

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

- Most visitors reach the park via the Haines Road, traveling either north from Haines, Alaska or south from Haines Junction, Yukon
- River rafters using the Tatshenshini River launch at Shāwshe / Dalton Post in Yukon; those descending the Alsek River launch their craft in Yukon near Haines Junction; take-outs are at Lowell Lake, Turnback Canyon and at Dry Bay (Alaska) for rafters on the Alsek; take-outs for those on the Tatshenshini are at Dry Bay (Alaska)
- Most day-use river rafters put in on the Blanchard in Yukon and some day-use river rafters put in at Bear Flats / Stanley Flats (near the mouth of the Parton River) and descend the Tatshenshini River to Shāwshe / Dalton Post, Yukon
- Some old mining exploration roads provide limited access to the park from the Haines Road and from Shāwshe / Dalton Post to Squaw Creek
- Fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters provide access to specific sites for river rafters, hunters, skiers, climbers, horseback guides, DFO staff, researchers and park management personnel
- Helicopters shuttle river rafters around Turnback Canyon or shuttle visitors from the top of Turnback Canyon to the Haines Road or Haines Junction, Yukon
- Some kayaking and canoeing on rivers within the park
- Some jet boating on rivers within the park
- Some hiking and mountain biking west of the Haines Road during the summer
- Snowmobiling, backcountry skiing and dog sledding west of the Haines Road during the winter

Existing Tenures

- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations claim aboriginal rights, title and interest to the entire park; First Nations rights and interests are recognized in the Park Management Agreement
- 29 active Park Use Permits (PUPs) and 1 *Land Act* tenure; these include: 1 big game outfitter/ guiding permit that covers the entire park area and includes two satellite cabins and a few cache sites within the park; 1 commercial trapline which includes base and satellite cabins located within the park (a small portion of a second trapline lies in the southeast corner of the park – not officially registered as belonging to the Tatshenshini-Alsek area); 1 commercial telecommunications permit (covers two repeater sites); 1 gravel and sand permit (covers two sites); 15 river rafting guiding permits; 3 fixed-wing air charter permits; 5 rotary-wing air charter permits; 1 guided horse trip permit; 1 salmon research permit
- 171 mineral claims existed in the park in 1994; since 1995 the British Columbia government has been compensating mining companies and individuals for the expropriation of mineral properties; to date some of the mining parties have been compensated and the lands and resources have reverted to the Crown

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- Hunting, fishing, trapping, outfitting, guiding
- River rafting, kayaking, canoeing, jet boating
- Hiking, cycling, camping
- Snowmobiling, backcountry skiing, dog sledding
- Horse grazing (commercial outfitter/guide)
- First Nations trails and campsites
- Abandoned mining roads
- Commercial guide/outfitter cabins and caches
- Primitive campsites along the Tatshenshini and Alsek Rivers used by river rafters
- Sand and gravel pits near Haines Road
- Highway maintenance yard on Haines Road
- Three aircraft landing strips: Mile 75 (emergency), Windy Craggy (abandoned) and Shini (abandoned)
- Oil pipeline (abandoned) right-of-way
- Two telecommunications relay sites
- One trespass cabin site

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve (Alaska), Kluane National Park and Reserve (Yukon), the Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary (Yukon) abut the park
- Tongass National Forest (Alaska) and the Chilkat Eagle Preserve (Alaska) lies within a short distance of the park
- Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve (Alaska), Wrangell – St. Elias National Park and Preserve (Alaska) and Kluane National Park and Reserve (Yukon), along with Tatshenshini-Alsek Park, have all been designated UN World Heritage Sites
- Provincial Crown land lies to the east of the park for the full length of the Haines Road; gravel pits, an untenured cabin, an outfitter's base camp, undeveloped campsites and segments of an abandoned oil pipeline right-of-way extend along the Haines Road corridor; CAFN claim to this land remains unresolved
- Yukon Highways camp at Blanchard (Yukon)
- Some horse grazing on east side of the Haines Road
- Federal Crown land in adjacent Yukon
- CAFN Settlement Land in adjacent Yukon

First Nations Interests

- Traditional homeland of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, descendants of interior Tutchone and coastal Tlingit peoples
- Close historic and contemporary relations with First Nations families in Alaska
- CAFN are currently engaged in negotiating a land claim settlement for their traditional territory in northwest BC, including the entire park area
- First Nations heritage represented by network of inter-and-intra regional trails; old village sites (e.g., Nùghàyík); campsites; cabins and caches; trail markers; petroglyphs

- Fishing for salmon from the Tatshenshini, and its tributaries, remains culturally important to Champagne and Aishihik First Nations
- Hunting for food remains an important CAFN subsistence activity
- Plants harvested for food and medicinal purposes (e.g., devil's club)
- First Nations history, cultural heritage sites and place names being researched; interest in using this information and these places to strengthen the First Nations ties to the park

