

Endangered Species and Spaces

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Protected Areas Reference

12.0 Protected Areas

Protected areas are a critical component of the provincial environment and land use strategy. They provide a necessary balance with more intensively managed and developed areas; they maintain essential ecological processes that depend on natural ecosystems: they preserve genetic variation and diversity of species; they provide opportunities for recreation and for scientific research, education, and training; as well as being places of spiritual well-being and renewal. There is growing concern however, about the ability of protected areas to preserve and protect the resources within their boundaries.

Parks and protected areas suffer from both internal pressures, such as recreational overuse to external ones like development and resource extraction on adjacent lands. There are also stresses such as global warming and long range transport of atmospheric pollutants that do not respect any borders. Many of these protected areas are not large enough to ensure that minimum viable populations of indigenous wildlife species and populations of plants are maintained. There are some very important questions that remain largely unanswered. Are there enough protected areas? Are they large enough? How effectively do they protect our natural and cultural heritage? Are rare and endangered species adequately preserved within protected areas?

The provincial government's protected area strategy (PAS) was inaugurated to deliver an expanded and integrated system of protected areas that protects 12% of the province. The PAS has two principal goals:

Ecosystem Representation: To protect viable examples of the natural diversity of the province, representative of the major terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems, the characteristic habitats, hydrology and landforms, and the characteristic backcountry recreational and cultural heritage values of each ecosection.

Special Features Protection: To protect the special natural, cultural heritage and recreation features of the province, including rare and endangered species and critical habitats, outstanding or unique botanical, zoological, geological and paleontological features, outstanding or fragile cultural heritage features, and outstanding outdoor recreational features.

In July, 1995 the provincial government established sixteen new protected areas in the Columbia Basin. These, added to the existing protected areas, have brought the proportion of the basin landscape under protective status to 11.6%

The establishment of protected areas plays a key role in the realization of conservation values, particularly through contribution towards biodiversity maintenance and the protection of key habitat areas for maintenance of species health. However, the management of the 88.4% that remains outside of protected areas is the critical ingredient in the survival of many species. Physical and biological linkages are necessary to provide a complementary system of conservation areas and associated support zones in non-protected areas.

Resource development continues at an increasing pace. Areas that were remote wilderness just a few years ago are now easily accessible by logging roads. There is an ongoing need, therefore, not only to improve the protected areas system, but also to manage adjacent landscapes to protect important wildlife and plant species.

There are many types or classes of protected areas in British Columbia. There are national parks, national wildlife areas, and migratory bird sanctuaries administered by the federal government; and, provincial parks, ecological reserves, wildlife management areas, and wilderness areas administered by the provincial government. Within these two levels of government, there are several ministries or agencies responsible for specific protected area programs which vary considerably in scope, intent, legality, budget and objectives related to the species and spaces they are responsible for. **Table 13** below lists all protected areas in the Columbia Basin and identifies the type, location, size (area) and date of establishment for each.

