

**Mount Richardson  
PROVINCIAL PARK**

**B**ACKGROUND  
**R**EPORT

Prepared for:

**Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks  
BC Parks  
Garibaldi/Sunshine Coast District**

Prepared by:

CHRIS DAVY AND JAKE FILUSZ

April 5, 2000

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Natural and Cultural Resources</b> .....	4
Physiography.....	4
Geology.....	4
Water.....	4
Climate.....	4
Vegetation (Biogeoclimatic Zones).....	5
Fish Values.....	8
Wildlife Values.....	8
Outdoor Recreation Features.....	8
Visual Values.....	9
Cultural Values.....	9
Resource Analysis.....	9
<b>TENURES, OCCUPANCY RIGHTS AND JURISDICTIONS</b> .....	11
<b>RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES AND FACILITIES</b> .....	12
<b>MARKETING ANALYSIS</b> .....	12
<b>KEY ISSUES</b> .....	14
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	15

## List of Figures

Figure 1:	Provincial Context.....	2
Figure 2:	Features Of Park.....	3
Figure 3:	Biogeoclimatic Map.....	7
Figure 4:	Porpoise Bay Provincial Park Visitor Attendance.....	13

# INTRODUCTION

Mt. Richardson Provincial Park comprises 1,100 hectares and is situated on the windward side of the Pacific Ranges in the Coast Mountains (Figure 1). The park overlooks the small community of Tuwanek that lies approximately two hours north west of Vancouver by ferry and car.

As early as the 1920's two thousand tourists a day were recorded visiting Sechelt. Steam ships carried visitors and summer residents to many destinations on the Sunshine Coast. The recreation use of the Mt. Richardson area over the years has mainly been by local residents of the Sunshine Coast. However, due to proximity to Lower Mainland (a 45 minute Ferry trip across Howe Sound) the park is becoming a popular weekend destination for many Lower Mainland residents.

In 1989 the Tuwanek Ratepayers Association first proposed creation of Mt. Richardson Park to the Sechelt Regional District's Sechelt Inlet Strategy. The area was forwarded to the Regional Public Advisory Committee (RPAC) for consideration of protected area status under the Lower Mainland Protected Area Strategy (PAS) in 1994. In 1996 the provincial government as part of PAS accepted Mt. Richardson. In June 1999, Mt. Richardson was designated as a Class "A" Provincial Park.

Mt. Richardson Parks is part of only 3% of the Sunshine Coast Regional District. The protected area contains former forestry recreation sites (Figure 2), which have been in use for many years. Richardson Lake and Irvine creek are completely within the park. The lake and creek serve as sources of domestic water for some Tuwanek community residents as well as a fresh water source for the marine Sechelt Inlet ecology.

Several other provincial parks and recreation areas exist close to the Mt. Richardson area including: Tetrahedron Provincial Park, Porpoise Bay Park and Piper Point, Halfway Beach and Kunechin Point recreation sites of the Sechelt Inlet Provincial Park.

