

From: Government of British Columbia [<mailto:GCPE.News@gov.bc.ca>]
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Subject: Legislation establishes more parks and conservancies

NEWS RELEASE
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Ministry of Environment

Legislation establishes more parks and conservancies

VICTORIA - Nearly 276, 000 hectares was added to the BC Parks system through legislation introduced today, announced Environment Minister Terry Lake.

Bill 5 - the Protected Areas of British Columbia Amendment Act, 2013 adds new parks and conservancies and expands the Mount Maxwell ecological reserve, which is home to the rare Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem.

It entrenches in law protected area recommendations reached through multi-stakeholder and public land-use planning processes, as well as government-to-government agreements with First Nations, while at the same time supporting economic development.

"The B.C. government has been establishing parks and protected areas for more than a century," said Lake. "Through this legislation we are helping to protect our environment, including spawning habitat for sockeye salmon and a unique mineral source used by mountain caribou and other wildlife, which is the result of an extensive land-use planning process we have undertaken with First Nations, stakeholders and the public."

Central to the legislation is the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 process related to special natural, cultural and recreational features which results in the establishment of 17 new Class A parks and additions to five existing Class A parks in the region.

The establishment of the Ne'áh' and Hanna-Tintina conservancies in the northwest of the province also are hallmarks of the bill while private land acquisitions result in two new parks; Denman Island Park and Gerald Island Park.

Support for economic development projects, including a key BC Hydro upgrade that is expected to generate two thousand person years of employment over five years on Vancouver Island and a proposed corrections facility in the Interior is also facilitated by Bill 5.

B.C.'s total provincial protected areas system is 13,986,106 hectares - the third-largest in North America (after the Canadian and the U.S. national park systems) and the largest provincial/territorial parks

system in Canada.

Class A parks provide the highest level of protection of recreation and conservation values of all parks. Conservancies explicitly recognize the importance of the area to First Nations for social, ceremonial and cultural uses.

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Descriptions of the New and Expanded Class A Parks, Conservancies and Ecological Reserve (in alphabetical order)

Beaver Valley Park (767 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. The unique combination of a long growing season, a moist hot climate and the biologically rich stream/wetland/lake complex make the park highly productive in terms of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Species at risk found in the area include trumpeter swans, sandhill cranes, fishers, northern bitterns, wolverine, sharp-tailed grouse, and great blue heron. The park is located approximately 50 kilometres southeast of Quesnel.

Becher's Prairie Park (125 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. It contains undisturbed grasslands of the porcupine grass ecosystem. This ecosystem is not known to occur in British Columbia outside of the Cariboo Region and no other protected area in the Cariboo Region includes representation of this upland porcupine grass ecosystem. In the immediate vicinity of Rock Lake there is an area with associated waterfowl species and nesting habitat and a winter hibernation area for the Western terrestrial garter snake and common garter snake that will be protected. The park is located approximately 24 kilometres southwest of Williams Lake.

Big Basin Park (998 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. The important natural values of the park include wetlands, habitat for mule deer, California bighorn sheep and waterfowl, and a diversity of forest cover. The recreational values include a hiking trail and a horse trail leading from a break in the rim rock and meandering through to Churn Creek and opportunities for hiking fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing and horseback riding. The park is located approximately 98 kilometres west of 100 Mile House.

Boyle Park Addition (52 hectares): This park is located on Denman Island, off the east coast of Vancouver Island. This addition to Boyle Point Park is the result of a Crown land transfer and will protect forest that has never been logged. The forests contain some of Denman Island's oldest and largest Douglas-fir, hemlock and western red cedar trees. The addition also contains unique rock meadows and wetland areas. The wetlands supply critical amphibian breeding habitat in the dry forest for frogs, including the Pacific tree frog and salamanders. Several walking trails through the addition connect to existing trails in Boyle Point Park that receive considerable use by Denman Islanders and island visitors. The total area of Boyle Point Park will be 188 hectares.

Bridge Lake Park Addition (380 hectares): The addition to this park is as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. The park is located 43 kilometres southeast of 100 Mile House. The addition to the park is a large, undeveloped shoreline area of Crown land on Bridge Lake. The area had a small sawmill working in the early part of the century, but significant stands of large Douglas-fir and spruce still exist in the area. The presence of numerous bird species and several eagle nests, along with bears, fox, coyote, deer, mink, otter, and several very active beaver colonies have been reported. The area is very important for local recreation and is used as a day hiking site. Hiking, wildlife viewing and horseback riding occurs. Canoeing, swimming, boating and fishing are popular along the shoreline, which is quite open and has several small bays and inlets. The total area of the park will be 405 hectares.

