



Let's Talk South Okanagan– Similkameen

An Overview of the Proposed
National Park Reserve Concept
in the South Okanagan–Similkameen,
British Columbia



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Let's talk South Okanagan– Similkameen

This South Okanagan – Similkameen national park reserve public consultation process is Parks Canada's opportunity to share the latest information on the proposed national park reserve boundaries, provide an overview on key aspects related to land management, address concerns shared by the public in past consultations and invite new questions.

This is your opportunity, as members of the local community, region, and as Canadians, to provide further feedback and have your say.

Between December 10, 2018 and February 28, 2019, Parks Canada invites Canadians to discuss the proposed national park reserve in the South Okanagan – Similkameen. During this public consultation process, Parks Canada will consider the views that have been emphasized in past consultations and answer new questions.

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Objectives and Goals of the Proposed National Park Reserve

The South Okanagan – Similkameen region contains some of the most biologically diverse and rare ecosystems in Canada and has sustained Syilx/Okanagan communities for thousands of years. Nature inspires Canadians to take pride in their natural and cultural heritage, from coast to coast to coast, and the South Okanagan – Similkameen region is no exception.

A new national park reserve will not only renew a nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples, but it will contribute to a network of protected and conserved areas. These protected areas help safeguard Canada's biodiversity and provide unprecedented opportunities for Canadians to experience the outdoors and learn about our environment, and contribute to sustainable economic development.

The South Okanagan – Similkameen is where the northern edge of the Great Basin reaches into British Columbia, in the extreme south of the Interior Dry Plateau natural region.

This is one of 39 regions identified by Parks Canada's national parks system plan as a distinctive component of the national landscape, but is not yet represented by a national park reserve. From both national and provincial perspectives, this is an area of high conservation value and an excellent candidate area for Parks Canada to represent this region.

The goals of establishing a national park reserve are to:

- ◇ Protect the diversity of vegetation and landscape features of representative ecosystems;
- ◇ Maintain the ecological integrity of wildlife habitat and plant species; and
- ◇ Provide opportunities for quality visitor experiences, such as recreational activities and the presentation of natural and cultural heritage.



Key Aspects of Land Management in the Proposed National Park Reserve

This section provides an overview of key aspects related to land management within the proposed national park reserve and addresses views and questions that have been identified through past consultations.

Read the topics that interest you most or read them all.

1 Governance in a National Park Reserve

Proposing the establishment of a national park reserve versus a national park allows for the recognition of title and rights held in the South Okanagan – Similkameen region by the Syilx/Okanagan Nation. The South Okanagan – Similkameen Steering Committee demonstrates the provincial and federal governments call for renewed, nation-to-nation relationships with Indigenous peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.

There have been questions from local communities on how cooperative management within a national park reserve would work. Indigenous relationships with the land will continue as they always have and locals and visitors will continue to access the land. We only need to look to the large majority of national parks, and national park reserves in Canada that are already [cooperatively managed](#)¹ between Parks Canada and local First Nations, where surrounding communities continue to access and use the places they have always used. Cooperatively managed national parks and national park reserves remain places for the community and all Canadians.

2 What a “Working” Boundary Means

Working Boundary: This term is used to describe the boundary of the proposed national park reserve, where private lands, along with Crown lands are also present within the boundary area. The line on the map is what Parks Canada proposes to achieve at some point in the future, however, it will take some years to realize. Privately owned lands will remain under the title of the private owner(s); a national park reserve designation **would not** apply to private lands. The regional district will remain as the administrator of by-laws on privately owned lands. Private lands may be considered as part of national park reserve at some point in the future, but only on a willing-seller willing-buyer basis. No lands will be expropriated as part of a national park reserve establishment.

See the proposed working boundary map and the regional context map at the end of this document.

3 What is Willing Seller – Willing Buyer? How it Works

As directed by Parliament through the *Canada National Parks Act*, the Government of Canada cannot expropriate private property in order to enlarge or establish a national park or national park reserve. Private lands would only ever be purchased on a willing seller-willing buyer basis, based upon independent property appraisals in conjunction and agreement with private land owners and once the proposed national park reserve is established. The federal government has no jurisdiction over property rights on privately owned land adjacent to or within the boundaries of a national park or national park reserve.

4 Road Access to Private Property and Autonomy over Private Lands within and Adjacent to the Boundary

If your property is in the middle of the proposed national park reserve, it will still remain your property, under the by-laws and regulations of the regional district, and where applicable provincial statutes. In order for you, guests, family, friends or patrons to access your property, you will **not** need to pay fees, toll road fees or the like.

Parks Canada has no jurisdiction over how you manage your private land. Bordering a national park reserve can have immense benefits and, as good neighbours, Parks Canada welcomes the opportunity to work with private land owners towards common objectives.