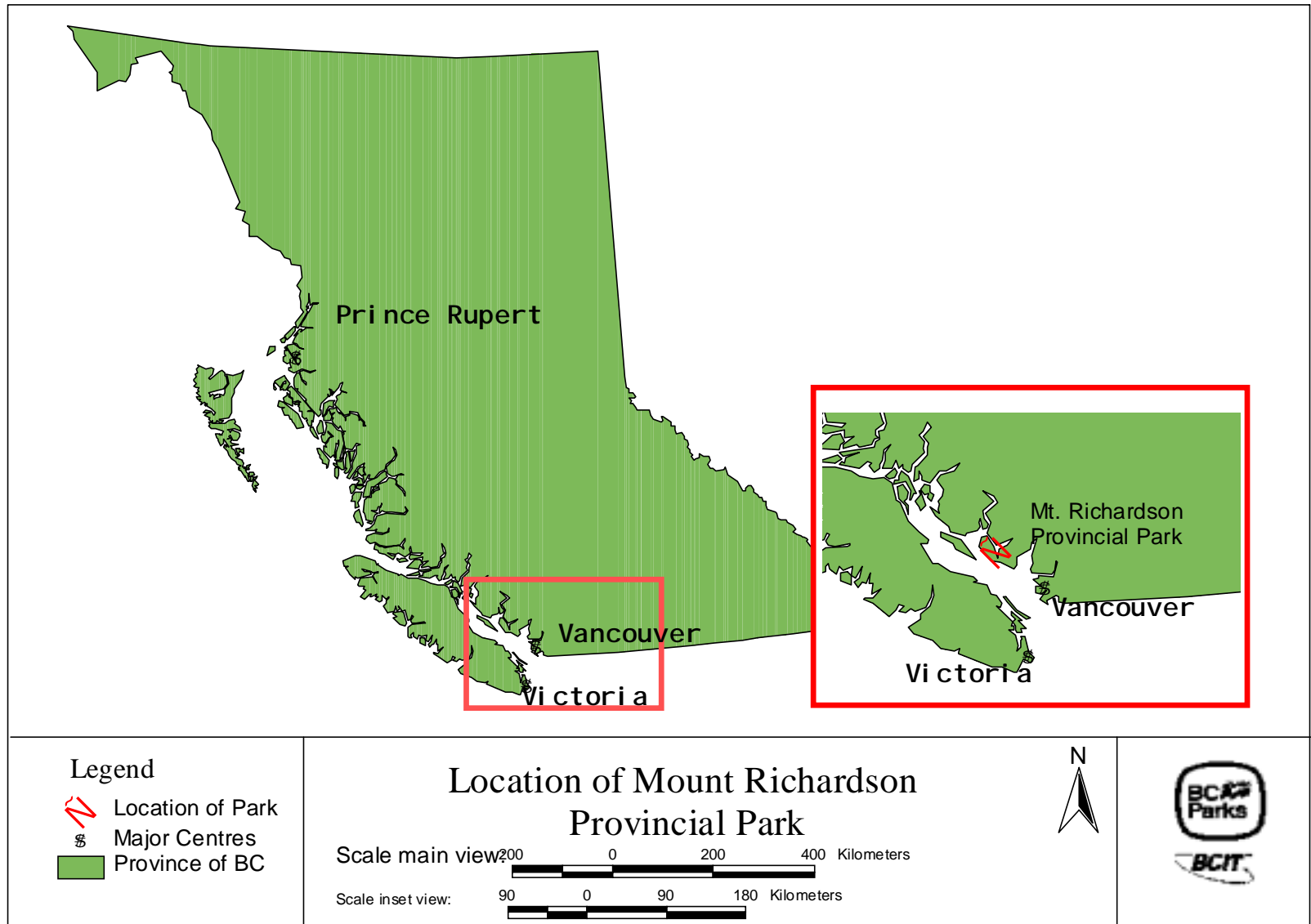


Figure 1. Location of Mount Richardson Provincial Park

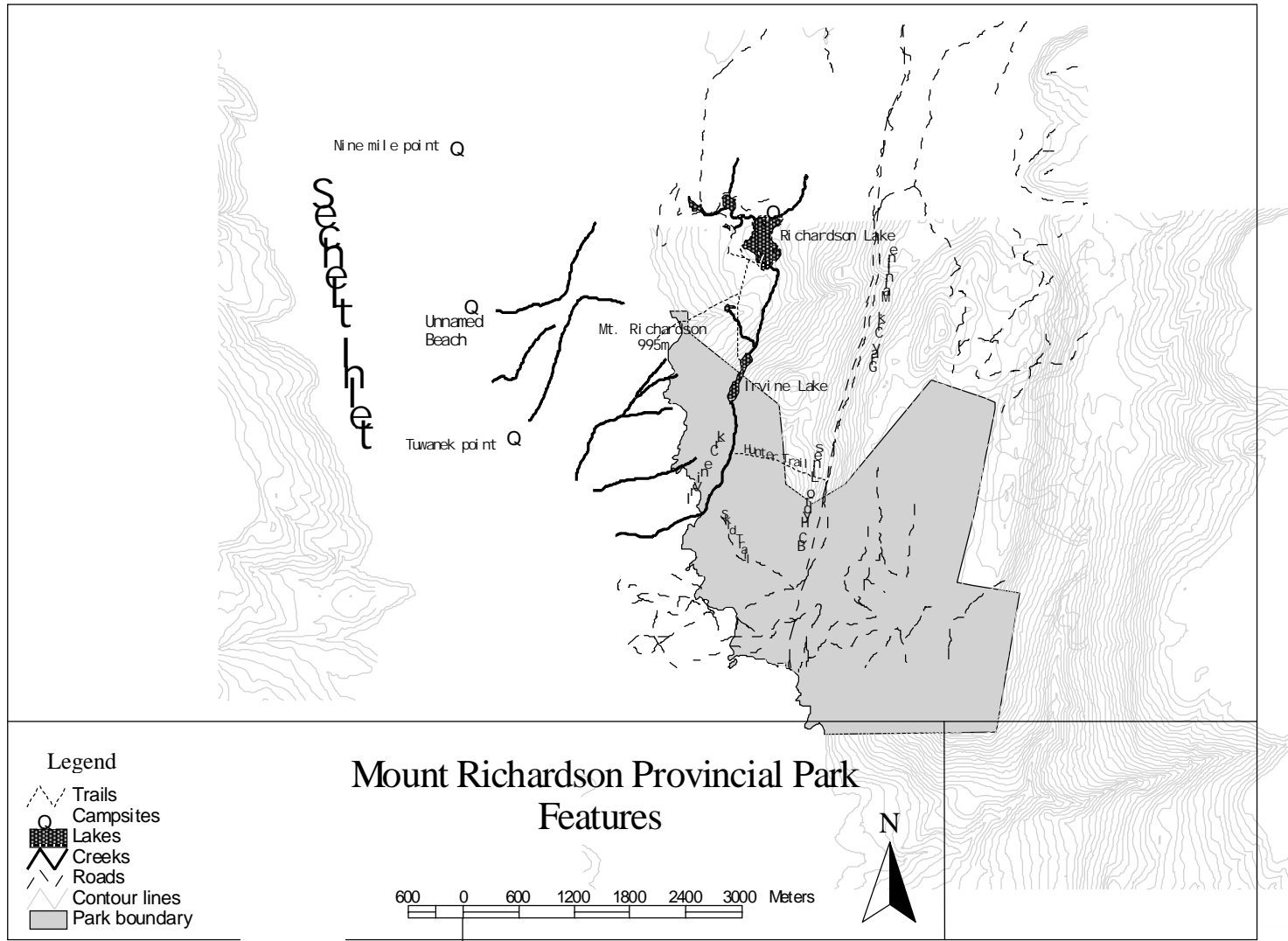


Figure 2. Features of Park

# NATURAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

## Physiography

Mt. Richardson Provincial Park lies along the boundary of the Coastal Trough and the Coast Mountains physiographic sub-divisions of British Columbia. This Landscape is comprised of a series of rolling peaks that are separated by steep ravines and cliffs.

Mt. Richardson stands at an elevation of 995m above sea level (a.s.l). The park is dominated by steep south and west facing slopes, and by a plateau at approximately 800m a.s.l. The plateau lies to the east holding Richardson and Irvine Lakes. One main creek, Irvine, flows from the two lakes to provide riparian habitat on the plateau and to the drier south face of Mt. Richardson. The Gray Creek mainline parallels the east boundary of the park to some degree.

## Geology

Mt. Richardson Provincial Park is made up of a batholithic mass of igneous intrusive rock (quartz diorite and granodiorite chiefly of the late Mesozoic era) as well as by inliers of older formations. Small remnants of a late Tertiary erosion surface can be seen as gently sloping upland surfaces (Holland, 1964).

## Soils

Although a soil survey has not been conducted within the park, general soil maps of the province indicate that the typical soil type for areas along the outer coast is a Humo-Ferric Podzol. The main climatic influences on this soil type are mild winters, cool to warm summers and moderate to high precipitation. These podzolic soils are well to moderately well drained with a course to medium texture (Meidinger *et al*, 1991).

## Water

The primary water bodies of Mt. Richardson Provincial Park are Richardson and Irvine Lakes. These lakes are fed by several smaller lakes and streams as well as by direct run-off and snow melt water. Richardson Lake is 13.5 hectares in size with 2.2 km of shoreline. Irvine Lake is 4.9 hectares in size with 1.4 km of shoreline. Richardson Lake flows into Irvine Lake via a 1.1-km section of Irvine Creek. The lake outlet to Irvine Creek is clogged with logs, preventing sufficient flow that has resulted in an accumulation of silt (DFO, 1996). The creek flows in a southwesterly direction from Irvine Lake to its mouth in Sechelt Inlet. There are also five other unnamed creeks that flow down the south face of Mt. Richardson that contribute to the hydrology of the area.

## Climate

Mt. Richardson Provincial Park lies in a transitional area between the very dry maritime and the montane very wet maritime climatic regions. The climate for this area is dictated by the fact that it represents the first significant rise in elevation beyond the rain shadow of Vancouver Island. The climate of this windward range can generally be characterized as having warm dry summers and moist mild winters with relatively little snowfall at lower and mid elevations. The upper elevations can typically experience a wet, humid climate with cool, short summers and cool winters with substantial snowfall.

The mean annual precipitation for this area is 150cm at the lower elevations and can reach up to 300cm at the higher elevations. Mean annual temperatures vary from 8.2-9.3°C. The mean temperature of the coldest month (January) ranges from 0.3-1.8°C and can experience in excess of 220 frost-free days. The mean temperature of the warmest month (July) ranges from 14-16°C with 36-75cm of precipitation falling between April and September. This area can also expect 5 months with the mean temperature above 10°C (Meidinger *et al*, 1991).

## Vegetation (Biogeoclimatic Zones)

Mt. Richardson Provincial Park lies along the division of the Southern Pacific Ranges (SPR) and the Georgia Lowlands (GEL) Ecoregions. The park contains one Biogeoclimatic zone with four sub-zone variants (Figure 3.). The Coastal Western Hemlock Zone (CWH) of Mt. Richardson has within its borders:

### SPR Ecoregion:

CWH Dry Maritime (dm)- 18 ha representing 0.01% of total of CWHdm in Ecoregion (171700ha.)

CWH *Submontane, Montane* Very Wet Maritime (vm2) - 255.5 ha., representing 0.09% of total of CWHvm2 in Ecoregion (281426 ha.)

### GEL Ecoregion:

CWH Dry Maritime (dm) - 484.5 ha representing 0.87% of total of CWHdm in Ecoregion (55434 ha.)

CWH Very Dry Maritime (xm1) - 228.9 ha representing 0.41% of total of CWHxm in Ecoregion (56157 ha.)

The CWHxm1 occurs at the lowest elevations of the park along a narrow band that follows the Sechelt and Salmon Inlet shores. Species that are found in the sub-zone include Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), dull Oregon-grape (*Mahonia nervosa*) and red huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*).

The CWHdm occurs above the CWHxm1 to approximately 650m a.s.l. The forests in this sub-zone are typically dominated by Douglas-fir, western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) and

western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*). Major plant species that occur here include salal, red huckleberry, with a minor component of vine maple (*Acer circinatum*).

The CWHvm1 variant occurs above the CWHdm on Mt. Richardson Provincial Park with western hemlock, and amabilis fir (*Abies amabilis*) dominating the forests. The most prevalent understory species include red huckleberry, Alaskan blueberry (*Vaccinium alaskaense*), five-leaved bramble (*Rubus pedatus*), lanky moss (*Rhytidiadelphus loreus*) and step moss (*Hylocomium splendens*).

The CWHvm2 variant represents the highest biogeoclimatic zone of Mt. Richardson Provincial Park lying at about 900m a.s.l. The forests of this cool, moist zone are again dominated by western hemlock, and amabilis fir but the wetter sites in this sub-zone typically hold yellow cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*), and mountain hemlock (*Tsuga mertensiana*). The under story holds Alaskan blueberry (*Vaccinium alaskaense*), five-leaved bramble (*Rubus pedatus*), lanky moss (*Rhytidiadelphus loreus*), step moss (*Hylocomium splendens*) and pipecleaner moss (*Rhytidiopsis robusta*) (Klinka *et al*, 1994).



