Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Interpretive Plan 2017

Prepared for: Marika Welsh
East Kootenay South Area Supervisor, BC Parks

Prepared by: Lee-Anne Walker, BA Heritage Interpretation/MA Environment and Management
Walk About Interpretation
1883 Dicken Road
Fernie, BC V0B 1M5

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Introduction

Kikomun Creek Provincial Park (Kikomun) is part of BC Parks Kootenay-Okanagan Region, Kootenay Section, East Kootenay South Management Area. Kikomun is located at the south end of the Rocky Mountain Trench, behind the rain shadow of the Columbia Mountains to the west, hemmed in on the east by the Southern Canadian Rockies. It has provincially significant conservation values and spectacular recreational opportunities that annually attract large numbers of tourists as well as local visitors.

Although Kikomun has been a Class A, BC Park for decades it has never had an Interpretation Plan, blending park management needs and unique resource considerations with the desires of visitors to the park. This "Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Interpretive Plan" (Plan) is a document designed to assist with the management needs of BC Parks responsible for conservation of native grassland and open forest ecosystems, as well as associated rare species at Kikomun. The challenge facing BC Parks is balancing the increasing conservation of a rare ecosystem with the demand of visitors who desire a variety of recreational opportunities. The purpose of this Plan is to recommend effective non-personal interpretation strategies to increase public stewardship of Kikomun by sharing relevant information and stories unique to this park.

BC Parks – East Kootenay South Area contracted Walk About Interpretation and principal Lee-Anne Walker (BA Heritage Interpretation/MA Environment and Management) from Fernie, BC, to assist with the development of this Interpretive Plan. Ms. Walker had been the Visitor Service Contractor providing personal and non-personal interpretation at Kikomun between 1996-2001. During her contract with BC Parks at Kikomun, she delivered personal interpretation programs ranging from Jerry's Rangers children's programs and special events, to guided hikes and amphitheater evening programs. She also developed non-personal media including the "Great Northern Rail Trail" post in place, self-guided bike tour. During the school year she delivered BC Parks programs for various grades at local schools in Jaffray and Grasmere, as well as throughout the Elk Valley. After cancelling government-contracted interpretation in BC Parks (2002), Ms. Walker delivered education programs at Kikomun for regional partnership organization Wildsight and their *Education in the Wild – Classroom with Outdoors* field trips for Grades 4-7 from 2001-2015. For several years Ms. Walker also delivered turtle, flower and insect themed programs at Kikomun with partner the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN) program *Wild Voices for Kids*.

In summary, the goals of this Interpretive Plan are to:

1. Provide an overview of interpretation and interpretive planning;
2. Understand BC Parks provincial/regional organizational goals and objectives and the role of interpretation at Kikomun, which defines the scope of this Plan;
3. Summarize the unique natural/cultural resources at Kikomun Creek Provincial Park;

4. Conduct an inventory of the interpretive resources throughout the Park;
5. Determine the demographic characteristics of visitors at Kikomun and isolate specific target groups. Consider their motivation and use patterns when developing effective non-personal interpretation;
6. Identify relevant themes and suggest methods for how/when/where interpretation can best be utilized to tell the unique Kikomun story.
7. Assess the implementation costs (e.g. time, resources, budget, people) required for the implementation of this Plan.
8. Recommend evaluation tools to assess whether the Plan objectives are being reached.

1. Interpretation Planning Overview

Following an assessment of visitor services in parks (1977) throughout the United States, Freeman Tilden, the founding father or modern day interpretation, stated that interpretation is an "educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, firsthand experience, and by illustrative media rather than simply to communicate factual information". Interpretation Canada (1976), a professional community that supports/engages/inspires those involved in Heritage Interpretation in Canada, defines interpretation as "any communication process designed to reveal meanings and relationships of cultural and natural heritage to the public, through first-hand involvement with an object, artifact, landscape or site". Both an educational activity and communication process, the intent of good interpretation is creating meaningful connections with park visitors to engage and inspire them as ongoing stewardship partners.

Interpretation has the potential to communicate scientific information and relate to the visitors mind and soul with the potential to change attitudes and behaviours. (Shultis ed. 2006) Good interpretation requires an intentional plan to achieve success. Interpretive planning is both a social science and an art form, taking management plans and making connections with visitors to support conservation values.

Interpretation planning is a process that is continuous and ongoing; not an end in itself (Sharpe, 1976). Planning is dynamic and is concerned with future courses of action as a means of achieving established goals and objectives (Sharpe, 1976). Good interpretive planning starts by assessing the management and existing state of interpretation at Kikomun. It then must determine where Kikomun should be going with interpretation, how to get there and ways to assess the effectiveness of this communication process as a management tool for visitors.

There are three main ways BC Parks can attempt to manage visitor behavior while at Kikomun. There can be physical separation like barriers, pathways and locations, or secondly by using direct management tools such as rules and fines (Orams,1994).

The third way to manage visitors is by heritage interpretation, a form of indirect management, which seeks to reduce inappropriate conduct on a voluntary basis through education (Orams, 1994). Interpretation is a tool for managing behaviour by enriching the visitor experience, providing orientation and information, encouraging appropriate actions, and advising the public of safety issues. Interpretation is therefore seen as a 'win-win' situation for park managers and visitors. Another important aspect of interpretation is that it allows users to retain their freedom of choice, which is a fundamental part of the recreation and leisure experience (Tubb, 2003 in UNBC p20).

Interpretation has been a part of BC Provincial Parks since 1957 (BC Nature, n.d.). Based on the decision of the provincial government to cut funding to personal park interpretation at Kikomun in the summer 2002 (BC Nature, n.d.), this Plan will focus on non-personal interpretation methods for reaching park visitors.

Anatole France, the recipient of the French Nobel Prize in Literature (1921) said, "do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds, do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire". This poignant quote resonates at Kikomun where fire is being reintroduced to restore the ecosystem health of Interior Douglas-Fir and Ponderosa Pine open forest grasslands. Additionally it inspires this Interpretive Plan with an aim to improve the effectiveness of communicating park messages and 'spark' thoughtful use of the Park by visitors.

2. Why interpretation at BC Parks?

2.1 Vision and Mandate for BC Park: the Context for Interpretive Planning at Kikomun

On the BC Parks website (2017) the agency's vision is 'to be a world leader in parks and protected areas management' and aims 'to protect representative and special natural places within the province's Protected Areas System for world-class conservation, outdoor recreation, education and scientific study'. Inherent in this mandate is the requirement to maintain a balance between BC Parks' goals for protecting natural environments and providing outdoor recreation.

To achieve this mandate, BC Parks is committed to serving British Columbians and their visitors by:

- Protecting and managing for future generations a wide variety of outstanding parklands, which represent the best natural features and diverse wilderness environments of the province.
- Providing province-wide opportunities for a diversity of high quality and safe outdoor recreation that is compatible with protecting the natural environment.

BC Parks' authority is drawn from three pieces of legislation, the *Park Act*, *Ecological Reserve Act* and the *Environment and Land Use Act*, and their associated regulations, policies and agreements.

From the BC Parks Program Plan (2007-2012) to achieve BC Parks vision and mandate of being a world leaders in park management, three relevant goals and related objectives apply to the development of this Kikomun Creek Interpretive Plan:

1) BC Parks is recognized for its leadership in the proactive stewardship of ecological and cultural integrity.
    a. A dynamic parks and protected areas system that supports the adaptation of species and ecosystems.
    b. BC's diverse First Nations heritage is respected, preserves and enhanced.
    c. The parks and protected areas system plays a key role in the response to climate change.
    d. Objectives for ecological and cultural integrity are understood and supported.

2) BC Parks attracts diverse audiences to a range of superior recreational destinations and services, where visitors have fun, discover nature and history, find inspiration and improve health and wellness.
    a. An appropriate and diverse range of quality outdoor visitor experiences is provided.
    b. Opportunities to improve the physical and mental health of people of all ages and abilities is promoted.

3) BC Parks is a model of organizational excellence.
    a. Innovative people practices and staff wellness are championed.
    b. Develop and improve relationships and partnerships to engage British Columbians in achieving parks and protected areas goals.
    c. BC Parks commitment to management excellence and continuous improvement is demonstrated through its own practices.

BC Park managers are challenged with managing fragile natural and cultural resources with the recreational needs and desires of visitors. Each Park in BC protects representative ecosystems, protects rare species and offers unique recreational experiences. Interpretation planning at Kikomun is required to design an effective approach to communicate unique park themes to the specific visitors using relevant and engaging media/messages thus enhancing visitor experiences.

2.2 Managing Ecological Integrity at BC Parks

Ecological integrity is an important concept that influences protected area management to ensure natural areas are well managed into the future. BC Parks is committed to the proactive stewardship of ecological integrity. Ecological integrity

occurs when an area or network of areas supports natural ecosystem composition, structure and function, and a capacity for self-renewal. It is a complex concept and difficult to measure directly.

BC Parks represents a diversity of ecosystems in the Province so there is some assurance that the majority of species across the province have some level of protection. A protected areas strategy directed the land use planning tables to represent the biogeoclimatic (BEC) zones within the province in the protected areas system. These BEC zones are broad areas of similar climate, geography and vegetative characteristics. There is approximately 14% of the provincial land base in the provincial protected areas system. If all the 16 BEC zones were represented evenly they would each have 14% protected.

Kikomun Creek Provincial Park is located in the Interior Douglas Fir (IDF) and Ponderosa Pine (PP) BEC zones. The percentage of these two BEC zones is underrepresented in protected areas within the province with equally 5% for each (BC Parks Annual Report Website).

