

**PORTEAU COVE
PROVINCIAL PARK**

MASTER PLAN

November, 1990



Province of
British Columbia

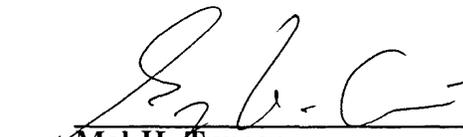
SOUTH COAST REGION

Ministry of
Parks

MEMORANDUM

Mr. George Trachuk
Regional Director
South Coast Region

This five year review of the 1985 Master Plan for Porteau Cove Provincial Park is submitted for your consideration and approval. The review has resulted in no substantive changes to either the role of the park or the management of the park's resources.


Mel H. Turner
for: Manager, Planning
and Conservation Services

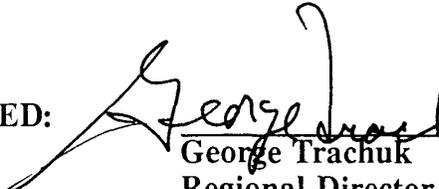
RECOMMENDED:


Drew Carmichael
District Manager
Garibaldi/Sunshine
Coast

DATE:



APPROVED:


George Trachuk
Regional Director

DATE:

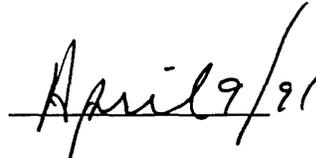


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1.0 PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The Plan's highlights include:

- Proposed study areas for expansion
- Vegetation inventory and management plan
- Improved screening of the railway
- Periodic monitoring and expansion of artificial reefs
- Revegetation of walk-in campsites

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Plan Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to guide the development and management of Porteau Cove Provincial Park. There is only one key issue to address, the need to expand the land base of the park.

2.2 Background Summary

The 50 hectare park was established in 1981 to provide marine-oriented recreational opportunities including boating, fishing, scuba diving, camping and picnicking. The popularity of this park has substantially increased, with gains of 268% for camping use and 234% for day use since the park was opened in 1981.

The main features are the tidal and intertidal marine life of the park's foreshore areas. There is a good diversity of marine species to see, both along the shore and underwater. A scuba diving area has been developed with sunken ships and artificial reefs that has greatly enhanced subtidal marine life.

The terrestrial resources of the park are very limited in view of the small size of the park. A mixed forest cover and several gravel and sandy beach areas provide some recreation opportunities and the setting for the park.