Other Agency Interests

- The federal government's Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) manage the anadromous fishery; the Department operates a counting weir on Klukshu River and Village Creek, tributaries of the Tatshenshini River near Shāwshe / Dalton Post, Yukon
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game fly annual surveys of index salmon spawning areas
- The Wildlife Branch of the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, has an interest in wildlife and waterfowl management within the park; also responsible for setting outfitter harvesting quotas and monitoring the commercial trapping operation, jointly with BC Parks
- Forestry Canada has been monitoring and mapping spruce beetle infestation in the park and adjacent forests
- Northwest Tel operates two repeater stations within the park
- Environment Canada, DIAND and BC Ministry of Environment continue to monitor contaminants at Rainy Hollow
- Government of Yukon's Community and Transportation Services Department maintains the Haines Road, under contract with the Government of British Columbia
- CAFN and Government of British Columbia cooperate on wildlife management under a recently signed *Northern Summit Agreement*; signatories to this *Agreement* include the Carcross Tagish First Nations, Teslin Tlingit Council, Taku River Tlingit First Nation, Tahltan Joint Councils, Kaska Dena Council, and the Tsay Keh Dene; the *Agreement* established a Joint Wildlife Policy Committee and a Technical Working Group to advise and recommend action on the conservation and sustainability of wildlife resources; major issues include assessing current harvesting rates and coordinating data gathering and analysis to include local and aboriginal knowledge
- Canada Customs border crossing at Rainy Hollow
- Yukon Heritage Branch (Yukon Tourism) presents and provides highway interpretation strategies and signage for all territorial roads, including the Haines Road

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; fishers, hunters, gatherers, heritage preservationists, wilderness guides
- Local and regional residents
- Environmentalists and conservationists
- Guide-outfitter
- Commercial trappers
- Commercial river rafting operators
- Private river rafters
- Commercial airplane and helicopter operators

- Private kayakers and canoeists
- Licensed fishers; anglers and fly-fishers
- Licensed hunters
- Snowmobilers
- Backcountry skiers
- Hikers, climbers
- Mountain bikers
- Naturalists
- Parks personnel
- Llama owners
- Dog sled owners

Role of Tatshenshini-Alsek Park

Tatshenshini-Alsek park is a flagship park in British Columbia's protected area system with the primary role of protecting internationally significant conservation, cultural heritage and recreation values. Tatshenshini-Alsek Park is a key component of the world's largest contiguous protected area and largest World Heritage Site.

Tatshenshini-Alsek Park is one of 13 parks co-managed by BC parks and First Nations.

Tatshenshini-Alsek Park encompasses part of the traditional territory of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. Cultural heritage features are significant but not well known and include old village sites, caches, campsites, petroglyphs, trails and campsites.

The park protects all of the Icefield Ranges Ecosystem, and most of the Tatshenshini and Alsek Ecoregions, and alpine tundra, spruce willow birch, boreal white and black spruce and minor components of coastal western hemlock and mountain hemlock biogeoclimactic zones.

The park contains outstanding wilderness qualities, outstanding natural features, and one of British Columbia's most dynamic geomorphic environments. Key features are outlined in the section on "Protected Area Attributes" above.

The park is the second largest park in BC and one of a few parks in the province that encompass entire ecosystems and predator-prey systems. Key species include grizzly bears, black bears, rare glacier bears, Dall sheep, mountain goat, moose, gray wolf, wolverines, golden eagles, and numerous other species. Two other such park systems, Spatsizi-Edziza-Stikine and Tweedsmuir-Kitlope, are also in the Skeena Parks District.

Tatshenshini-Alsek Park provides outstanding wilderness recreation opportunities including nature appreciation, scenic vistas, two of the world's finest river rafting experiences, guided hunting, resident hunting, angling, hiking, outfitting, cycling, wildlife viewing and potential for cultural tourism.