Copper Johnny Park (656 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. It encompasses a diverse wetland complex, glacial features (eskers), pothole and alkali lakes and grasslands. A number of bird species abound in the wetland areas, along with moose, beavers, and deer. Forest cover is consistently fir and pine, with spruce located in wetland and low areas. The eskers provide excellent viewing opportunities into the wetland areas, which are rich in bird and mammal life. The park is located approximately 43 kilometres southwest of 100 Mile House.

Crater Lake Park (95 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. It protects a unique lake feature. The lake is steep sided and deep, surrounded by basalt formations and fed by a canyon/gorge and a series of small, visually attractive waterfalls. The lake has a resident population of rainbow trout and is reported to have freshwater clams. Recreation use is presently focused on wildlife viewing and scenic appreciation, fishing, picnicking, and hiking. The park is located approximately 35 kilometres southeast of 100 Mile House.

Dante's Inferno Park (376 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. It offers a number of unique recreational, ecological and scenic features. It contains a recreational lake with good early season fishing opportunities surrounded by a scenic setting of basalt cliffs. Dry old growth, Douglas-fir forests, cottonwood forests, marsh, shrub streamside vegetation, and bedrock are all features which can be found in the area. Several species of bats utilize the basalt cliffs in

the area, and pikas, flammulated owls and poorwills are in the area. A very large population of aquatic and other insects are an important feature of the area and their presence is likely attributable to the relatively warm lake and vigorous shoreline (riparian) vegetation. The park is located approximately 56 kilometres southwest of Williams Lake.

Denman Island Park (552 hectares): This new park, located on Denman Island, off the east coast of Vancouver Island, is being established as the result of private land acquisition and Crown land transfers. This park is found within the relatively rare Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone. It also includes the Chickadee watershed and areas important for a number of species at risk including the Taylor's Checkerspot butterfly.

Donnelly Lake Park (814 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. It protects a regionally significant wilderness walk-in fishery and camping in a wilderness setting. As well, it protects an entire small watershed, which is unique in the Cariboo. Rainbow trout are found in the lake. The slopes surrounding the lake are mature and old spruce, Douglas-fir and pine forests. The park is located approximately 45 hectares northeast from 100 Mile House.

Dragon Mountain Park (1,773 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. It protects the viewscape in this area along with mule deer winter range values. This park contains mostly immature and mature conifer forests, (Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine) with some deciduous forests and a small amount of old forest. The park is located approximately 14 kilometres south of Quesnel.

Eleven Sisters Park (3,052 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. The combination of high lake productivity, the wild rainbow trout and the wilderness setting of this large chain of lakes makes this area very unique in the Cariboo. The lakes in the area have a good recreational fishery and, as access is limited, it also provides for wilderness recreation experiences. The lakes provide good viewing opportunities for waterfowl. The park is located approximately 93 kilometres southwest of Williams Lake.

Flat Lake Park Addition (26 hectares): The addition to this park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. The addition to the park provides a valuable staging area to Flat Lakes Park through the development of a parking lot and boat launch. The park is located approximately 18 kilometres southwest of 100 Mile House. The total area of the park will be 4,275 hectares.

Fraser River Breaks Park (883 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. It contains areas of old growth Douglas-fir and open grasslands, both at their northern extent in British Columbia. The area is also classified as mule deer winter range. The park is at the northern extent of the range of the flammulated owl, a species at risk in British Columbia. BC has one of Canada's only populations of flammulated owls, and this area has one of the highest densities of

these owls in BC. The area is also habitat for the Townsend's big eared bat, another species at risk, which is also at its northern limits. The park is located approximately 12 kilometres north of Williams Lake.

Gerald Island Park (12 hectares): This new park, an island located near Nanoose Bay, is being established as the result of a private land acquisition. The park is a good example of the rocky coastal bluff ecosystem rarely found undisturbed in the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone in the southern Strait of Georgia. Northern and California sea-lions, bald eagles and various bird and marine species are found in the park. In addition, the island is accessed recreationally by small boats, especially kayaks and canoes.

Hanna-Tintina Conservancy (23,702 hectares): This new conservancy is being established as a result of the Nass South Resource Management Plan and Gitanyow Huwilp Recognition and Reconciliation Agreement. It protects the spawning habitat for the majority of the Nass River sockeye salmon. With timbered hillsides, alpine slopes, riparian and wetland ecosystems, the conservancy also protects important grizzly bear habitat. The conservancy also has many cultural heritage values important to the Gitanyow and Nisga'a Nations. The conservancy is located 128 kilometres northwest of Hazelton.

Inkaneep Park Addition (0.9 hectare): This addition to Inkaneep Park is being added to the park as a mitigation measure for the deletion of 0.24 of a hectare to provide for secondary road access to a planned correctional facility. The total area of the park will be 16 hectares.