1 For more information on cooperative management go to: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/agence-agency/aa-ia/te-wt/introduction>

5 Ranching and Grazing

Long-term relationships with ranchers are critical to the future success of a national park reserve in the South Okanagan – Similkameen. Although commercial live-stock grazing is not typically allowed in a national park reserve, Parks Canada is committed to working with ranching families to provide certainty and stability on their respective Crown grazing tenures. Ranching families within the proposed national park reserve will be able to continue operating as they are today with a similar regulatory framework. Parks Canada is in a position to assist grazing tenure holders with capacity funding to work together to address common stewardship objectives. A transition plan is currently under development.

If you are a rancher and/or a holder of a grazing tenure in the proposed national park reserve boundary, the project manager will be in contact with you to discuss next steps and go over questions in greater detail.

6 Agricultural Land Reserve

A small amount (14 percent) of the total lands within the proposed national park reserve boundary are considered as part of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Approximately 80 percent of these ALR lands are under private ownership. This means three (3) percent of the total hectares within the proposed national park reserve are designated as ALR provincial Crown land. These ALR lands will not be developed or lost from the land base if transferred to Parks Canada.

7 Environment, Ecology and Species at Risk

The shrub steppe ecosystem found in the interior of British Columbia, including the South Okanagan – Similkameen, is recognized as one of the country's most endangered natural systems. These rare pockets of semi-arid desert are the only occurrence of this ecosystem in Canada; they form the northern tip of North America's Great Basin desert. By establishing a national park reserve in the South Okanagan – Similkameen, Parks Canada will protect and represent this rare and endangered ecosystem in the national park system, and protecting this area would support recovery of 30 federally-listed species at risk, and protect habitat for a substantial number of other species.

8 Fire Management

Wildfire management and the use of prescribed fire and fuel reduction will require a collaborative approach. Syilx peoples have managed the landscape through controlled burns for millennia. The role of the British Columbia Wildfire Service is to mitigate impacts of wildfire on life and assets, Crown forests and grasslands, and prioritize fuel management and wildfire suppression in interface areas where communities and forests come together. Local and volunteer fire departments have lifetimes of experience protecting homes and community. Parks Canada is a leader, with more than 125 years of experience using [fire management](#)² to prevent catastrophic wildfire, naturally restore and maintain the ecology of national parks and manage fire and fuel sources to protect important resources and infrastructure.

Parks Canada eagerly awaits the opportunity to learn from and cooperatively work with the Syilx peoples, British Columbia Wildfire Service and local community fire departments and municipalities to develop fire and vegetation management plans for the proposed national park reserve to protect the places and spaces that we all love.

2 For information on Fire and Vegetation management by Parks Canada see <http://parkscanada.gc.ca/fire>, for a video on fire management see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wpm63CtsnyY>



2018 South Okanagan – Similkameen UPDATE ON KEY ISSUES

Visitation, Law Enforcement and Property Values.



Proposed National Park Reserve

PROJECTED Visitation =

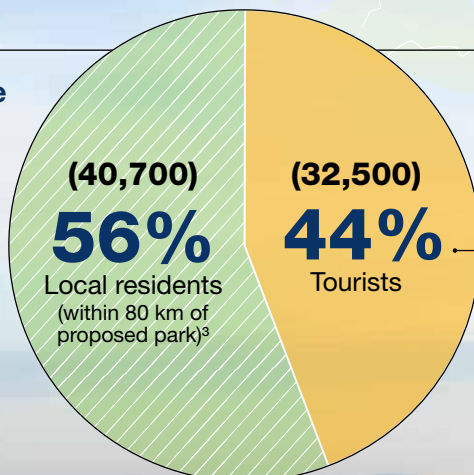
Year 1

73,200 VISITORS

GROWING TO

77,200 VISITORS

by year 5



Only **5.3%** are projected to be new visitors not already in the region for other reasons.⁴

Year 1 between **2,300** and **3,900** new visitors

CURRENT

Visitation
by the Numbers

Thompson Okanagan
Tourism Region
= **8.4 million**
visitors annually¹

South Okanagan
Similkameen
= **375,000**
visitors annually mostly from
other regions in British Columbia²

Close to **1/3** are visiting friends and relatives.

? WHAT THESE NUMBERS MEAN FOR YOU

Visitation numbers to the national park reserve (NPR) over the first 5 years following establishment will be less than 100,000 persons/year. The majority of tourists will already be in the region for other purposes, with modest growth between 2,000 to 4,000 extra visitors per year attracted by the proposed NPR. The first five years are for planning and development of park infrastructure and visitor services. It is anticipated that visitation will increase sustainably and strategically over time.



