

5. Helipad and Muster Points Management Strategy

Date: March 31st, 2019

Wells Gray Provincial Park and the surrounding areas have unique evacuation related risks. Access is limited by the parks remoteness and the many one way in, one way out roads. The landbase is extensive, and at any given time during peak season, there can be up to 3,000 people per day spread throughout the park. The consideration of helipads and muster points for evacuation needs has been identified by the Planning Team for the Wells Gray Wildfire Risk Management Plan as an issue that requires specific attention, through the development of management strategies.

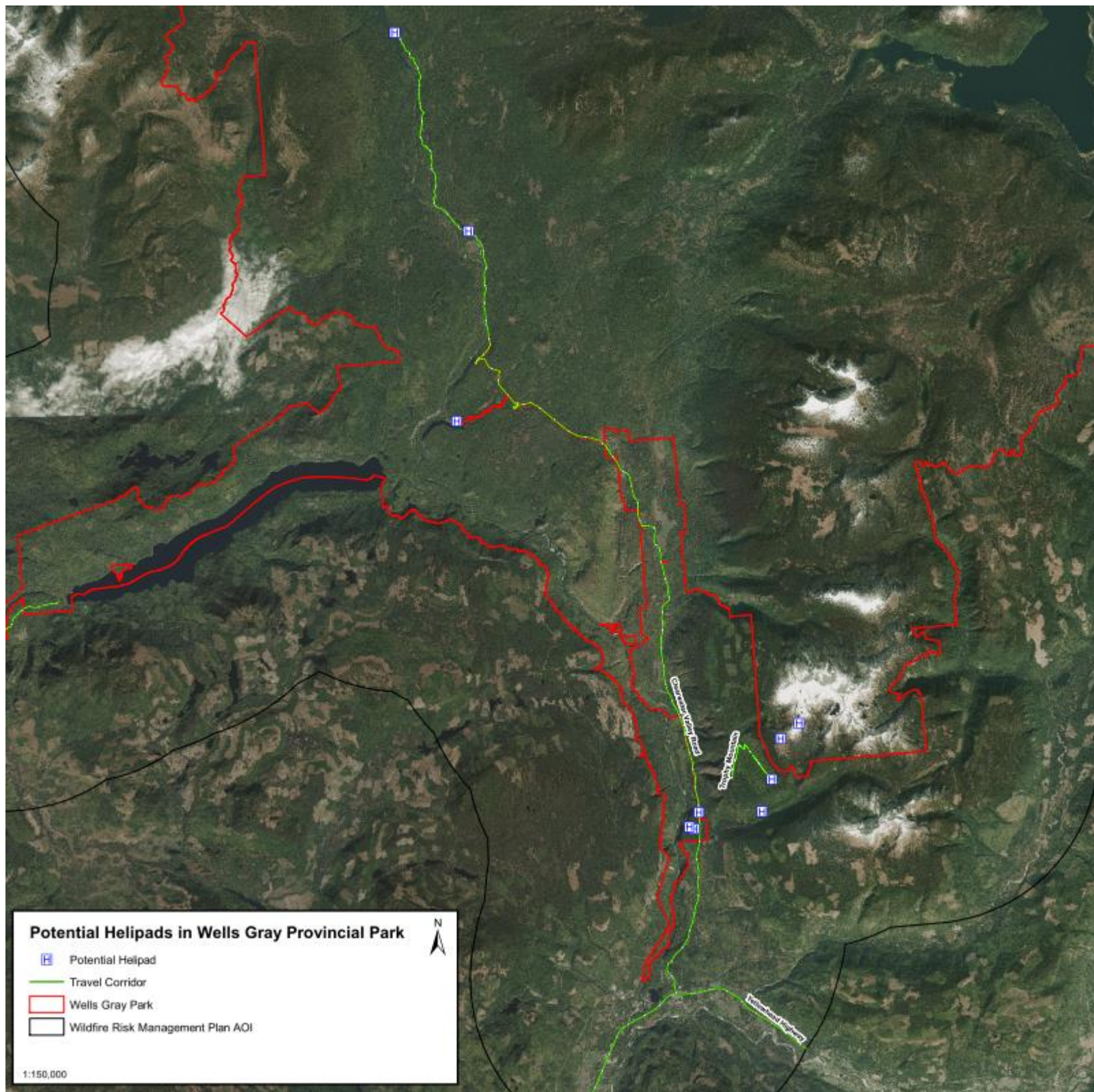


Figure 1: Potential Helipad Locations in Wells Gray Provincial Park

Management Strategies

5.1 ASSESS CURRENT AND POTENTIAL HELIPADS TO ENSURE THEY ARE COMPATIBLE WITH EVACUATION NEEDS

DISCUSSION: There are helipads throughout the park, and areas that may be suitable for use as helipads during an emergency evacuation. These areas should be identified for suitability and may require additional work and land clearing for use. Permittee's often have helipads designated for remote use that may be appropriate for many different types of helicopters with additional tree clearing.

ACTIONS:

1. Define the needs and purpose of each helipad.
2. Create tracking tool (spreadsheet) of helipad and capabilities
3. Assess helipads throughout the park for suitability for helicopter type and evacuation use.
4. Consider improvements to existing helipads and or establish and construct new helipad locations; subject to resource availability. This may include the installation of signage.
5. Establish a monitoring and maintenance program that ensures upkeep and hazard assessment going forward.

RESPONSIBILITY: BC Parks

PARTNERS: BCWS/BC Parks Operators/Permittees/Local helicopter services company/EMBC

RISK RESPONSE GOALS: Reduce risk through establishing evacuation points.

5.2 DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF MUSTER POINTS FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN WELLS GRAY PARK

DISCUSSION: Muster points may be a tool to help with evacuation of large groups of people. What a muster point entails, and the liability involved, may create challenges for BC Parks. Further conversation on the definition, suitability, and appropriateness of muster points and whether they can be used in Wells Gray is required.

ACTIONS:

1. Engage with agencies, such as BCWS, MoTI, RCMP, etc, to discuss the suitability of muster points for evacuation and emergency management in Wells Gray Provincial Park. Consider the following factors:
 - Purpose of use and protocols
 - Signage and communication to the public
 - Standards and upkeep

RESPONSIBILITY: BC Parks

PARTNERS: BCWS/MoTI/TNRD/District of Clearwater/Rec Sites and Trails/EMBC

RISK RESPONSE GOALS: Reduce risk through the creation of safe places for the public to evacuate to and/or meeting areas for emergency management.