Long Creek Park (254 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. It protects a unique mineral lick used by mountain caribou (a species at risk) and other wildlife. The lick is located in a low, wet, sub-alpine meadow at the confluence of a number of small streams. It is believed to be one of the few mineral licks used by mountain caribou in this area. The park is located approximately 96 kilometres northeast of Williams Lake.

Marble Range Park Addition (2,215 hectares): This addition to Marble Range Park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. Mount Bowman is considered a central feature of the Marble Range because of high scenic values and the area also has value due to its naturalness and significant wildlife habitat. The Lime Ridge area has high wildlife habitat values, particularly for California bighorn sheep. The area near Mad Dog Mountain provides for connectivity of habitats and protects scenic values along the western extent of the park. There are several hiking and horse trails that lead to or through these areas. The park is located approximately 55 kilometres southwest of 100 Mile House. The total area of the park will be 19,236 hectares.

Moose Valley Park Addition (161 hectares): This addition to Moose Valley Park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. The area being added to the existing Moose Valley Park incorporates an area of medicinal plants into the park. The park is located approximately 18 kilometres west of 100 Mile House. The total area of the park will be 2,500 hectares.

Mount Maxwell Ecological Reserve Addition (22 hectares): The addition to Mount Maxwell Ecological Reserve on Salt Spring Island was acquired through an agreement between BC Parks, The Nature Trust of British Columbia and a private vendor. It adds the last piece in the Burgoyne Bay/Mount Maxwell protected area complex. This complex is situated in one of the most threatened areas in BC, the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone. Along with the surrounding parks and ecological reserve, this addition protects the largest stand of Garry oak woodlands in Canada.

Ne'áh' Conservancy (233,304 hectares): This new conservancy is being established as a result of the Dease-Liard Sustainable Resource Management Plan and the Kaska Strategic Land Use Plan. It is nestled between the Cassiar Mountains and the Liard Plains in northern British Columbia. The conservancy is comprised of high value habitat for caribou, moose, Stone's sheep, mountain goat, bears and small furbearers. The area is, and has been, an important place to the Kaska Dena First Nations and has great cultural and spiritual value.

Patterson Lake Park (1,595 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. It is utilized for recreational purposes by local residents. The park contains Patterson Lake, a complex system of eskers, at least one species at risk, the Short-beaked Fen Sedge, and several recreational trails. It is located approximately 172 kilometres west of Williams Lake.

Punti Island Park (12 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. The island contains a variety of undisturbed grassland species and has remained largely ungrazed, owing to its location on a small island. The park is located approximately 120 kilometres west of Williams Lake.

Quesnel Lake Park (872 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. The values in this system of small, generally water access only areas, are very diverse. Some sites have valuable fish habitat, including shore spawning by sockeye and Kokanee salmon while others have creeks important for rearing and spawning. A number of the areas are thought to be important as early season foraging sites and late season access to salmon for grizzly bears. At least one area is used as an early winter area for caribou. The park includes a number of features that are representative of landscapes around Quesnel Lake. These include sandy beaches, anchorages, waterfalls, wetlands and rivers, creeks, large tree communities and wildlife viewing opportunities in all areas. Culturally, many of these areas may have received significant use by First Nations. The park is located approximately 110 kilometres southeast of Quesnel.

Rainbow/Qiwentem Park (385 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. It protects important water quality in the Bridge Creek watershed, pockets of old growth Douglas-fir, locally important recreation trails, possible archaeological values, and wildlife and lakeshore habitat. The park is located approximately 44 kilometres east of 100 Mile House.

Redbrush Park (1,165 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. Alkaline meadows, although present in other areas of the Chilcotin, are more abundant in this park. The area also includes some moose winter habitat values. The park is located approximately 148 kilometres west of Williams Lake.

Schoolhouse Lake Park Addition (544 hectares): The addition to the existing Schoolhouse Lake Park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. This addition to Schoolhouse Lake Park protects high value old Douglas-fir, spruce, and pine in a riparian area, a wilderness recreation fishery, and wildlife travel corridors. The park is located approximately 33 kilometres northeast of 100 Mile House. The total area of the park will be 5,106 hectares.

Titetown Park (1,070 hectares): This new park is being established as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) process. It protects immature and mature pine and aspen forests. Small wet depressions are inhabited by shrubby wetlands while the steep south aspects are dominated by grass and dry shrub communities. The area is traversed by, and provides access to, the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail. The area includes significant archaeological values related to aboriginal use. Large depressions locally referred to as Mackenzie's bowls are a significant feature. The park is located approximately 88 kilometres northwest of Quesnel.

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