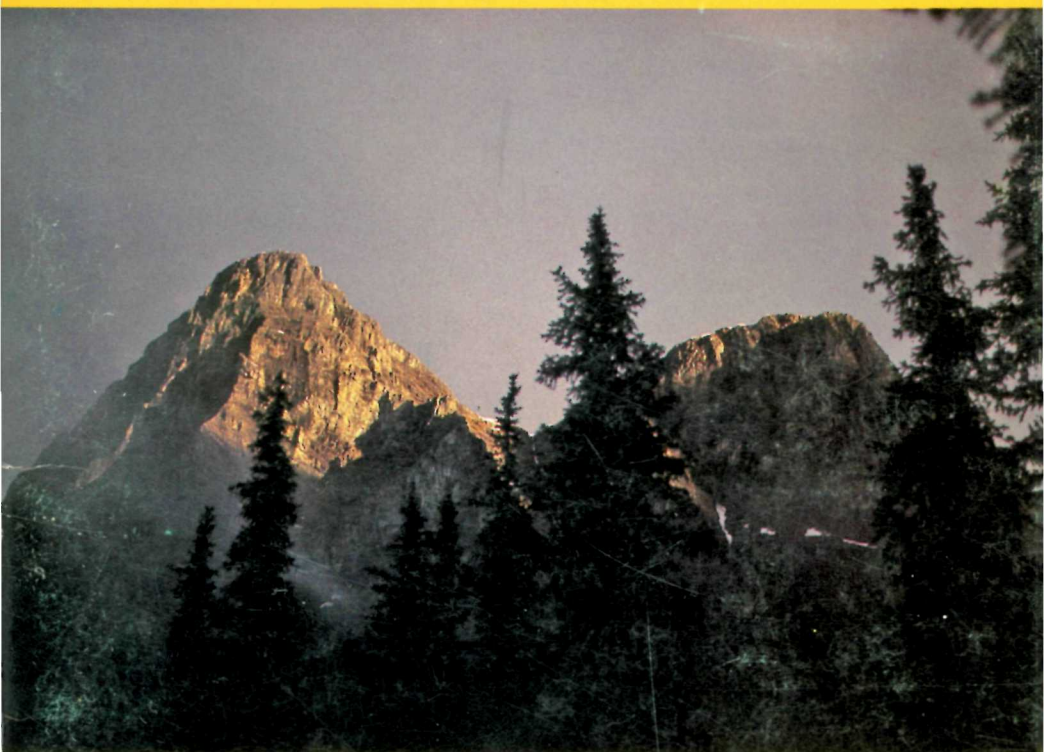


National Parks and New Initiatives in British Columbia

Shelagh Stiven / Bruce Downie



National and Provincial Parks
Association of Canada
British Columbia Chapter

***National Parks
and New Initiatives
in
British Columbia***

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Bruce K. Downie

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National and Provincial Parks
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National Parks and New Initiatives in British Columbia

INTRODUCTION

Each year, there are fewer places in the world where nature is left alone, undisturbed by man's manipulative actions. Our natural ecosystems are fast disappearing, making it increasingly apparent that we in Canada need to recognize our international obligation to preserve and protect examples of our natural landscapes. One Canadian response to this obligation has been to establish Parks Canada as the federal agency responsible for the protection of natural and cultural areas of national significance. Over the last 100 years, the list of protected areas has grown from the first parks in the Rocky Mountains to become an extensive system of national parks, national historic sites, national historic parks, heritage canals, Canadian landmarks, heritage rivers, heritage buildings and co-operative heritage areas. The focus of this brochure is on the contribution of British Columbia to the National Park System and other Parks Canada initiatives.

The Parks Canada objective for national parks, is:

"To protect for all time representative natural areas of Canadian significance in a system of national parks and to encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this heritage in ways which leave it unimpaired for future generations."

National Park Policy has been developed to guide the establishment, planning and management of the parks in keeping with Parks Canada's conservation mandate.

Annually, approximately 22 million visitors are attracted by the superlative natural landscapes combined with the recreation and leisure opportunities of the national parks. Visitor reception centres, interpretation centres and a variety of recreation facilities are provided within park boundaries. Recreation opportunities exist along park roads as well as in the backcountry and encompass a wide range of activities, including alpine skiing, nature interpretation, hiking, camping and underwater diving.

PARKS CANADA PROGRAMS

Overview of the Parks Canada Program

Parks Canada's original mandate to provide national parks and national historic parks and sites has been expanded over the years to include new complementary initiatives.

In 1972, eight Heritage Canals were transferred to Parks Canada to ensure continued protection of their historic values and the provision of water-based recreation opportunities.

Work is underway to establish national marine parks. A marine park policy has been drafted and 29 marine regions have been proposed along Canada's coasts, five of them in British Columbia.

Parks Canada recognizes the importance of working co-operatively with the provinces and territories as an effective means of further fulfilling its mandate. Three new co-operative programs have been initiated: the Canadian Heritage Rivers Systems (CHRS), Co-operative Heritage Areas (CHA) and Canadian Landmarks.

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System is aimed at conserving the integrity of our rivers that are being threatened by developments such as hydroelectric dams, forestry operations and the dumping of wastes. The objective of the CHRS is to give national recognition to naturally and historically important rivers of Canada and to ensure their future management for the public's benefit and enjoyment. To become part of the CHRS, a river must be of outstanding Canadian value in terms of its natural heritage, human heritage, or recreational opportunities. The program is entirely co-operative; provincial and territorial governments may voluntarily join the system and nominate rivers which, if designated, remain within their jurisdictions. To date, six provinces and both Territories have joined the system. A Canadian Heritage Rivers Board has been established to consider nominations from participating provincial and territorial governments.

The Co-operative Heritage Areas program has as its aim the protection, interpretation and management of groups of related heritage sites such as those located along historic waterways and trails. This is achieved through co-operation between Parks Canada and provincial and territorial agencies, and is implemented through an Agreement for Recreation and Conservation. The Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail is an established Co-operative Heritage Area in British Columbia.

The Canadian Landmark program is being designed to foster the protection of generally small sites containing rare, unique, or exceptional natural features or phenomena of Canadian significance. For instance a site near Tuktoyuktuk in the Arctic, which contains Canada's most impressive examples of the pingo phenomenon, has for many years been recognized as a potential landmark.

Overview of the Existing National Park System

Parks Canada has developed a logical and systematic approach to park identification and establishment to ensure that a representative segment of our many diverse landscapes is preserved for all time. This approach is based at present, on the division of Canada into 39 terrestrial natural regions and 29 marine natural regions (refer to map on p. 20). The regions primarily represent differences in landscapes, vegetation and oceanographic characteristics. With natural regions identified, the aim is to preserve a representative example of each region in a national park. This systematic approach establishes a definite goal for the system while ensuring that in years to come there will remain unmodified, high quality examples of our natural environment.

Park Establishment

The establishment of a national park is a five-step process. The first step is the identification of preliminary natural areas, based on those natural heritage resources which are representative of their natural region. The second step consists of comparative studies of the area's natural resources through field investigations, which result in each deserving area being designated as a Natural Area of Canadian Significance (NACS). Each NACS is considered to provide outstanding representation of a natural region's major characteristics. As a third step, further in-depth feasibility studies are required to identify potential national parks. Here, consideration must be given to land ownership, existing and proposed alternative land use, extent and quality of physical and cultural resources, recreation opportunities and public support of a park proposal. In the fourth step, acceptance of a new national park proposal by Parks Canada requires the proposed area to be endorsed by the provincial parks ministry. Finally, the proposed park becomes a "designated" national park following a written agreement between the two governments, the fifth step in the establishment of a national park.