3.0 ROLE OF THE PARK

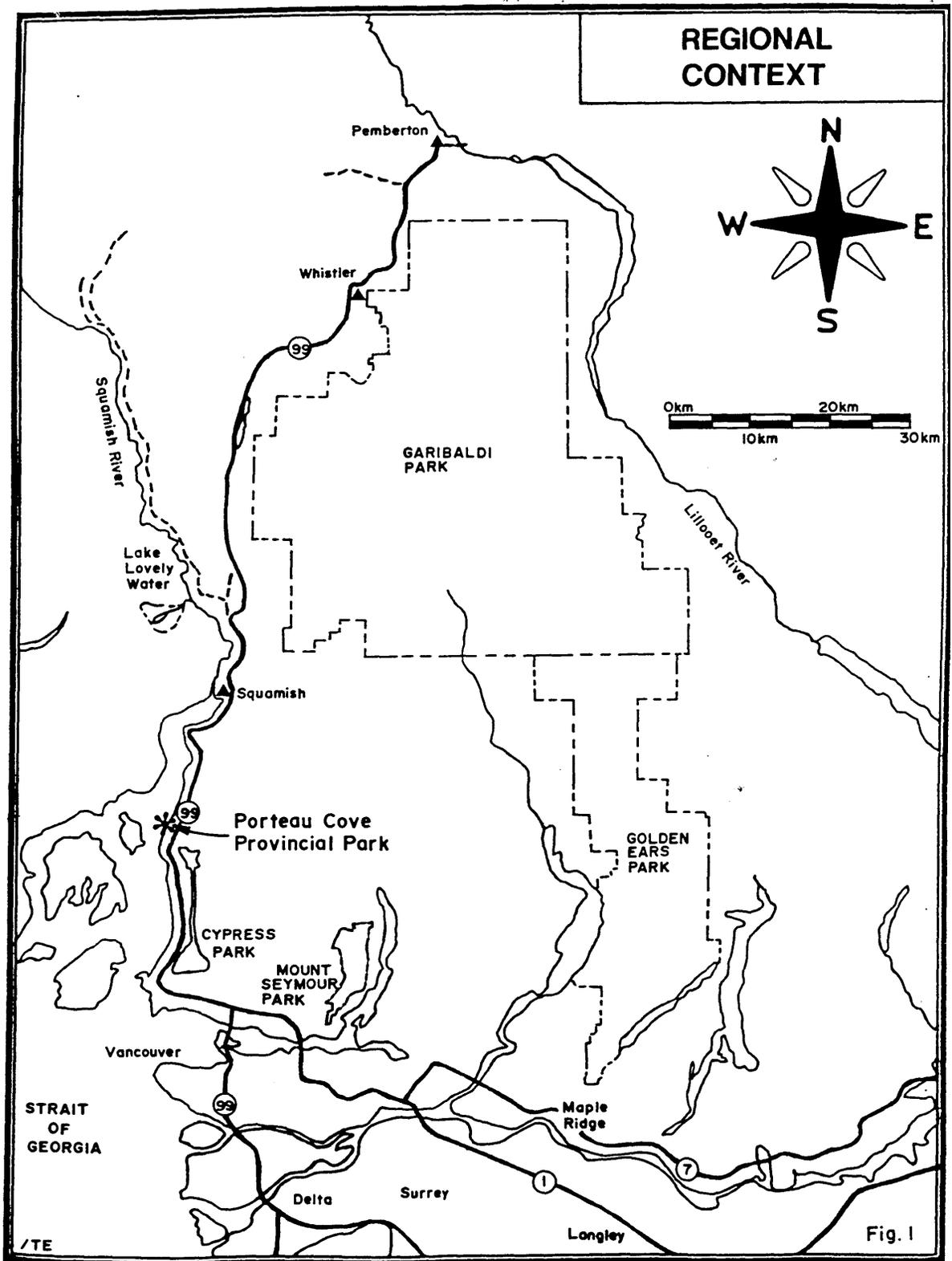
3.1 Regional and Provincial Context

Porteau Cove Provincial Park is situated on the eastern shore of Howe Sound about 35 kilometres north of Vancouver (Figure 1). With some 1.5 million people of the Greater Vancouver area in such close proximity, about a 40 minute drive away, Porteau Cove is one of the most easily accessible marine-oriented parks in the provincial park system.

Most visitors access the park via Highway 99; however, it is also possible to take a train from North Vancouver provided prior arrangements are made to be dropped off at the park. Boaters from the Vancouver area can also easily access the park via Howe Sound.

Highway 99 extends to the Canada-US border and is the main route visitors from Seattle and other Americans use when entering British Columbia. The portion of the highway north of Vancouver is in itself a significant access to recreational opportunities. Popular as a scenic drive, the highway winds along the shoreline of Howe Sound with towering mountain ridges on one side and an ocean vista on the other. Through its length, there are provincial parks, private resorts and several points of interest.

The communities in the immediate vicinity of the park, Lions Bay and Britannia Beach, provide food and fuel in a picturesque setting, while Britannia Beach also has a mining museum and other popular tourist attractions.



3.2 Conservation Role

Objective:

To conserve a marine component and the ancillary terrestrial features of the Southern Fiordland Regional Landscape.

Given the land and water use demands on this landscape, it is difficult to include the entire landscape within a single park. Porteau Cove Provincial Park and Princess Louisa Provincial Park, includes many of the elements necessary to conserve this important landscape.

3.3 Recreation Role

Objectives:

To provide destination outdoor recreation opportunities in an oceanside environment.

The park provides a wide variety of recreation opportunities oriented to the ocean that are generally lacking in the Greater Vancouver area.

To provide travel corridor recreational opportunities that enhance tourism and complement opportunities offered by other agencies and the private sector.

Travellers and tourists on the highway use the park as a scenic rest stop for short periods of time and overnight.

4.0 ZONING

In view of the small size of the park, only two zones are required (Figure 2); Intensive Recreation Zone and Natural Environment Zone.

4.1 Intensive Recreation Zone

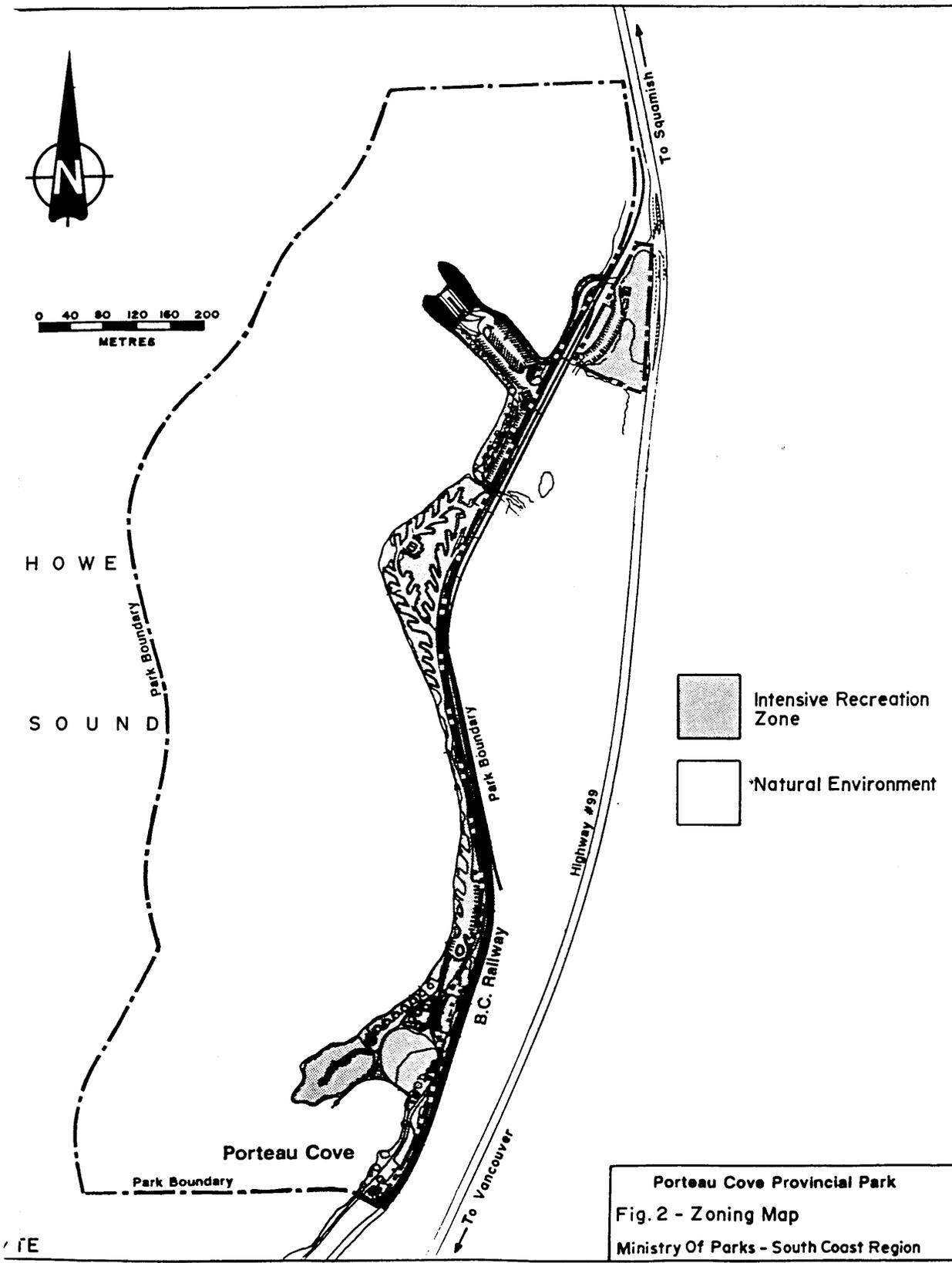
The objective of this zone is to provide for a variety of readily accessible, facility-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities. All of the parkland base is included in this zone as the existing park development and high density use levels are prevalent. Management of this area is oriented toward maintaining a high quality recreation experience through intensive management of resources and/or control of visitor activities.