Law Enforcement vs Crime Projections

Approximately **55** incidents/year

Similar National Parks in Canada record annual incidents anywhere from 19 to 81 for national parks with similar characteristics⁵

1-2-3-4

Only **1-4** incidents per year anticipated to be referred to the RCMP⁶

> 1/1,000

Incidents per visits (on average)⁷



Property Values

Some studies show upwards to

20% premium value when close to a national park.⁹

Some instances show no impact, positive or negative.

Only lakeview properties have an identifiable premium in the region⁸

SOURCES:

- ¹ Destination BC (2017) (Destination BC. 2017. Thompson Okanagan Regional Tourism Profile May 2017. Available at: https://www.destinationbc.ca/getattachment/Research/Research-by-Region/Thompson-Okanagan/Thompson-Okanagan-Regional-Tourism-Profile_2017.pdf.aspx. Accessed: October 10, 2018.)
- ² Destination BC (2017) BC Stats (2018b) (BC Stats. 2018b. Room Revenues by Tourism Regions Calculated from Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) Room Revenues in \$000, Annually.)
- ³ BC Stats 2009 (BC Stats. 2009. Measuring the Size of British Columbia's Tourism Sector. Available at: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Files/1a9ce086-a0e0-4e48-9e38-70fee3c58a2/MeasuringtheSizeofBritishColumbiasTourismSector.pdf>. Accessed: October 4, 2018.)
- ⁴ Seidl 2001, Fredman 2004, Weiler 2005, Nous Group 2017.)

- ⁵ Kejimikujik (NB), Bruce Peninsula (ON), Elk Island (AB), Prince Albert (SK), Riding Mountain (MB), Grasslands (SK), Mount Revelstoke and Glacier (BC), Waterton (AB), Gwaii Haanas Reserve (BC)
- ⁶ From page 32 Parks Canada (2017) (Parks Canada. 2017. Evaluation of Parks Canada's Law Enforcement Program – Final Report Office of Internal Audit and Evaluation. Available at: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/agency-bib-lib/rapports-reports/evaluation/examens-reviews/loi-law>. Accessed October 18, 2018.)
- ⁷ Parks Canada. 2017. Evaluation of Parks Canada's Law Enforcement Program – Final Report Office of Internal Audit and Evaluation. Available at: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/agency-bib-lib/rapports-reports/evaluation/examens-reviews/loi-law>. Accessed October 18, 2018.
- ⁸ (Crompton, 2001; (Nicholls 2004).; findings were despite the concerns expressed by rural landowners that the adjacent public lands would facilitate access to trespassers (Gartner et al 1996).; (Brown and Connelly, 1983)
- ⁹ South Okanagan Real Estate Board.



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9 Visitation and Law Enforcement

Visitation numbers to the national park reserve over the **first 5 years** following establishment are expected to be less than 100,000 persons/year, with 56 percent of visitation attributed to local residents and 44 percent to tourists. The majority of tourists will already be in the region for other purposes, with modest growth between 2,000 to 4,000 extra visitors per year who are attracted by the proposed national park reserve. Visitation is modest in the first five years as park infrastructure and visitor services are in the planning and development phase. It is anticipated that visitation will increase sustainably and strategically over time as the as the proposed national park reserve becomes more established.

With respect to law enforcement, an increase in staff and capacity will result in more “incidents” that are tracked, but the bulk of these would be offenses that can be addressed by Park Wardens. The number of Criminal Code infractions referred to the local RCMP are not expected to be significant (ranging from 1 to 4 infractions per year), based on information from national parks or national park reserves with similar characteristics.



10 Allowable Activities

ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK RESERVE INCLUDE

-  Nature appreciation and wildlife viewing
-  Fishing
-  Hiking/Trail Running
-  Camping (front-country and back-country)
-  Photography
-  Horseback riding
-  Mountain biking in designated areas
-  Non-Motorized Hang Gliding and Paragliding
-  Star gazing
-  Off Road Vehicle Use for operational purposes (e.g. grazing tenure holders or national park reserve operations for fence repair) as per the *British Columbia Motor Vehicle Act* and the *Off-Road Vehicle Act*.

These activities will be managed within a conservation framework that emphasizes the maintenance of ecological integrity, visitor safety and quality visitor experiences.

11 Prohibited Activities

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES IN THE PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK RESERVE INCLUDE:



Recreational off-road vehicle use, as per the *British Columbia Motor Vehicle Act* and the *Off-Road Vehicle Act*.



Hunting/Trapping



Firewood collection



Parachuting and base jumping



Mushroom picking



Drone use

12 Hunting on Private Lands

The federal government has no jurisdiction over property rights on privately-owned land adjacent to the boundaries of a national park reserve. Hunting is administered by the owner of those lands, subject to the *British Columbia Wildlife Act*. Parks Canada will work with owners of private lands who allow hunting in order to streamline activities.