2.3 History of Kikomun Creek Provincial Park

Kikomun Creek Provincial Park is a Class A Park established on May 18, 1972. The 682 ha park is located along 4 kms of Lake Koocanusa and is dedicated to the preservation of their natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public. In 1978 Kikomun expanded through a private land purchase to include Surveyors Lake and four other smaller lakes.

Class A parks are Crown lands dedicated to the preservation of their natural environments for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public. Development in a Class A park is limited to that which is necessary for the maintenance of its recreational values. Activities such as grazing, hay cutting and other uses (except commercial logging, mining or hydroelectric development) that existed at the time the park was established may be allowed to continue in certain parks.

Analyzing the timing of the construction of the Libby Dam in 1972 at Libby, Montana and the subsequent flooding of the 145 linear km Lake Koocanusa reservoir damming the Kootenay River as far north as where Highway 3 crosses the Wardner bridge, the 4 km shoreline and small footprint of Kikomun Creek Provincial Park is little consolation for the loss of healthy valley bottom floodplains, riparian forest and upland grasslands/open forests that were flooded.

Management of Kikomun is directed by the “Management Plan”, which is the most important document for a protected area. It sets out the high-level framework from which subsequent protected area management, planning and implementation will take place. There is no mention of interpretation in this document; a good reason to develop a specific Interpretation Plan for Kikomun.

3. Summary of the Natural, Cultural and Recreational Resources Protected at Kikomun Creek Provincial Park

3.1 Natural Resources

3.1.1 Ecological Integrity Protected

The primary role of Kikomun Creek Park is to protect a rare open forest and grassland ecosystem within the East Kootenay Trench Ecosection. Most of these ecosystems are located on private land and utilized for resource use practices such as grazing and forestry, as well as small private residential land holdings. The East Kootenay Trench Ecosection is a major landscape component of the East Kootenay, which is significantly underrepresented within the protected areas system. Of the 15 parks in this Ecosection, combined they cover only 3,000 hectares in total area. Kikomun Creek Park is integral in sustaining a variety of 'at risk' flora and fauna species in this Ecosection. The prevalence of the remnant Interior Douglas Fir (IDFdm2) BEC zone within Kikomun Creek Park outlines the importance of this protected area in maintaining province-wide biodiversity.

Kikomun Creek Provincial Park is located near the border of the Kootenay Dry Mild Interior Douglas Fir (IDFdm2) and the dry, hot Ponderosa Pine (PP) variant (Marcoux 1997). Over 60% of the park supports habitats rated as being rare or endangered by the Conservation Data Centre in 1997, with approximately 18% considered red-listed or endangered and 49% to be blue-listed or threatened (Marcoux 1997).

The East Kootenay Trench Ecosection (Ecosection) is a 2600 km2 area defined by terrain and climate that encompasses Kikomun Creek Park. This Ecosection extends from the Tobacco Plains in the south to Dutch Creek by Columbia Lake in the north. While Kikomun Creek Park is the largest protected area in the Ecosection, it covers less than 0.01% of this Ecosection. There is, however, significant biodiversity in its relatively compact size in part due to the fact that the park sits at the transition of two biogeoclimatic variants (IDFdm2 and PPdh2) and contains aquatic features like kettle lakes and streams like Kikomun Creek in an otherwise dry environment.

Kikomun Creek Park is one of two protected areas in the Ecosection that contain the PPdh2 Variant, the other being Wasa Lake Provincial Park about 80 kilometres to the north. There are four other parks in the Ecosection that contain the IDFdm2 variant but its co-occurrence with the PPdh2 variant is only found in Kikomun Creek Park. Because of the close proximity and overlap of these two variants, it is difficult to determine the precise amount of each variant in the park. The PPdh2 is the more prominent.

Only 0.87 % of the PPdh2 variant is protected in British Columbia and 82% of this representation is found in Kikomun Creek Provincial Park. There are a number of species at risk that are found in the Park including a red-listed plant community

Douglas-fir/common snowberry/arrowleaf balsamroot IDFdm2/03 site series and the blue-listed antelope-brush/bluebunch Wheatgrass IDFdm2/02 site series.

Native grasslands are rare in BC and Canada, so it is not surprising that many endangered plants and animals are found at Kikomun. Kikomun protects four red-listed or endangered species: American Badger, wild licorice, little bluestem, and mock-pennyroyal. Three blue-listed or species of special concern inhabit the Park: grizzly bear, Western painted turtle and bull trout. An extensive program to restore native grassland habitat for species of concern that depend on grasslands has been underway since the late 1990s.

3.1.2 Geography

The park falls within the southern portion of the broad, flat valley known as the Rocky Mountain Trench, which lies between the Rocky Mountains to the east and the Purcell Range of the Columbia Mountains to the west. Kikomun Creek Park was a place where the main continental glacier that occupied the Rocky Mountain Trench converged with a branching glacier from the Elk Valley to the east. The landscape shows remains of glacial activity where melting masses of ice filled with rock material left behind ridges, valleys and water filled depressions that are now lakes. The resulting complex terrain includes four large drumlins, an esker, several kettle lakes and an outwash plain.

3.1.3 Natural Processes

In terms of ongoing natural processes, the main influence on the park's natural values is wildfire. The Park is classified as Natural Disturbance Type 4 (NDT4), which normally experiences frequent stand maintaining fires. It is estimated that the fire frequency for the surrounding area is on average 6.4 years with a range from 2 – 13 years. Small lightning strike fires have occurred in the last 10 years but all have been quickly contained.

3.1.4 Terrestrial Vertebrate Wildlife

No formal wildlife species inventory has been conducted for Kikomun, but from anecdotal observations there are many wildlife species including a diversity of song birds like chipping sparrows, Western meadowlarks and Western tanagers as well as birds of prey like osprey and American kestrel, to rodents from flying squirrel to chipmunks, and carnivores including American badger, cougar, grizzly and black bear. Western painted turtles (Intermountain-Rocky Mountain Population) are abundant reptiles throughout the small kettle lakes in the Park.

There are regionally important wildlife values for ungulates in the park. Roughly 25% of the northern portion of the park lying in Class 1 Ungulate Winter Range and the rest of the park in Class 2 and Class 3. Browsing occurs year round for elk, mule deer and white-tailed deer, but most use occurs in the winter by elk (i.e. 200 plus animals in one herd were counted foraging in one winter). In terms of wildlife use of the terrain, forest covered areas are used for bedding, hiding and travel while the grasslands are used for foraging.

3.1.5 Invasive Species

A key management concern relevant to Kikomun is the spread of invasive weeds. Invasive plants that are an issue at Kikomun include spotted knapweed, sulphur cinquefoil, blue weed and St. John's wort.

3.1.6 Hydrology and Aquatic Wildlife

The hydrology in the Park has been significantly altered over the years. The construction of a long abandoned railway blocked the natural flow between the lakes and a portion of a connecting stream was also diverted for agricultural purposes for the private land holding inside the park. Despite these interventions, the lakes are pockets of aquatic life with a diversity of plants and animals. The lakes in the Park have largemouth bass that were likely introduced in the 1940-50s. Surveyors Lake and some of the creeks in the park also have rainbow trout and bull trout.

Lake Koocanusa, along the western boundary of the Park, is a fishers' destination well known for its abundance of kokanee salmon and a variety of other species, including rainbow trout, Westslope cutthroat and brook trout, as well as whitefish. Annually from late August to mid September kokanee spawn up Kikomun Creek. A culvert under the Jaffray-Baynes Lake road is a barrier to kokanee travel causing them to pool up as fish rest and gain energy to brave the fast flowing water in the long, linear steel tube. One benefit of the large pool on the west side of the road stalling migrating kokanee is that it provides unique wildlife viewing opportunity. Raptors like eagle and osprey along with grizzly and black bears frequent the area to eat this high protein food source.

3.2 Cultural Resources

3.2.1 First Nations Presence

There is evidence that early indigenous people used the park. A pre-contact archaeological site (DhPt-17) registered in 1972 showed the presence of rock flakes (lithic scatters) from working rock into tools. The park is believed to have been used traditionally for hunting, fishing, trapping and plant root harvesting based in a temporary summer camp. The Ktunaxa First Nations from this region called the area '*Qikmin',* which refers to the 'trait of a creek drying or shrinking in warm summer months'. Today there has been no indication that traditional use practises are occurring in the park, however, from general knowledge there are ten species of plants in the park that have been known to be used for food, medicine, tools, shelter and sustenance. There is a high probability that a plant species inventory of the park would identify many more species that were used traditionally by First Nations. The closest community of Ktunaxa First Nations people are members of the Tobacco Plains Indian Band in Grasmere approximately 22 km south of the Park.

3.2.2 European History

In 1901, the construction of a spur line of the Great Northern Railway (GNR) from Montana went through the park linking the United States to the Elk Valley and

enabling the importing of goods from the United States and exporting of coal and timber. Portions of the now abandoned rail bed can be found in the park. Many important transportation routes passed through and near the area.

Another transportation route that traversed the park was a mud-wagon trail and stagecoach route called the Kalispell Trail. Used between 1895 - 1899, this trail and route served both passengers and freight between Kalispell, Montana and Fort Steele, a journey of 36 hours. Today there are no visible signs of the trail. Steamboats also paddled past the shores of Kikomun up the Kootenay River in the late 1800s until the CPR 'BC Southern Line' was completed in 1898.

3.3 Recreational Amenities

3.3.1 Camping at Kikomun

Kikomun is open for visitors May 1-September 30 providing three vehicle accessible campsites: 1) Kalispell Trail with 30 sites; 2) Ponderosa with 37 sites; and 2) Surveyors with 104 sites. Of the 171 campsites, 138 can be reserved and the remainder are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Ponderosa campground offers 10 vehicle accessible campsites with electrical hook-ups at an extra charge of $5/night. Also available for rent are two sleeping cabins.