Table 13: Protected Areas in the Columbia Basin

Site Name	Class	Location	Total Area (ha)	NTS	Date Established
Provincial Parks & Ecological Reserves					
Akamina-Kishinena	A	BC/Alberta/Montana borders	10921.00	082G/01	1986/Sep/19
Arrow Lakes - A Multi site (4) 93.04 ha	A	Total area - 93.04 ha	0.00		
Arrow Lakes - Burton Site	A	Burton	18.00	082F/13	1981/May/08
Arrow Lakes - Eagle Site	A	Edgewood	38.00	082E/16	1981/May/08
Arrow Lakes - Fauquier Site	A	Fauquier	16.04	082E/16	1981/May/08
Arrow Lakes - Shelter Bay Site	A	at Shelter Bay	21.00	082K/12	1987/Dec/04
Beaver Creek	A	13km E of Trail	44.00	082F/04	1965/Mar/24
Blanket Creek	A	25km S of Revelstoke	316.00	082L/16	1982/Feb/18
Bugaboo	A	60km S of Golden	13646.60	082K/10	1969/Jul/17
Burges & James Gadsden	A	11km N of Golden	352.00	082N/06	1965/Jun/24
Canal Flats	A	3km N of Canal Flats	6.00	082J/04	1981/May/08
Champion Lakes	A	18km NW of Fruitvale	1426.00	082F/04	1955/Mar/12
Cody Caves	A	13km NW of Ainsworth	63.00	082F/10	1966/Jul/07
Columbia Lake	A	S of Fairmont Hotsprings	260.00	082J/05	1988/Jun/07
Columbia Lake	ER	E side of Columbia Lake	32.00	082J/04	1971/May/04
Crowsnest	A	51km E of Fernie	46.00	082G/10	1960/Nov/08
Cummins Lakes	A	head of the Cummins River	6109.30	083C/04	1995/Jul/12
Drewry Point	A	32km S of Balfour by boat	21.00	082F/07	1970/May/14
Dry Gulch	A	8km S of Radium Junction	29.00	082K/09	1956/Mar/16
Elk Lakes	A	55km N of Elkford	17245.00	082J/11	1973/Apr/17
Elk Valley	A	18km N of Fernie	81.00	082G/10	1960/Nov/08
Elko	C	Elko - 32km S of Fernie	22.00	082G/06	1958/Dec/10
Erie Creek	A	5km W of Salmo	15.00	082F/03	1965/Aug/11
Evans Lake	ER	head of Evans Lake	185.00	082F/13	1972/Mar/08
Gilnockie	A	vicinity of Moyie & Elko Lakes	2842.20	082G/04	1995/Jul/12
Gilnockie Creek	ER	27 km S/SE of Moyie	58.00	082G/04	1981/Jul/09
Goat Range	A	NW of Kootenay Lake	78947.00	082K/03	1995/Jul/12
Goosegrass Creek	ER	west side of Kinbasket L.	2185.00	083D/01	1974/Dec/23
Grohman Narrows	A	5km W of Nelson	10.00	082F/10	1981/May/21
Height of the Rockies	A	Adjacent to Banff Nat. Park	54208.20	082J/06	1995/Jul/12
Inonaklin	C	Edgewood, Arrow Lake	12.00	082E/16	1929/Nov/15
James Chabot	A	N end Windermere Lake	14.00	082K/09	1979/Jan/03
Jimsmith Lake	A	2km S of Cranbrook	12.00	082G/05	1956/Mar/16
Kianuko	A	40km N of Creston	11637.90	082F/07	1995/Jul/12
Kikomun Creek	A	64km E of Cranbrook	682.00	082G/03	1972/May/18
King George VI	A	10km S of Rossland	162.00	082F/04	1937/May/03
Kokanee Creek	A	19km E of Nelson	260.00	082F/11	1955/Apr/05
Kokanee Glacier	A	34km NE of Nelson	32035.40	082F/11	1922/Feb/06
Kootenay Lake - A Multi site (5) 343.00 ha	A	Total area -343 ha	0.00		