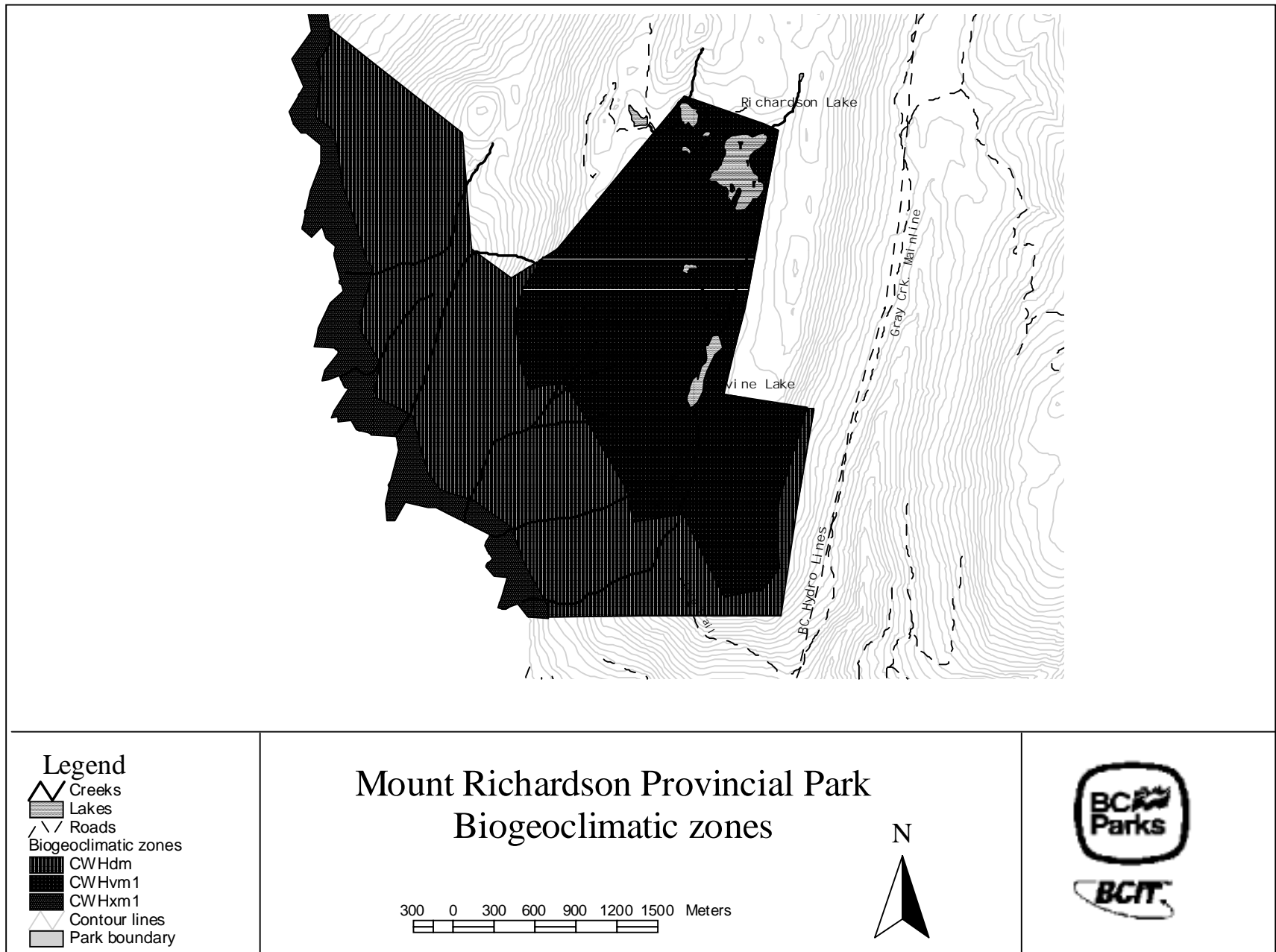


Figure 3. Biogeoclimatic Zones of Mt. Richardson Provincial Park

## Fish

Fish species present in Richardson and Irvine lakes include cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki. clarki*) and dolly varden (*Salvelinus malmo*). A short reach at the mouth of Irvine Creek supports spawning coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) and chum (*Oncorhynchus keta*) salmon.

Enhancement and management activities in Richardson Lake included stocking and habitat enhancement surveys, which indicated poor growth rates for all cutthroats. The lake has been stocked with cutthroat every two years since 1984, and stocked with rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) in 1995 (DFO, 1996).

## Wildlife

Wildlife species in Mt. Richardson Provincial Park include a present or probable 2 amphibians including the tailed frog (*Escaphus truei*) and western red-backed salamander (*Plethodon vehiculum*).

Small mammals present or probable include mice (*Peromyscus Sp.*), moles (*Scapanus Sp.*), squirrels (*Spermophilus Sp.*) and hares (*Lepus Sp.*).

Furbearing species that are likely present include wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), weasel (*Mustela frenata*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), marten, river otter (*Lutra canadensis*), stellar sea lion (*Eumetopias jabutus*) and harbour seal (*Phoca vitulina*) (Golder, 1993). Some confirmed sightings include bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), cougar (*Felis concolor*), and mink (*Mustela vison*) (Williams, pers comm). Large mammal species present include black bear (*Ursus americanus*) and Columbian black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*).

Two pairs of breeding osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) have been observed within the park boundaries. Other large breeding populations of birds include bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), doves (*Columbidae*), owls (*Strigidae Sp.*), pileated woodpeckers (*Dryocopus pileatus*), dark-eyed juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) and blue (*Dendragapus obscurus*) (Williams, pers. comm.). Various waterfowl such as loons (*Gavia Sp.*), mergansers (*Mergus Sp.*), grebes (*Podiceps Sp.*), buffleheads and goldeneyes (*Bucephala Sp.*) inhabit the shores of the park.

## Outdoor Recreation Features

Due to the variety of landscapes within the park, a wide range of backcountry recreation opportunities exists. The park setting offers an accessible backcountry experience to all visitors.

The upland region includes a coastal forest with a Mediterranean type setting of arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*) and rocky bluffs. Richardson Lake facilities include a rough boat launch suitable for a car top boat or canoe, 15 Vehicle Units (rustic condition), 7 tables, 2 toilets, 7 fire pits and 4 signs. Easy to moderate difficulty hiking trails in the uplands connect all of the existing campgrounds to the natural park features such as Mount Richardson summit. Visitors to the lake are able to enjoy fishing, swimming, canoeing

and camping. Other recreational activities in upland region of the park include old growth forest hiking, bird watching, vista viewing and nature study.

The shore component of the park includes many features such as sheltered bays, clear water, protected coves, sandy/gravelly beach landings, access to the upland, fresh water creeks and falls, and abundant marine biodiversity. Tuwanek point and Nine mile point have served as marine recreation sites prior to park establishment. The existing facilities include: 17 camp sites (maintained), 2 toilets, 4 fire pits with benches, 2 elevated tent pads, 1 food cache (4 hang ropes) and 2 picnic tables. An unnamed site located between Nine Mile Point and Tuwanek Point has 5 tent site, no toilet facilities and is relatively undeveloped. Visitors to these sites can enjoy swimming, sea kayaking, fishing, diving, boating, camping and wildlife viewing.

## Visual Values

The landscape of Mt. Richardson Provincial Park provides two main visual experiences.

**Focal** - Mount Richardson is a dominant focal point when looking north from the ferry while crossing the Strait of Georgia between Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. The mountain's visual integrity is still intact while forest harvesting has visually altered the surrounding areas to the east and west of the park.

**Panorama** - Panoramic views are possible from the top of Mount Richardson. These views are accessed from an established trail. Spectacular views of the Sechelt and Salmon Inlets as well as the Strait of Georgia exist in good weather.