This process is complex, requiring the co-operation of many different agencies and governmental departments. While it may take over a decade to complete, constant public support is critical to a successful national park designation.

The National Park System

Today, the National Park System includes 31 national parks or national park reserves encompassing approximately 135,000 km² (see centre map). Four of these parks have yet to be proclaimed by Act of Parliament (Gros Morne, Pukaskwa, Pacific Rim and Grasslands) and four other parks (Kluane, Nahanni, Auyuittuq, and Mingan Archipelago) remain as "National park reserves" pending native land claim settlements. The present 31 national parks have been added to the system over a 100-year period which began in 1885 with the establishment of Rocky Mountain Park, now Banff National Park.

Over the years park policies have reflected the changing objectives of the system, from the initial encouragement of development and provision of extensive visitor facilities in the earlier years, to the present emphasis on conservation and the provision of visitor facilities that are compatible with conservation.

The completion of the National Park System remains a large task for Parks Canada and the public at large. The 31 established national parks are representative of only 20 of the 39 terrestrial natural regions, making the system 52% complete. Within the marine national park context, only one of the 29 proposed marine natural regions is represented by an existing park (Pacific Rim) leaving this portion of the system only 3% complete. Single areas which combine both land and marine NACS will be a priority for establishment. Accordingly, at least 29 new parks will be required to fulfil the basic requirements of the system. In addition, other areas are desirable in natural regions which need additional representation. At present Parks Canada is focusing much of its effort on the north and on the marine environment.

Existing National Parks in British Columbia

Introduction

As one of a number of park systems in British Columbia, the primary purpose of the National Parks System is to preserve its parkland while utilizing its recreation potential. There are at present 5 such national parks in the province, namely, Yoho, Glacier, Mount Revelstoke, Kootenay and Pacific Rim. In total, these parks cover roughly 5,000 km². This is less than 1% of British Columbia's entire area and 3.8% of the total area of the National Parks System. Annually, approximately 7.2 million people visit the parks which comprises 38% of all visitation to Canada's national parks.

Despite the significant size and proportionately high use of British Columbia's national parks, the system is by no means complete. Of the natural regions of Canada, the province contains all or part of 9 terrestrial and 5 marine regions. To date, two of the terrestrial regions are fully represented: the Columbia Mountains Natural Region by Glacier and Mt. Revelstoke National Parks; and the Rocky Mountain Natural Region by Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. The fifth natural region, the Pacific Coast Mountain Natural Region, is considered only partially represented by Pacific Rim National Park. All of the five marine regions remain unrepresented or inadequately so.

Management of National Parks

Management plans play an important role in dealing with the issues confronting the national parks and the future development of the parks. They are prepared as a "guide by which Parks Canada manages the resources and uses of a national park." A system of park zoning has been established in order to express the management goals and objectives. Five zones exist and range from a strong protection emphasis to a strong use emphasis. In this way, our national parks reflect the balance between conservation and development that is needed to maintain park integrity. Parks Canada, in formulating management plans for the parks, has established a process which provides an opportunity for public involvement. It is critical that the public contributes to the management planning process to ensure the comprehensiveness of the plans and to help to direct the future of our parks.

YOHO NATIONAL PARK

Introduction

Yoho National Park, located west of the B.C./Alberta border, 185 km west of Calgary, protects an example of the Rocky Mountain Natural Region enabling present and future generations to continue to appreciate and experience the park's primarily wilderness character. The park covers an area of 1,313 km² in the heart of the Rockies' main ranges. As it is accessible year-round by the Trans-Canada Highway which bisects the park, approximately 1.2 million people visit each year. The majority of visitation occurs during the summer months due in part to harsh winter conditions and consists, to a large degree, of sightseeing by motor vehicle along the highway.

Yoho was established as a national park in 1911 although its national significance was recognized long before with the Kicking Horse Pass providing one of the few routes through which the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) could penetrate the Rockies. With the railroad built in 1884, visitors soon realized the scenic potential of the area's high peaks and impressive cliffs, alpine lakes and meadows. In the early days the timbered valley area was also a source of lead and zinc ore but today empty mine shafts are all that remain.

Park Character

There are many interesting natural features within the boundaries of the park. Most significantly, the park houses one of the world's best deposits of soft bodied fossils, the Burgess Shales of the Cathedral Escarpment. This area contains fossils of marine animals buried on the ocean floor over 530 million years ago. Also of geological importance, near Ice River, is the largest exposed igneous intrusion in the Canadian Rockies. Yoho contains a number of spectacular waterfalls including one of the ten highest in the world, Takakkaw Falls. Other interesting landforms are the natural rock bridge, hoodoo formations, and such pristine alpine lakes as Lake O'Hara and Emerald Lake. Climatically, the Kicking Horse Pass and Big Hill occasionally experience winds of over 100 km/hr. This phenomenon is known as the "Yoho Blow" and is due to unusual conditions in the Kicking Horse Valley.

The mountainous terrain and heavy winter snowfall restricts the variety of wildlife found in the park. However, marmots, mountain goats and elk are among those animals that can be found in abundance.

Cultural Features

The CPR railway route built in the 1880's through the Kicking Horse Pass was steep and dangerous, limiting the number and speed of rail cars on

the track. In 1907 an effort to remedy this was made and the railway was diverted, looping through the mountains on either side of the valley. This diversion offered a reduced grade, and safer route, producing what are called the Spiral Tunnels. There are many remains of the area's cultural heritage including logging towns, mine shafts, warden cabins and various log buildings.

A wide selection of interpretive programs are offered by the park including slide shows, campfire talks, and roving interpreters. Recreation opportunities available within the boundaries include hiking, fishing, boating, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, ski mountaineering and ice and rock climbing. Commercial accommodation is available in the park including a lodge on the shores of Lake O'Hara. Campgrounds, primitive campsites and a hostel are maintained for those with different preferences.

Current Status and Relevant Issues

Parks Canada, in identifying many similarities between the Four Mountain Parks of Yoho, Kootenay, Jasper and Banff, recognized the need for a co-ordinated plan to manage these contiguous parks. As a result, work is currently underway to complete a joint management plan in which the overall development, protection and management principles will be co-ordinated. The plan for the four parks will be completed in 1985.

The specific issues pertaining to Yoho are many and diverse. The means of protection and method of interpretation of the Burgess Shales



Lake McArthur, Yoho National Park

PARKS CANADA

is of extreme importance. The fossil bed is a delicate resource that requires well-researched management goals reflecting the need to protect them and the desire to learn from the story they tell. Present concerns about the management of the shales relate to the removal of specimens by the casual visitor and researchers.

The small community of Field, serving as an administrative centre for Parks Canada and the CPR, is experiencing little growth and relies heavily on the community of Golden, 56 km away. Concern has been raised regarding the interpretation of the area's transportation history. Many of today's visitors are often oblivious to the area's historical significance as they are removed by over 100 years and the ease of an engineered highway.

Other pertinent issues are those of wildlife fatalities due to road and rail access, the sanctioning of snowmobiling in the parks, the presence of and extent of facilities provided by backcountry lodges and shelters, and the identification of a carrying capacity for each park in the face of increased park use.