The transport of firearms is a federal law that applies in all of the provinces and territories in Canada (the *Storage, Display, Transportation and Handling of Firearms by Individuals Regulations*). The enabling Act for those Regulations is the *Firearms Act*. The law and act apply inside national parks and national park reserves.

If you are transporting a firearm through a national park reserve to another destination it must be unloaded, disabled and securely encased as per federal law.

13 Mineral, Forestry, Hunting, Helicopter, and Guiding Tenures

If you are the holder of a tenure in the proposed national park reserve area, the project manager will be in contact with you to discuss next steps and go over questions in greater detail.

Indigenous relationships with the land and land use will be respected in the proposed national park reserve.

14 Business Opportunities, Tourism and Employment

The federal, provincial and Syilx/Okanagan governments agree that the South Okanagan – Similkameen offers potential for the establishment of a national park reserve. National parks and national park reserves represent the very best that Canada has to offer and tell stories of who we are, including the history, cultures, and contributions of Indigenous peoples. The proposed national park reserve would enable the inspiring South Okanagan – Similkameen landscape to be shared with local residents, British Columbians, Canadians and visitors from around the world.

Parks Canada makes a substantial economic contribution to Canada's economy. Through the spending of the organization and from the visitors, a significant and widespread economic impact is felt throughout the country and within local communities. See the Economic Impact of Parks Canada – Outspan report³.

As planning progresses, Parks Canada will work with local chambers of commerce and tourism associations to collaborate on meaningful, genuine and authentic experiences on the land, which promote respect and teach the value of protecting and conserving all living things for the benefit of all, present and future.

Thanks for your time and attention. Please see proceed to answer the survey questions. Return instructions are at the end of the survey.

For more information or to make an inquiry:

Email: pc.SouthOkanaganSud.pc@canada.ca

Phone: 1-833-837-7535

Online consultation platform:

<https://letstalksouthokanagansimilkameen.ca>

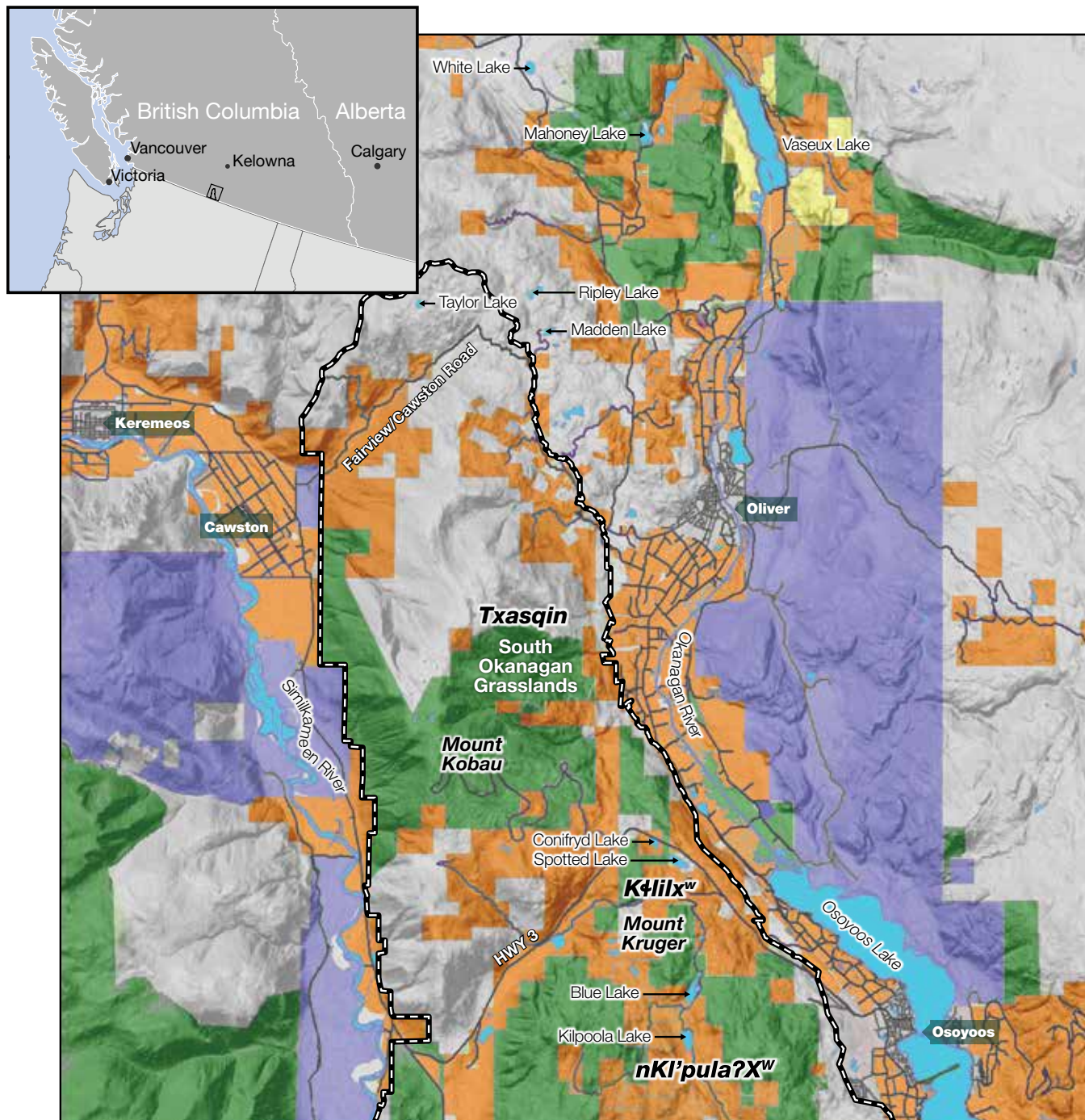
Website: <https://pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/cnnp-cnnp/okanagan>