About 4.5 hectares are included in this zone.

4.2 Natural Environment Zone

The objective of this zone is to protect scenic values and to provide dispersed forms of recreational opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment. This zone is applied to all of the foreshore area of the park including the artificial reefs area. Although the natural values of the underwater foreshore are void of appreciable scenic values, the levels of use and management of the area are characteristic of the Natural Environment Zone. Management will be oriented to maintaining and enhancing the natural environment while providing a high quality recreation experience.

About 45.5 hectares are included in this zone.



Porteau Cove Provincial Park
 Fig. 2 - Zoning Map
 Ministry Of Parks - South Coast Region

5.0 NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

5.1 Introduction

The overall management of natural and cultural resources will be based upon the ***Park Act, Park Regulations***, ministry policies and the role of Porteau Cove in the overall system of provincial parks and recreation areas in British Columbia.

The resource management objective in the park is to ensure that the Ministry of Parks' goals are met by:

- protecting Porteau Cove's representative natural environment and recreation resources;
- allowing only appropriate types and levels of recreation uses;
- monitoring use impacts and resource conditions so that appropriate actions may be taken;
- establishing resource guidelines that will protect Porteau Cove's recreation and conservation resources.

5.2 Land Management

Objective:

To protect the existing land base of the park while expanding boundaries into adjacent land areas that would enhance opportunities.

While the limited land base severely restricts the expansion of needed park opportunities, there are potential opportunities in the future to add the adjacent lands currently used by the BC Rail Corporation and the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Action:

Review with the appropriate agencies the possibility of adding all or portions of the land adjacent to the park.

5.3 Vegetation Management

Objective:

To retain the natural setting of the park by maintaining and enhancing the park's natural and exotic vegetation.

The park vegetation is subject to impact from overuse as well as to periodic inclement weather. It is important that regular maintenance and enhancement take place to achieve the above objective.

Actions:

- ***Revegetate the understorey of the walk-in campground.***
- ***Inventory trees and formulate a management plan.***

5.4 Visual Management

Objective:

To enhance viewing opportunities in the park by reducing visual intrusions.

The adjacent railway lands with its extensive rock excavation and gravel piles is a significant intrusion on the park setting.

Action:

Establish in concert with BC Rail a natural visual buffer between the railway and the main park road.

5.5 Water Management

Objective:

To ensure the water quality of the foreshore areas of the park are kept to a standard that sustains the existing marine life.

Although the management of the water over the foreshore area of the park is the responsibility of the Federal Government, they can be encouraged to address this objective in their overall management program for Howe Sound.

Actions:

- ***Monitor through observation and public comments the water quality of the park.***
- ***Periodically advise and encourage the Federal Government agencies involved in the management of Howe Sound.***

5.6 Fish and Wildlife Management

Objective:

To protect and enhance marine life diversity and quantity in the foreshore area of the park.

Actions:

- ***Periodically monitor the colonization and growth on the artificial reefs.***
- ***Expand the artificial reefs and add additional wrecks as the opportunities become available to do so.***
- ***Use only non-polluting materials in an artificial reef development or other marine works.***

6.0 VISITOR SERVICES

6.1 Introduction

The general visitor services concept is to provide as many and diverse opportunities as possible over the limited land base, while guarding against over use. With the high demand for park opportunities at this location but limited land and natural reserves, it is important to get the maximum and most efficient use of park resources.

Although vehicle access will continue to be the main mode of access, access via train and boat will be encouraged to alleviate vehicle congestion at peak times.

The information strategy of the park will focus on presentation of park features, recreation opportunities and the social and environmentally sensitive ways of enjoying them.

6.2 Visitor Opportunities/Objectives

Porteau Cove Provincial Park is for the most part completely developed. The following visitor opportunities are already provided for to their fullest extent except for the areas noted.