The park landscape can be termed as being highly sensitive (Level 1), uniquely variable (Class A) and low in Visual Absorption Capability (VACs). Ministry of Forests has established visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) for the area in 1991.

## Cultural Values

There are significant cultural values in the park to the Sechelt Nation. The shore along the base of Mt. Richardson contains the only pictograph of the Sechelt Nation about which history and origin are known. The pictograph is of a mythological sea serpent TCHAIN'-KO, god of the waters (Williams, pers comm.).

## Resource Analysis

When looking at the role of a BC Provincial Park, it is important to consider its natural and cultural values. This will help achieve the overall conservation and recreation goals of the BC Parks system. The natural and cultural values in Mt. Richardson Provincial Park contribute towards achieving the recreation and conservation goals of the BC Park system in the following ways:

## **BC Parks Conservation Goal 1**

### **Representation**

To protect viable, representative examples of the natural diversity of the province.

Mt. Richardson contributes significantly to the under-represented Georgia Lowlands Ecoregion. The park contributes by protecting four sub zone variants of the Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH) biogeoclimatic zone (Figure 3). These areas are under the most pressure from urban development on the West Coast.

## **BC Parks Recreation Goal 2**

### **Holiday Destination**

To provide park attractions that serve as or improve key destinations for the outdoor recreation holidays.

With appropriate development and promotion, Mt. Richardson could significantly contribute to this goal. To become an outdoor recreation holiday destination, improved access and overnight accommodations must be considered.

## **BC Parks Recreation Goal 3**

### **Local recreation**

To ensure access to local outdoor recreation opportunities for all residents of the province.

The local communities of Tuwanek, Sechelt and Gibsons are served by the recreational opportunities at Mount Richardson Provincial Park.

## **TENURES, OCCUPANCY RIGHTS AND JURISDICTIONS**

Reserves: Richardson-Irvine Creek Watershed Reserve #8 (0326763) part of which is outside the park boundary

Permits: YMCA Permit # GS97 10096

Natural West Coast Adventures Permit #GS98 10120

Young Life-Malibu Permit # GS98 10144

Sunshine Kayaking Permit # GS99 10194

Canadian Wild Eco-tours Permit # Application Log #5

## **RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES AND FACILITIES**

Prior to becoming a Provincial Park, a BC Forest Service Recreation Reserve was established at Richardson Lake that already had a number of facilities developed. The full extent of this reserve was not included in the park boundary. Facilities at this site include a rough boat launch suitable for a car top boat or canoe, 15 Vehicle Units, 7 tables, 2 toilets, 7 fire rings and 4 signs (MOF, 1996). Visitors to the lake are able to enjoy fishing, swimming, canoeing and camping. A small network of trails is established around Richardson and Irvine Lakes, as well as to the top of Mount Richardson. The trails provide scenic and wildlife viewing opportunities and easy day hiking forays where one can view old growth forests of Douglas-fir and unique sphagnum bogs. Three marine campsites are located at the base of Mount Richardson along the shores of Sechelt Inlet. These sites are accessed by boat (typically sea kayak) and each has fire rings present. Nine-Mile and Tuwanek Point also have pit toilets present but their suitability and locations may have to be reassessed. Visitors to these sites can enjoy swimming, fishing, diving, boating, camping and wildlife viewing. The park offers an alternative destination to the neighboring Tetrahedron Provincial Park.

## **MARKETING ANALYSIS**

Statistics show that the Mt. Richardson Forest Recreation Sites received 800 user days in the summer of 1996 (MOF 1996), from May long weekend to Labor Day. This would suggest that the area is quite heavily used. However, the road that links Richardson Lake and the Gray Creek Mainline is currently in poor shape and overgrown. This now makes Richardson Lake available only to those willing to hike in or those with 4x4 vehicles. Due to this fact, visitation to the lake will likely remain low until the situation is remedied.

Porpoise Bay Provincial Park lies about 20 kilometers to the south of Mt. Richardson. It receives significant use by highway travelers and was established to provide camping and recreation opportunities in the Porpoise Bay area. Although park data does not detail camper's activities statistics for the park have remained steady since the 1990s (Figure 4). The three beach campsites have always been popular, as they are part of a sea kayaking circuit in the Sechelt and Salmon Inlets. Information shows that the Tuwanek Point and the Nine-Mile Point sites are the most commonly used. In the summer of 1998 it was reported that there were 3200 kayak rentals from a local outfitter with a significant amount of them destined for Sechelt Inlet and the sites located within (Reid, pers.comm.). The recent establishment of four more kayak outfitters in the region also testifies the area's popularity and recreation potential.

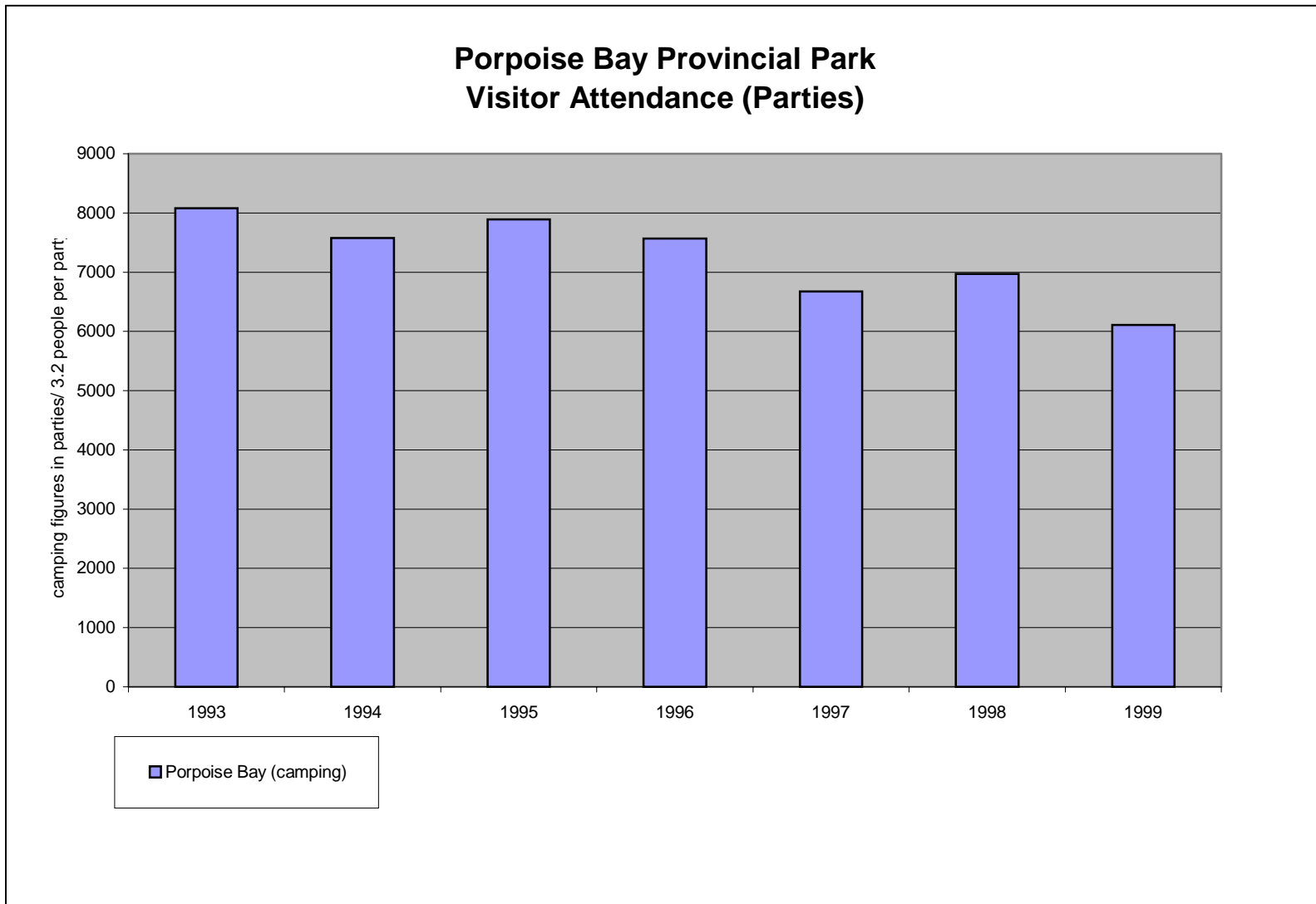


Figure 4. Porpoise Bay Provincial Park Visitor Attendance

# KEY ISSUES

## **Protecting the Visual Integrity of the Park**

Mt. Richardson Provincial Park is surrounded by active logging and is yet highly visible from almost all views. It would be appropriate to develop a plan to deal with negative visual impacts on surrounding lands.