Mail: Parks Canada
C/O Province of BC
102 Industrial Place
Penticton, BC, V2A 7C8

3 Economic Impact of Parks Canada – Outspan report see <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/agence-agency/bib-lib/rapports-reports/econo2011>

South Okanagan – Similkameen Proposed National Park Reserve Regional Context Map









-  Working Boundary
-  Crown Land
-  Indian Reserve
-  National Wildlife Area
-  Roads
-  Private Land
-  Provincial Protected Area

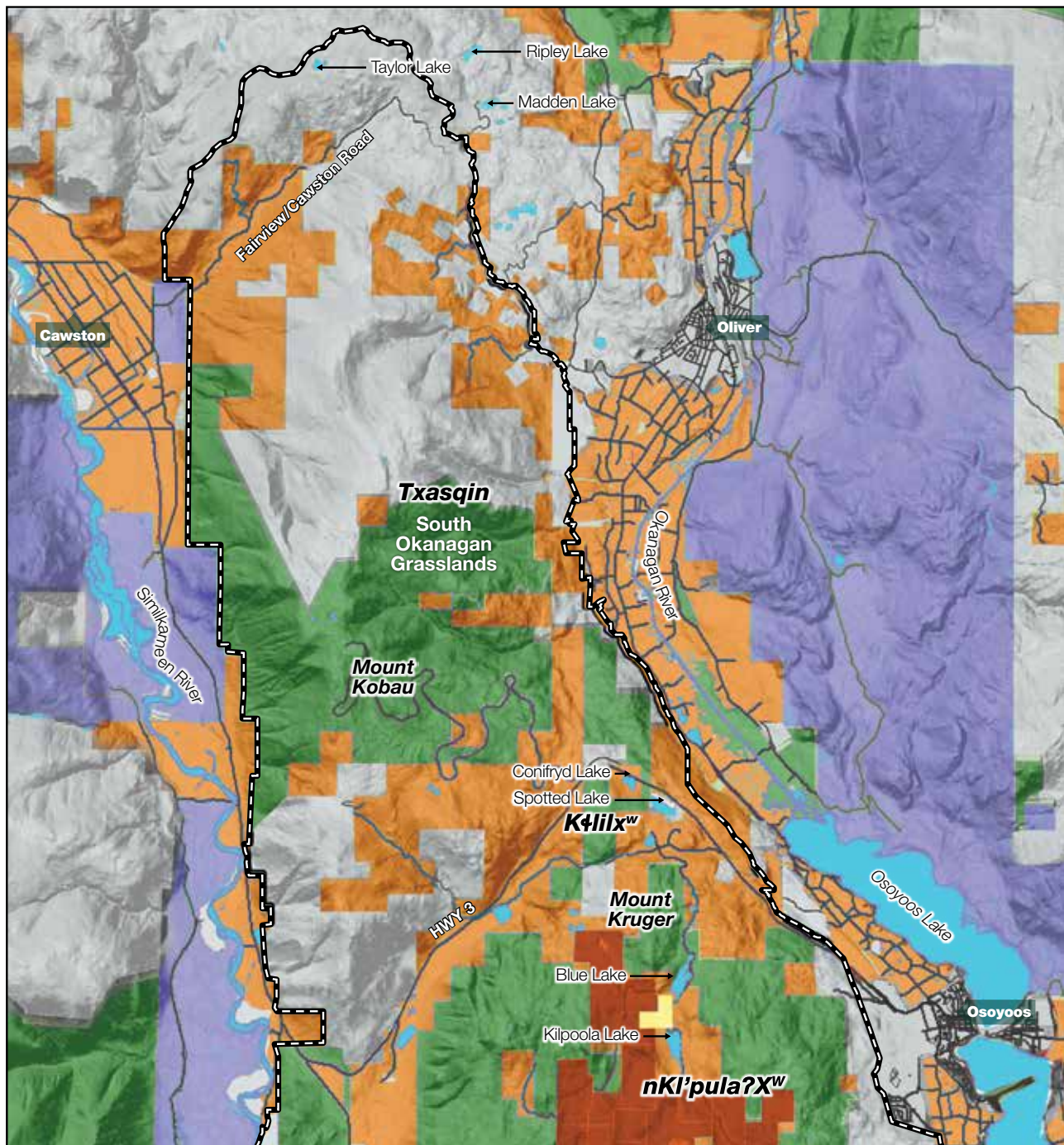


3 1.5 0 3 Kms

! Privately owned lands will remain under the title of the private owner(s), and would only be considered for future inclusion on a willing-seller