Visitor Opportunity	Objective	Actions
Picnicking	To provide a variety and increase opportunities where possible	Remove driftwood from beach as required when it becomes a hindrance to picnicking
Fishing	To provide opportunities for shore and boat fishing	See Fish and Wildlife Management
Boating	To provide a variety of boating opportunities including sea kayaking, windsurfing and power boating	Provide small dinghy float for shore access
Camping	To provide easy access and walk-in destination overnight camping	None
Scuba Diving	To provide a variety of diving opportunities for novice scuba divers	Continue to enhance the marine environment. Provide stairs to improve access to dive sites.

6.3 Management Services

The park headquarters and service yard will continue to be located at Alice Lake Park.

6.4 Promotion and Information Program

Given the overall high levels of existing use, there is little need to further promote park use.

The information strategy as was aforementioned will focus on the presentation of park features and opportunities and the social and environmentally sensitive ways of enjoying them. Currently, there are a number of signs, maps and brochures that address this strategy to some extent. Greater emphasis should be placed on underwater and shoreline environmental ethics when viewing marine life or in case of terrestrial resources, protection of park vegetation from trampling.

7.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

There are two proposals of this plan that should be implemented as soon as priorities allow the revegetation of the walk-in campsites and improvements to screening the railway. As it will take some time to establish the vegetation in these areas, the work should start as soon as possible.

The remaining proposals of the plan are not of any urgent priority and will be implemented as regional priorities permit.

PORTEAU COVE MASTER PLAN

APPENDIX I

BACKGROUND REPORT

PORTEAU COVE PROVINCIAL PARK MASTER PLAN
APPENDIX I
BACKGROUND REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Porteau Cove Provincial Park lies 35 kilometres north of Vancouver (Figure 1, page 4) on the eastern shore of Howe Sound. The park encompasses a narrow 4.5 hectares strip that is partially bisected by the BC Rail right-of-way and a 45.6 hectare area of foreshore. Along this narrow shoreline strip are several gravel beaches backed by a buffer of mixed forest cover over generally flat terrain.

The name, Porteau, is derived from the French meaning for "water gate" (*porte d'eau*). This name dates from 1908 when John F. Deeks began mining the extensive sand and gravel deposits here to supply Vancouver. A small community of employees lived here until the beginning of the depression.

In 1954, the Pacific Great Eastern Railway purchased the area of Porteau Cove for railway right-of-way. The railway line was pushed through during 1955, resulting in better access for this area.

Today, the railway use adjacent to the park continues to be significant. Gravel material continues to be extracted and processed for ballast, and trains and railway work crews frequently travel the rails.

2.0 NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

2.1 Natural Resources

2.1.1 Physiography

The physiography of this region includes a narrow coastal plain rising east to the coastal mountain ranges. The shoreline is characteristic of glaciated coastlines with deep fjords, rock outcroppings and small beaches. The beach fronting Porteau Cove is part of an alluvial fan formed from both natural and induced deposition.

The beach area consists of an abundance of pebbles, gravel and sand material with many logs washed ashore during winter storms, lying above the high water mark.

2.1.2 Climate

This area experiences the typical lower west coast climate with mild wet winters and moderate sunny summers. Mean average daily temperatures range from 23 degrees celsius in July to 4 degrees celsius in January (mean for May through September being 15 degrees celsius). Precipitation averages approximately 130 to 150 centimetres per year (mean for June to September averaging about 25 to 30 centimetres). Considering the high mountain to the east and the north-south orientation of Porteau Cove Provincial Park, the amount of direct sun on the beach area in the morning is reduced but lasts long into the evening.

2.1.3 Fish

There is a good diversity of marine life in the park. In the intertidal zone, at low tide, the following organisms have been observed on rocks: many edible Blue Mussels (*Mytilus edulis*), a few California Mussels (*Mytilus californianus*), Common Acorn Barnacle (*Balanus glandula*), Sitka Periwinkle (*Littorina scutulata*), and Shield Limpets (*Acmaea spp.*) Sand Fleas (*Orchestia spp.*) and Orange Nemerteans (*Tubulanus polymorphus*) can be seen among the mussels.

The subtidal area of the park has considerably less diversity. The sea floor off Porteau Cove has a sandy bottom that gently slopes with a few scattered rock outcroppings but with the creation of artificial reefs and the sinking of several ships, the marine life in this zone has improved. Crabs, several species of flatfish and Orange Sea Pens (*Ptilosarcus gurneyi*) can be found on the soft bottom, while Plumose Anemones (*Metridium senile*) and Swimming Sea Anemones (*Stomphia didemon*) can be found on the rocks.

In the ship wrecks, divers have reported seeing a variety of organisms including Lingcod (*Ophiodon elongatus*), Perch, Rockfish (*Sebastes spp.*), Barnacle (*Balanus spp.*), Plumose Anemones, Galathaeid Crabs (*Munida quadrispina*), Peach Tunicates (*Halocynthia aurantium*), Armoured Sea Cucumbers (*Psolus chitonoides*), California Sea Cucumbers (*Parastichopus californicus*), Ochre Stars, Slime Stars (*Pteraster tesselatus*), Pink Stars (*Pisaster brevispinus*), Sunflower Stars (*Pycnopodia helianthoides*), Rainbow Stars (*Orthasterias koehlerii*), Pacific Octopus (*Octopus dofleini*), Spiny Dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*), Shrimp and Sea Whips (*Osteocella septentrionalis*).