## **Protection of Natural Values**

Currently there is an area to the east of Richardson and Irvine Lakes just beyond the park boundary that has been identified as valuable deer winter range (Reynolds, pers.comm.). This area is slated for harvest (cut blocks 151, 181, 183) so it would be important to evaluate this area to determine what impacts this could have on the park.

## **Water Quality**

The headwaters of several creeks that flow through the park begin adjacent to the boundary. Negative impacts in these areas may affect water quality within the park. It would be important to develop a plan to prevent such occurrences.

## **Development and Conservation – Defining Appropriate Levels of Development**

Information gathered on the biophysical environment of the park suggests that the area hold many unique values. The Mt. Richardson area has already been developed while under the responsibility of the Forest Service. The relatively small size of the park and its minor representative area under protected designation would make it appropriate to further develop only as a means to facilitate a safe, enjoyable park visit. This would keep impacts to values at a minimum.

BC Parks should address possible development options for:

- **Trails** that could link the beach campsites to the Richardson Lake sites and viewpoint.
- **Oceanside day use** (Interpretive displays, structures to reduce impacts, picnic facilities, etc.) would be of great importance to the on-shore sites as they are part of a sensitive foreshore ecosystem.
- **Rehabilitation** and removal of inappropriate campsites and trails that are located along the shores of Richardson Lake



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Klinka, K and R. Green.** A Field Guide for Site Identification and Interpretation for the Vancouver Forest Region. 1994, Land Management Handbook Number 28, 285p.

**BC Assets and Lands, Shellfish Division.** 2000. (Unpublished) Mt. Richardson Aquaculture Tenure Information. Victoria.

**Department of Fisheries and Oceans.** 1996. Fisheries Information Summary System (FISS) Reports on Richardson Lake and Irvine Creek, Watershed Code 9001689. Surrey.

**Geotechnical Reconnaissance study of the District of Sechelt Official Community Plan Area.** 1993. Golder&Associates (Golder Report).

**Holland, Stuart.** 1964. Landforms of BC, A Physiographic Outline. Energy Mines and Petroleum Resources. 130p.

**Meidinger, Del and Jim Pojar.** 1991. Ecosystems of BC. Ministry of Forests. 329p.

**Ministry of Forests.** Forest Tenure Administration System (FTAS), 1996. Richardson Lake Recreation Inventory and Visitor Stats. Sechelt.

**Pierce, Doug.** personal communications, Fishing, Trapping and Hunting in Mt. Richardson Area. MOELP Conservation Officer, Sechelt Field Office, October 1999.

**Reid, Doug.** personal communications, Visitation To Marine Sites. Pedals and Paddles rentals, Tillicum Marina, January 2000.

**Reynolds Darryl.** personal communications, Habitat Information. MOELP Forest Ecosystem Specialist, Sechelt Field Office, October 1999-2000.

**Smart, Brian.** personal communications, Forest Cover Maps and Air Photos. MOF District Planner, Sechelt Field Office, October 1999-January 2000.

**Ed. Valentine *et al.*** Soil Landscapes of BC. 1986, Ministry of Environment. 197p.

**Sunshine Coast Inventory of Environmentally Important Sites.** 1995. (Unpublished) Compilation of Biophysical Information on Mt. Richardson.

**Williams, Linda.** personal communications, Mt. Richardson Information. Tuwanek Ratepayers Association, Tuwanek, October 1999-January 2000.

Garabaldi/Sunshine  
Coast District

# MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

April, 2000



for **Mt. Richardson Provincial Park**

Ministry of Environment  
Lands and Parks  
BC Parks Division

# **Mt. Richardson Provincial Park Approvals Page**

## **Forward**

This management direction statement for Mt. Richardson Provincial Park provides management direction until such a time as a more detailed management plan is prepared.

## **Approvals**

---

Drew Carmichael  
District Manager  
Garibaldi/Sunshine Coast District

---

Date

---

Denis O’Gorman  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Parks Management Committee  
BC Parks Division

---

Date

### **Purpose of the Management Direction Statement**

Management direction statements provide strategic direction for all protected areas which do not have a full management plan. MDS do not negate the need for future, more detailed management plans. Management direction statements also describe protected area values, management issues and concerns; management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies; and, directional statements form other planning processes.

# Table of Contents

	Page
<b>Introduction</b>	
Purpose.....	1
Setting and Context.....	1
<b>Protected Area Attributes</b>	
Conservation.....	4
Recreation and Tourism .....	4
Cultural Heritage .....	5
Significance in the Protected Areas System.....	5
<b>Land Uses, Tenures and Interests</b>	
Access.....	5
Existing Tenures.....	6
Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities .....	6
Adjacent Patterns of Land Use.....	6
First Nations Interests.....	6
Other Agency Interests.....	7
Private and Public Stakeholder Interests .....	7
<b>Role of Mt. Richardson Park .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Management Commitments and Issues</b>	
Direction from Previous Planning.....	10
Management Issues .....	10
<b>Management Strategy</b>	
Priority Management Objectives and Strategies .....	11
Consultation and Future Planning .....	11
Zoning Plan .....	12
Land and Resource Use Commitments.....	14
Figure 1 .....	2
Figure 2 .....	3
Figure 3 .....	13
Plate 1 .....	9
Appendix .....	15

# **Introduction**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this management direction statement (MDS) is to provide management direction for Mt. Richardson Provincial Park. This new protected area requires direction in the interim until a full management plan is prepared. While key strategies are identified in this MDS, the completion of all these strategies is subject to funding and funding procedures. As such, strategies are ranked according to priority and completed as funding permits. As well, all development associated with these strategies within this park is subject to the BC Parks Impact Assessment Policy.

## **Setting and Context**

In 1989 the Tuwanek Ratepayers Association first proposed creation of Mt. Richardson Park to the Sechelt Regional District's Sechelt Inlet Strategy. In 1996 Mt Richardson was accepted by the provincial government as part of the Lower Mainland Protected Area Strategy. In June 1999 Mt. Richardson protected area received Class "A" Provincial Park designation.

Mt. Richardson Provincial Park is located on the west side of Sechelt Inlet, 30 kilometres north of the Town of Sechelt (Figure 1.). The 1,000 hectare park has provincially significant conservation and recreation values that contribute to the representation of the marine setting of the West Coast and the surrounding mountainous terrain.

Mount Richardson Provincial Park is the third largest protected area on the southern Sunshine Coast. The 6,000 hectare Tetrahedron Provincial Park, 30 kilometres east of Sechelt, protects a high elevation alpine environment which complements the low to mid elevation wilderness character of Mt. Richardson Park. The 3000 hectare Spipiyus Park west of Pender Harbour protects sensitive Marbled Murrelet habitats and remnant old-growth forests. Porpoise Bay Park at the south end of Sechelt Inlet, offers individual and group camping opportunities. Roberts Creek Park, south of Sechelt provides inter-tidal marine viewing opportunities. These unique opportunities may also be found at Sargent Bay Park 3 kilometers north of Sechelt. Finally, Sechelt Inlet Recreation Area, 20 kilometres north of Sechelt, contains outstanding diving and sea kayaking opportunities that draws many interested visitors (Figure 2.).

