



RELEASED BY: Minister's Office
Ministry of Environment
and Parks

January 29, 1987

387-5202

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PARK CHANGES ANNOUNCED

Further implementation of the report and recommendations of the Wilderness Advisory Committee was announced today by Environment and Parks Minister Stephen Rogers.

"This initiative will result in a resolution to park boundary and resource commitment issues for six provincial parks dealt with by the Committee," Rogers said.

At the same time, a boundary adjustment will be made to Garibaldi Provincial Park which will greatly enhance winter recreation opportunities in the Whistler Mountain area."

The changes are as follows:

* A total of 1,100,000 hectares of land in Tweedsmuir and Strathcona Parks will be upgraded from Class B to Class A. This will mean that those lands are removed from any future mineral or forest development.

* Another 24,000 hectares in Kokanee Glacier Park are intended for Class A status but will be the subject of a two-year mineral evaluation study by the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources before a final decision is made by government.

* Existing mineral claims in Strathcona, Tweedsmuir and Kokanee Glacier will become Recreation Areas and the freeze on exploration -- within those lands only -- will be lifted. In addition, at Kwadacha and Tweedsmuir, areas of known high mineral potential will be designated as Recreation Area to permit exploration.

* 111,300 hectares of land will be added to Strathcona, Tweedsmuir, Kokanee Glacier, Manning, and Wells Gray Parks as Recreation Areas, and 50,200 hectares of land of low park values will be deleted from the park system.

* The new additions include the Cascade Wilderness addition to Manning Park, the Trophy Mountain and Flourmills volcanoes in Wells Gray, and the Rainbow Range in Tweedsmuir. In Strathcona, essential lands around the access to the park and on Buttle Lake, will be added.

* 615 hectares of land adjacent to Whistler Mountain will be transferred from Garibaldi Provincial Park to the Ministry of Forests and Lands. This land will then be made available to Blackcombe (165 hectares) and Whistler Mountain Ski Corporation for lift development.

"The new lifts will greatly enhance the intermediate and advanced alpine and sub-alpine skiing opportunities at Whistler," explained the Minister. "It will also extend Whistler's skiing season and allow the Corporation to properly ensure the safety of users who have in the past skied the Burnt Stew Basin area without benefit of ski and avalanche patrols."

Rogers pointed out that the boundaries and tenure management resulting from the announced changes will be similar to those advocated by the Wilderness Advisory Committee.

"Based on the submissions made to the Committee, the government appreciates that there will continue to be public concern over the issue of mineral tenures in parks," the Minister said.

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It is only with great reluctance that the government is making some of the tenure management changes announced today. However, in some cases, the only alternative to permitting controlled exploration would be to pay unacceptably high compensation fees to the owners of existing tenures whose rights have been clearly established by rulings of the Supreme Court of Canada.

"I invite all concerned members of the public to participate in a public process to prepare master plans for Strathcona, Kokanee and Tweedsmuir Parks. That would will identify the role, zoning and management objectives of the newly defined parks," the Minister said.

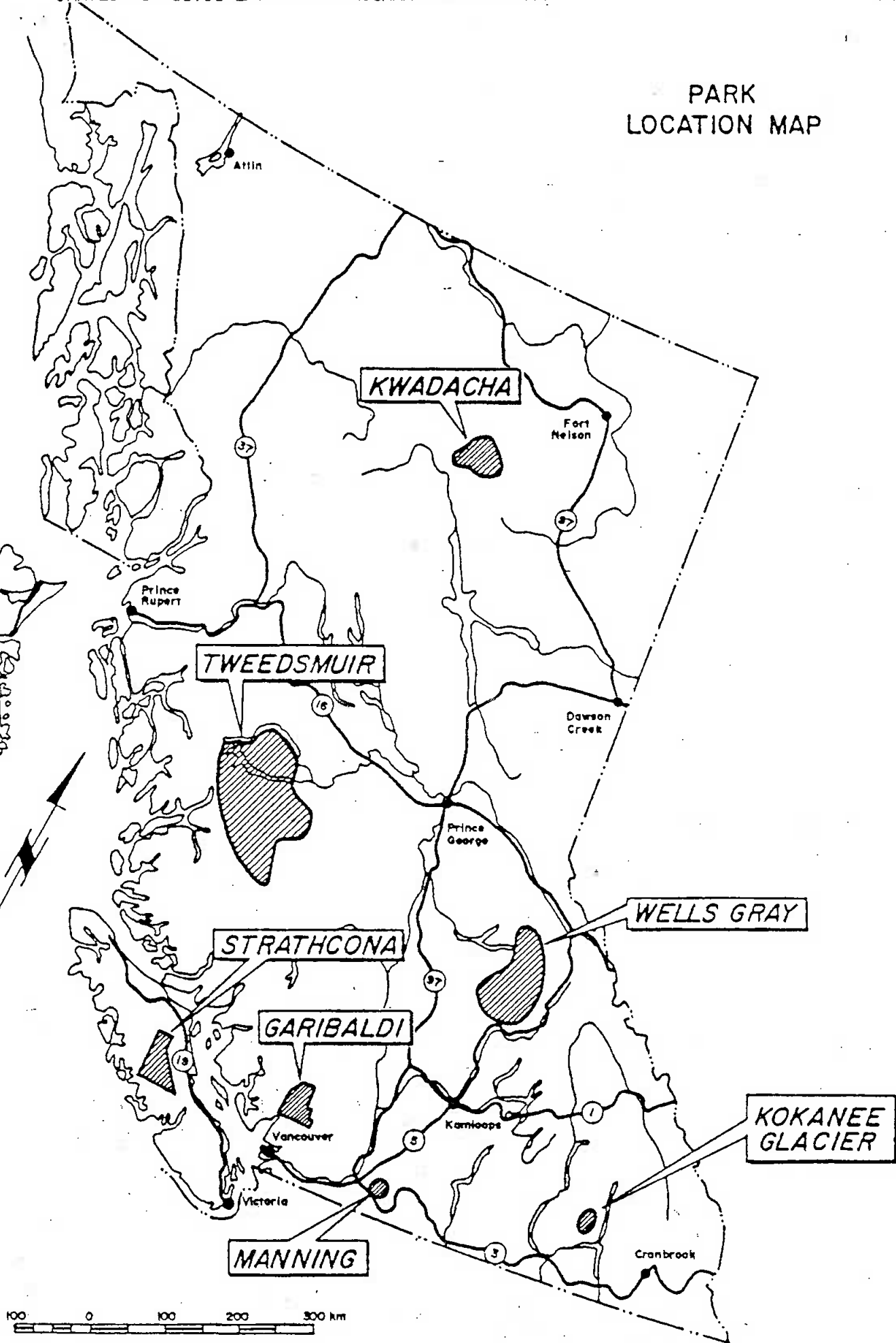
A master plan for Wells Gray was completed in 1986, following public review. Master plans for Manning and Kwadacha Parks will commence in the future.