3.3.2 Kikomun Offers a Variety of Recreation Opportunities

The Park's five small inland lakes and rolling hills typical of the kettle and kame topography of a glaciated landscape with a prominent esker running the length of the park creates a pastoral landscape offering many recreational amenities.

3.3.2.1 Fishing

Fishing for kokanee in the Koocanusa reservoir has been excellent although fish are small. Fishers also catch largemouth bass, which were introduced into many of the kettle lakes in and around the Park in the mid 1900s.

3.3.2.2 Playground

There is an adventure playground located between the Surveyors Campground and day-use picnic area with a grass area and picnic tables adjacent for adults to watch youngsters play.

3.3.2.3 Boating and Swimming

Kayaks, stand-up paddleboards and paddle-boat rentals are available from Surveyors beach. Visitors enjoy paddling all manner of vessels around the clear inviting waters of Surveyors Lake and adjacent Engineers Lake. Two beaches beckon visitors at Saunders day use beach and Surveyors beach below the campground. Remote bike/hike in pebble beaches can be accessed north of Ponderosa campsite on Lake Koocanusa. At the Kalispell Campground is a popular boat launch for motorized boats on Lake Koocanusa, as well as a day use parking for vehicles and boat trailers.

3.3.2.4 Biking and Hiking Trails

There is a self-guided mountain bike loop leaving from the southwest area of Surveyors campsite, along the west side of Surveyors lake, intersecting with the abandoned Great Northern Railways line. There used to be a self-guided brochure called the "Great Northern Rail Trail" with post-in-place numbers guiding visitors around a loop trail. BC Parks no longer prints the brochure and the interpretive posts have largely disappeared. Easily accessible, flat hiking loops circumnavigate both Hidden and Surveyors Lakes.

3.3.2.5 Swimming

Surveyors Lake is a popular swimming destination with sandy beaches located below Surveyors Campsite and drive-in beach at Saunders Beach. Local swimmers come early in the season to cross-lake swim training for the open swim portion of triathlons and for general fitness. The Lake Koocanusa shoreline on the western boundary of Kikomun offer lengthy gravel beaches for swimming and are less busy.

4. Managing the Natural Resources and Visitors at Kikomun

4.1 Kikomun Creek Management Plan Priorities

Kikomun Creek Park has outstanding provincially significant conservation values and recreational opportunities that continue to attract large numbers of tourists and residents. The park's grassland and open forest ecosystems and associated rare species contribute to the conservation legacy of the BC Parks system. A variety of recreational opportunities, valued by visitors, are provided in a manner sustainable in this environment through well-planned management and monitoring of environmental impacts. (Kikomun Creek Management Plan, 2014).

This Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Interpretation Plan is intended to compliment the Kikomun Creek Management Plan (2014). An interpretation plan is a persuasive management tool promoting helpful and appropriate visitor behaviours. To begin the Plan process required an inventory of non-personal natural and cultural interpretation media at Kikomun Creek Provincial Park. Educational efforts have focused on grasslands and their importance to society and future generations as well as species at risk in the Park e.g. Western painted turtle and Lewis's Woodpecker. Through sign panels, interpretive signs, and brochures, these values are shared with park visitors. Limited personal interpretation has been delivered at Kikomun since 2002.

Over the past decade and a half, a number of workshops and grassland-oriented field tours have taken place on the ecological restoration treatment areas with grassland management specialists. The ecosystem restoration work in the park has been recognized by many grassland conservation organizations as ground breaking in park management. The information from these monitoring sites is also benefiting those carrying out grassland ecosystem restoration work in the areas surrounding

the park. In terms of future research, there are opportunities to establish Long Term Ecological Monitoring (LTEM) sites in grassland and wetland ecosystems that will contribute to BC Parks' long-term monitoring network. Research into the potential impact of Elk grazing on treated grassland ecosystems is another opportunity in the park that could provide insights into more effective restoration of bunchgrass species.

Strategies for implementing the Management Plan have been to:

- Continue to implement the Ecosystem Restoration Plan including tree removal, vegetation management and prescribed burning.
- Continue to monitor the restoration of treated areas and establish monitoring to determine the effect of high Elk populations on native bunch grasses.
- Ensure that recreational use does not occur in the Hunts Hill area of the park zoned for conservation values. Develop management strategies for protecting values and restricting public use.
- Implement signing, messaging and monitoring related to recreational use restrictions.
- Conduct periodic compliance and enforcement patrols to ensure compliance is achieved.
- Develop and implement treatment plans for forest fuel reduction and secure funding for implementation.

The measure of success of this Management Plan use the following relevant measures:

- Percentage of the province/region native species and ecosystems represented in the parks and protected areas system
- Presence and number of initiatives that engage First Nations in the management of natural and cultural values in parks and protected areas.
- Visitation statistics regarding increased diverse recreation opportunity and user satisfaction rating
- Number of new non-personal interpretation experiences created
- Randomized surveys of park users to see percentage of visitors engaged with non-personal interpretation and retention of messages communicated.

4.2 Grassland Restoration

Grassland ecosystems in the park are rare and highly vulnerable due to: forest in-growth, excessive fuel loading, invasive plants, over-grazing by elk and natural forest/grassland succession because of historic wildfire suppression throughout the Rocky Mountain Trench. Management direction is required to determine the long-term strategy for protecting, restoring and managing the grassland and open forest ecosystem restoration, especially during predicted transition due to climate change. A common strategy for ecosystem response to climate change has been towards strategies that increase ecosystem resilience.

However, the lack of a coordinated, consistent global response to fire has moved managers beyond resilience into a strategy of managed ecosystem transformation. As the forests in Kikomun Creek Park are expected to transform from in-grown dense thicket forests back into grasslands, transformation strategies such as ecological restoration can help support transformation and avoid issues such as the establishment of invasive species. An ecological restoration management plan was developed in 1998 to restore approximately 400 hectares of the park to a pre-contact distribution of grasslands and open-forests types.

The park was divided into 23 priority polygon treatment areas. This plan has been followed from 1998-2014 resulting in over 300 hectares of in-grown forest restored to open forest grasslands. Invasive plants are a significant threat to the grasslands in the Park. St John's wort is the most commonly found invasive plant followed by sulphur cinquefoil, spotted knapweed, hounds-tongue and burdock. The latter three species are more prevalent near trails, roads and parking areas. St. John's wort has significantly reduced wildflower diversity in the grasslands throughout the Park.

4.3 Lakes and Streams

Past management practices and development have changed the natural hydrology of the kettle lakes and streams in the park. Roads and a flume (on private land) have affected the natural flow of surface water through the site to Lake Koocanusa and a causeway built for the Great Northern Railway causes a significant change in water flow from Surveyors Lake and Engineers Lake to Fisher Lake, which is itself also bisected by the causeway. The effect of these water flow barriers on aquatic ecosystems, including species such as the blue-listed Western painted turtle and bull trout, is unknown. The hydrology of these dry ecosystems is an important component of their ecological function.

4.4 Species at Risk

Some of the species at risk that use the park, such as grizzly bears and bull trout, range over large areas with the park representing only a small fraction of the utilized habitat. Other species, such as Western painted turtles and American badgers, are more focused on the park. Western painted turtles uses all of the lakes in the park. A survey carried out in 2001 showed a maximum population of 1,190 turtles. Considering the significant recreational use on the small lakes in the park and potential influence of climate change, there could be some impact on the Western painted turtle population. Not much specific information is known about the American badgers in the park. Both the badgers and their burrows are known to be present in the park. The occurrence of little bluestem in the park is based on data that is very old and may be out of date.

4.5 Cultural Heritage

There are archaeological sites (DhPt-17) of cultural value that are potentially vulnerable to being impacted in the future along with any others that might be discovered in the park. No immediate threats are present but, as these values lie in the ground and are not very visible, their protection requires awareness and

vigilance. The Ktunaxa Nation is interested in ensuring the archaeological and cultural resources of the park are protected.

4.6 Zoning at Kikomun Creek Provincial Park

4.6.1 Intensive Recreation Zone (IRZ)

Campgrounds, day use areas and group sites are represented in the IRZ, 19% of park or 129 hectares. This zone provides a variety of readily accessible, facility-oriented recreation opportunities. Management is on maintaining high-quality and diverse recreational opportunities. Within this zone is intensive management of hazard trees and invasive weeds, park user experience and control their impacts. Interpretation and information appropriate in this zone. Trails for hiking, cross country skiing and mountain biking are appropriate for this zone.

4.6.2 Nature Recreation Zone (NRZ)

The NRZ zone is represented by all areas where dispersed recreation occurs along trails and in areas with a high degree of naturalness, represented by 59% of park or 402 hectares. The purpose of the NRZ is to protect scenic values and to provide for dispersed recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment. Management of this zone is for natural qualities with development subordinate to the natural setting. This zone promotes the appreciation of natural and cultural values by providing multi-use trails, interpretation and boating experiences that enhance park users' interaction in the natural environment. Interpretation and information as well as trails for hiking, cross country skiing and mountain biking are also appropriate for this zone.

4.6.3 Special Natural Feature Zone (SNFZ)

The SNFZ is mainly the grassland area that has been restored representing 22% of the park or 151 hectares. The purpose of this zone is to protect and present significant natural values, features or processes because of their special character, fragility or natural value. Of primary importance in this zone is the conservation of grassland values that have been restored as well as ongoing scientific research and monitoring. There is potential for ongoing education opportunities in this zone, although management will minimize recreational use with limited facilities such as trails. With minimal recreational facility development and low recreational use, this creates a balance with the more intensively developed and used zones in the Park. Interpretation and information is not appropriate in this zone. Trails for hiking, cross country skiing and mountain biking for research and education purposes are appropriate for this zone.