Mt. Sir Donald, Glacier National Park

PARKS CANADA

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

Introduction

Glacier National Park with its steep peaks, glacier filled valleys and alpine tundra, represents the Columbia Mountain Natural Region in the National Parks System. Situated 318 km west of Calgary, it covers an area of 1,349 km². With access provided by the Trans-Canada Highway which bisects the park, and the current twinning of the CPR line, Glacier is open year-round. Of the 3.5 million people who pass through each year, most travel in the summer and approximately 10% stop while only 1% stay to enjoy the park.

National park status was granted to Glacier in 1886 although the area had long been recognized as having national significance. In 1881, Roger's Pass appeared to be the most suitable place to attempt a rail passage through the towering jagged slopes of the Columbia Mountains. However, the terrain and heavy snowfall combined to make the pass treacherous. Over 200 lives were lost to the numerous avalanches prior to the construction of the Connaught Tunnel in 1916. The tunnel allowed a safer journey through the mountains, however, its route bypassed the main tourist attraction in the park, Glacier House, which eventually led to a decline in people visiting the park by 1925.

Park Character

The natural landscape of Glacier is dominated by the impressive angular peaks of the Selkirk Mountains. The climate and geology of the park play an important role in shaping the landscape. The moist air masses rise as they meet the steep slopes of the Columbias and consistently deposit large amounts of snow and rain in the ranges. In the winter this accumulation of snow is combined with the steep terrain providing perfect conditions for avalanches. There are few places in Roger's Pass that, at one time or another, have not been in the path of an avalanche. The great accumulation of snow leads also to compaction and formation of glaciers, of which the park has over 400.

An additional feature of importance within the park is the karst formations, an intricate network of limestone caves formed over thousands of years. The Nakimu Cave System has been heralded as one of the longest caves known in Canada.

Wildlife in the park can be grouped into three habitat zones. Above the treeline, mountain goat, caribou and hoary marmot are abundant. Here, there is a relatively high concentration of grizzlies. In the sub-alpine area, which consists of Hemlock and Englemann spruce forest, mountain goat are less frequent but black bear, porcupine and snowshoe hare are more common inhabitants. The densely forested valley bottom of western hemlock, western red cedar and Douglas fir, supports populations of moose, elk, mule deer, beaver, and muskrat.



Glacier National Park

PARKS CANADA

Cultural Features

Of significant heritage value in the park are a number of remnants of the transportation history including a historic steel CPR trestle, stone arches and bridge pillars. The remains of Glacier House, built in 1887 as a tourist destination, can also be seen. The Connaught Tunnel, rotting boards of old snow sheds and the sheer presence of Roger's Pass are reminders of the many disasters that occurred throughout the area's history.

The park's interpretation program includes self-guiding trails, viewpoints, movies and brochures focusing on the available natural and cultural resources. A major component of the interpretive program, however, occurs at the recently built Roger's Pass Visitor Centre which houses impressive visual displays presenting the area's significant heritage.

Recreation opportunities within the park include hiking, alpine skiing and mountain climbing. There is commercial accommodation available at Roger's Pass and camping facilities at three sites in the park.

Current Status and Relevant Issues

The similarities in region representation and physical closeness of Glacier National Park with Mount Revelstoke National Park have resulted in the parks being administered jointly by Parks Canada. At present management plans for the two parks are being developed.

One issue concerns the future of the Nakimu Cave System. The caves were closed in the mid 1930's and have remained so ever since except for limited access to experienced spelunkers. However, there is some concern over the impact that the CPR tunnelling in the area will have on the cave system. An alteration in the underground drainage could change the nature of the caves and cause long-term repercussions.

MOUNT REVELSTOKE NATIONAL PARK

Introduction

Mount Revelstoke National Park, together with Glacier National Park protect a natural area of Canadian significance representative of the Columbian Mountains Natural Region. Covering only 260 km², Mount Revelstoke is the smallest national park in B.C. It is located northeast of the junction of the Columbia and Illecillewaet Rivers, 209 km east of Kamloops and only 22 km west of Glacier National Park. Access is provided by B.C. Highway 23 from the south, Highway 1 from the west and east and one logging road to the east. The park is intended primarily for day-use and attracts 50,000 visitors per year.

Mount Revelstoke Park was established in 1914 through the encouragement of local residents who valued its alpine meadows and recreation opportunities. Today, the park is unique as it allows access by automobile to the summit of the mountain permitting large numbers of tourists to enjoy the alpine experience.

Park Character

Mount Revelstoke is the dominant landscape feature in the more accessible reaches of the park. The summit road, winding along the mountain-side, provides spectacular views of the Monashee and Selkirk Mountains and the Columbia Valley and after passing through a variety of life zones, arrives at the alpine meadows. Also characteristic of the park are dense damp cedar-hemlock forests in the lowlands and at higher altitudes, glaciers and an icefield.

Wildlife in the park is similar to that found at Glacier with mountain goat, grizzly bear and caribou inhabiting the higher ground while deer and snowshoe hare are commonly found at lower elevations. Bird life in Mt. Revelstoke National Park is also abundant in the lower rainforest and marshland areas where plant life is rich.

Cultural Features

As the principal role of the park is to provide day-use facilities there are numerous hiking trails but no established campgrounds. Primitive camping is permitted at Eva and Jade Lakes. Interpretation of the park's resources focuses on the park's life zones and in particular the sub-alpine zone. On-site exhibits, nature trails and a conducted event organized out of the Rogers Pass Centre, comprise the interpretive services offered in the park. Recreation opportunities include 66 km of hiking trails, 5 km of groomed cross-country ski trails, fishing, sightseeing and picnicking.



Mount Revelstoke National Park

PARKS CANADA

Current Status and Relevant Issues

Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks at present are jointly administered. A management plan, for Mount Revelstoke National Park is now underway.

The most pressing issue relating to the park concerns the integrity of the alpine zone at the summit of Mt. Revelstoke. The ecosystem of an alpine meadow is extremely fragile and requires strict management to prevent downgrading of its quality. With 16,000 people visiting the summit each year it is vital that a management plan address this issue in detail.

The presence of logging operations close to the park boundaries is also a source of concern. The sight of clear-cut mountainsides will undoubtedly detract from the visitor experience regardless of whether the sites are within the park boundaries or not. The one logging road that lies on the periphery of the park also provides unwanted additional access to backcountry areas thus increasing the potential for adverse environmental impacts upon fragile ecosystems.

KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK

Introduction

As one of the Four Mountain Parks, Kootenay National Park protects an example of the Rocky Mountain Natural Region, in particular the western main ranges. This linear park of 1,406 km² is located 105 km southeast of Golden, B.C. and is accessible year-round by the Banff-Windermere highway which runs along the length of the park. Visitor use is concentrated along the highway corridor and occurs mainly during the summer months. Two and a half million people are recorded passing through the park each year, a large portion being attracted to the hot springs at Radium.