willing-buyer basis. No lands will be expropriated as part of a national park reserve establishment.

South Okanagan – Similkameen Proposed National Park Reserve Working Boundary Map


 Working Boundary
  Crown Land
  Private Land – Nature Conservancy of Canada
  Indian Reserve
 Roads
 Private Land
 Private Land – The Nature Trust
 Provincial Protected Area

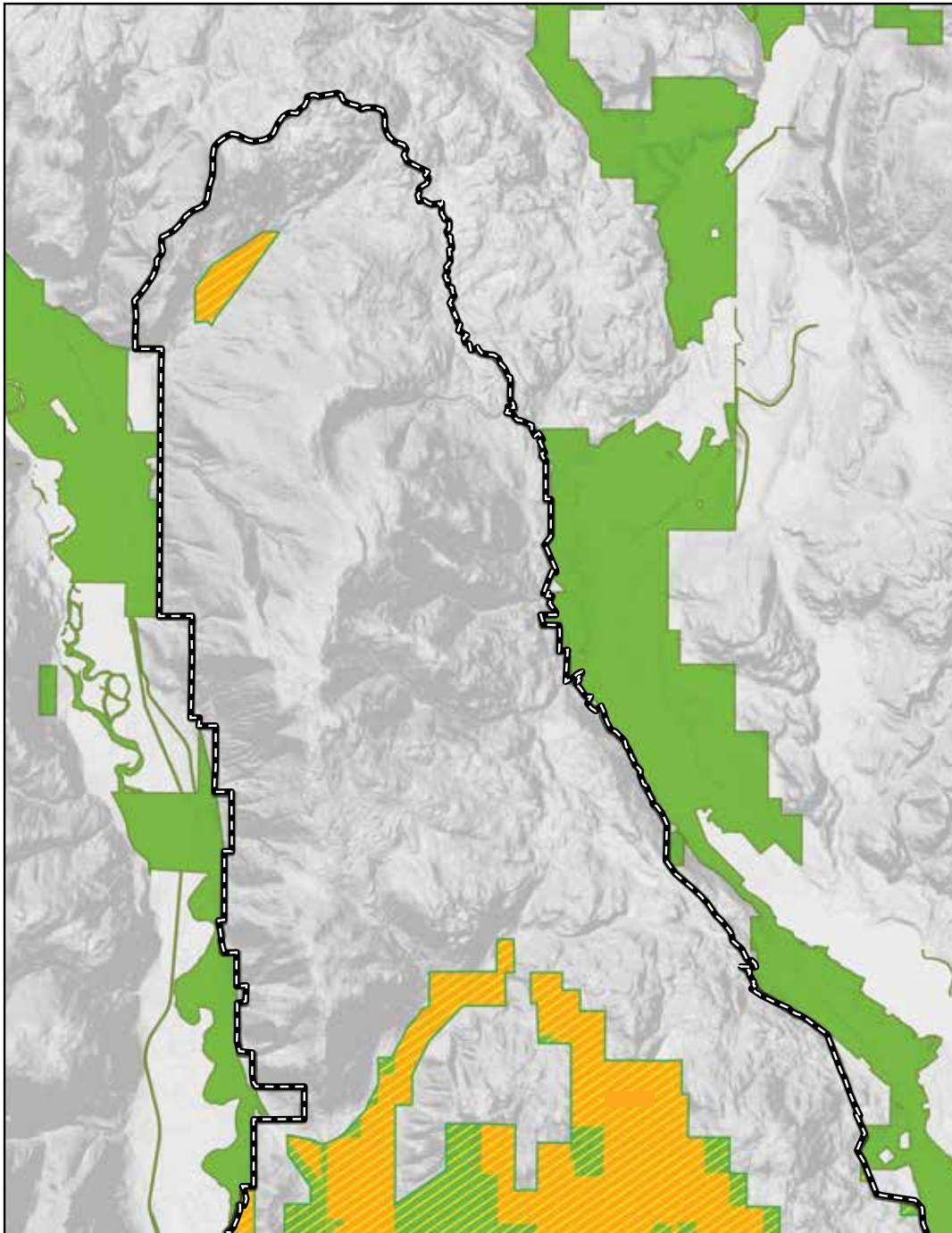


3 1.5 0 5 Kms




! Privately owned lands will remain under the title of the private owner(s), and would only be considered for future inclusion on a willing-seller willing-buyer basis. No lands will be expropriated as part of a national park reserve establishment.