4.7 Ecological Restoration Projects at Kikomun

BC Parks began working with various NGO groups and other agencies on the concept of carrying out a pilot Ecosystem Restoration project at Kikomun Creek Provincial Park in 1996. The next year approval was given to initiate a "Pilot Ecosystem Restoration Project". This essentially allowed BC Parks to remove trees from provincial parkland and to retain the revenue from the sale of the trees to pay

for the restoration costs. A set of guiding principles were established for this Ecosystem Restoration project which included:

- The restoration work had to follow an approved vegetation management plan and preferably an approved Park Management Plan.
- Local environmental groups must be informed and on-side.
- The most environmentally sensitive method available must be used for the removal of trees, not the cheapest.
- Money from the sale of trees must go only towards the removal of trees, clean-up, research plots, wildlife trees, etc.
- The largest trees had to be left – this is a clear distinction from a typical harvesting operation on Crown land.
- The removal of trees should happen only once - after that the ecosystem should be maintained by regular prescribed burning.

To date BC Parks has completed many different types of restoration treatment including; hand slashing, mastication, machine tree removal, pile burning, sloop burning and prescribed burning. In addition both the standardized pre/post photo monitoring as well as long-term permanent research monitoring sites have been established in the park. These sites have had three, five and ten year post treatment monitoring completed on them. Grassland restoration changes following treatment is a slow process as witnessed by the above monitoring. This site provides a great science based monitoring opportunity as full scale tree removal with associated long term monitoring sites are rare in the East Kootenay Trench.

4.7.1 Ecological Restoration Planning

Outdated Biophysical mapping was upgraded to Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping in 1997. This data was then used to develop a descriptive Ecosystem Restoration Management Plan as well as a Research Monitoring Plan.

Year	Planning
1993	Biophysical Habitat Mapping
1997	Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping / Management Strategy
1998	Grassland/Open Forest Ecosystem Restoration Management Plan Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring Plan
2002	Ecosystem Restoration Overview / Adjacent Crown Lands
2003	Predictive Ecosystem Mapping

Figure 1: Timeline of Ecosystem Restoration at Kikomun

4.7.2 Research to Support Grassland Restoration

A commitment was made from the beginning to have a standardized and defendable Research / Monitoring component. Special attention has focused on known endangered species and potential associated risks.

Year	Research	Author
1995	Endangered Species Plant Inventory	H. Roemer

1996-98	Badger Survey	N. Newhouse
1998	Native Grass Plug Co-op Project Forest Service Nursery/BC Parks	J. Kusisto
1998	Research Monitoring Plots Established	T. Ross
1998	Soil Impact Monitoring/Forest Service	M. Curran
2002	Vegetation Monitoring Report/BC Parks	T. Ross
2007	Vegetation Monitoring Report/BC Parks	T. Ross
2012	Vegetation Monitoring Report/BC Parks	T. Ross

Figure 2: Research Projects at Kikomun Creek Park to support Grassland Restoration

4.7.3 History of Grassland Restoration Treatment Activity

To date four hundred plus hectares have been treated using a variety of methods including: hand slashing, mechanical tree removal and chipping and prescribed burning. In excess of a million dollars has been spent carrying out this ecological restoration and associated monitoring.

Year	Parkland treated (ha)	Volume (m3)
1998	6	*
1999	40	1322
2001	45	1010
2002	30	870
2004	45	2436
2005	40	2040 (Est.)
2014	50 (Est.)	2672
2015	60 (Est.)	6708
Total	**334**	**17,058 (Est.)**

* all wood was used for firewood inside park Est. = estimated

Figure 3: Year and size of area treated

4.7.4 Cost of Ecosystem Restoration Works from 1997 to 2015

Activity	**Costs**
Planning	$73,000
Slashing	$140,000
Mastication (Chipping)	$27,000
Tree Removal	$720,000 (Est.)
Prescribed Burning	$95,000
Monitoring	$22,000
Total	**$1,077,000**

Figure 4: Cost of Ecosystem Restoration Works 1997-2015

1998

Polygon 9 - Pre-Treatment- T5+25 m. - T5+30 m. - 010°

2002

Polygon 9 - Post-treatment - T5+25 m. - T5+30 m. - 010°

Photo 1: Pre (1998) and Post (2002) treatment of Grassland Restoration

4.8 Prescribed Burning

Low intensity spring burns have been successfully carried out in co-operation with BC Wildlife Service. One of BC Parks objectives for this Ecological Restoration project has been to re-introduce fire back to the parks landscape.

Date	Size	Park Location	Burn Boss
April 1994	5 hectares	Boat Launch	BC Parks
April 1998	3 hectares	North Pool Group Site	BC Parks
April 2002	27 hectares	Polygons 1 & 4	BC Forest Service (IA)
April 2004	62 hectares	Polygons 6, 7, 8 & 9	BC Parks
April 2008	42 hectares	Polygons 27,28,30,31 & 39	BC Parks
April 2008	40	Polygons 23, 24 & 35	BC Parks
Total	**176 hectares**		

Figure 5: Prescribed burn dates, sizes, locations and agency responsible for burn

Photo 2: Prescribed burning along northern Park boundary

4.9 Future of Ecosystem Restoration at Kikomun

Ecosystem Restoration (ER) in BC Parks continues to be challenged by the very high costs associated with tree removal as the largest and most valuable trees are protected from harvesting. The non-commercial trees removed are more difficult to dispose of as they usually not high quality saw logs, thus the cost per hectare for harvesting is high in parks. BC Parks also requires all tree removal to be done on frozen ground with sufficient snow levels required to protect park values as well as limit site degradation. Planning costs associated with ER projects in parks tend to be higher as well given the high level of public scrutiny and need for more details to be considered and included in the prescriptions. BC Parks has developed its own Best Management Practices (BMP`s) for planning, road design / engineering and harvesting, which set high standards for any work in parks. The challenge in the future will be securing funding to carry out critical assessment, monitoring and maintenance treatments as in house government funding is very limited with the majority of ER funding being received from outside funding. BC Parks has made great progress towards meeting their ER goals and objectives in BC Parks located in the East Kootenay Trench, the challenge will be to maintain these treated sites into the future, so that all the progress made to date is not lost.

BC Parks is committed to continuing Ecological Restoration works in the future as well as sharing associated data, information and results with other organizations, non –government groups, public and stakeholders. An increased focus for the near future will be placed on endangered species research, post-treatment monitoring as well as working with other agencies and non–Government organizations involved in Ecosystem Restoration initiatives in the East Kootenay Trench.

5. Kikomun Creek Provincial Park: Interpretation Mission, Goals, Objectives, Themes/Subthemes/Messages and Non-Personal Interpretive Media

5.1 Develop a Mission for Interpretation at Kikomun

BC Parks managing Kikomun do not have a mission statement for interpretation. It should state concisely: who you are (as an agency), what you do with regards to interpretation and why you do it. An attempt at a Mission Statement for Interpretation at Kikomun could be: *"At Kikomun Creek Provincial Park, BC Parks employs innovative strategies to manage a rare open-forest grassland ecosystem including its unique recreational experiences, and values visitors as partners in this effort when they demonstrate positive stewardship behavior while visiting".*

5.2 Interpretation Goals at Kikomun

Interpretation at Kikomun is intended to connect people to the Park and create enjoyable, safe, recreational learning experiences fostering lifelong connections to this unique habitat. Opportunities for interpretation are designed to help visitors

discover nature in their own way, at their own pace, with targeted products developed respecting specific user profiles.

Interpretation goals are 'goal posts' to shoot for and are a statement of what BC Parks would like to have happen at Kikomun. Goals provide a framework for developing more specific Kikomun themes, messages and appropriate interpretive media to effectively communicate the unique features of the Park. Below are suggested goals for interpretation at Kikomun:

1. Stimulate thinking globally about issues like climate change, habitat loss and species at risk and use local actions employed at Kikomun to demonstrate solutions to these challenges.
2. Use interpretation as an education tool regarding the unique natural and cultural heritage of Kikomun.
3. Maximize the potential of interpretation for attitude and behavioural change by highlighting specific actions that engage visitors as stewardship partners with BC Parks.
4. Monitor interpretation opportunities incorporating visitor input to improve the visitor experience and conservation of Kikomun.
5. Communicate the message of 'innovation to pay for restoration'. The financial pressures that accompany challenges to do projects like 'ecosystem restoration' mean BC Parks must take a fresh look at how to deliver the things that visitors expect e.g. enhanced and accessible protected areas; more clean and safe campsites; greater accessibility to recreation; and safe, up-to-date programs and facilities.
6. Demonstrate adaptive management and the feedback mechanism from ongoing research and monitoring successes as well as the challenges facing BC Parks managing Kikomun.
7. Engage First Nations communities, in particular the Tobacco Plains Indian Band in Grasmere, as partners in the legacy of Kikomun.

5.3 Interpretation Objectives

When developing specific communication objectives for interpretation at Kikomun, answer two key questions: 1) Why would a visitor want or need to know this information? If the answer is not obvious, BC Parks needs to create a reason for them; 2) How does BC Parks want the visitor to use the information? If you don't want them to use it then why are you telling them? (Veverka, 1998)

When specific interpretive non-personal programs are developed (e.g. self-guided brochure, interpretive signs, kiosks) three kinds of objectives should be included: 1) *learning* – what do you want visitors to know or remember; 2) *behavioural* – what do you want visitors to be able to do, linked to a specific action; 3) *emotional* – connected to a strong feeling e.g. motivated, surprised, pride, sadness, anger, acceptance related to the specific subject matter. (Veverka, 1998)

Written interpretation objectives are SMART: **s**pecific and **m**easureable, either you **a**ccomplish them or you don't, are **r**elevant and **t**ime sensitive! Following are some recommended interpretive objectives at Kikomun:

- All visitors will know the primary reasons why Kikomun is a Class A provincial park.
- All visitors are aware of and can easily locate safely all park interpretive experiences.
- After participating in an interpretive experience, visitors will be able to state the main theme of the program.
- Visitors will know how the grassland restoration project is a practical example of how BC Parks is improving habitat for wildlife and people since its inception.
- Visitors will understand the importance of this ecosystem to First Nations and European settlers and feel a personal connection that motivates positive stewardship action, passing on Kikomun in a healthy state to future generations.