2.1.4 Wildlife

The most visible and abundant wildlife in the park are marine birds. A number of diving duck species can be seen at Porteau Cove during the winter months, including Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Barrow's Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Oldsquaw, Harlequin Duck, White-winged Scoter, Black Scoter and Red-breasted Merganser.

In addition, two Loon species and three Grebe species can be seen at Porteau Cove during the winter months but they migrate to the freshwater lakes of the interior or the far north to breed during the summer. Bonaparte's Gulls and Common Terns may be seen during migration.

Some examples of birds that nest in the park and probably utilize its forest community for nesting and feeding their young include White-crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Rufous Hummingbird, Pine Siskin, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin and Northwestern Crow.

Mammals in the park are mainly comprised of Douglas Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus douglasi*), Northwestern Chipmunk (*Eutamias amoenus*) and Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*). In addition, there have been sightings of River Otter (*Lutra canadensis*) and Harbour Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) reported by parks staff.

2.1.5 Vegetation (Biogeoclimatic Zones)

As the park lies in a transition between the Coastal Douglas Fir and Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zones, characteristic species of each of these zones are present.

The most diversely vegetated area of the park is a rocky knoll adjacent to the cove. Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) is the predominant tree species. However, Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) and a few Shore Pine (*Pinus contorta*) can also be seen. There are a few Arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*) trees located just below the summit on the southwestern side of the knoll. The understorey consists of Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), a variety of mosses and Red Huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*). Kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) grows just below the lookout and Licorice Fern (*Polypodium vulgare*) grows profusely on the southeastern side of the knoll near its base.

In the campground, the dominant trees include Western Red Cedar, Douglas-fir, Broadleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) and Red Alder. The understorey is quite open and consists of Salal, Ocean Spray, Huckleberry, Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*) and Western Sword-Fern, to name some of the species. Ivy (*Hedera*) has been planted as ground cover and Vine Maple (*Acer circinatum*) and Scotch Broom (*Cytisus praecox*) have been planted for landscaping.

A small fresh water marsh, located by the cove, contains Cattails (*Typha latifolia*), various Sedge species (*Carex*) and Giant Vetch (*Vicia gigantea*).

2.1.6 Outdoor Recreation Features

The shoreline of the park is the main outdoor recreation feature. The beaches and water's edge provide the setting for the camping and picnicking opportunities that have been popular with visitors. At the south end of the park, the rocky knolls have become popular for viewing Howe Sound.

2.1.7 Visual Features

Like outdoor recreation features, the visual features of the park are focused along the shoreline, the attractive views of Howe Sound and the off-shore islands.

2.2 Resource Analysis

The most significant aspect of a park's resources and features are their potential to serve the goals of the park system and to fulfil the purpose for which it was designated. Porteau Cove's resources contribute significantly to achieving the conservation and recreation goals of the British Columbia Parks System (Appendix II).

Conservation goals are addressed by securing access to view Howe Sound; a major component within the Southern Fiordland Regional Landscape. While it would be ideal to encompass the landscape by a park boundary, this is presently not feasible. The beaches and subtidal areas of the park are small characteristic features of the natural landscape that are protected.

Recreation goals of the park system are served by providing destination and travel corridor recreational opportunities. Park facilities have enhanced public access and enjoyment of the park's ocean side environment and are the significant features that serve the recreation goals.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

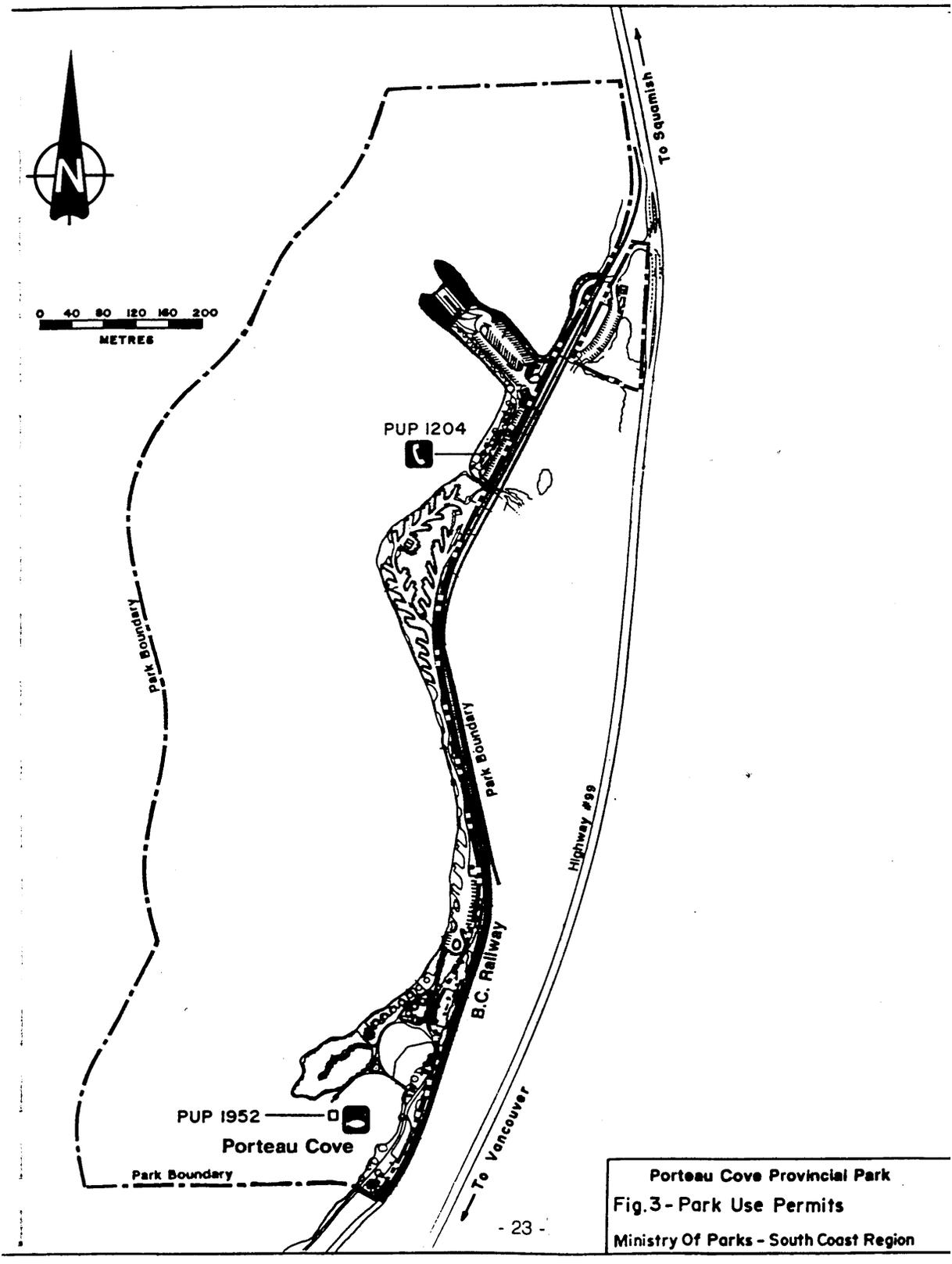
Day use area during Opening Day in July of 1983.