In exchange for lands removed from Strathcona Park, negotiations with private forest companies will begin immediately to arrange the addition of new park opportunities in Strathcona, Desolation Sound, Princess Louisa and McMillan Parks, as well as for new parks in the Gulf Islands.

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For further information, please contact: Vince Collins, Assistant Deputy Minister, Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Ministry of Environment and Parks, Victoria, 387-9997.

PARK LOCATION MAP



BACKGROUND

B.C. PARKS SYSTEM -- HISTORY

The first provincial park in British Columbia was established in 1911. Strathcona Park and the next few early parks were large attractive areas set aside in a natural state on the expectation of attracting large numbers of wealthy tourists. By 1930 there were thirteen provincial parks covering over seven hundred thousand hectares. However, the anticipated tourist boom never developed as the parks were remote and access too difficult.

A second phase in the history of the park system began in the 1930s during the depression. There were almost three million hectares of new parks set aside between 1938 and 1944, to be managed under the multiple use concept. Resource extraction, logging and mining, became as important as tourism and recreation. Many of these massive new parks commemorated special events or the service of particular people (eg. Tweedsmuir, Wells Gray, Manning, Hamber). By the end of World War II, the provincial park system consisted of 58 parks encompassing 4.5 million hectares.

In the post war years, the park system saw very rapid expansion. The population grew rapidly, people had more money and free time, and interest grew in both automobile travel on the province's expanding highway system and in outdoor recreation. In response to a new enthusiasm for camping and outdoor recreation, the provincial park system underwent an unprecedented expansion, from 58 parks in 1948 to 244 parks in 1970. During that period, parks were often established very quickly in response to perceived needs but without an overall plan in place. Many of these new parks were relatively small in size and established as roadside stops for camping holidayers, or to serve community park needs. At the same time, however, some outstanding park areas were identified and set aside including a few additional wilderness areas, new marine parks, and historic parks.

Ironically, during this time of rapid expansion and new developments, the total area of the park system actually decreased. A re-assessment of some of the huge wilderness parks set aside in the thirties and forties led to the deletion of about one and a half million hectares from Hamber and Tweedsmuir Parks.

Since 1970, expansion of the system has slowed with emphasis on filling out the system and adding parks to newly accessible corners of the province. By 1986, there were 367 provincial park areas totalling 4,644,769 hectares or approximately 4.8% of the area of British Columbia.

BACKGROUND

B.C. PARKS -- NEW PARK BOUNDARIES AND LAND DESIGNATIONS

PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

British Columbia's Park Act calls for the designation of Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas. Conserved areas include both large wilderness landscapes and small intensive recreation sites. Parks and Recreation Areas conserve and present for public enjoyment those lands which are representative of British Columbia's outstanding natural environment.

In Class A Parks, no resource extraction may occur except that which is essential to protecting the natural values which the park protects. In Recreation Areas, certain mining and logging operations may occur where legal resource commitments exist and where, prior to a final decision on Class A status, there has been insufficient opportunity to evaluate the resource potential of the area.

NEW BOUNDARIES AND DESIGNATIONS

The decision announced by the provincial government today will deal with almost all existing resource commitments in provincial parks. No new mineral claims will be issued in provincial parks.

The boundaries of these parks were drawn hastily many years ago when there was limited information about the parks and associated natural values. Consequently, the present boundaries include some areas of low park value while excluding areas which are now known to have high park or wilderness characteristics. Past resource management in these parks has resulted in a limited number of conflicting land and resource commitments. Mineral tenures have been a particular problem.