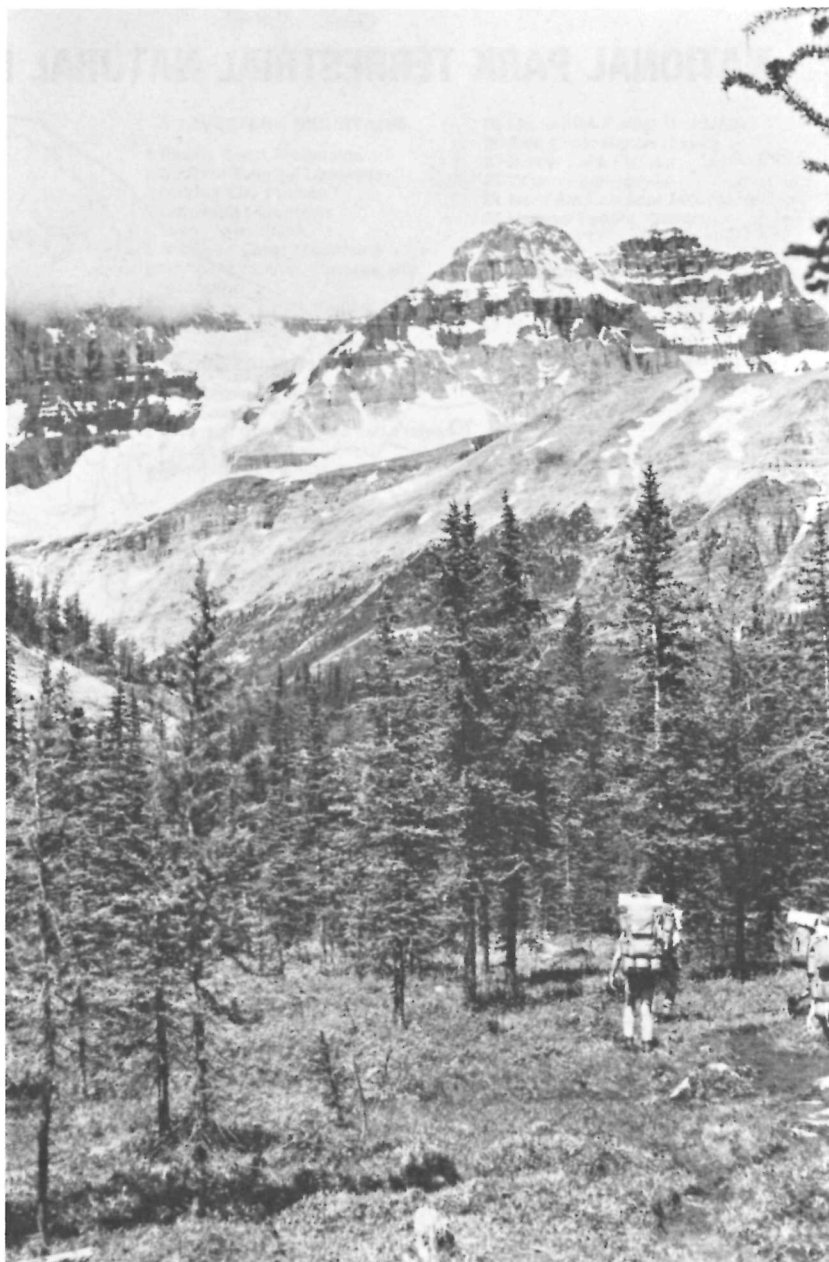
Kootenay was established as a national park in 1920 as part of an agreement between the provincial and federal governments to fund the completion of a highway project between Banff, Alberta and Windermere, B.C. This highway, Number 93, was the first motor road through the Rockies. The area's significance, however, extends much farther back in time. For thousands of years, the Kootenay Indians, after which the park is named, regarded the area's geothermal activity as important and hunted the abundant wildlife in the adjacent Columbia Valley.

Park Character

With the Continental Divide immediately to the east of the park boundary, Kootenay National Park lies in rugged terrain in a geologically active area. Examples of large scale faulting are evident at Redwall Fault and the hot springs. At Radium, hot mineral water is forced to the surface and provides a relaxing bathing experience. These springs have provided the main commercial attraction at Radium for the last 80 years.

The ochre beds of Kootenay, referred to today as the "paint pots," owe their bright colour to a high concentration of iron oxide dissolved in cold spring water. The Indians prized the ochre as a pigment for trading and regarded the area's natural values as sacred.

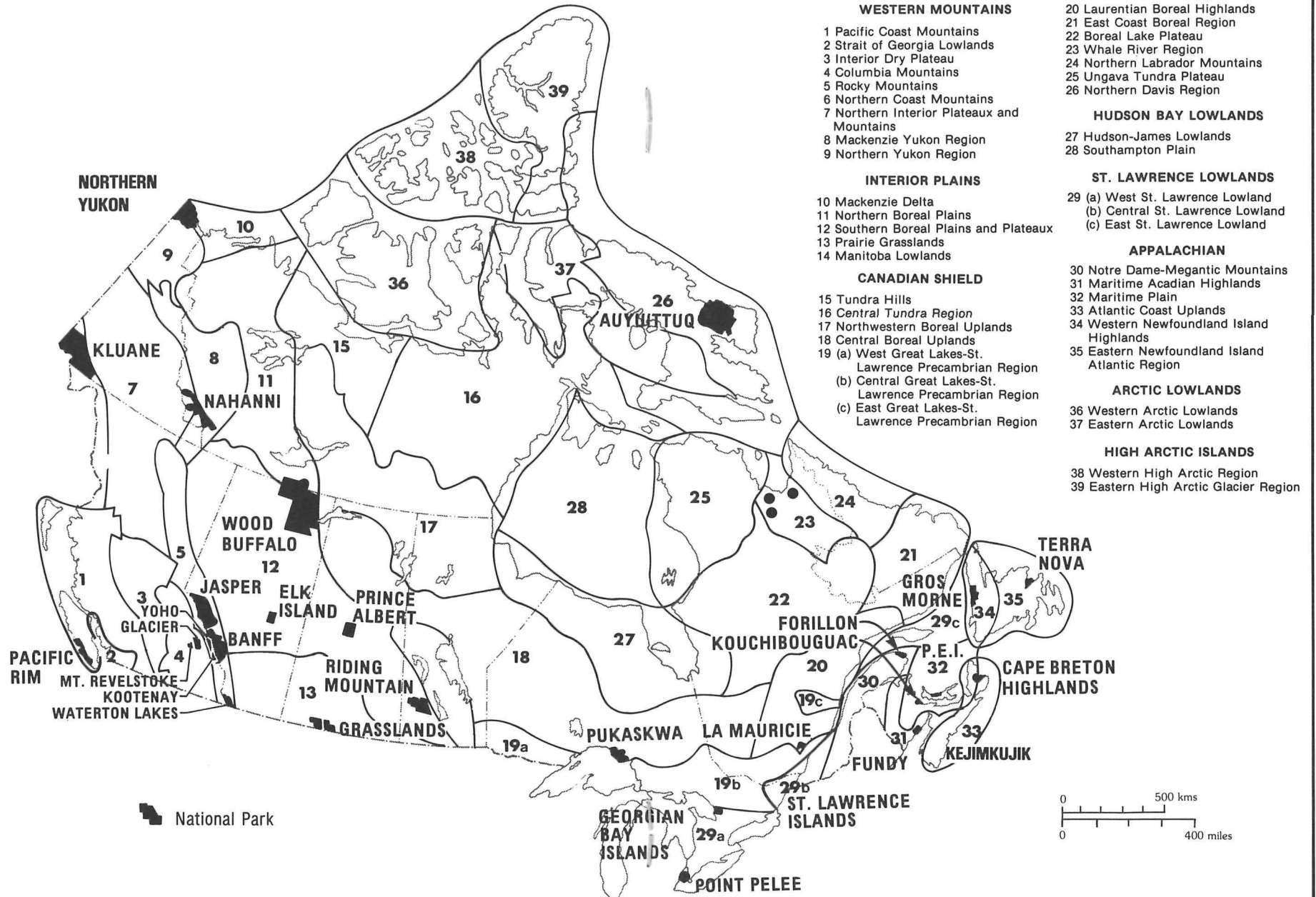
A significant physical characteristic is the obvious changes in climate between the northern and the southern sectors of the park. The northern portion is comparatively wet with the forest mainly sub-alpine and consisting of a mixture of Englemann spruce and sub-alpine fir trees. The southern part, in comparison, is dryer supporting an interior Douglas fir forest. This diversity marks the area as an ecological transition zone, making the park especially rich in plant and animal life. Large populations of mountain goat and bighorn sheep live within the park and can frequently be found at the roadside mineral licks.