3.0 TENURES, OCCUPANCY RIGHTS AND JURISDICTIONS

Leases and Permits (Figure 3)

Expiry	Permit	Name	Purpose
03/31/93	1204	BC Telephone Co.	Pay Telephone
04/30/97	1807	BCR Properties Ltd.	Waterline
03/31/94	1952	Fisheries & Oceans Canada	Salmonoid Enhancement
03/31/95	1957	BCR Properties Ltd.	Water Connection
12/31/91	2154	Bob Cunneyworth	Operations Permit

Fee Simple Holdings	: None
Forest Tenures	: None
Water Rights	: None
Rights-of-Way	: None
Mineral Claims	: None
Trespasses	: None
Statutory Jurisdiction	: None
Guiding	: None



Porteau Cove Provincial Park
 Fig.3- Park Use Permits
 Ministry Of Parks - South Coast Region

4.0 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Porteau Cove is a four season recreation destination. There are a variety of recreational opportunities for visitors to enjoy (Figure 4) activities such as camping, picnicking, scuba diving and fishing.

Camping is available for easy access vehicle camping and tenting or walk-in tenting. There are 42 easy access campsites and 15 walk-in sites. Most sites are very private with a tree canopy and high shrubs providing much of the setting. About half of all the campsites are waterfront sites.

Picnicking and associated activities such as sunbathing and beachcombing are facilitated by picnic tables and parking for 100 cars in the day use area. These opportunities are supported by a flush washroom building and a number of interpretation information signs.

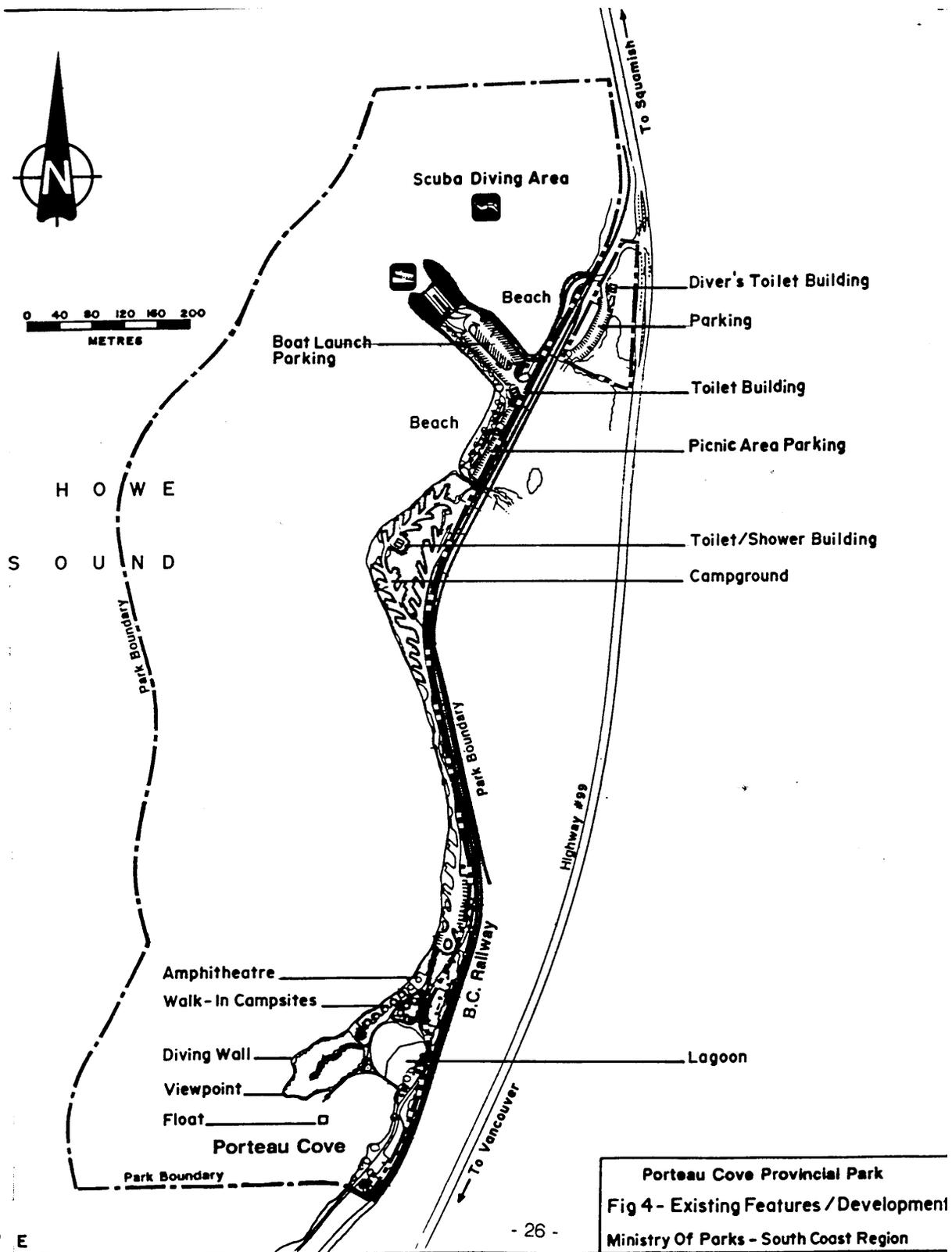
Fishing and boating in Howe Sound have been popular traditional activities and continue to be attractive, despite concerns about water pollution and the environment of Howe Sound. The day use parking lot has been designed to conveniently access the boat launch and to park boat trailers. Howe Sound has been known for its rock and crab fishing but fishing closures have curtailed these activities in recent years.