5.4 Interpretive Themes, Subthemes and Messages

Themes are the central ideas of any interpretive program and it should be summarized in one sentence. Strong themes provide structure and clarity of understanding because they contain one main idea, reveal purpose and are stated in an interesting manner. (Veverka, 1998) The six suggested themes for Kikomun are:

1. Weeds are worrisome to wildflowers.
2. Wildfires: friend or foe?
3. Respect these wild rules for our home when visiting this summer.
4. People have visited Kikomun through the years - what will you leave behind as your legacy?
5. After a day of swimming and beaches at Kikomun and Koocanusa, what else is there to do at Kikomun?
6. I ♥ BC grass (lands).

5.5 Description of Interpretive Media at Kikomun: Current and Proposed

5.5.1 Current Kikomun Non-Personal Interpretation

As per the non-personal interpretation inventory conducted April 2017 (see Section 6), the following types of non-personal media exist at Kikomun:

- **Kiosks**: covered shelters at the entrance gate, Ponderosa campground and Grassland Kiosk in a wayside pull off enroute to the Kalispell Campground. Multiple signs are posted on the front and backs of these kiosks.
- **Sign Panels**: Plywood painted signs containing various types of information
- **Interpretive Signs**: Includes plywood painted signs with a covered top, baked enamel signs and signs encased in plexi glass boxes on wooden posts

- **Post in Place**: Self-guided experiences where visitors use a numbered brochure with accompanying posts in place at distinguishing features e.g. Great Northern Rail Trail mountain bike loop
- **Grassland Restoration Project Signs**: Signs denoting when grassland restoration occurred at the site
- **Trail Maps**: Trail maps on wooden posts in strategic locations to help visitors navigate through Kikomun
- **Monuments**: Formal signs acknowledging when the park was formed and sponsors

5.5.2 Proposed Additional Interpretive Media (Non-Personal and Personal)

- **Bathroom Blurbs:** Utilizing washroom walls and backs of toilet doors with simple, short and funny behavior tips to help Kikomun's Who's Who. For example cool caring opportunities to help Western painted turtles, ground nesting birds, eradicate noxious weeds, etc. Could involve local school children art work and text from Jaffray Elementary School engaging locals and visitors to Kikomun to 'lend a helping hand'.
- **Information Leaflets:** Create specific leaflets on "Wild about Flowers", "Place Names by and for the People e.g. Kikomun, Koocanusa, Surveyors/Engineer Lake, Kalispell Trail", "Resourceful People" highlighting First Nations use of plants and animals in the Rocky Mountain Trench.
- **Grassland Geocache:** Create a biking or hiking geocache, a cross between a treasure hunt and orienteering, where visitors discover about the process of restoration and help monitor its recovery by getting involved with a Grassland Citizen Science Initiative
- **Social Media:** Design and manage a "Kikomun by the Season" Facebook Page highlighting unique opportunities for various times of the year
- **Special Events:** I ♥ BC Grass (lands) Special Event in June inviting partners, guest lecturers, guides, etc. educating local people about the unique biology and ecology of Kikomun.
- **Guided Grassland Experiences**: A series of lectures at Kikomun with a local First Nations expert on grassland ethnobotany, fire ecologist, grassland biologist, bird experts, wildflower experts, fisheries biologist about diversity of flora and fauna, risk of invasive species, spawning Kokanee, turtle truths with experts targeting both local and visitor audiences who want to learn more.

5.5.3 Telling the Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Story: Matrix of Themes, Subthemes, Messages, Interpretive Media, and Locations

Specific subthemes and messages, suggested interpretive media/method and site location suggested are indicated in the table below.

Theme 1. Weeds are worrisome to wildflowers.			
Subtheme	*Message*	*Interpretive Media/ Method*	*Suggested Site Location*
1.1 Non-native, invasive plants out-compete beautiful and rare wildflowers.	Invasive plants are a significant threat to grasslands at Kikomun – the worst being St. John's wort, sulphur cinquefoil, spotted knapweed, hounds-tongue and burdock.	Guided grassland experiences Grassland citizen science initiative	Selected sites at Kikomun depending on the topic Kikomun could host events to eradicate invasive, noxious weeds
1.2 Caring for nature's wildflowers.	Non-native plants are outcompeting wildflowers so let's give them a helping hand. "Pick a flower it is yours for a day; leave it be and its there for a lifetime."	Bathroom blurbs	Washrooms and outhouses
1.3 Stop weeds in their tracks.	You can help reduce the spread of noxious weeds to your home.	Bathroom blurbs Social media	Washrooms and outhouses World Wide Web
Theme 2. Wildfires: friend or foe?			
2.1 Wildfires are important for healthy ecosystems at Kikomun.	Grasslands survive and thrive with fire: what is their secret to success?	Guided grassland experiences Grassland geocache Interpretive signs Grassland restoration kiosk	Some signage exists at Kikomun Grassland restoration kiosk needs some enhancement
2.2 Suppressing wildfires encourage trees to invade and shade out grasslands.	Fire risk can harm people and destroy personal property but are essential for grassland health.	Interpretive signs Great Northern Rail Trail post in place Grassland restoration project signs (enhanced)	Loop at Kikomun, partially along the abandoned GNR line
2.3 Climate change means evolving strategies and adaptive management of Kikomun.	Management at Kikomun is innovative and we are learning lessons about how to do it right.	Grassland restoration project signs (enhanced)	Where they presently exist in the park
	Kikomun is expecting drier, hotter summers and drought as the climate changes. What might be the impacts and adaptations required for both Kikomun and us?	Grassland geocache	Throughout Kikomun

Theme 3. Respect these wild rules for our home while visiting this summer.			
3.1Kikomun is home to threatened wildlife that need our help.	Kikomun is where some animal species of special concern make their living finding food, water, shelter and space to survive.	Information signs Bathroom blurbs	Saunders Beach Surveyors Campground
3.2 Kikomun protects a small portion of this rare ecosection in BC.	Managing rare ecosystems requires BC Parks to take radical action using innovative techniques.	Kiosk Grassland restoration project signs (enhanced)	Entrance and Ponderosa Campground
3.3 Kikomun is protected winter range for ungulates like deer and elk.	Your summer visit affects animals winter opportunities.	Kiosk Grasslands geocache	Entrance and Ponderosa Campground
3.4 Many animals at Kikomun are only seen in summer but depend on the park for their year round survival.	Summer stewardship supports survival until your next visit.	Bathroom blurbs	Especially the washrooms and outhouses around Saunders Beach and Surveyor Beach/Campground
Theme 4. People have visited Kikomun through the years – what will you leave behind as your legacy?			
4.1 First peoples from the Ktunaxa Nation have utilized Kikomun to harvest natural resources for 1000s of years.	What natural resources were utilized by First Nations.	Information leaflet Guided grassland experiences Interpretive signs	Grassland between the Ponderosa and Kalispell Campgrounds
4.2 Europeans have left their mark on the landscape for just over 100 years.	Signs of settlement over the last 100+ years include the Kalispell Trail stagecoach route, Great Northern Railway and Koocanusa Reservoir.	Grassland Geocache	Throughout Kikomun
4.3 Visitation in the last few decades is growing fast.	What are ways to leave a positive legacy of your visit to Kikomun preserving the experience for your future generations to enjoy.	Bathroom Blurbs	Washrooms and outhouses around Kikomun
Theme 5. After a day of swimming and beaches at Kikomun and Koocanusa, what else is there to do at Kikomun?			
5.1 Primary interest in Kikomun is Surveyors Lake, where there are two beaches, swimming, and paddling, but there are so many more options!	Promoting other recreation opportunities at Kikomun – mountain bike loop, hiking loops in spring with early season snow melt and late snow accumulation, bird watching early spring, ethnobotany, kokanee spawning,	Trail maps Sign panels	At both Surveyors and Saunders Beaches Sign panel into Surveyors Campground

	motorized boat launch, SUP to Koocanusa beaches		
5.2 Kikomun can be enjoyed through the seasons.	Unique opportunities at various times of the year reveals deeper learning.	Social media	World Wide Web
Theme 6. I ♥ BC grass (lands).			
6.1 A grassland is not a lawn.	How are they different and the same?	Post in place walk through a piece of native grassland	In the grassland meadow south of the gate house entrance
6.2 Very few native grasslands remain in BC.	Human development and fire suppression are two of the main reasons why grasslands have disappeared and there are ways to stop their disappearance and restoration.	Grassland geocache Guided grassland experiences Special event	Throughout Kikomun
6.3 Grasslands do not match the BC image of old growth forests, but they are more rare.	Forests cover most of BC and big old trees are what we expect to see when visiting the province but grasslands are part of our varied landscape too.	Grassland geocache Guided grassland experiences Special event	Throughout Kikomun

Figure 6: Telling the Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Story

6. Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Non-Personal Interpretation Inventory

This section inventories the existing interpretive and information signage at Kikomun Creek Provincial Park as of April 1, 2017. This inventory was necessary to understand current state of signage, assess the effectiveness of interpretation, determine what to eliminate/replace and what can be re-purposed to ensure the most cost effective strategy for new interpretive signage. For the purpose of clarity, the park has been divided into three sections: Areas A, B and C. These areas are outlined below (Figure 1) and are expanded upon in greater depth in the following document.