Hiking in Kootenay National Park

B. K. DOWNIE

NATIONAL PARK TERRESTRIAL NATURAL REGIONS





Kootenay National Park

B. K. DOWNIE

Cultural Features

The cultural heritage of Kootenay National Park focuses primarily on the spiritual significance and the use of ochre as a paint pigment by the Indians. However, there is cultural significance related to the building of the first motor road through the Rockies, the park's reason for being, and the subsequent development of the region. These themes are developed throughout the park's interpretive programs with self-guiding trails, pamphlets and talk-shows offering information on a wide variety of park topics. Among the recreation opportunities available to the visitor are sightseeing, hiking, swimming, camping, canoeing and cross-country skiing. The town of Radium Hot Springs delivers a wide range of services including motel and hotel accommodation. Camping in sites along the highway and primitive camping along the backcountry trails are also available.

Current Status and Relevant Issues

As part of the Four Mountain Parks planning program, the management plan for Kootenay National Park will be incorporated into a joint management plan for the four parks, to be completed in 1985.

A major concern in the park, at present, deals with the increasing use of Highway 93 by commercial truck traffic. Highway 93 provides the major north-south transportation route for the nearby logging and mining operations. The added use of this road strains the existing facilities and adversely affects the visitor experience. An increasing incidence of wild-life mortality is due in large part to this heavy traffic use of Highway 93 and the loss of bighorn sheep habitat to the expanding facility development of the area.

PACIFIC RIM NATIONAL PARK

Introduction

Pacific Rim National Park was established to protect representative examples of the Pacific Coast Mountains Natural Region and the West Vancouver Island Shelf Marine Region so that visitors could appreciate and experience the park's natural environment. Located on the west coast of Vancouver Island, the park is approximately 304 km northwest of Victoria, a four-five hour drive.

The physical components of the park lie in three distinct units: the Broken Group Islands unit, presently the only area totally acquired, covering 107 km² and accessible only by boat; the Long Beach unit, covering 138 km² and the most accessible of the three units along Highway 4 between Tofino and Ucluelet; and the West Coast Trail unit, for which boundaries have been designated but the lands have yet to be acquired. The trailhead areas of the West Coast Trail unit are accessible by car, although the trail itself can only be travelled on foot. It is expected that this unit will eventually include the 72 km trail and land in the adjoining Nitinat Lake area.

Approximately 500,000 people visit the park each year. The park's mild climate permits extensive use during all seasons of the year. However, use is generally concentrated in the summer. These mild climatic conditions, coupled with a rich coastal environment have contributed to a long history of human settlement. For thousands of years the area has been home to the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people. In 1891, the West Coast Trail section was cut for a telegraph line but by 1908 was being maintained as a "lifesaving trail." This trail played a vital role in the survival and rescue of sailors whose ships were wrecked on the rugged and treacherous coastline.

Park Character

Most notable of the physical landforms within the area are the 20 km of sandy beaches in the Long Beach unit. Sand dunes and mudflats are also extensive. The 90 small islands and rocks of the Broken Group and the tidal shelf, rock arches, sea stacks, sea caves and sandstone cliffs of the West Coast Trail unit are noteworthy marine landforms of the park area.

The warm ocean winds, while serving to moderate the temperatures, bring with them the heavy downpours from the southeast that are a trademark of the coast. High levels of rainfall produce a luxuriant coastal rainforest.

Along the coast, both on the open stretches of shoreline and in small coves and bays, the intertidal life is both abundant and diverse. Anemones, brightly coloured starfish and barnacles are among the tide-pool



Long Beach, Pacific Rim National Park

PARKS CANADA

species. In the ocean, sea-lions, seals and grey whales are well-known attractions. The park is also home to more than 140 species of birds, including migratory birds on the Pacific Flyway that annually take refuge here.

Cultural Features

Remains of the native Indian cultural heritage are evident at the petroglyph sites. Similarly, the rocky shoreline serves as a reminder of the many shipwrecks and the need to maintain a "lifesaving" trail. With such a rich natural and cultural heritage the park authorities have developed an imaginative, well co-ordinated interpretive program focusing on the marine environment. One of the highlights is the "Scuba Special" where parks staff collect a variety of animals from the ocean floor to display for a time on land before returning them to their natural environment.

Sheltered waters provide opportunity for water-based recreation such as diving, swimming, snorkeling, canoeing, kayaking, and fishing. The more exposed Long Beach is a well-known surfing area. Hiking, especially along the west coast trail, is a popular activity.

The park's only accommodation facilities are camping sites. A full range of commercial facilities is located adjacent to the park.

Current Status and Relevant Issues

Although the wonders of Long Beach, the West Coast Trail and the Broken Group Islands have been enjoyed by many visitors over the years and managed as "Pacific Rim National Park," the area has yet to be proclaimed a national park in law. In 1970, an agreement to establish the park was signed but the provincial and federal governments have yet to agree on the value of the timber lands.

There are still significant parcels of land to be acquired in the Long Beach unit and the West Coast Trail unit. It is hoped that the Nitinat Triangle, a chain of lakes surrounded by virgin rainforest located midway along the Trail, will be included in the final boundaries of this unit. The problem lies in negotiating suitable financial compensation for the forested lands which are currently held under tree farm licenses.

This lack of national park status is the most crucial issue facing Pacific Rim National Park, however, there are other issues secondary to land acquisition, that pertain to the park and are of public concern. These include: the possible designation of buffer zones, areas adjacent to the park that help to ensure the long-term integrity of the area; the visual and environmental impact of nearby logging operations, and the management and use of Indian reserve land within the park's boundaries. A management plan for Pacific Rim, will be started to address these and other issues once the timber land financial compensation issue has been resolved.