During calm weather, the park dinghy float is used by water skiers as a launching platform. Other popular forms of boating at Porteau Cove include wind surfing and sea kayaking.

Scuba diving opportunities are fairly diverse with several wreck sites, two artificial reefs and a submerged cliff face as the main opportunities. Most of the diving opportunities are aimed at a novice ability with features within a depth of 20 metres; however, the Nakaya wreck is more appropriate for advance divers. The marine life in these sites can be quite variable depending on when they are dived. A changehouse/ washroom, complete with showers is provided near the dive area for the convenience of divers.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

Divers returning from the underwater area of the park.
Marine buoys marking the dive sites can be seen in the
background along the horizon.



Porteau Cove Provincial Park
 Fig 4 - Existing Features / Development
 Ministry Of Parks - South Coast Region

5.0 MARKETING ANALYSIS

5.1 Existing Use

Porteau Cove is one of the most heavily used multi-purpose parks in the Lower Mainland for its size. In 1989, there were about 73,000 day use parties and nearly 7,000 overnight camping parties. Many of the day users are travellers of Highway 99 who use the park as a rest stop.

5.2 Visitor Profile

About 80% of the visitors are BC residents, while visitors from the states of Washington, Oregon and California are the next most frequent, representing about 7.5%. Families with children aged between five to twelve years are the single largest demographic group that the park serves; however, field observations indicate that the park appeals to seniors as well.

5.3 Demand

The demand for day use and camping opportunities in the park has increased since the park was designated in 1981 (Appendix III). Since that time, camping use has increased by 268%, while day use has increased 234%. This increase in day use has been a steady climb and it appears that this trend will continue in the future.

Camping use in comparison fluctuated in 1987 and 1988 substantially below the 1986 peak of Expo 86. It is difficult from this past performance to assess the future demand for camping opportunities at Porteau Cove; however, it is unlikely over the five year term of this plan that peak levels of use that were experienced during Expo will be achieved.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

Waterfront campsites are one of the main attractions
of the park

6.0 KEY ISSUES

There is only one major issue that needs to be addressed over the term of this plan; the expansion of the park's land base.

The demand for expanded recreational opportunities and services continues to grow but the opportunities to serve these needs is severely constrained by a limited land base. Visitor pressure on the park is evident in the degradation of understorey plants in the campground and particularly the walk-in campsites. The congestion of traffic and people appears to be conditions that have become normal for this park throughout the summer. Options for addressing this issue are as follows:

Maintain Status Quo

It is clear that inaction, in terms of expanding opportunities would necessitate a more restrictive management profile to regulate and possibly limit use to protect park values.