Figure 7: Map of Kikomun Creek Provincial Park and the three areas broken down for this report.

Area A is located on the northeast section of the park (Figure 7) and contains sites labeled as S001 to S017 in Figure 8.

Area A

Figure 8: Map of Area A and locations of signs; sites 001-S017.

Sites are marked with different colours to illustrate what kind of sign they are: kiosk (red), sign panels (light blue), posts in place (pink), interpretive signs (green), grassland restoration project sign (purple), bathrooms (green washroom symbol), trailmap (white) and monument (yellow).

Site 001 – Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Entrance Kiosk

Site 001 (S001 in Figure 8) is located at the park entrance (49°15’’15.3 north and 115°14”13.9 west) and is a kiosk.

Figure 9: Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Entrance Kiosk at S001.

Top photos and bottom left photo are the front of kiosk; bottom right photo is the back of the kiosk.

Site 002 – Gate House Information Sign Panel

Site 002 (S002 in Figure 8) is located at the park entrance west of the Gate House (49°15”15.3 north and 115°14”13.9 west) opposite of the kiosk and is an information sign panel.

Figure 10. Gate House Information Sign Panel at S002.

Top photos and bottom left photo are the front of sign panel, bottom right photo is of the back of the sign panel.

Site 003 – Surveyors Campsite Entrance Information Sign Panel

Site 003 (S003 in Figure 8) consists of an information sign panel sign located near the entrance to Surveyors campground located at 49°15’’04.1 north and 115°14”06.0 west.

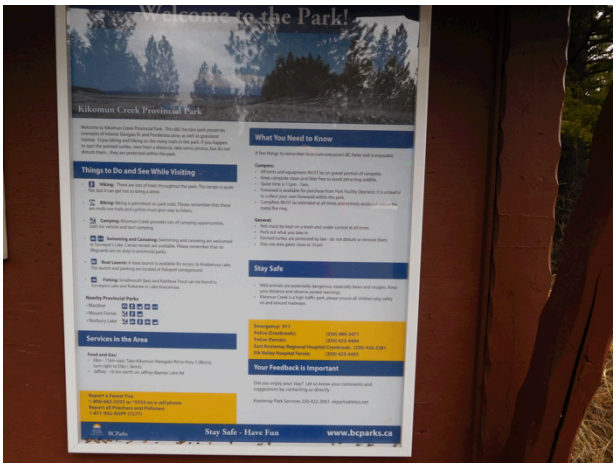

Figure 11: Surveyors Campsite Entrance Information Sign Panel at S003.

Site 004 – Surveyors Campsite Western Painted Turtles Interpretive Sign

Site 004 (S004 in Figure 8) consists of an interpretive sign about the Western painted turtle and is located inside the Surveyors campsite at 49°15”00.6 north and 115°14”23.0 west.

Figure 12: Surveyors Campsite Western Painted Turtles Interpretive Sign panel at S004.

Note the rusted holes, damage to the sign from a hard object.

Site 005 – Surveyors Campground Western Shower House Bathroom

Site 005 (S005 in Figure 8) is the shower house bathroom located on the western section of the Surveyors campground and is located at 49°15”55.2 north and 115°14”24.8 west. Not in the photos is the eastern shower house and bathroom, and the outhouses in the Surveyors Campground.


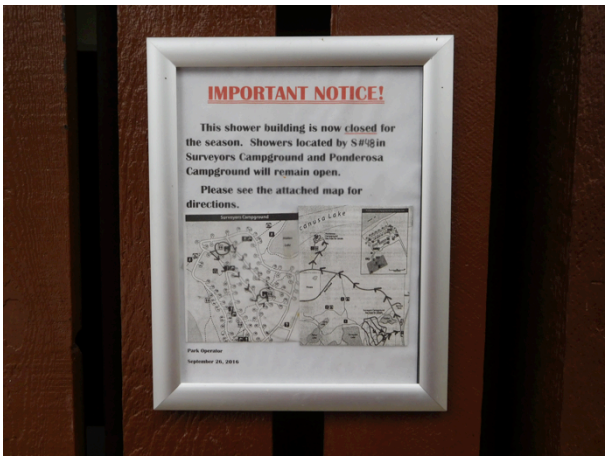


Figure 13: Surveyors Campground Western Shower House at S005.

Site 006 – Great Northern Rail Trail Interpretive Sign

Site 006 (S006 in Figure 8) consists of an interpretive sign about the Great Northern Rail Trail on the southwest side of Surveyors campsite located at 49°15’’51.7 north and 115°14”24.5 west.

Figure 14: Great Northern Rail Trail Interpretive Sign at S006.
Note the brochure holder for the self-guided bicycle tour that is empty and rarely stocked. The bottom image is a map for the Surveyor’s Campsite. Not sure how many people know it is there and view it. Might be better moved to the Sign Panel at the entrance to the Amphitheater.

Site 007 – Trail Map

Site 007 (S007 in Figure 8) consists of map highlighting the trail locations at Kikomun Creek Provincial Park, located at 49°15’’51.3 north and 115°14”23.4 west.

Figure 14: Trail map at S007.

Site 008 – Information Sign Panel at the Entrance to the Amphitheater and the Surveyors Campground Amphitheater

Site 008 (S008 in Figure 8) consists of an information sign panel and amphitheater that has fallen into disrepair located in Surveyors campsite at 49°15’’55.0 north and 115°14”19.4 west.

Figure 15: Information Sign Panel and Kiosk at S008.

Site 009 – Great Northern Rail Trail Interpretive Sign at the Adventure Playground

Site 009 (S009 in Figure 8) consists of an interpretive sign about the Great Northern Rail Trail on the southeast side of the Surveyors Campsite, beside the Adventure Playground 49°14''55.4 north and 115°13"56.8 west.

Figure 16: Great Northen Rail Trail Interpretive Sign at the Adventure Playground.
Note the back of the Interpretive sign at S009 in the image below – empty space could be utilized for a map of the Surveyors Campground. Note in the upper left photo there is a brochure dispenser for the self-guided bike interpretive trail that is empty, and from past experience over the last few years, is rarely stocked.

Site 010 – Bathroom at the Adventure Playground

Site 010 (S010 in Figure 8) consists of a bathroom located on the southeastern section of the park and is nearby the adventure playground (49°14''54.4 north and 115°13"56.7 west).

Figure 17: Bathroom at the Adventure Playground S010.

Site 011 – Saunders Beach Turn-Around Information Sign Panel

Site 011 (S010 in Figure 8) consists of an underutilized information sign panel located at 49°14''44.4 north and 115°13"54.1 west.

Figure 18. Information Sign Panel at S011.

Site 012 – Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Designation Monument

Sign 012 (S012 in Figure 8) consists of the designation monument located at 49°14’’43.2 north and 115°13”55.3 west.

Figure 19. Monument at S012.
Not included in the photo are two outhouses for day users at Saunders Beach, 40 m south of the monument.

Site 013 – Saunders Beach Western Painted Turtles Interpretive Sign

Site 013 (S013 in Figure 8) consists of an interpretive sign regarding the Western painted turtle and is located at 49°14’’43.3 north and 115°13”57.0 west.

Figure 20: Saunders Beach Western Painted Turtles Interpretive Sign at S013.
Note sign is damaged in the top and bottom left from a heavy object like a rock.

Site 014 – Grasslands in the Mountains Interpretive Sign

Site 014 (S014 in Figure 8) consists of an interpretive sign regarding grasslands in the mountains and is located at 49°14''43.6 north and 115°14"22.1 west.

Figure 21: Interpretive sign at S014.
Note insects trapped under the plexi glass; difficult to remove.

Site 015 – Great Northern Rail Trail Self-Guided Trail Post-in-Place Marker

Site 015 (S015 in Figure 8) consists of an old Great Northern Rail Trail post-in-place and is located at 49°14''32.8 north and 115°14"16.7 west.

Figure 22. Post-in-place marker at S015.
Many of the posts from the "Great Northern Rail Trail" self-guided bike trail are either removed or deteriorating.

Site 016 – Grassland Restoration Project Sign

Site 016 (S017 in Figure 8) consists of a grassland restoration project sign post with no sign and is located at 49°14''33.7 north and 115°14"33.9 west.

Figure 23: Grassland post in place at S016.
Note this is technically a grassland restoration project sign but the sign is missing off the post.

Site 017 – Grassland Restoration Project Sign

Site 017 (S017 in Figure 8) consists of a sign regarding tree removal in the grassland restoration project located at 49°15”07.9 north and 115°14”41.1 west.

Figure 24: Grassland restoration project sign at S017.

Area B

Area B is located on the southern section of the park and contains sites 018 to 024, labeled as S019 to S023 in Figure 25.

Figure 25: Map of Area B and locations of interpretive signs; sites 018-S023.
Sites are marked with different colours to illustrate what kind they are as follow: kiosk (red), sign panels (light blue), posts in place (pink), interpretive signs (green), grassland restoration project signs (purple).

Site 018 – Grassland Restoration Project Sign

Site 018 (S018 in Figure 25) consists of a sign regarding a grassland restoration project and is located along the abandoned Great Northern Rail Trail at 49°14’’13.9 north and 115°14”25.6 west.

Figure 26: Grassland Restoration Project Sign at S018.
Note the sign is out of date as the trees have been removed.

Site 019 – Water, Water Not Everywhere! Interpretive Sign

Site 019 (S019 in Figure 25) consists of an interpretive sign regarding water and is located at 49°13’’39.7 north and 115°14”45.9 west.

Figure 27: Interpretive sign at S019.
Not included in the photos is the outhouse at the adjacent Kalispell Campground and outhouses and picnic shelter at the South Pool day use group area.