Interpretive programs at Pacific Rim National Park

PARKS CANADA

Parks Canada Interests in British Columbia

NATURAL AREAS OF CANADIAN SIGNIFICANCE (NACS)

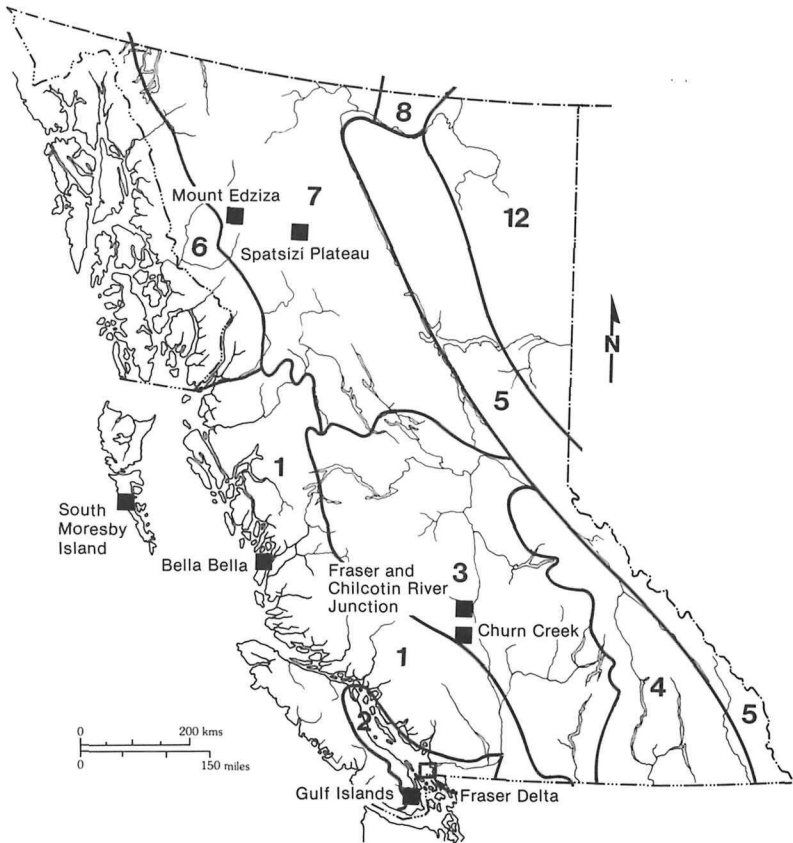
Introduction.

Parks Canada is working towards completing the National Park System's representation of natural regions. In B.C. this means suitable park sites must be found in at least two terrestrial regions (Strait of Georgia Lowlands and the Interior Dry Plateau) and in five marine regions (Hecate Strait, Queen Charlotte Sound, Vancouver Island Inland Sea, West Queen Charlotte Islands, West Vancouver Island Shelf). In addition, another park site is desirable to complement Pacific Rim's representation of the Pacific Coast Mountain region. B.C. also shares the Northern Interior Plateau Natural Region with the Yukon: it is possible that a park representative of this region could be located in B.C. The other regions partially within B.C. are adequately represented outside the province.

Natural Areas of Canadian Significance are areas which encompass a substantial diversity of natural themes in the region. Many factors help determine the feasibility of establishing a NACS as a national park, including the ease of land acquisition, accessibility, potential recreation opportunities, available public support, and existing land-use conflicts. At present, Parks Canada is interested, where possible, in combining marine and terrestrial NACS to establish side-by-side national parks and national marine parks. Such an approach would more efficiently provide increased diversity of recreational opportunities for the visitor and would require only one administrative facility.

Parks Canada has been actively assessing the natural regions of the province and identifying areas of interest for future park establishment (see maps on p. 27 and 32).

TERRESTRIAL NACS AND REGIONS



TERRESTRIAL NATURAL REGIONS

- 1 Pacific Coast
- 2 Strait of Georgia Lowlands
- 3 Interior Dry Plateau
- 4 Columbia Mountains
- 5 Rocky Mountains
- 6 Northern Coast Mountains
- 7 Northern Interior Plateau and Mountains
- 8 Mackenzie Mountains
- 12 Southern Boreal Plains and Plateaux

- Natural Area of Canadian Significance
 □ Preliminary Area

TERRESTRIAL NACS

(a) *Pacific Coast Mountain Region*

Two NACS have been identified in this region as potential complements to Pacific Rim National Park. These are South Moresby Island in the southern Queen Charlotte Archipelago; and an area in the vicinity of Bella Bella on the mainland B.C. coast. Both areas have the potential for side-by-side marine/terrestrial parks and are equally representative of the required themes. The Bella Bella area provides particularly outstanding examples of the spectacular mountains and fiords characteristic of the B.C. coast. The South Moresby NACS, with its superlative scenery and interesting cultural heritage has also gained international attention and Anthony Island has been designated as a World Heritage Site. Parks Canada has publically expressed interest in the establishment of a national park in the South Moresby area. However, logging operations currently threaten the area and after a number of years of study and discussion the provincial government has yet to decide to what extent protection of the area should be pursued.



West Coast of Moresby Island

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Gulf Islands

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(b) Strait of Georgia Lowland Region

The Strait of Georgia Lowland Region, in which there are presently no national parks, has two identified NACS—in the Gulf Islands located in the strait between Victoria and Vancouver, and on the Fraser Delta on the outskirts of the city of Vancouver. The Fraser Delta NACS constitutes a very modified environment where visitation could be high but the range of visitor experiences would be limited. The preferred NACS is therefore in the Gulf Islands; its status has been elevated to a Potential Park Proposal. This area with its marine environment, is particularly scenic and offers prime sites for picnicking, camping, walking as well as a host of water-related activities. The moderate climate, proximity to population centres and wide range of recreational opportunities make the Gulf Islands a popular choice for a national park site. It also presents the possibility of a side-by-side marine/terrestrial park. However, the increasingly modified nature of the landscape and high land value coupled with a large percentage of privately owned land has made progress on the proposal difficult.

(c) Interior Dry Plateau Region

The Fraser/Chilcotin River junction and Churn Creek comprise the two NACS for this region. Both are located to the south of Williams Lake, in a central location and accessible to the large population



Chilcotin River

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centres. The natural landscape consists of a plateau deeply incised by the work of spectacular wild rivers. The region also contains the range of Canada's largest herd of California bighorn sheep. Both NACS provide impressive representation of natural values, and also present ideal conditions for such recreational opportunities as horse-back riding, camping and wildlife photography.