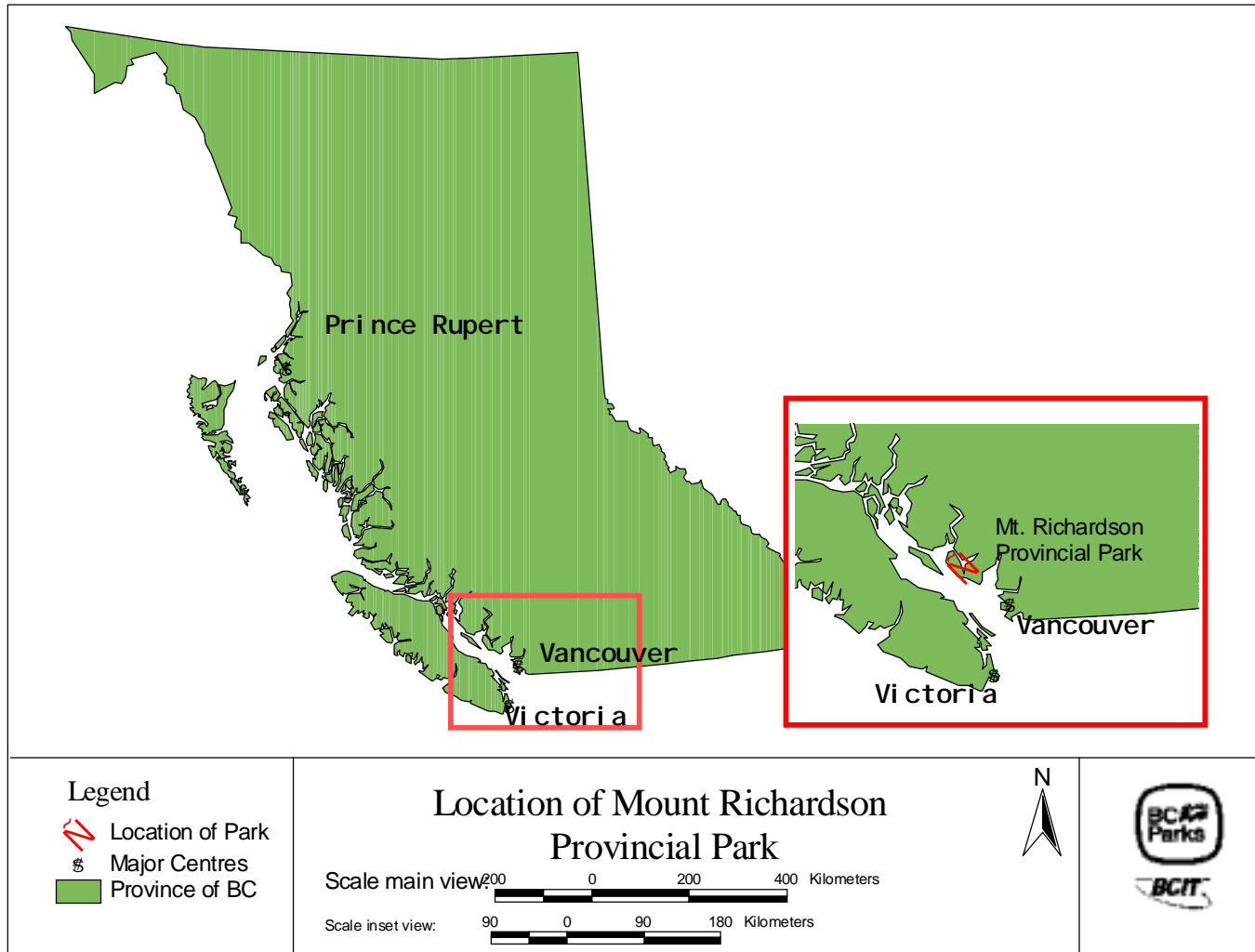


Figure 1- Park Location

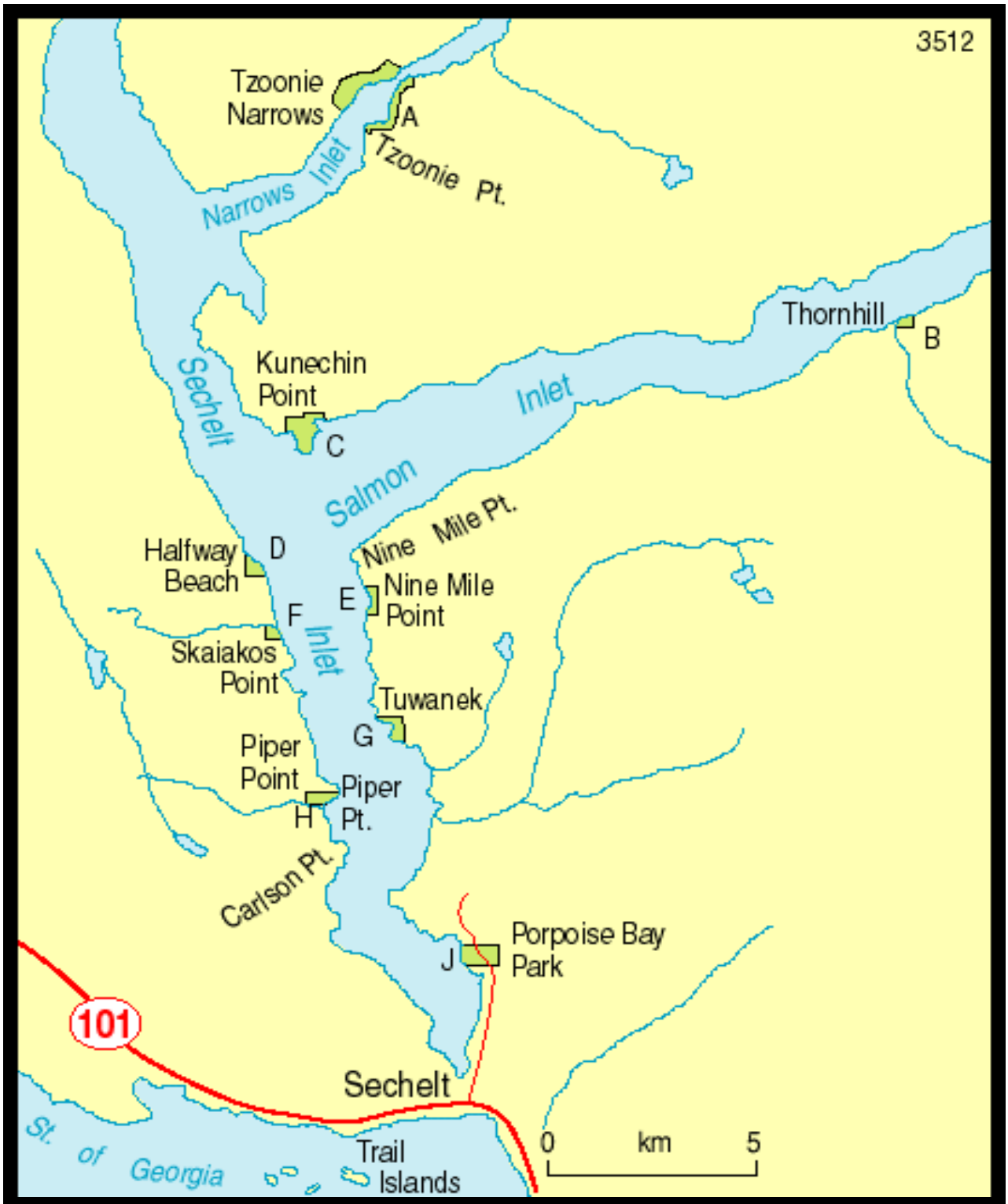


Figure 2. Sechelt Inlet Marine Recreation Area



# Protected Area Attributes

## Conservation

The park is comprised of the following biogeoclimatic zone and variants in the Georgia Lowlands and Southern Pacific Ranges Ecoregions.

### GEL

BGC Zone/Variant	Park Area (ha.)	Contribution to Total Protected in GEL Ecoregion	Total of Zone Protected in GEL Ecoregion
CWHdm	484.5	0.87%	10.6%
CWHxm	228.9	0.41%	5.8%
Lake	4.9	0.05%	873.5 ha.

