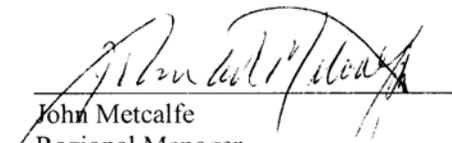


**CARP LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK
AND PROTECTED AREA
AND
MACKINNON ESKER ECOLOGICAL
RESERVE**

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

December 2002

Approved by:



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Date: Dec 19, 2002



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Date: February 17, 2003

**CARP LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK AND PROTECTED AREA
and
MACKINNON ESKER ECOLOGICAL RESERVE
Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan**

Carp Lake Park is 38,612 ha in area and represents the undulating, glaciated landscape of the Nechako Lowlands Ecosection. The park is 32 km west of Highway 97 and 141 km north of Prince George.

The park includes all of Carp Lake, nearby War Lake, numerous smaller lakes and streams and the eight-kilometre long connecting waterway between Carp and War lakes that forms the beginning of the McLeod River.

As part of the Protected Areas Strategy, Carp Lake was doubled in size to protect a larger component of the sub-boreal spruce ecosystem and includes a mix of old growth spruce and young naturally regenerated forest. The park also provides the best representation in the province of the Nechako Lowlands Ecosection.

Carp Lake Park is situated in an area of low relief (between elevations of 1,200 and 1,500 m), encompassing great expanses of flat or gently rolling landscapes. During the ice ages, the area was completely covered with ice and it now is marked with thousands of grooves and drumlin ridges trending in a northeast-southwest direction parallel to the flow of ice. Numerous depressions left on the plateau surface after the ice retreated are now occupied by a magnitude of ponds, lakes and in some cases, very large lakes. Carp Lake is such an example.

Carp Lake itself covers an area of approximately 6,000 hectares. Alder and willow fringe its shoreline, backed by a mixed forest of aspen, spruce and lodgepole pine.

The park includes Class 1 capability for moose, and the park is relatively productive in terms of moose harvest.

The rainbow trout population is the most significant recreational resource in the park and constitutes the primary reason for most visitors being there. Carp Lake and adjacent connected lakes contain a genetically intact local race of rainbow trout. Most spawning occurs in the McLeod River between Carp Lake and War Lake.

Carp Lake Park is rich in history with 118 known archaeological sites found along only 50% of the Carp Lake shoreline that has been surveyed. The archaeological evidence remaining in the park consists of a section of the Fort St. James - Fort McLeod aboriginal pack trail,

In January 2000, 111 hectares were removed from Carp Lake Park and subsequently established as Carp Lake Protected Area under the *Environment and Land Use Act* on March 30, 2000. The lands were removed from the park and established as a protected area for the sole purpose of allowing the construction and maintenance of a forest access road through the park. The forest access road is now constructed and the protected area needs to be cancelled and the lands “returned” to the park.

Mackinnon Esker Ecological Reserve was established on June 2, 1972. The central feature of this ecological reserve is a superb segment of the Mackinnon compound esker, a sinuous ridge over 50 km long, the longest such landform in the province. The esker was formed during the waning stages of glaciation on the Nechako Plateau, a time when meltwater streams flowed through the crevasses or tunnels in the stagnant ice, depositing their load of sand and gravel in the process. Within the ecological reserve, the main body of the esker is about 150 m wide. Though termed a compound esker, its associated arms or branches are much less distinctive than its central trunk. Other glacial features in this area of undulating to flat plateau surface are drumlins sculpted by moving ice, and meltwater channels and kettle holes formed as the ice melted.

The lands added to Carp Lake Park in 2000 included Mackinnon Esker Ecological Reserve. As such, the lands in Mackinnon Esker Ecological Reserve are established as both a Class A park and an ecological reserve.

Carp Lake Park

The **primary** roles of Carp Lake Park are to provide representation of the Nechako Lowlands Ecoregion and its typical glacial features (specifically drumlins and eskers) and to provide provincial representation of the SBSmk1 biogeoclimatic subzone.

The **secondary** role of Carp Lake Park is to provide quality angling, boating and camping opportunities in a rustic, undisturbed setting. Twelve campsites are located at War Lake, 90 at Carp Lake, and wilderness camping is available on three of the islands.

The Carp Lake area is rich in cultural history – with over 118 archaeological sites found to date. Many cache pits can be found on well drained sites above the high water mark. A section of an aboriginal trading trail between Fort McLeod and Fort St. James is also found within the park. A **tertiary** role of Carp Lake Park is to protect these cultural and archaeological resources.

Carp Lake Protected Area

The **primary** role of Carp Lake Protected Area is to allow for the construction and maintenance of a road through Carp Lake Park to access timber resources outside of the park.