Management Commitments and Issues

Direction from Previous Planning

- Under the 1996 *Tatshenshini-Elsek Park Management Agreement* (Appendix I), the Province of British Columbia and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations agreed to prepare a management plan for the Tatshenshini-Elsek Park based on a number of preservation and conservation principles. Under the agreement the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations have sole authority over the use of aboriginal languages, provision of aboriginal place names, former Champagne and Aishihik community sites and heritage routes, and interpretation and depiction of aboriginal history and traditional use.
- In August 1993, the Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks directed that until a master plan (management plan) was completed the status quo for tenures and use levels would be maintained.
- In January 1994, the Deputy Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks confirmed that no new facilities or activities would be permitted pending the development of a master plan and that ATV use was prohibited in the park.
- Between 1994 and 1996, BC Parks prepared Annual Management Plans (AMPs) for Tatshenshini-Elsek Park; these were primarily operational in scope.
- Since the signing of the *Tatshenshini-Elsek Park Management Agreement*, the Tatshenshini-Elsek Park Board has been reviewing Annual Management Plans (AMPs) for Tatshenshini-Elsek Park and providing short-term planning direction to BC Parks personnel who remain operational managers of the park.
- Since the late 1970s, Glacier Bay National Park and Kluane National Park and Reserve personnel have provided operational management of river rafting expeditions down the Tatshenshini and Elsek Rivers with take outs at Dry Bay, Alaska. In the absence of a park management plan, BC Parks, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Kluane National Park and Reserve and Government of Yukon officials have cooperated with Glacier Bay National Park personnel in scheduling and permitting commercial river rafters on an annual basis. The *Glacier Bay River Management Plan* has been informally endorsed by the Government of Yukon, Kluane National Park and Reserve, CAFN and BC Parks.
- In 1996, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, shortly after the signing of the *Tatshenshini-Elsek Park Management Agreement*, hosted a two-day workshop for CAFN members at Haines Junction where participants engaged in the task of setting a vision for the future use and development of the park, identifying park management issues and identifying strategies for addressing current and long-range management issues; outcomes from this workshop revealed a strong desire by First Nations to protect the natural and cultural resources of the park.
- In 1998 the *Elsek Moose Management Plan* was developed by personnel representing the Elsek Renewable Resource Council, CAFN, Government of Yukon, Kluane National Park

and Reserve, Kluane National Park Management Board, BC Parks and BC Environment. The plan presents traditional knowledge, current moose research findings, community concerns and outlines an action plan. The plan reflects current moose management strategies and outlines community concerns. This three-year action plan assigns tasks to the various partners of the plan. It now serves as the guiding document for managing moose in the Alsek area.

- A few background studies on the wilderness recreation values of the park have been completed. These include:

Askey, E. and P. Williams. 1992. *Tatshenshini-Alsek River Use Study*. Simon Fraser University: Burnaby, BC.

Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. 1998. *Tatshenshini-Alsek Park Background Study – Draft*. Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. Whitehorse, Yukon.

Commission on Resources and Environment. 1993. *Interim Report on Tatshenshini/Alsek Land Use, British Columbia. Volume One-Report and Recommendations*. Government of British Columbia. Victoria, BC.

Peepre, J.S. and Associates. 1992. *Tatshenshini-Alsek Region Wilderness Study*. Tatshenshini-Alsek Region Wilderness Study Steering Committee. Vancouver, BC.

Peepre, J.S. and Associates. 1986. *Tatshenshini-Alsek Rivers Recreation Corridor Assessment*. Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division, Ministry of Environment and Parks, BC, and Northern Land Use Planning Directorate, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Management Issues

The following management issues require attention:

Theme	Issue
Land and Water Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impact to the park's wild character and ecosystems because of human use and access
Environment and Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on humans, fish, wildlife and ecosystems caused by abandoned mining, transportation and industrial site contamination Introduction of exotic species
Fish and Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited inventories of fish and wildlife populations and habitats, particularly in areas frequented by visitors Threat to grizzly bears, black bears, rare glacier bears and other wildlife because of increased presence of humans visiting the park Potential impacts on wildlife and fish populations caused by human activities and environmental factors
Access and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on park values caused by the use of old roads, trails, gravel pits, abandoned airstrips and trespass cabins
Tenures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential threat to park values because of the unresolved compensation of mineral claims in the park
Safety and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential threat to public safety over the discharge of firearms in the park e.g. firearms carried by rafters and hunters Threat to public safety because of inconsistent firearms regulations across jurisdictions by river rafting parties Potential impact on public health from contaminated sites, including the old pipeline corridor and former mining sites Presence of giardia
Recreation and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflicting outdoor recreation uses e.g. motorized and non motorized uses Reduced quality of wilderness river rafting experience due to low flying rotary- and fixed-winged aircraft, jet boating, and overlapping traveling and camping along the Tatshenshini and Alsek Rivers Reduced quality of recreation experience caused by a lack of information about the park Clearing of international boundary diminishes wilderness experience(and destroys vegetation unnecessarily)
Watershed Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impact of water management decisions made in jurisdictions adjacent to the park
Cultural Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural sites not well documented, inadequate inventories Traditional trails critical to understanding cultural sites in park, need to be mapped Dynamic tectonic, geomorphic, fluvial and glacial activities threaten cultural sites Cultural sites (world class, unique) on glaciers and alpine ice patches melting out with warmer summers; this is a new management challenge for BC Parks and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation; ice patches not yet documented in park, but anticipated with their recognition in adjacent jurisdictions CAFN's role in management of cultural resources e.g. field work at the KDS site is urgently needed
Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop framework for CAFN human history interpretive program