factors to an acceptable risk level, where they pose a significant risk to resources and/or values.
- BC Parks is to assign forest health objectives and strategies for each protected area that are consistent with the purpose of the protected area. These will include fire management strategies.
- Areas are monitored for forest health factor indicators in conjunction with adjacent, non-protected areas.
- Where there is a low risk from forest health factors no human intervention is necessary.
- Where there is a significant risk from forest health factors, management should follow direction from BC Parks, and consider the potential impact to resources and values within and external to the protected area.

Resource Management Zone Direction

The Okanagan Shuswap LRMP also contains relevant direction for a number of resources in Resource Management Zones (RMZ). Some of these RMZs overlap with Skaha Bluffs Park, namely the Derenzy Bighorn Sheep Habitat RMZ.

In addition to bighorn sheep, the RMZ also provides winter habitat for mule deer, elk, and mountain goat. Predators, such as cougar and coyote, are fairly common due to the presence of the variety of ungulates. Also, because of the variety of habitat types (e.g., rock outcrops, cliffs, interspersed grasslands, open grown Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine forests at the lower elevations, and lodgepole pine and larch forests in the upper elevations, and riparian areas), the

area provides habitat for a variety of smaller wildlife species including raptors, songbirds, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

The specific goals of the Derenzy Sheep Bighorn Habitat RMZ are:

- To maintain and enhance wildlife and their habitats to ensure an abundant, diverse and self-sustaining wildlife resource throughout this RMZ.
- To maintain, enhance and promote opportunities to appreciate, study and view bighorn sheep in their habitats.
- To maintain, enhance and promote recreational opportunities to hunt game species, including bighorn sheep in their habitats.

In 2011, much of the Derenzy Sheep Bighorn Habitat RMZ was designated as the McTaggart-Cowan/nsek'tniw't Wildlife Management Area.