Site 020 – Lewis's Woodpecker Interpretive Sign

Site 020 (S020 in Figure 25) consists of an interpretive sign regarding the Lewis's Woodpecker and is located at 49°14''04.6 north and 115°15"04.4 west.

Figure 28: Interpretive sign at S020.

Site 021 – Grassland Restoration Sign

Site 021 (S021 in Figure 25) consists of a sign regarding a prescribed burn as part of a grassland restoration project and is located at 49°14''14.8 north and 115°14"12.4 west.

Figure 29: Grassland restoration sign at S021.

Site 022 – Wanted: Native Grasslands Interpretive Sign

Site 022 (S022 in Figure 25) consists of an interpretive sign regarding native grasslands and is located at 49°14’’20.4 north and 115°15”22.4 west.


Figure 30: Interpretive sign at S022.

Site 023 - Grassland Restoration Sign

Site 023 (S023 in Figure 25) consists of a sign regarding a prescribed burn as part of a grassland restoration project and is located at 49°14’’23.4 north and 115°15”27.2 west.

Figure 31: Grassland restoration sign at S023.

Area C

Area C is located on the northwestern section of the park and contains sites 024 to 031, labeled as S024 to S031 in Figure 26.

Figure 32: Map of Area C and locations of interpretive signs; sites S024-S031.
Sites are marked with different colours to illustrate what kind they are as follow: kiosk (red), sign panels (light blue), posts in place (pink), interpretive signs (green), grassland restoration signs (purple).

Site 024 – Grassland Restoration Sign

Site 024 (S024 in Figure 32) consists of a sign regarding tree removal in a grassland restoration project and is located at 49°14’’27.9 north and 115°15”34.9 west.

Figure 33: Grassland restoration sign at S024.

Site 025 – Ponderosa Campground Entrance Kiosk

Site 025 (point S025 in Figure 32) is located in the Ponderosa Campground (49°14''27.9 north and 115°15"15.9 west) and consists of a kiosk.

Figure 34: Kiosk at S025. Top photos are the front of kiosk, bottom photo is of the back of the kiosk. This empty space could be utilized for signage. Not included in the photos are the outhouses, picnic shelter or cabins.

Site 026 – Grassland Restoration Sign

Site 026 (S026 in Figure 32) consists of a sign regarding a prescribed burn as part of a grassland restoration project and is located at 49°14’’29.3 north and 115°15”11.2.

Figure 35: Grassland restoration sign at S026.

Site 027 – Grassland Restoration sign

Site 027 (S027 in Figure 32) consists of a sign regarding tree removal in the grassland restoration project located at 49°14’’30.2 north and 115°15”11.0 west.

Figure 36: Grassland restoration sign at S027.

Site 028 – Grassland Restoration Sign

Site 028 (S028 in Figure 32) consists of a sign regarding a prescribed burn as part of a grassland restoration project and is located at 49°14''42.2 north and 115°15"03.0 west.

Figure 37: Grassland restoration sign at S028.

Site 029 – Grassland Restoration Sign

Site 029 (S029 in Figure 32) consists of a sign regarding tree removal in a grassland restoration project located at 49°14''44.1 north and 115°14"59.6 west.

Figure 37: Grassland restoration sign at S029.

Site 030 – Grassland Restoration Interpretive Kiosk

Site 030 (point S030 in Figure 32) is an interpretive kiosk regarding the history of fire circles and is located 49°14''52.0 north and 115°14"54.2 west.

Figure 38: Grassland Restoration Interpretive Kiosk at S030
Top photos are the front of kiosk, bottom photos are of the cracks in the plexi glass and attempted repair, as well as damage due to insects getting in-between the plexi glass and the sign.

Site 031 – Grasslands – Born of Fire Interpretive Sign

Site 031 (S031 in Figure 32) consists of an interpretive sign regarding the successive role fire plays for grasslands is located at 49°14''37.5 north and 115°15"01.1 west.

Figure 39: Interpretive sign at S031.

7. Understanding the Visitors and Suggested Interpretive Media

7.1. Kikomun Visitors and their Use Patterns: Five Sources of Demographic Characteristics

Parks invite people to recreate in nature. The challenge facing BC Parks is to protect these natural treasures for people and from their inappropriate, potentially destructive behavior. This Plan is intended to engage visitors in meaningful experiences with relevant Kikomun themes and messages. To better understand the specific target audience and visitor use patterns this Plan draws from a variety of sources.

*7.1.1 2005 H*ousehold Survey of 2000 British Columbians

Drawn from the 2005 Household Survey of 2000 British Columbians regarding BC Parks, which could help characterize BC visitors to Kikomun:

- For 7/10 respondents, learning about the natural environment and having a range of outdoor recreation opportunities was important.
- Park visitors are primarily outdoor enthusiasts between 35-54, white/Canadian/European, of a higher level of education (37% university degree and 12% other post secondary education).

- Most were linked to internet at home, through their cell phone service provider.
- Primarily couples with children.
- Largest demographics for BC Parks at 31% were age 55+.
- Strong support for BC Parks with 88% who said it is 'very important' that there are provincial parks in BC with the remainder 7% saying BC Parks are 'important'.
- Wilderness preservation was rated at 82% being 'very important' and 11% as 'important'.
- 75.4% of respondents saw BC Parks as places to learn about the natural environment.
- The strongest held images of BC Parks are: fun, relaxing, wilderness atmosphere, and family-oriented. Other images were of distinctive and unique attractions.

Relevant audience and visitor use components to this Plan from the 2005 Household Survey:

- British Columbians care about BC Parks and want to learn about their unique characteristics in a fun, relaxing way outdoors.
- If visitors want to find out more about Kikomun they could be directed to a website or Facebook page while visiting the park as there is internet at the Park through 3G, on cell phones.
- Experiences at BC Parks are shared amongst families with children, and by a more mature audience with a higher degree of education.

7.1.2 BC Parks – Kikomun Website

Taken from the BC Parks website about Kikomun, it is noted that Kikomun is close to major populations in southern Alberta and close to the USA border. The Park also attracts day-users from the East Kootenays, largely from the Elk Valley, with the closest community being Fernie. Kikomun is known as a park unsurpassed in the diversity and quantity of recreational opportunities to residents in the region. Visitors can come for few hours to swim, paddle or picnic at Surveyors or Saunders beach or they can hike a variety of trails from a 15 minute loop around Hidden Lake, to a 30 minute hike around Surveyors Lake or 1.5 hour bike on the Great Northern Rail Trail loop. The boat launch on Lake Koocanusa provides access to hundreds of kms of shoreline, fishing, waterskiing and wake boarding.

The park is a well-known holiday destination for Albertans coming from Calgary, just four hours away. Visitor surveys show that visitors from Alberta make up nearly 60% of park users, while British Columbians account for about 32%. The majority of visitors (59%) who stay overnight have travel trailers, while those tenting make up about 35%. Visitors to the park tend to stay more than 4 days and are mostly repeat visitors, confirming the holiday destination role that the park plays.

Relevant audience and visitor use components to this Plan from the BC Parks Website for Kikomun Creek Provincial Park:

- A high degree of visitors to Kikomun are Albertans in the summer months.
- Given the high percentage of tent use, this can reflect families on a more fixed income.
- Kikomun has high repeat visitation and visitors may be open to more indepth learning during visits year after year and may be interested in tracking changes over time.

7.1.3 Kikomun Creek Management Plan (2014)

From the Kikomun Creek Management Plan (2014), on average over the last 10 years, annual camping attendance has been around 9800. Camping parties and annual day use has averaged about 33,000 vehicles a year. In 2012, camping attendance was higher at 11,800 camping parties and day use was down to 29,600 vehicles.

While some of the increase in camping can be attributed to the increase in the number of campsites available over the last few years, the reason for the decline in day use is not known. The main recreation activities enjoyed at Kikomun include swimming, paddling on the lakes, hiking, mountain biking, camping, and small lake fishing. Lake Koocanusa provides motorized boating and associated opportunities such as fishing, water skiing and float tube towing that is accessed from a boat launch in the park.

Day use recreation at Surveyors Lake is arguably the most popular activity in the park and, at peak times during summer weekends, there can be congestion. Given the inherent popularity of day use beach opportunities, the demand is expected to grow over time and the need to address expanding day use opportunities will need to be addressed. The Lake Koocanusa shoreline in the park was originally planned to provide day use beach recreation with the construction of three lagoons, however, water levels of this reservoir lake have rarely been high enough for the lagoons to be used. There may still be potential for these areas to be used in the future considering that water levels governed by the Columbia River Treaty are being re-considered or there may be future engineering solutions. Cycling is another popular activity that is expected to grow. Increased use of trails can help disperse visitors throughout the park and take pressure off the more popular sites such as Surveyors Lake. Two new short trails have been developed recently that have been important in creating better linkages to existing trails resulting in a more integrated trail network that expands capacity and diversifies the cycling experience.

Relevant audience and visitor use components to this Plan from the Kikomun Creek Management Plan (2014):

- Better trail network can be promoted to repeat users to expand experiences at Kikomun both hiking and biking.
- With congestion at Surveyors lake families could be encouraged to bike to the cobble beaches along Koocanusa.

7.1.4 Conversation with Kikomun Park Facility Operator

Conversation with Jenna Gyrkovits, Park Facility Operator (PFO) at Kikomun regarding her anecdotal observations of Kikomun audience and visitor use (Personal Conversation, March 6, 2017):

- More seniors and out of country visitors come to the Park in spring and fall (i.e. shoulder season).
- When summer hits, primary campers are Albertans from Calgary, Edmonton, and Lethbridge.
- There are high return rates of visitors with people coming back to the park for multiple years.
- Younger families tend to stay for 3 nights to one week; not often longer as it is noted as being 'expensive'.
- Kikomun is a truly a destination vacation Provincial Park.
- Park users seem to be more affluent; not sure about education levels.
- Strong use of Park by motorized boat users on Lake Koocanusa. Many also have ATV/ORV's which they ride locally outside the Park.
- High use of non-motorized recreation in park with bicycles, paddlers on Surveyors Lake and hikers on trails.