Mackinnon Esker Ecological Reserve

The **primary** role of Mackinnon Esker Ecological Reserve is to protect a segment of the longest known esker in the province and vegetation types characteristic of eskers.

Known Management Issues	Response
Forest Health	<p>Spruce Beetle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement forest health recommendations (i.e. burn plan). • Monitor blowdowns for spruce beetle <p>Mountain Pine Beetle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include Carp Lake Park in the Mountain Pine Beetle Strategy to determine appropriate management action. <p>Hazard Trees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct annual survey on islands to ensure no additional safety threat from Tomentosus root rot.
BRIM (Backcountry Recreation Impact Monitoring)	<p>Develop vegetation restoration program on the islands.</p> <p>Initiate a monitoring program on the islands to assess recreation impacts and vegetation restoration efforts.</p>
Forest Harvesting – Visitor Safety	<p>Canfor is hauling logs through the Carp Lake Protected Area. Ensure visitor safety continues to be addressed.</p>
Adjacency Issues	<p>Timber harvesting to protected area boundaries (potential windthrow and access issues).</p> <p>Review development plans and monitor industrial activity.</p> <p>Strive for road de-activation within 2 km of park boundaries.</p>
Fish Management	<p>Manage fishery based on natural productivity to achieve an average catch per unit effort of common size trout fishery (size and likelihood of success).</p> <p>Have host/PFO informally collect information on number of visitors fishing, number of hours and number of fish caught.</p> <p>Monitor outlet for angling use and spawners in late May/early June.</p>
Hunting/Guiding	<p>Monitor use and effects on wildlife.</p>
Cancellation of Protected Area	<p>Now that the forest access road is constructed, the protected area needs to be cancelled and the lands added to Carp Lake Park.</p>
Management Planning	<p>Need to resolve acceptable uses which were deferred from the LRMP table</p>

Zoning

Carp Lake Park and Protected Area includes three zones:

- Intensive Recreation (provision of a variety of readily accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities) – approximately 3.6% of park and protected area;
- Natural Environment (protection of scenic values and provision of backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment) – approximately 74.6% of park and protected area; and
- Wilderness Recreation (protection of a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and provision of backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment where air access may be permitted to designated sites) – approximately 21.8% of park and protected area.

CONSERVATION

Representation

- ecosection X Nechako Lowland (NEL) 4.68% of this ecosection is protected; Carp Lake provides the best representation of this ecosection contributing 55.3% of the overall representation
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant X SBSmk1 – 2.38% protected. Carp Lake provides the best representation of this ecosystem, contributing 91.37% of the overall representation SBSwk1 - 3.84% protected. Carp Lake contributes 8.23% of overall representation placing it third behind Bowron Lake (80.55%) and Purden Lake (8.67%)

Special Feature

- X Mackinnon Esker (a compound esker) is protected as an ecological reserve within the park.

Rare/Endangered Values

- X Genetically distinct race of rainbow trout, old growth spruce

Scientific/Research Opportunities

Indigenous wild rainbow stocks, island recreational impacts

RECREATION

Representation:

- backcountry X Island camping, walk-in lakes
- destination X Noted angling destination
- travel corridor
- local recreation Popular regional destination for fishing

Special Opportunities

- X Provincially significant trout fishing

Education/Interpretation Opportunities

- X First Nations sites and history; fisheries management

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Representation

Special Feature

- X 118 known archaeological sites, aboriginal trail from Fort McLeod to Fort St. James

OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Other Designations

Relationship to Other PAs

- X Primary representation of Nechako Lowlands; other

parks, like Stuart River Park, provide additional representation and features such as an incised river valley. Mount Pope, Eskers, Whiskers, Tudyah, Crooked River, Paarens Beach, Sowchea and one ER are located within 75 km.

Co-operative Management Arrangements

Partnerships

X Canfor - interpretation signs and presentations

Vulnerability

The Conservation Risk Assessment Process identified 3 risk factors (the shape, the size of the park, and terrestrial ecosystem replication) for the park and rated them as moderately significant. Six stressors/threats were identified for the park: forest health, forest harvesting activity and roadways were rated as highly significant; and non-motorized recreation, motorized recreation and sport fishing were all rated as moderately significant.

Relationship to Other Strategies

X Carp Lake Park was originally established in 1973. The park was doubled in size through the Prince George LRMP for representative values.

Area:

Carp Lake Park - 38,612 hectares
Carp Lake Protected Area – 111 hectares
Mackinnon Esker Ecological Reserve – 583 hectares

Date of establishment:

Carp Lake Park was originally established on May 18, 1973. The park was doubled in size on June 29, 1999 through the Prince George LRMP for representative values.
Carp Lake Protected Area – March 30, 2000
Mackinnon Esker Ecological Reserve – June 2, 1972