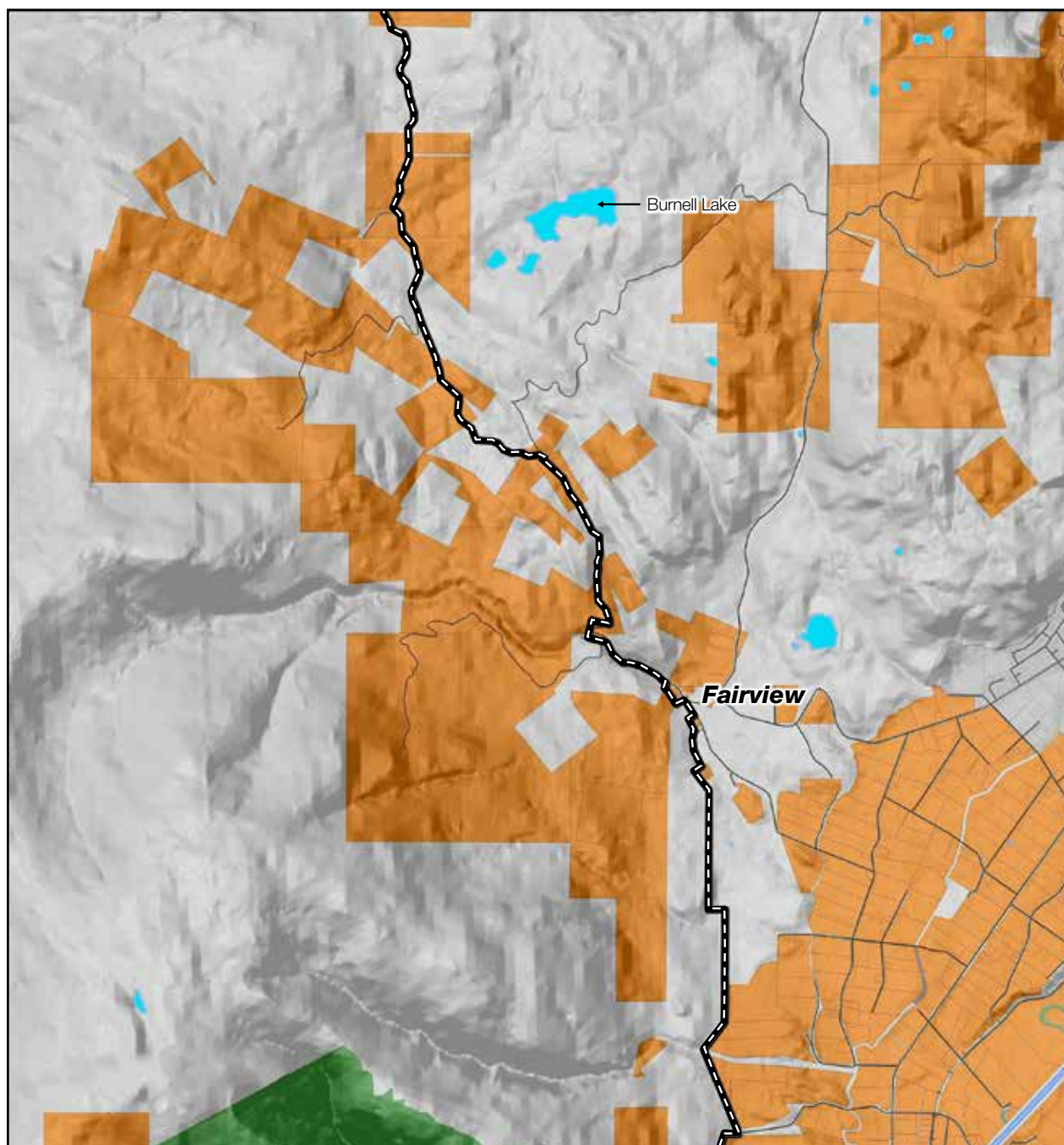
South Okanagan – Similkameen Proposed National Park Reserve Working Boundary Overlap with Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)


 Working Boundary (~273 km² = 27322 Ha)  ALR Private intersection (~30.32 km² = 3031.627 Ha)  ALR intersection (~9.90 km² = 986.517 Ha)  ALR