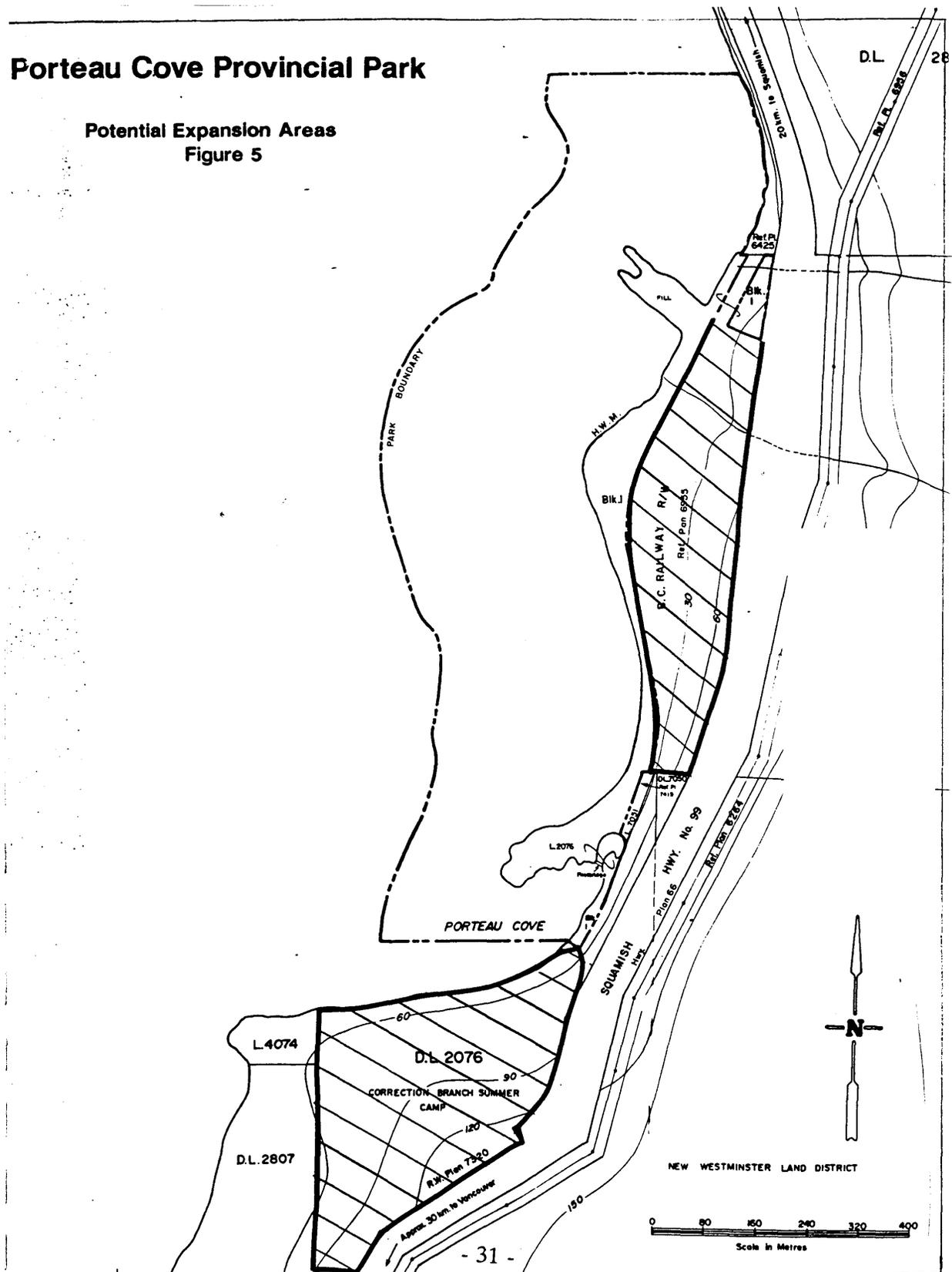
Expand Park Boundaries

There are two areas that are feasible to expand park boundaries (Figure 5). The first is the BC Rail land at the southern end of the park currently leased to the Ministry of the Attorney General. The second is the BC Rail land east of the railway right-of-way, currently used for gravel extraction and processing. Both would add useable land base to the park and could potentially increase some opportunities. The major

constraint to acquiring one or both of these areas besides financing is the availability. The gravel extraction is expected to be completed within a few years.

Porteau Cove Provincial Park

Potential Expansion Areas
Figure 5



APPENDIX II PROVINCIAL PARK SYSTEM GOALS

The British Columbia Provincial Park System has two mandates:

- 1) To conserve significant and representative natural and cultural resources.
- 2) To provide a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Within the conservation mandate, the system has two goals:

Goal 1 Protection of Representative Landscapes

The Provincial Park System will include areas that are representative of the Landscapes of British Columbia, thereby protecting and presenting for posterity, the characteristic combinations of flora, fauna, landforms and waters associated with this diverse province.

Goal 2 Protection of Outstanding Recreation Resources

The park system will contain a wide scenic selection of the best provincial outdoor recreation resources, natural features, wilderness areas and historic resources of British Columbia.

Within the recreation mandate, the system attempts to achieve three recreation goals:

Goal 1 Destination Opportunities

The Provincial Park System will include appropriate outdoor recreation lands and facilities providing for the use and enjoyment of major outdoor recreation destinations in British Columbia.

Goal 2 Travel Corridor Opportunities

The Provincial Park System will include, as a complement to other suppliers, outdoor recreation lands and facilities in association with major provincial travel corridors to ensure that travelling vacationers are supplied with a basic network of scenic stop-offs.

Goal 3 Regional Recreation Opportunities

The Provincial Park System will include, as a complement to other suppliers, land and facility-based opportunities for outdoor recreation, distributed in association with British Columbia's natural geographic regions in order that British Columbians are assured a basic supply of outdoor recreation services close to home.

Goal 4 Backcountry Recreation Opportunities

The Provincial Park System will build the province's reputation for backcountry recreation by protecting and managing our most outstanding wilderness areas.

APPENDIX III

**PORTEAU COVE PARK ATTENDANCE
1981-1989**

(In Parties)

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Day Use	21,838	45,926	46,865	53,036	53,657	56,727	58,148	63,737	73,151
Camping	1,889	4,892	5,625	5,903	6,374	8,598	7,184	5,420	6,960

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