The background and specific changes to individual parks are summarized in the following pages.

1. STRATHCONA PARK

Background

Stathcona Park was established in 1911. It has long been acknowledged to have both significant wilderness values and commercial resources. Today it includes 396 mineral claims and 21 forest tenures and the straight line boundaries of the park often bear no relationship to the natural features which the park protects.

The owners of the existing tenures have been pressing for resolution of the situation and work toward the park master plan has clearly identified the land required for park purposes.

Changes

- 1) Removing land from park status in Bedwell River, and areas on the west and east boundary (see map).
- 2) Re-classifying to Recreation Area status mineral claims in the Cream Lake area.
- 3) Adding lands to the park as noted on the attached map.
- 4) Re-classifying the remaining 198,400 hectares of park to class A status.

2. KOKANEE GLACIER PARK

Background

Kokanee Glacier Park was established in 1922 and has both significant wilderness values and good potential for discovery of commercial mineral deposits. Today it includes 45 mineral claims. The park and surrounding area has a long history of mining and mineral exploration.

Mining companies are pressing for resolution of existing tenures and for exploration in the rest of the park. Work toward a park master plan has clearly identified the land required for park purposes.

Changes

- 1) Removing lands from the park and adding other land as Recreation Area (see map).
- 2) Re-classifying the existing mineral claims to Recreation Area.
- 3) Approving the principle of re-classifying the remaining park lands to Class A. Prior to reclassification, a two-year mineral potential study will be undertaken by the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources to identify those mineral resource values situated in the rest of the park. Following that study, the area will either become Class A park or will be classified as Recreation Area to permit further mineral exploration.

3. WELLS GRAY PARK

Background

Wells Gray Park contains 530,000 hectares and occupies most of the Clearwater River watershed. The boundaries of this large wilderness are largely established on natural watersheds and the area includes most, but not all of the special natural features representative of this landscape.

The recently completed master plan concluded that a limited number of areas warranted further consideration for possible addition to the park. It also concluded that the Pendleton Lakes area warranted withdrawal from park status as having low park values and potential for forest and mineral resources.

Changes

Amendments will be made to the park by adding 14,000 hectares of land at McAndrew Lake, Flourmills volcanoes, Clearwater River corridor and Trophy Mountain. Further, there will be a deletion of 12,000 hectares in the Pendleton Lakes area.

4. CASCADES/MANNING STUDY AREA

Background

The 41,000 hectares area adjacent to the northwestern boundary of Manning Park is an area of important heritage, recreational and wilderness values. It has been the subject of study over a number of years by both the public and the government.

It is a mountainous region containing the drainages of Snass, Skaist, Sowaqua, Podunk, and Holding Creeks and the Upper Tulameen. The number of heritage trails in the Cascade Wilderness indicates its important past in connecting the southern interior to the Fraser Valley.

Changes

The Manning Park boundaries will be amended by adding 17,000 hectares of the Cascade Study Area as a Recreation Area, with a compensatory withdrawal of 5,500 hectares from the existing park.

5. TWEEDSMUIR PARK

Background

Tweedsmuir Park consists of nearly one million hectares and is the largest Provincial Park in British Columbia. It was established in the 1930s and focused primarily on the 300 km Ootsa-Eutsuk Lakes Circuit. The Alcan-Kemano Project in the 1950s resulted in Whitesail and Ootsa Lakes being converted to large reservoirs, significantly reducing this area's park value.

Two areas of mineral claims have existed within the park and continue to be of interest to the mining community as well as an area (Lindquist Lake) where the claims have lapsed.

Planning studies have recognized the value of adding certain highly scenic and unique geological features to the park and the need to increase the level of resource protection, particularly for the parks' extensive wildlife resources, by park classification adjustments. A park master plan is in preparation and will deal with the details of zoning and questions of recreation and natural resource management.

Changes

Amendments will be made in Tweedsmuir Park by:

- 1) Adding land to the park as Recreation Area in the Rainbow Mountain range.
- 2) Re-classifying existing mineral claims and land along the northern park boundary to Recreation Area.
- 3) Re-classifying the remaining 900,000 hectares to Class A Park status.

6. KWADACHA WILDERNESS PARK

Background

Kwadacha Wilderness Park contains 167,000 hectares of rugged northern Rocky Mountain terrain broadly representative of the Muskwa Ranges landscape. It was established in 1973 without detailed assessment of natural, recreation and resource values.

A draft master plan for the park concluded that the southwest portion of the park may benefit the province more through uses other than recreation and conservation and that no significant loss to park value would result from a boundary revision in this area. It also recognized that the upper Tuchodi River area was of limited value to the park.

A review following the report of the Wilderness Advisory Committee and the park master plan determined that the Tuchodi River area is an isolated area cut off from the rest of the park, and that its deletion would have no adverse impact on park values. However, the southwest portion of the park contains significant conservation values (wildlife) as well as significant mineralization and would best be managed as a Recreation Area rather than by removal from the park system. This would permit investigation of the areas mineral potential while allowing optimum protection of conservation values and the eventual return of the area to Class A Park status. The two additions suggested by the Wilderness Advisory Committee have been reviewed and have been found to be of low value to the park system. The remainder of the park will remain as wilderness with a Class A designation.