Kootenay Lake - Campbell Bay Site	A	across lake from Kaslo	25.00	082F/15	1987/Dec/04
Kootenay Lake - Coffee Creek Site	A	N of Balfour	52.00	082F/10	1987/Dec/04
Kootenay Lake - Davis Creek Site	A	8km S of Lardeau	5.00	082K/02	1987/Dec/10
Kootenay Lake - Lost Ledge Site	A	8km S of Lardeau	38.00	082K/02	1987/Dec/10
Kootenay Lake - Midge Creek Site	A	16km N of Sand Lake	223.00	082F/07	1987/Dec/04
Lew Creek	ER	SW side of Trout Lake	815.00	082K/11	1972/Mar/08
Lockhart Beach	A	19km S of Crawford Bay	3.00	082F/10	1933/Oct/13
Lockhart Creek	A	E of Nelson	3750.60	082F/10	1995/Jul/12
Marl Creek	A	24km N of Golden	167.00	082N/06	1961/Jun/06
Martha Creek	A	20 km north of Revelstoke	71.00	082M/01	1993/Jun/14
McDonald Creek	A	10km S of Nakusp	468.00	082K/04	1982/Apr/28
Morrissey	A	16km SE of Fernie	5.00	082G/06	1962/Aug/06
Mount Assiniboine	A	48km SW of Banff	39050.00	082J/13	1922/Feb/06
Mount Fernie	A	3km W of Fernie	259.00	082G/06	1959/May/04
Mount Sabine	ER	on Mount Sabine	8.00	082J/04	1971/May/04
Moyie Lake	A	19km S of Cranbrook	90.50	082G/05	1959/Jul/07
Nancy Greene	A	35km E of Rossland	203.00	082F/04	1972/Jan/25
Norbury Lake	A	13km E of Cranbrook	0.00	082G/11	1958/Jul/15
Pilot Bay	A	8km E of Balfour by boat	347.00	082F/10	1964/Jul/21
Premier Lake	A	40km NE of Kimberley	662.00	082G/13	1940/Apr/26
Purcell Wilderness Conservancy (East)	A	East of Kootenay Lake	106290.60	082F&K	1974/Dec/04
Purcell Wilderness Conservancy (West)	A	East of Kootenay Lake	91825.00	082F&K	1974/Dec/04
Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Corridor	PA	E side of Purcell WC Park	1990.00	082K/01	1996/Feb/14
Ram Creek	ER	20km SE of Canal Flats	121.00	082J/04	1971/Jul/29
Rosebery	A	6km SE of Rosebery	32.00	082K/03	1959/Jul/27
Ryan	A	10km N of Yahk	58.00	082F/01	1959/Sep/03
St. Mary's Alpine	A	42km NW of Kimberley	9146.00	082F/16	1973/Apr/17
Stagleap	A	34km W of Creston	1133.00	082F/03	1964/Aug/17
Summit Lake	C	18km SE of Nakusp	6.00	082K/04	1964/Feb/04
Syringa	A	19km W of Castlegar	4416.90	082F/05	1968/Nov/19
Thunder Hill	A	69km N of Kimberley	44.00	082J/04	1960/Feb/05
Top of the World	A	64km E of Kimberley	8790.00	082G/14	1973/Apr/09
Valhalla	A	west shore of Slocan Lake	49800.00	082F/14	1983/Mar/03
Wardner	A	at Wardner	4.00	082G/06	1977/May/05
Wasa Lake	A	21km N of Fort Steele	144.00	082G/13	1955/Oct/04
West Arm	A	SW of Nelson	25318.60	082F/06	1995/Jul/12
Whiteswan Lake	A	10km E of Canal Flats	1994.00	082J/03	1978/Aug/02
Yahk	A	at Yahk	9.00	082F/01	1956/Mar/16
Total Area			581,453.74		
National Parks					
Glacier	NP	Selkirk Mtns/Rogers Pass	134900.00		1886/Oct/31
Mount Revelstoke	NP	NE of Revelstoke	25900.00		1914/Apr/15
Kootenay	NP	BC/Alberta Border - E. of Radium	140600.00		1920
Yoho	NP	BC/Alberta Border - E. of Golden	133000.00		1886/Oct/31
Total Area			434,400.00		
National Wildlife Areas					
Columbia - Harrogate	NWA	45 km north of Radium	171.60	82K16	1984
Columbia - Spillimacheen	NWA	40 km north of Radium	206.00	82K16	1983
Columbia - Brisco	NWA	30 km north of Radium	151.00	82K16	1983
Columbia - Wilmer	NWA	5 km south of Radium	472.00	82K9	Apr.27/1978
Total Area			1,000.60		
Provincial Wildlife Management Areas					
Creston Valley	WMA	10 Km w. of Creston	6,900.00		1968
Columbia Wetlands	WMA	Fairmont to Donald	26,000.00		1996/April
Columbia Lake (E.side)	WMA	E. Side-Columbia Lake	255.00		
Midge Creek	WMA		15,163.00	82FSE	1997/Dec/1
Hamling Lakes	WMA		30,572.00	82KSW	1997/Dec/1
Total Area			78,890.00		

Unofficial WMA	MELP	11 Areas - various loc.	2,830.00		1976-1998
COLUMBIA BASIN GRAND TOTAL			1,098,574.30		

While there are over 90 officially and 11 unofficially designated protected areas in the Columbia Basin, most of them are very small and are under intense pressure from recreational use or development pressure from adjacent land uses. Many of the protected areas in the province are in all probability too small to adequately protect a complete sample of the ecological diversity of the ecosystem they are supposed to represent. Also, many of these protected areas contain high proportions of high elevation terrain that has relatively lower biodiversity values (rock and ice).

Now that the Kootenay-Boundary (East & West) Land Use Plans have been completed, and the economy in B.C. is struggling, there is little appetite on the part of the government to set aside more protected areas. A few small special features or habitats may be identified in the PAS 2 process (Protected Areas Strategy - Phase 2), although these will likely not provide any significant improvement to the protective status of rare and threatened species. Only continued pressure from the concerned public, and better research and resource information on endangered species and habitats will lead to further protection. This may not be in the form of more protected areas, but could be partnerships with private landowners and industry to enter into cooperative management arrangements that meet common objectives.

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