### SPR

BGC Zone/Variant	Park Area (ha.)	Contribution to Total Protected in SPR Ecoregion	Total of Zone Protected in SPR Ecoregion
CWHdm	18	0.01%	6.9%
CWHvm2	255.5	0.09%	13.69%
Lake	13,5	0.05%	2421.4 ha.

- provincially significant conservation values, including largely undeveloped shoreline and upland typical of the Georgia Lowlands and Southern Pacific Ranges Ecoregions
- representation of old-growth Douglas-fir forests in upland areas with sections of moist coastal mountain hemlock and yellow cedar forest of the west coast
- almost the entire Irvine Creek watershed is contained within the park including an outstanding cascading creek that flows down the south face of Mt. Richardson.
- spawning habitat in mouth of Irvine Creek for coho and chum salmon when water levels permit
- important habitat on the south face of Mt. Richardson providing winter range for black-tail deer and prey for mammals including black bear and cougar
- regionally significant backcountry values

## Recreation and Tourism

- about 6000 metres of Sechelt Inlet shoreline, of which all is provincially significant
- exceptional recreation potential for sea kayaking, diving, day-use and interpretation
- regionally significant boating, hiking, and camping opportunities
- potential tourism values associated with destination camping, boating, backcountry recreation, nature and cultural heritage appreciation opportunities

## **Cultural Heritage**

The park lies within the traditional territory of the Sechelt Indian Band. The shore along the base of Mt. Richardson contains a pictograph of a mythological sea serpent that is an important part of the Sechelt Indian Band legend.

## **Significance in the Protected Areas System**

- protects lower elevation PAS conservation and recreation values within the GEL ecosection; important protection of under-represented CWHxm and CWHdm biogeoclimatic zones
- protects the mid elevation PAS conservation and recreation values of the SPR ecosection; important protection of under-represented CWHdm and CWHvm2 biogeoclimatic zones
- a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities and the protection of wilderness near a major urban centre.
- the Garibaldi/Sunshine Coast District Levels of Management evaluation determined the park ranked high (1) for natural heritage values; high (1) for cultural heritage values and high (1) for recreation, use and appreciation values.
- added strength for meeting long-term demands for camping, day use and boating in Sechelt Inlet

## **Land Uses, Tenures and Interests**

### **Access**

There are two major ways of accessing the park.

- Land access: Porpoise Bay Road branches north from Hwy 101 in Sechelt. The road is paved up to Tuwanek. From Tuwanek an active logging main line road runs adjacent to Gray Creek. At approx. the ten kilometer mark, a rough 4WD spur road branches left (west) and can be followed all the way into the north-east section of the park.
- It is also possible to hike into the park from Tuwanek. However there is no established trail and some of the local hikers have been walking up the steep Irvine Creek.
- Water access: The three camp sites located along the foreshore at the base of Mt. Richardson can be accessed by boat from the Sechelt Inlet. There are no trails that would connect these sites with the upland portion of the park.

## **Existing Tenures**

The following eco-tourism companies have valid permits inside the park. YMCA (Permit # GS9710096), Natural West Coast Adventures (Permit # GS9810120), Young Life – Malibu (Permit # GS9810144), Sunshine Kayaking (Permit # GS9910194), Canadian Wild Eco-Tours (Permit # Application Log #35)

Active oyster farm operation exists adjacent to the park, between Tuwanek Point and the “no name” beach camp site. The park lies within Wildlife Management Unit 2-5 with an associated guide outfitter, though it is not known if the park area is used for guide-outfitting.

## **Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities**

Richardson Lake facilities include a rustic boat launch suitable for a car top boat or canoe, 15 Vehicle Units (rustic condition), 7 tables, 2 toilets, 7 fire pits and 4 signs. Easy to moderate difficulty hiking trails in the uplands connect all of the existing campgrounds with the natural park features such as Mount Richardson summit. Visitors to the lake are able to enjoy fishing, swimming, canoeing and camping. Other activities include old-growth forest hiking, bird watching, vista viewing and nature study.

The upland sites adjacent to Sechelt Inlet have facilities that include: 12 camp sites (maintained), 2 toilets, 4 fire pits with benches, 2 elevated tent pads, 1 bear-proof food cache (4 hang-ropes) and 2 picnic tables. Visitors to these sites enjoy swimming, sea kayaking, fishing, diving, boating, camping and wildlife viewing.

The areas upland from the inlets high water mark include many features such as sheltered bays, clear water, sandy/gravelly boat landings, some access to the upland freshwater creeks and falls, and abundant flora and fauna.

The park area is open to hunting for black-tailed deer, black bear, wolf, coyote, racoon, skunk, hare, bobcat, cougar, grouse, coots, snipe, ducks and Canada geese.

## **Adjacent Patterns of Land Use**

Active forestry activities occur along the eastern border of the park. A dry log-sort site exists next to the southern corner of the park.

## **First Nations Interests**

- 2 registered archaeological sites in the park.
- Sechelt First Nations use the northwest portion of the park for vision quests.
- 1 pictograph found in the park

## **Other Agency Interests**

- BC Environment has interest in fishery, wildlife and water management within the park
- the Sechelt Regional District wants a close cooperative relationship, especially concerning water management (An existing water license that pre-dates the park is issued to the regional district. The license is for domestic water purposes, though no infrastructure exists.), tourism and park development

## **Private and Public Stakeholder Interests**

- owners of adjacent properties
- commercial recreation operators

## **Role of Mt. Richardson Park**

Mt. Richardson Park contributes to the BC Protected Areas System conservation goals by:

- protecting lower elevation PAS conservation and recreation values of the Georgia Lowland ecoregion and the under represented CWHxm1, dm, vm1, vm2, of the west coast region
- preserving salmon and trout spawning habitat in Irvine Creek;
- protecting important ungulate species habitats and old-growth Douglas-fir values;
- maintaining and preserving a local and regionally important backcountry environment.
- protecting and presenting regionally significant trails associated with the historic logging industry
- protecting Sechelt First Nations interests.

Mt. Richardson Park fulfills the Ministry's backcountry recreation goal, on both a provincial and regional basis, by providing a range of backcountry and tourism opportunities including :

- relatively accessible and safe backcountry day use and overnight use in the north east portion of the park with some trail facilities. Recreation management recognizes traditional activities and use patterns for hiking, camping, backpacking, nature study, photography, ski touring and hunting.
- more remote and challenging marine recreation opportunities in the western portion of the park, with emphasis on low, dispersed levels of use. Facilities are limited and visitors must be self-reliant and experienced in water travel.

- potential tourism values associated with backcountry recreation, nature and cultural heritage appreciation opportunities.

Mt. Richardson Park contributes to the BC Parks recreation goals including:

- providing exceptional recreation potential for destination camping, day-use and nature appreciation opportunities; and,
- regionally significant boating, hiking and diving opportunities.



Plate 1. Representative Photo of Mount Richardson

# Management Commitments and Issues

## Direction from Previous Planning

A report detailing the recommendations from the Lower Mainland Regional Public Advisory Committee called for 24 new protected areas, totaling approximately 138,000 hectares. This would be added to the approximate 444,000 hectares of existing parks and protected areas in the region.

Following evaluation of the report, government made a decision to establish 23 new protected areas in the Lower Mainland region including Mt. Richardson Park. No specific direction on management of the park was given in this report.