Changes

Amendments will be made to Kwadacha Wilderness Park (see map) by re-classifying the southwest portion of the park to Recreation Area and by deleting the Tuchodi River area in the northwest corner.

7. GARBALDI PARK

Background

Garibaldi is a Class A Park containing 194,939 hectares. Both Whistler Mountain Ski Corporation and Blackcombe Skiing Enterprises approached the Ministry of Environment and Parks with a request to expand their skiing facilities into Garibaldi Provincial Park. In both instances, the land would be added to the existing leases with the province for the purpose of providing better and more exciting skiing opportunities. Over the years, a total of 1,916 hectares has been removed from the park, largely to accommodate the skiing industry.

Whistler townsite and surrounding tourist facilities are internationally known and patronized for winter alpine skiing excellence. The two companies currently operating in the area, Whistler Mountain Ski Corporation and Blackcombe Skiing Enterprises, have plans to build new facilities to add a greater diversity to their ski areas and attract more customers. The only land onto which both can logically expand is contained within the boundaries of Garibaldi Park.

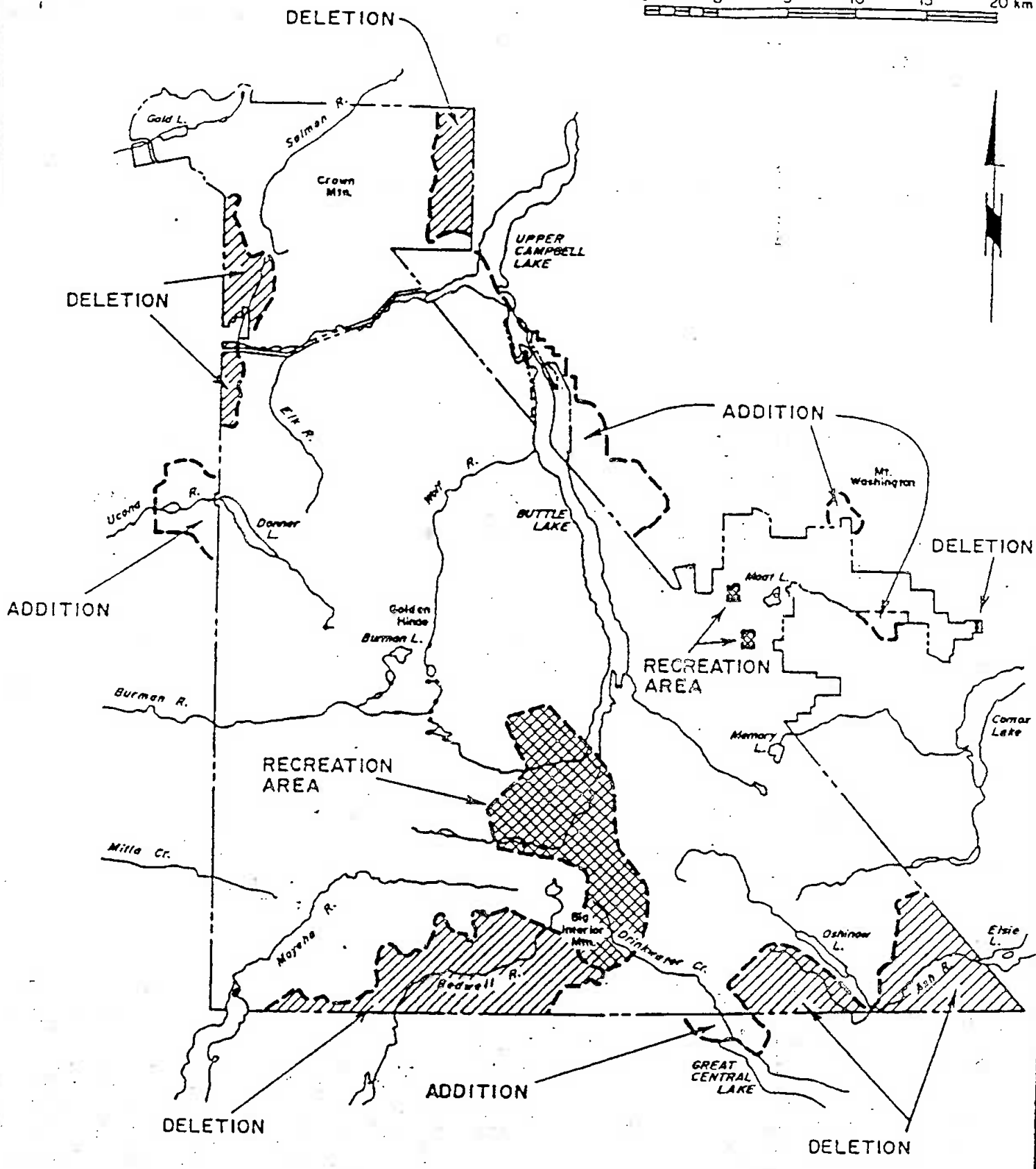
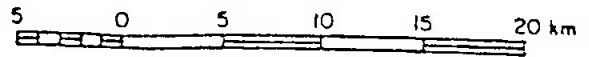
Changes

Amendments to Garibaldi Park will be made by deleting 615 hectares and:

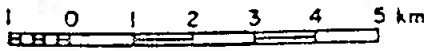
- 1) Adding 450 hectares to the Whistler Mountain Ski Corporation ski area lease.
- 2) Adding 165 hectares to the Blackcombe Skiing Enterprises ski area lease.