(d) *Northern Interior Plateau and Mountains Region*

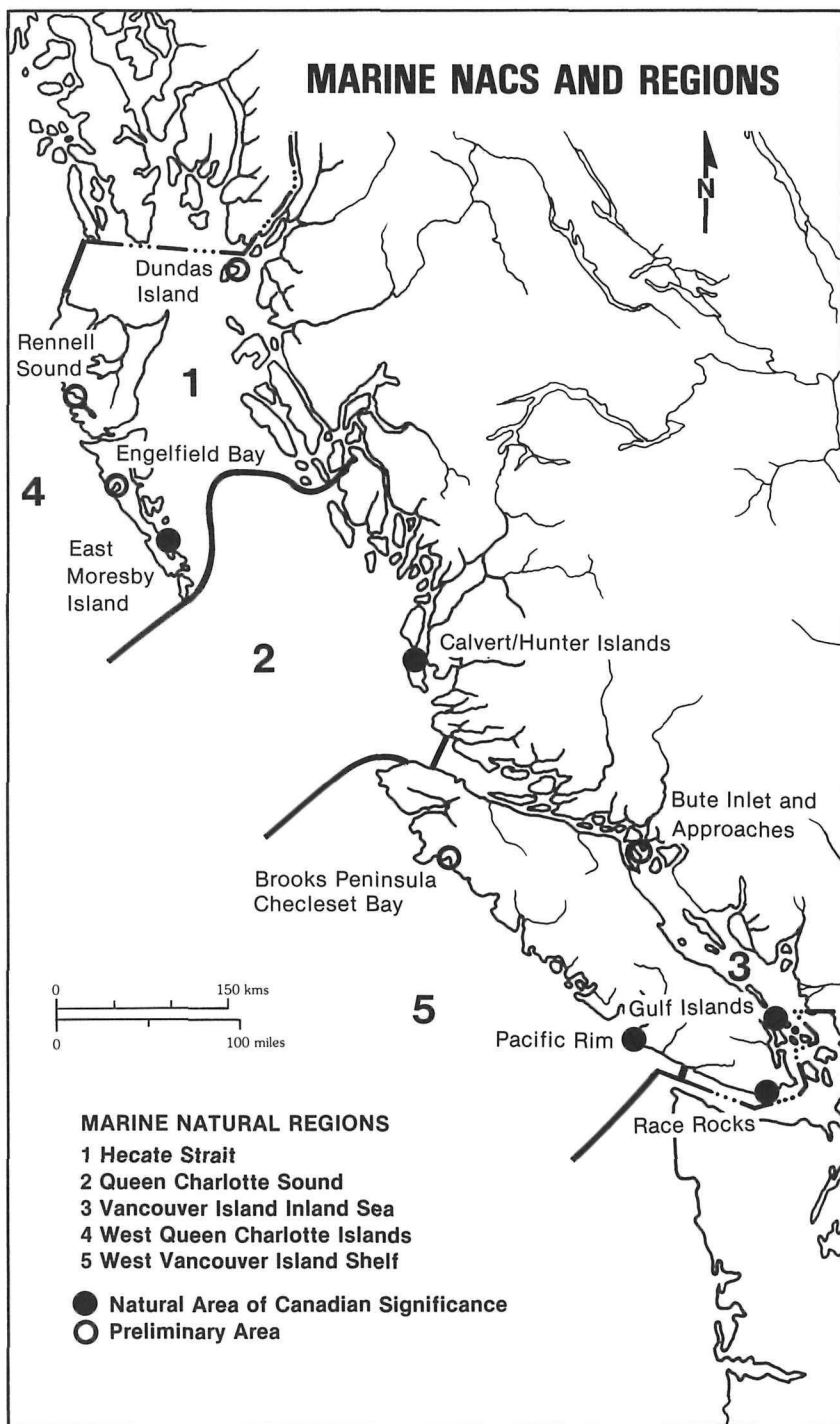
Within this region that straddles the B.C./Yukon border, four NACS have been designated, two in B.C. and two in the Yukon. Two of these NACS, Mount Edziza and Spatzizi Plateau, are located approximately 60 km apart in the northwest corner of British Columbia. The Mt. Edziza NACS encompasses many volcanic features, including the brilliantly coloured layers of lava in the Spectrum Range, along with volcanic cones at Mt. Edziza itself. The area offers a wide range of visitor experiences including those associated with the Stikine River and the cultural heritage of local Indian villages. The Spatzizi NACS is a particularly important wildlife area, supporting amongst others, a herd of the increasingly threatened stone sheep. The landscape consists of attractive tablelands separated by a network of wide, sparsely timbered valleys. Both NACS provide excellent wilderness recreation opportunities including wilderness canoeing, back-packing, and nature-interpretation. However, both NACS are low priority for Parks Canada as they already have protection afforded by provincial park status. At the same time, real threats to the integrity of both areas exist. The impact of the proposed hydroelectric dam on the Stikine River or large scale coal developments on the borders of Spatzizi Plateau Provincial Park could be devastating.



Mt. Edziza, Natural Area of Canadian Significance

PARKS CANADA

MARINE NACS AND REGIONS



MARINE NACS

(a) *Hecate Strait Marine Region*

There are two marine NACS in the Hecate Strait Marine Region: the Dundas Island Archipelago, northwest of Prince Rupert, and the Southeastern Moresby Island Archipelago. Although the Dundas Island area displays a great diversity of marine flora and fauna, the establishment of adjoining terrestrial and marine parks at Moresby Island has already been proposed by Parks Canada. With its numerous small bays, islands and inlets, southeastern Moresby offers excellent recreational opportunities such as scuba diving, ocean kayaking and wildlife viewing. The area has some of the richest intertidal life in Canada as well as large populations of seabirds and marine mammals. The irregular coastline provides spectacular west coast wilderness scenery.

(b) *Queen Charlotte Sound Marine Region*

The sole marine NACS in this region is the Hunter and Calvert Islands area off British Columbia's central mainland coast. Establishment of a marine park here would complement a possible terrestrial national park in the Bella Bella NACS. The Hunter/Calvert Islands NACS has great ecological and geophysical diversity. The area is characterized by bedrock outcroppings interrupting stretches of wild sandy beaches and numerous small islets dotting the inlets and bays. The exposed western sides of the islands are characteristic of the wild, wave-battered coastline which borders Queen Charlotte Sound.

(c) *Vancouver Island Inland Sea Marine Region*

Two marine NACS have been confirmed in the Vancouver Island Inland Sea Marine Region. These are the Gulf Islands, discussed previously, and Race Rocks, to the southwest of the city of Victoria. The Race Rocks NACS is no longer under consideration as a potential marine park, but the area is now protected as a provincial ecological reserve. The Gulf Islands NACS remains of interest to Parks Canada as it adequately represents the marine region and presents a wide range of recreational opportunities. The sheltered waters and abundant marine life make water-based activities such as boating, swimming, diving and snorkeling popular pastimes. There is potential in the Gulf Islands for side-by-side marine and terrestrial national parks, but problems may develop in acquiring a land component.

(d) *West Queen Charlotte Islands Marine Region*

In preliminary studies of the exposed, western coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands, two new marine NACS have been identified. The Englefield Bay and Rennell Sound NACS are both representative of the oceanic conditions which prevail along the western margin of the Queen Charlottes. Here the continental shelf is very narrow and the coastline is highly exposed.

(e) *West Vancouver Island Shelf Marine Region*

The continental shelf is much wider along the Vancouver Island coast, where the Brooks Peninsula NACS has been identified as representative of the marine region. Checleset Bay within this NACS is home to the only Canadian colony of sea otters. Farther south, the marine components of Pacific Rim National Park have been assessed as being largely characteristic of the West Vancouver Island Shelf region, and it is possible that some minor adjustment to the proposed park boundary will ensure adequate representation of the region in the system of national marine parks.

Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)

B.C. is rich in river resources although fewer and fewer rivers remain unaltered by man. While six provinces and both territories have joined the system, B.C. has so far chosen not to participate. However, B.C. has recently developed its own program for the designation of significant recreation corridors. The Recreation Corridor Program is aimed at protecting and interpreting significant trails or waterways for the public's use and enjoyment. Previous corridor identification work in the 1970's is being used as a basis for implementing the program.

The two programs are not mutually exclusive. The intent of the CHRS is to give national recognition to outstanding examples of the Canadian river heritage and to ensure their protection and the provision of recreational enjoyment. Designation of a river to the CHRS does not imply a change in jurisdiction or management of the river.

Within national parks in British Columbia several rivers have been considered by Parks Canada as potential Canadian Heritage Rivers. At the January 1985 CHRS Board meeting, the Yoho Kicking Horse River system in Yoho National Park was accepted by the board as a candidate Canadian Heritage River.