## Management Issues

The following management issues require attention:

Theme	Issue
<b>Public Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• threat of injury to park visitors created by presence of dead trees around existing sites</li> <li>• threat of injury to park visitors because of unsafe structures (e.g. old foot bridge crossings around Richardson Lake );</li> <li>• danger to park visitors caused by steep rocky bluffs</li> <li>• danger to park visitors in summer caused by dry conditions and presence of fuel build-up (shrubs; branches)</li> <li>• threat to public safety caused by black bears trying to get at garbage</li> </ul>
<b>Ecological Values Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• damage to park vegetation by off-trail hikers;</li> <li>• damage to fish spawning habitat and water quality caused by sediment deposition from activities outside of the park</li> <li>• loss of native plants caused by the introduction and spread of non-native plants</li> <li>• lack of knowledge about park natural values because only a small inventory exists</li> </ul>
<b>Unauthorized Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• damage to lakeshore and recreational sites caused by unauthorized off-road vehicle use and camping</li> <li>• damage to marine foreshore by aquaculture operators</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Values Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• threat to First Nations' archaeological sites and pictographs because of lack of inventory and public information</li> </ul>
<b>Park Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• action needed to maintain existing camping, day use and hiking facilities because of high public demand for BC Parks standard facilities</li> </ul>

# Management Strategy

Priority Management Objectives	Priority Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Mt. Richardson Park is safe for public use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• replace existing foot bridges throughout the park</li> <li>• remove hazard trees from around campsites</li> <li>• issue operations contract for camping and general park security</li> <li>• establish safety regulations for the steep bluffs of Mt. Richardson</li> <li>• establish safety regulations for marine sites</li> <li>• prepare fire suppression and fire evacuation plans</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the park's natural, cultural heritage and outdoor recreation values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• secure all cultural heritage features, archaeological sites, facilities and artifacts;</li> <li>• contact all interest groups to gain information about values;</li> <li>• control off-road vehicles</li> <li>• undertake a baseline inventory of natural, cultural heritage and outdoor recreation values with priority on cultural heritage features, fish habitat and black-tailed deer winter range.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide basic picnicking, camping and boating facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• repair and replace facilities</li> <li>• establish a (temporary) day use parking at the Richardson Lake area following an environmental impact assessment</li> <li>• rehabilitate the boat launch and camp sites located along Richardson Lake</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide basic information to the public about the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prepare an information package that will effectively inform the public about the park with emphasis on public safety awareness</li> </ul>

## Consultation and Future Planning

Planning and management of the park will conform with the intent and directions as set forth in the Provincial Protected Areas Strategy. BC Parks is accountable for planning, administration and management of the park through the application of the laws, policies and regulations granted under the *Park Act*. BC Parks will coordinate with other agencies, various public stakeholder groups and First Nations in developing a full management plan for Mt. Richardson Park in the future.

## **Zoning Plan**

Figure # 3 provides a zoning plan for Mt. Richardson Park. The park is zoned as follows:

### **Natural Environment**

- objective: to protect scenic values and to provide for recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.
- Covers all of the foreshore along Sechelt Inlet and all of the plateau located at the top of Mt. Richardson; the emphasis is to maintain the area in a natural condition while allowing appropriate recreation use and facilities (e.g., trails, camping).
- contains 500 hectares or 50% of the park's area.

### **Special Feature**

- objective: to protect and present significant natural and cultural resources, features or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage values.
- includes the entire steep rocky face of Mt. Richardson
- covers 500 hectares or 50% of the park's area.



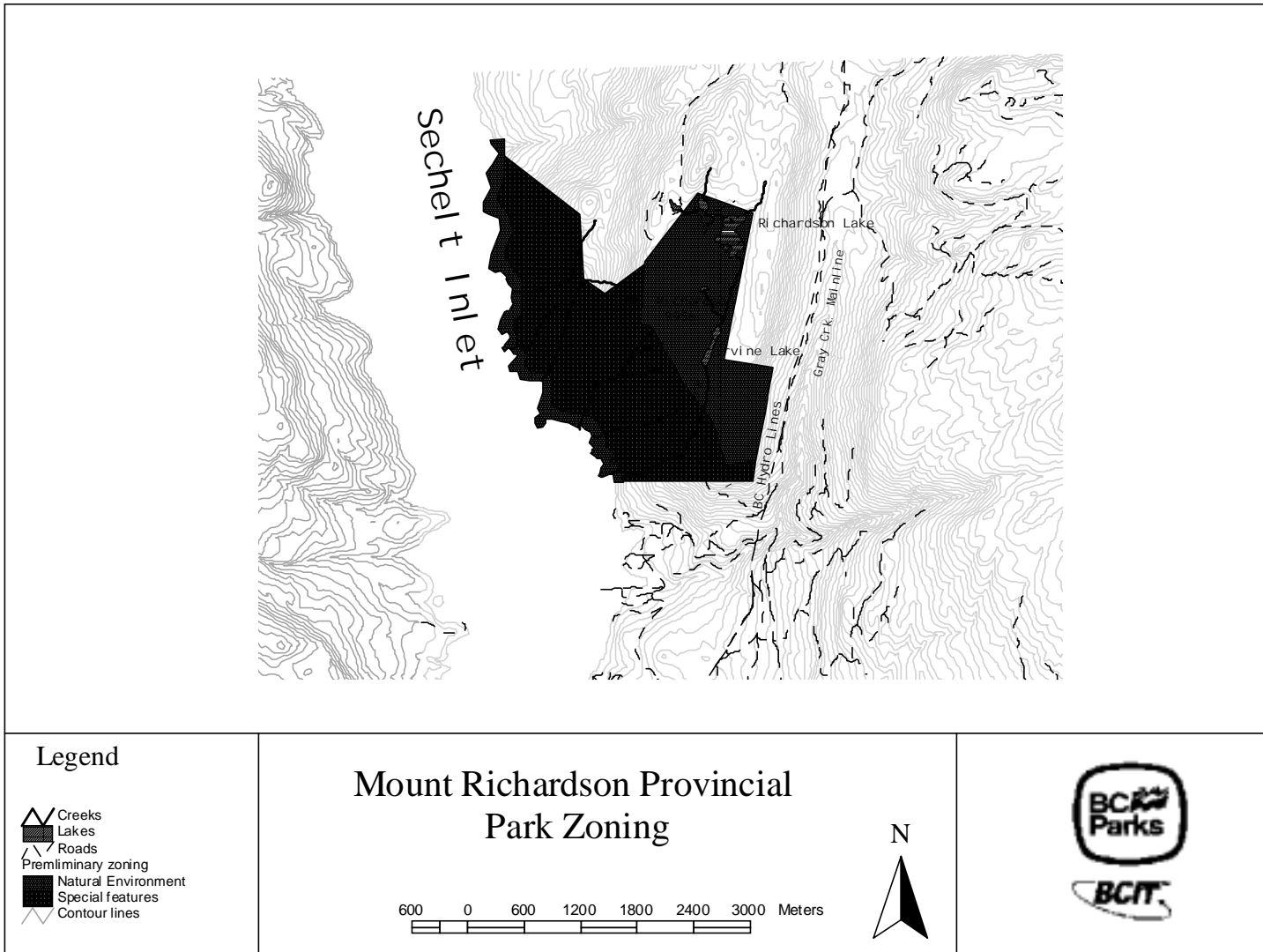


Figure 3. Park Zoning for Mount Richardson Provincial Park

**Mt. Richardson Park Summary Table of Land and Resource Use Commitments**

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptable Uses
Hunting	Y
Fishing	Y
Trapping	N2
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N/A
Recreational Gold Panning/Rock Hounding	N/A
Utility corridors	N
Communication Sites	N
Horse Use/ Pack Animals	N
Guide Outfitting (hunting)	Y
Guide Outfitting (fishing)	N
Guide Outfitting (nature tours)	M
Guide Outfitting (river rafting)	N/A
Cat-Assisted Skiing	N/A
Ski Hills	N/A
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N
Backcountry Huts	N
Water Control Structures	N1
Fish Stocking and Enhancement	M
Road Access	Y
Off-road Access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road Access (motorized)	N
Off-road Access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorized Water Access	Y
Aircraft Access	N
Fire Management (suppression)	Y
Fire Management (prescribed fire management)	M
Fire Management (prevention)	Y
Forest Insect/Disease Control	M
Noxious Weed Control	M
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	M
Scientific Research (specimen collection)	M
Scientific Research (manipulative activities)	M

Y=allowed subject to conditions identified in the management direction statement or management plan  
M=may be permitted if compatible with protected area objectives  
N=not allowed N1=allowed for expressed management purposes only  
N2=present and allowed to continue but not normally allowed

# Appendix