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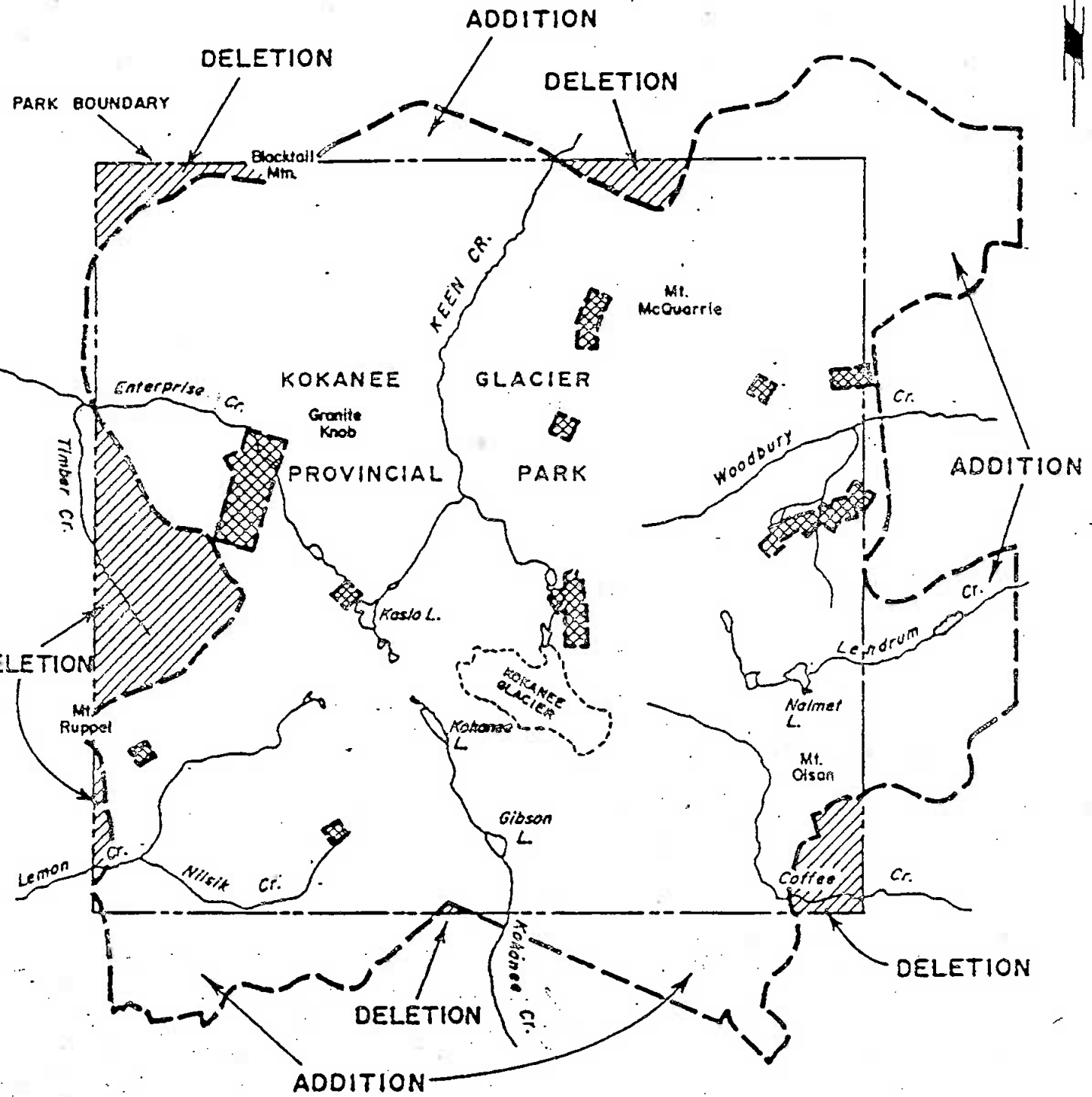
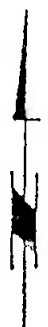
CONTACT: Vince Collins, Assistant Deputy Minister,
Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Ministry of Environment and Parks,
Victoria, 387-9997.



