



# Nháxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy

## 1. Introduction

We see that a draft plan was added to your website in June 2018. Is there any way that the Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia (“FMCBC”) could be added to an email distribution list to inform us when new draft plans are available for public comment?

## 2. Background

We recommend that a Background Section be added to the plan. You do have a historical note about Keith’s Hut being built in 1988. However a lot of history has been missed. This area was not really accessible for most people until the logging roads were built in the mid 1970s or early 80s. Joffre Creek was used more for mountaineering until Keith’s Hut was built. The paving of Highway 99 over the pass to Duffey Lake in about 1990 was the start of increased use for the area. Before the road was paved, only a few committed mountaineers and hikers used the area.

The conservancy was recommended for protection by the FMCBC during the Lillooet LRMP process during the late 1990s. The consensus report from the LRMP planning team recognized the area’s high recreational values and the importance of protecting timber to protect wilderness values.

## 3. Comments on Management Direction

### Section 3.1.3 Secure access to the Conservancy

We recommend that the existing parking lot along Highway 99 is the best location for winter access to the conservancy. The existing lot on the south side of the highway is safe from avalanches and simple for plowing.

Also the limited number of parking spots limits over-use of the area. Over-use has become a major issue with the adjacent Joffre Lakes Park.

We recommend that some pit-toilets be added adjacent to the parking area for sanitary reasons. The addition of security cameras to reduce break-ins would also be a welcome addition.

The winter ski access route and the summer hiking trail corridor with a buffer of approximately 50 m on either side of the trail should be added to the conservancy. It doesn't make sense to have two government agencies managing an area.

Perhaps the old logging road that runs to Duffey Lake could be removed from the Conservancy in exchange for the trail corridor along Cerise Creek.

#### **Section 3.1.4 Maintain backcountry recreation opportunities**

We agree that the carrying capacity of the area is important to determine. We recommend that an adequate management plan should not be approved until some consultation has occurred to discuss the carrying capacity.

We recommend that the carrying capacity for overnight users be approximately 30 people.

- 15 people in cabin or adjacent to cabin
- 5-10 dispersed tent platforms on the Anniversary Glacier moraine.

The parking lot is the best way to control the number of users. If a limit of about 30 cars was created, that might work well.

This recommendation has been discussed with our members and some comments were collected:

*About the parking lot: No bigger than it is already.*

*PAUL S: I don't think carrying capacity should be viewed as a fixed number. Carrying capacity depends on both objectives and infrastructure. The management plan does set out some objectives. Unfortunately, those objectives are too vague for anyone be able to say ex-ante what an appropriate carrying capacity would be. The objectives are also too vague for people ex-post to be able to easily agree whether the objectives are being met. Best practices in park management recognize that carrying capacity is nearly impossible to determine ex-ante, and that clear, concrete objectives are needed to ensure transparency and public support for management actions. As Manning (2001) says, "Research on carrying capacity suggests that it can be defined and managed through formulation of indicators and standards of quality. Indicators of quality are measurable, manageable variables that define the quality of visitor experiences and natural/cultural resources. Standards of quality define the minimum acceptable condition of indicator variables. Once indicators and standards of quality*

*have been formulated, indicator variables are monitored, and management action is undertaken to maintain standards of quality."*

<https://js.sagamorepub.com/jpra/article/view/1586>

*The draft management plan really needs some measurable indicators for deciding whether the objectives are being met.*

*Chris S: If you build it they will come, and come and keep coming! I think a discussion about environmental carrying capacity and the effect of crowding on users enjoyment needs to be part of discussion. Joffre Lakes provides a perfect example of how to ruin an area.*

Our members are not keen on reservation systems for backcountry users except in special places such as Garibaldi Lake and Taylor meadows. We see issues with people not showing up and the cost to enforce reservations in small campgrounds.

Much better is to have a strong presence of BC Park rangers to ensure that people are only camping at established campsites and not damaging meadows and vegetation.

We agree that the trail should be maintained at a Type III standard. Improving the trail to Joffre Lakes was one contributing factor that led to a vast increase in use.

We agree with the following statement but the tenure review should be done before the plan is approved.

- Complete tenure review process to determine whether or not any tenure amendments are required to meet the management intent of the conservancy.

Our members don't think that heli-hiking and heli-skiing are compatible with the large number of non-motorized users in the area.