Co-operative Heritage Areas

An agreement signed in May 1982 between the provincial and federal governments is intended to develop the historical Mackenzie Grease Trail as B.C.'s first Co-operative Heritage Area. The 300 km trail marks the original route over which the coastal Indians travelled to trade goods, in particular candlefish oil, with interior tribes. It was by way of this trail,

in 1793, that Alexander Mackenzie became the first European to cross the North American continent and to succeed in reaching the Pacific Ocean.

A Master Development Plan has been prepared jointly by Parks Canada and the British Columbia Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing. Studies have been completed to identify lost sections of the trail, to locate archaeological sites in the area and to assess the significance of the trail in the provincial context. Emphasis is being placed on public involvement in the planning process. It is intended that the development of the trail will promote greater awareness of a nationally significant historical resource and provide a unique recreational opportunity.

Canadian Landmarks

The Canadian Landmarks Program has yet to designate any areas under its jurisdiction. While legislation for the program is not currently in place, policies governing its implementation and potential landmarks have been drafted. British Columbia, with its rich natural history, has many opportunities to become involved through the nomination of potential sites.

Robson Bight on the east coast of northern Vancouver Island is one important potential site. This small bay is a seasonal home to the largest concentration of killer whales in the world. The shallow stony beaches are a favourite rubbing location for the whales and the bay is a mating ground. The integrity of this unique biological area is currently endangered by possible logging operations on the slopes of the bight, and by the uncontrolled use of the area by boaters and divers. Although opportunity arose to designate the area under provincial park status, the provincial government chose to protect it as an ecological reserve.

A potential Canadian landmark is also located at Nimpkish Island. This small island lies in the middle of the Nimpkish River on northern Vancouver Island and contains Canada's tallest standing trees. A mixture of western hemlock, western red cedar and Douglas fir, stand between 200 and 300 feet high. Their exceptional height is attributed to special biological conditions that exist on the island.

Both sites, although small in size, are of national and even international significance.

Role of the Public

All Canadians share the responsibility to be aware of the issues that are facing our parks today. Our parks system is vulnerable and requires support from individuals concerned about its integrity and future. While active participation is vital, becoming aware of the issues is the first step. The media can act as an important source of information but often the most revealing facts and basic background material can be obtained elsewhere. Much has been written on the issues confronting our national parks and this material is available through public organizations and government agencies (see "for further information"). In gaining awareness, it is equally important to encourage others to be aware by talking about the issues.

The second step is one of action. In order to show your concern and to be up-to-date on all of Parks Canada's activities, place your name on the "Parkscan" mailing list (see "for further information"). Have your say in the future development and direction of your national parks. Become involved in the management planning and systems planning processes and participate in the public input meetings. Once you are involved, make a habit of writing letters to your provincial and federal representatives as well as to the newspaper to express your opinions as a well-informed citizen. This is action that counts.

The final, essential step in taking effective action is to join a supporting organization. There exists a network of public organizations concerned about the future and quality of our environment. The National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (N.P.P.A.C.) along with its affiliate associations, the Islands Protection Society and the Newfoundland Wilderness Society, is one such organization and the only one focused solely on the present and future integrity of our parks. The Association comprises a collection of interested individuals from all walks of life working toward five main objectives: to promote better public understanding of the park purposes; to promote appropriate use and management of the parks; to encourage the expansion of the National and Provincial Parks Systems; to co-operate with private organizations and government agencies in preserving the integrity of the parks; and to promote research into all aspects of national and provincial parks in Canada.

The B.C. Chapter of the N.P.P.A.C., one of five across the country, is responsible for the production of this booklet. Other accomplishments are listed below as an indication of constructive action that can be undertaken by concerned individuals:

Involvement in Park Issues

- instrumental in the promotion and establishment of Pacific Rim National Park in B.C., and of Kluane, and Grasslands National Parks through support of the national association.
- active role, through letter writing and private meetings with government officials, in pertinent issues such as:
 - the environmental impacts of Kicking Horse River Hydroelectric Proposal
 - land-use options in the Queen Charlotte Islands
 - protection of Akimena-Kishinena area
 - land acquisition in Pacific Rim National Park
 - establishment of marine parks in B.C.
 - protection of unique areas e.g. Robson Bight/Nimpkish Island
 - issues relating to the management and protection of B.C. provincial parks.
- support of the Valhalla Wilderness Society in their successful efforts to secure the region as a Class "A" Provincial Park
- co-operation with "Residents of the Free-Flowing Stikine" to encourage the protection and conservation of the Stikine River, endangered by hydro and mining proposals
- strong support of the Kakwa River Provincial Park Proposal in co-operation with Alberta Wilderness Association
- joint initiation of the "Queen Charlotte Trust Fund" with the Islands Protection Society, established to study and promote awareness of the natural resource protection of the Queen Charlotte Islands

Activities/Publications/Presentations

- organization and hosting of a "Parks and Tourism Symposium" in Victoria, in 1982
- co-sponsorship of "Symposium on Parks in B.C.," Vancouver, 1984
- sponsorship of a presentation by the Islands Protection Society on the history and current status of South Moresby
- various publications including *Parks and Tourism: Progress or Prostitution?* and briefs on: South Moresby National Park establishment, draft Gulf Islands Master Plan, Meares Island logging proposal, the Mountain National Parks of Western Canada
- publication of a Chapter newsletter
- planning of and participation in field trips
- sponsorship of slide-show presentations and informative talks on park issues.

Regular monthly meetings of the B.C. Chapter are held in Victoria, where the chapter is based. Membership is province-wide and regular meetings in other centres are being encouraged. The Chapter chairman is Dr. Phil Dearden of Victoria. An annual general meeting is held each year which provides an opportunity for members to meet one another and for the general business of the association to be discussed. Guest speakers and workshops address a central theme, making these meetings an informative and enjoyable experience.

The B.C. Chapter is also involved at the national level of the association. Mr. Bob Peart of Victoria is the national president. *Park News*, the association's Canada-wide magazine which focuses on the protection of national and provincial parks, is now published at the University of Victoria with Dr. Colin Wood as editor.

If you are one of the millions of people who enjoy our park systems, take this opportunity to become involved and join the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada.

General References

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The National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada

is a private, educational, non-profit organization incorporated under Federal Charter in 1963 for the purpose of promoting the benefits and ensuring the protection of our great National and Provincial Parks, so that Canadians, as well as visitors to this country, may enjoy them in an unimpaired state for all time.

Specifically, its aims and objectives are:

- **to promote the use and management of National and Provincial Parks in a manner that will contribute to the education, inspiration and well-being of the general public;**
- **to uphold the highest standards of these samples of our heritage and promote by all appropriate means the widest understanding of their purposes;**
- **to encourage the expansion of both the National and Provincial Parks systems and the preservation of places having outstanding natural or historic significance;**
- **to co-operate with governmental agencies and with private, non-profit charitable, educational and scientific organizations in protecting the integrity of National and Provincial Parks, historic sites and nature reserves, and to seek the support of such organizations and of all other interested persons in furthering these objectives;**
- **to institute and encourage research into all matters pertaining to fulfilment of the foregoing aims.**

The Association depends for support upon its members and upon grants from private and corporate donors. Membership classes are:

Student — 1 year \$17, 2 years \$30; Active — 1 year \$23, 2 years \$40; Husband/Wife — 1 year \$28, 2 years \$50; Life — \$500.

Other contributions and bequests are also needed. Donations to the Association in excess of the basic \$23 Active membership fee, which covers the cost of *Park News*, are an allowable deduction for income tax purposes.

The National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada is a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

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