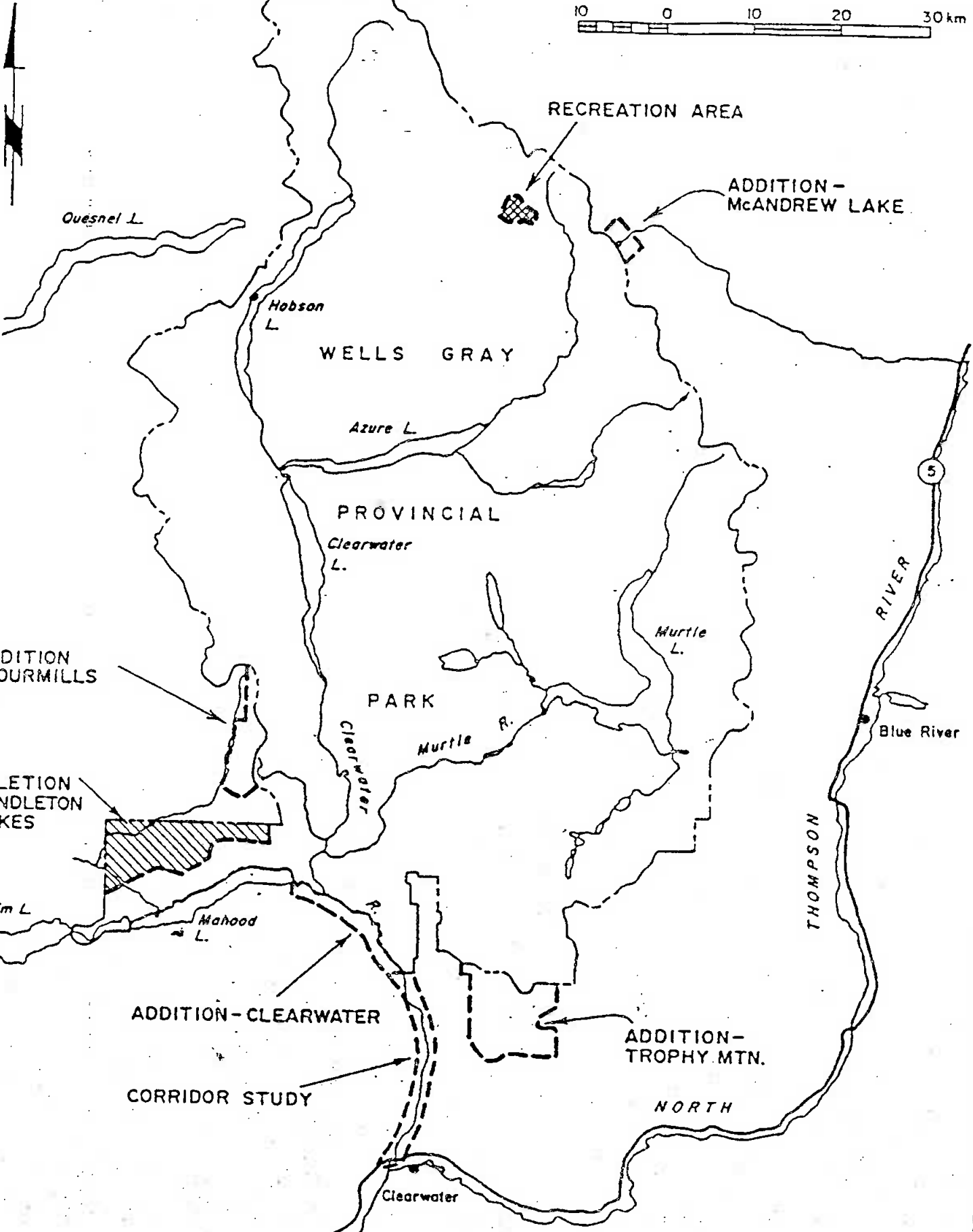
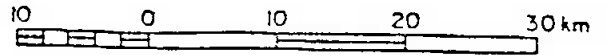
STRATHCONA PARK STUDY AREA