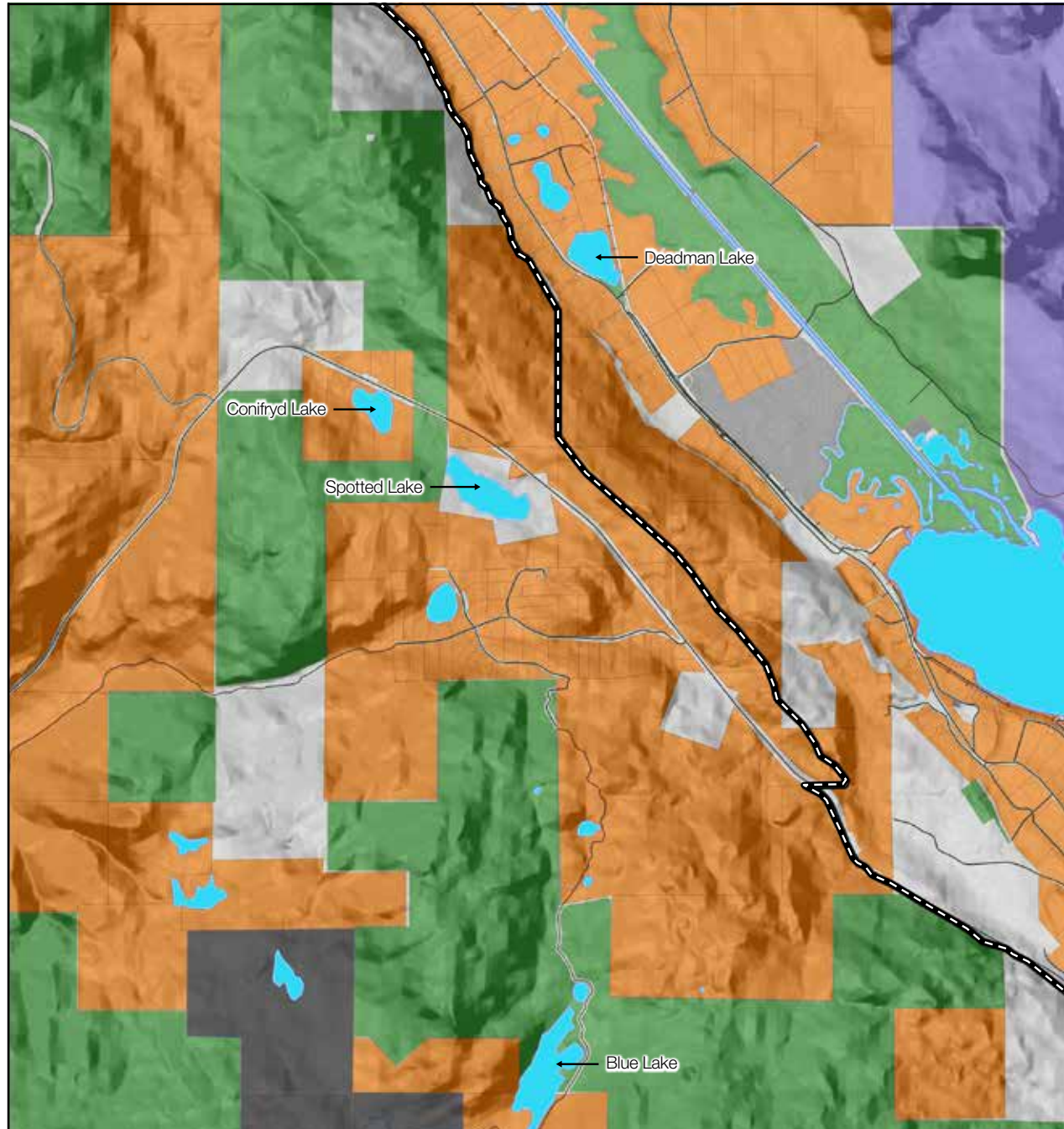
South Okanagan – Similkameen Proposed National Park Reserve – Fairview Private Land Parcels

 Working Boundary
  Crown Land
  Provincial Protected Area
 Roads
  Private Land



 Privately owned lands will remain under the title of the private owner(s), and would only be considered for future inclusion on a willing-seller willing-buyer basis. No lands will be expropriated as part of a national park reserve establishment.

South Okanagan – Similkameen Proposed National Park Reserve – Spotted Lake Private Land Parcels



! Privately owned lands will remain under the title of the private owner(s), and would only be considered for future inclusion on a willing-seller willing-buyer basis. No lands will be expropriated as part of a national park reserve establishment.

South Okanagan – Similkameen Proposed National Park Reserve Working Boundary Overlap with Province of BC Wildlife Management Units



Working Boundary



Wildlife Management Units



<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/sports-recreation-arts-and-culture/outdoor-recreation/fishing-and-hunting/hunting/regulations/2016-2018/hunting-trapping-synopsis-2016-2018-region8.pdf>