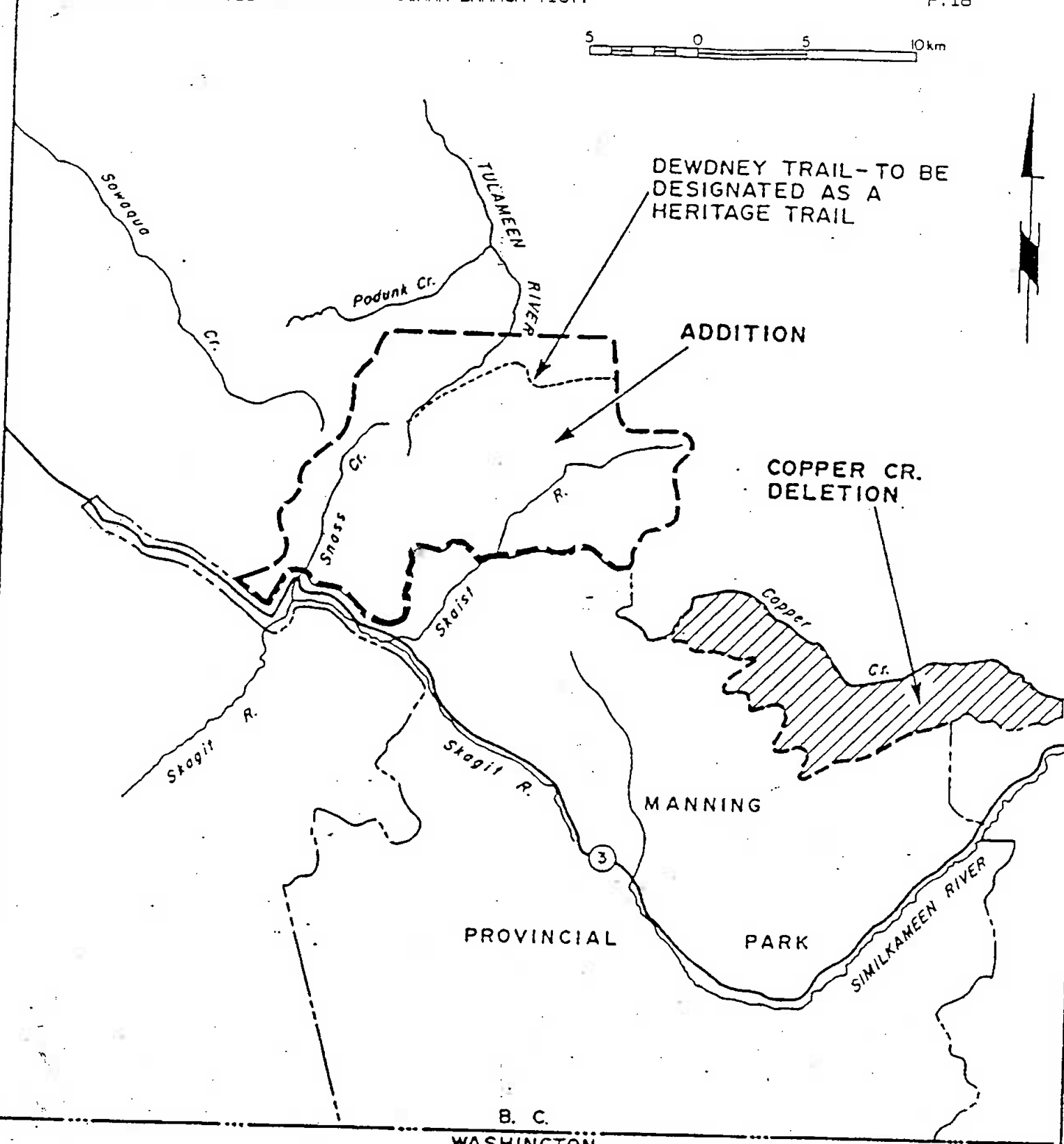
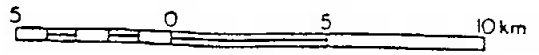
RECREATION AREA



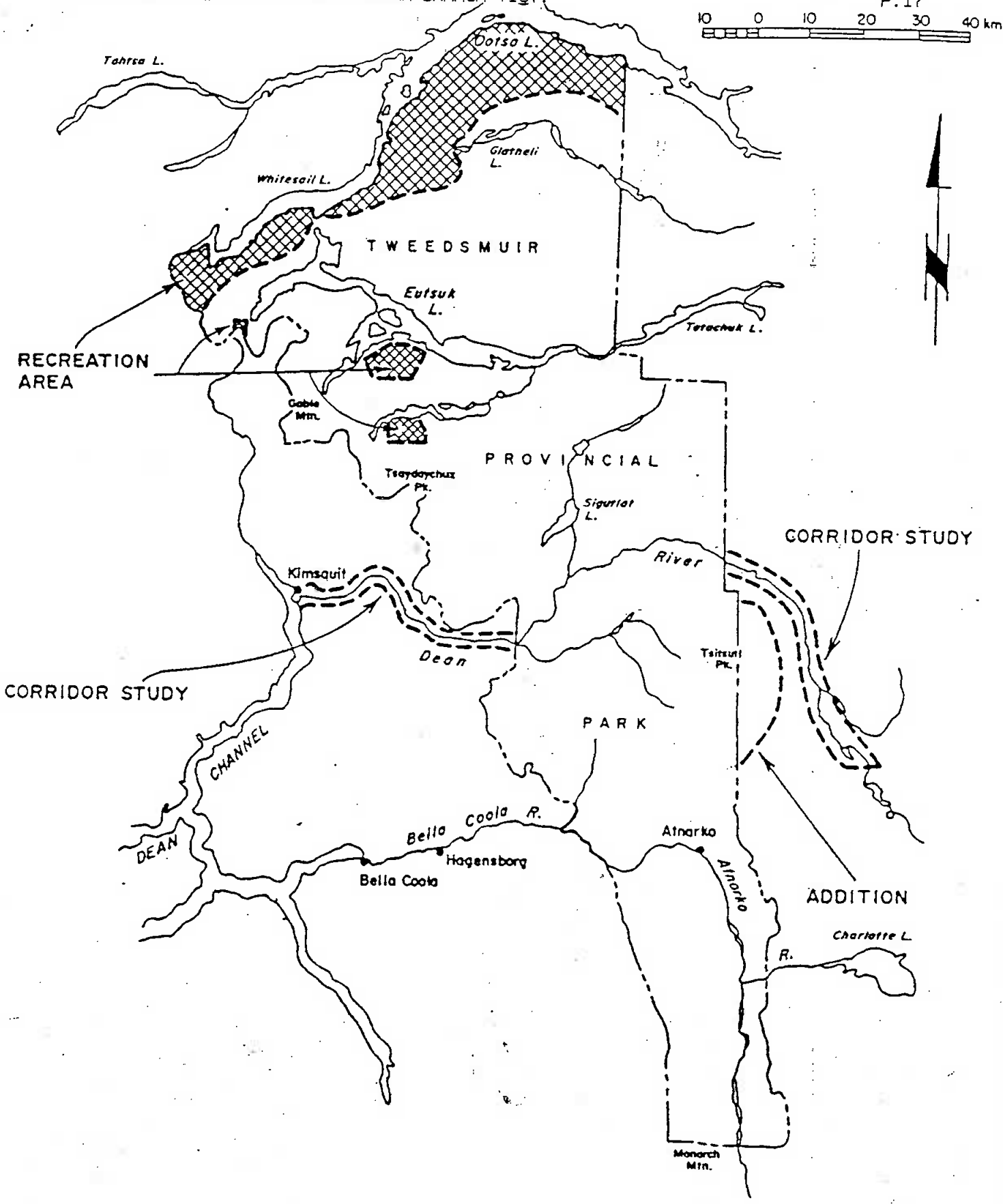
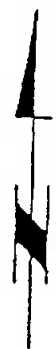
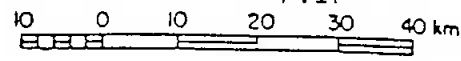
KOKANEE GLACIER PARK
STUDY AREA



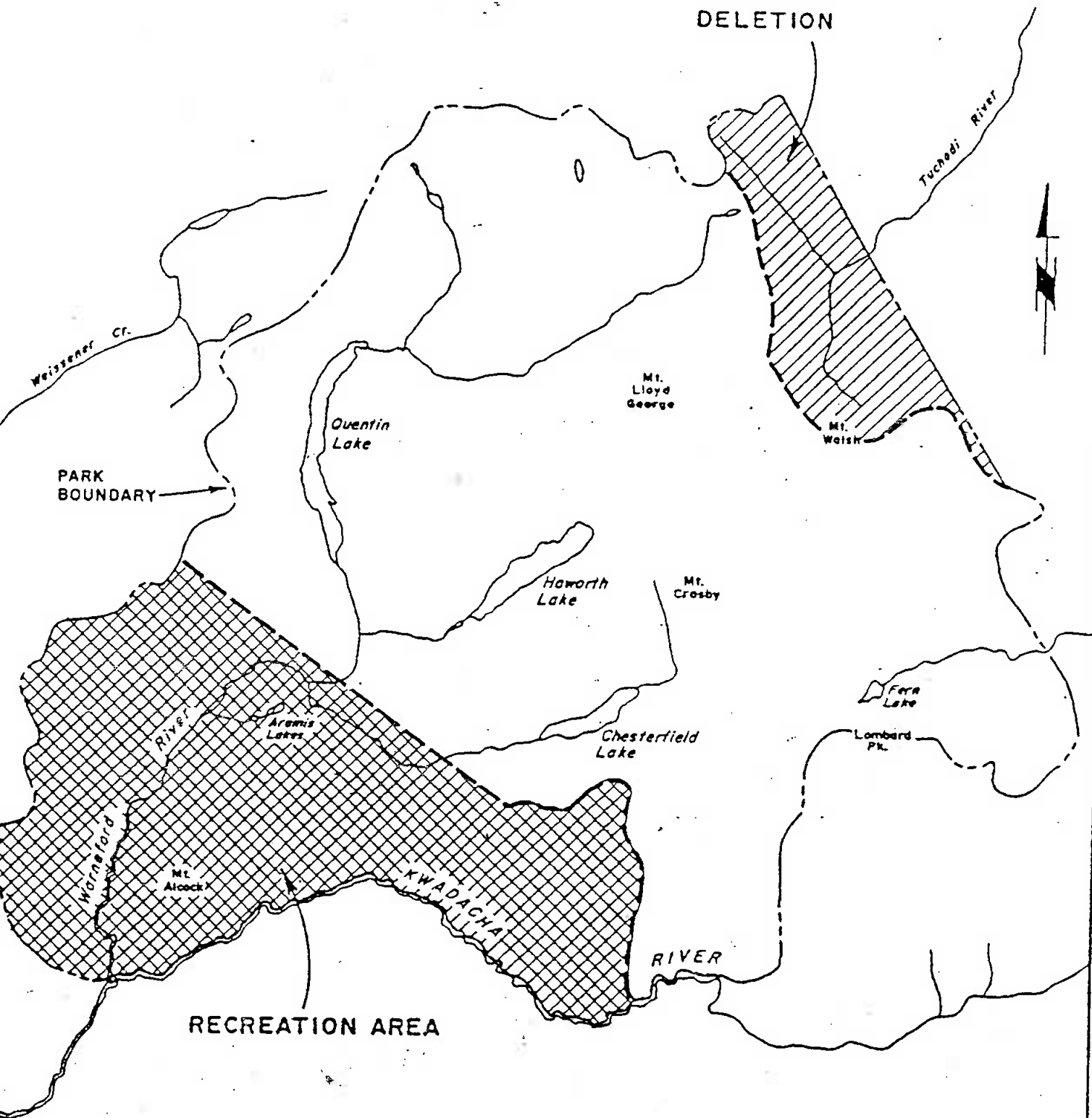
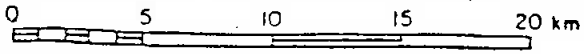
WELLS GRAY PARK STUDY AREA



CASCADE - MANNING
STUDY AREA



TWEEDSMUIR PARK STUDY AREA



KWADACHA PARK
STUDY AREA