Relevant audience and visitor use components to this Plan from conversation with Kikomun PFO:

- Target activities for mature adults in spring and fall; focus on families in the summer.
- With high repeat visitation, encourage further exploration and deeper learning of the Park while hiking and biking.
- Add a component of stewardship of open forest grasslands outside of Kikomun that are used by campers with ATV/ORV's.

7.1.5 Connecting BC Parks Legacy Lessons with Audiences

From reviewing the *BC Parks Legacy* initiative there are many take-away lessons relevant to interpretation at Kikomun.

- B.C. is growing and so is the demand to enjoy our parks and natural wonders.
- There is support from BC's urban/rural, young/old populations who want to share in the responsibility for improving our parks.
- Use innovative tools to empower park lovers to have a direct role in helping improve our BC Parks and establishing a sustainable financial foundation. This includes a partnership model that ensures every penny of funds raised go directly to supporting our parks.

- Communicate the opportunity to be partners, leading to an inclusive, innovative, sustainable and enviable parks system with something for everyone.

Relevant audience and visitor use components to this Plan from BC Parks Legacy:

- Visitation to Kikomun will only increase; the challenge is managing the visitor experience so as not to degrade the Park environment.
- How does BC Parks encourage and reward responsible visitor behavior at Kikomun – currently and in the future?
- Kikomun has a specific example from timber sales for grassland restoration, and the revenue used for interpretation.
- How does BC Parks in the Kootenay-Okanagan region advertise the *BC Parks Foundation*, which can receive gifts, bequests, funds and property? Sophie Pierre, former elected chef of the Aqam (St. Mary's Band) of the Ktunaxa Nation and recent recipient of the Order of Canada (2016), now elder advisor to her community and Ktunaxa Nation, is on the Board of the BC Parks Foundation. She could be a local advisor to Kikomun.
- What opportunities exist for partnerships at Kikomun with organizations like: Wildsight and Wildsight Elk Valley Branch, BC Wildlife Federation, College of the Rockies, East Kootenay Invasive Species Council, East Kootenay Wildlife Association, Fernie Rod and Gun Club, Grasslands Conservation Council of BC, Kootenay Community Bat Project, Kootenay Livestock Association, Kootenay Native Plant Society, Rocky Mountain and Fernie Naturalists, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative

7.2 Recommended Non-Personal Interpretive Media and Locations

BC Parks, East Kootenay South Management Area staff requested the direction of this Plan focus on developing non-personal interpretive media since the opportunities for personal interpretation are limited to existing partnerships at this time.

7.2.1 Non-personal Interpretive Media Recommended for Kikomun

Type of Interpretation at Kikomun	**Location**	**Media best suited for this area**
Kiosk A	Park Entrance, Ponderosa Campground	Interpretive signs Trail maps Information leaflets available from gatehouse
Kiosk B	Grassland Restoration Interpretive Kiosk	Interpretive signs
Sign Panels	Entrance Gate House, Surveyors	Interpretive signs

	Campground Entrance, Entrance to the Amphitheater, Saunders Beach	
Interpretive Signs	Western Painted Turtles – at Surveyors Campground & Saunders Beach Great Northern Rail Trail – at Surveyors Campground and at the Adventure Playground	Interpretive signs
Posts in Place – Self Guided Trails	Great Northern Rail Trail (number of posts are missing) Grassland Restoration Signs	Post in place brochures
Wash houses and outhouses	Park Entrance Outhouse, Surveyors Campground Washhouses and Outhouses, Adventure Playground Outhouses, Saunders Beach Outhouses, Kalispell Campground Outhouses, South Pool Group Site Outhouses and Picnic Shelter, Ponderosa Campground Outhouses and Picnic Shelter	Bathroom blurbs
Trail Maps	Strategic locations around Kikomun	Directional trail maps
Monuments	Saunders Beach acknowledging date and sponsors for Park formation	Sponsorship recognition
NEW - Grassland Geocache	Throughout the Park	Treasure boxes with cool facts hidden throughout the Park
NEW - Social Media: Kikomun Facebook Page	Available always	Through the world wide web
NEW - Information Leaflets	Available from the gatehouse staff	For specific locations
NEW - Special Events	At focal areas in the park	Guided tours Grassland geocache
NEW - Guided Grassland Experiences	Available throughout Kikomun	Guided tours

Figure 40: Interpretive media recommended for Kikomun

7.2.2 Fictional Profile and Preference for Interpretive Media at Kikomun

Interpretive media at Kikomun should be developed to expressly meet targeted audiences. Target interpretive media based on demographic profile of an audience:

- Where do they live? Urban or rural, BC/Canada/US/Foreign
- Life stage – age, marital status, family composition
- Household income
- Education level
- Language prefer
- Transportation mode, camping mode
- Group composition
- Main impetus for travel
- Time of year visit and how often
- What do they know about the park

Visitor non-personal media preferences may vary based on:

- Comfort with technology
- Naturalist intelligence
- Desired level of activity – mild, moderate, extreme
- Which media do they prefer
- Which existing interpretive at Kikomun products meet their needs in terms of time constraint, ease of access and the types of experiences they are seeking

In consideration of various non-personal media approaches, BC Parks may wish to consider these fictional profiles of visitors, demographic considerations and preferred interpretive media that may appeal to this group.

Audience	**Demographic Considerations**	**Recommended Interpretive Media**
Two sisters and their families from Lethbridge, both have girls age 8, 10 and boys 5, 6 who visit for a week camping in July, every year for five years in a row.	Working class family with dad's working in the agricultural processing industry, lower income, camping in tents, like the freedom letting the kids have some free unsupervised time, lower level of education, immigrants from Mexico – Spanish first language of parents but children fluent in English	Entrance kiosk Bathroom blurbs Interpretive signs Kikomun Facebook Page
Family from Calgary with 2 teenage boys aged, 12 and 14 with a	Middle to higher income oil family where dad works in Ft. McMurray on shift work,	Entrance kiosk Bathroom blurbs Geocache

motorboat for wake surfing on Lake Koocanusa. Mother hauled down two ATV's for riding around in South Country.	Education in the trades and college certificate, jazzed about motorized activities, children are not in the academic stream and when not wake surfing or ATVing want to access G3 to look on their screen devices	Kikomun Facebook Page
Retired mature couple from Portland, Oregon on touring vacation in September.	American, English speaking, urban, moderate disposable income, highly educated retired from the Tech Sector, love nature and most trips are seeking this experience, travel in a van with bicycles, like to hike and bird watch, travel in the fall to avoid crowds and enjoy the transitioning seasons especially migrating birds	Kiosk Sign panels Interpretive signs Post in place, self-guided trail Bathroom blurbs
Local moms from Fernie on day trips to Kikomun. Between May and October each will likely visit Kikomun 5 times.	Rural small town, age 30-45, female with ranges of children male/female between infant to 6 years old, husbands mostly work in coal mining or related support industry, like visiting Kikomun because of snow later and snow melt earlier in the season than Fernie, like that the park gate is closed until early May so the paved roads provide an opportunity for children to ride their bikes without traffic risk, enjoy swimming in June and September when all the tourists are gone, car pool out together, seasoned mom's invite new Fernie mom's through word of mouth to take advantage of the opportunities	Sign panel Kiosk Interpretive signs Bathroom blurbs

Professional couple with three boys age 5, 7, 9 from North Vancouver on a summer driving tour vacation in the West and East Kootenays.	Urban, English speaking, highly educated accountant and engineer, active boys travelling with mountain bikes, value place-based nature learning opportunities in BC Parks, booked 3 - 3 nights through BC Parks Reservation Service at Kokanee Springs near Nelson, Kikomun Creek and Dry Gulch near Invermere/Columbia Valley.	Kiosk Sign panels Post in place bike trail Interpretive signs Bathroom blurbs Geocache

Figure 41: Fictional Visitor Profile to Kikomun and Interpretive Media Preference.

8. Implementation and operation considerations

Graphic Design: For consistency in communication, Kikomun would benefit from an established branding including selected symbols, images and colours. Inspiration for symbols could be from nature like the puzzle bark on ponderosa pine, which could represent pieces of healthy ecosystems. Images for the park might include bunchgrass, turtles basking on logs, big old ponderosa pine/Douglas fir, spawning kokanee, people in bathing suits, hiking and riding bikes. A local contest through schools could generate preliminary designs. Colours would be from nature's palette.

Planning Interpretive Programs: Kikomun managers should utilize a consistent interpretive planning form when planning for interpretation at Kikomun. A form might include the following information:

- Link to one of Kikomun's six interpretive themes
- Site description and objectives – GPS Coordinates/Site Considerations (i.e. conservation concerns)
- Target audience (i.e. demographic, number of users, season of use, accessibility) for the program
- Key relevant resource concepts covered, resource references
- Interpretive program objectives (SMART - **Specific, measureable, achievable, relevant**, within a defined **timeframe**). What do you want visitors to learn/feel in terms of senses and emotion/do that requires they take action?
- Description of interpretive approach recommended
- Partnership possibilities
- Budget considerations

9. Partnerships for Interpretation at Kikomun

The future vision for BC Parks is captured in the document "Protecting our Legacy Together. BC Parks' Future Strategy: Securing our natural legacy through innovation, sustainability and partnerships" (2016). The third guiding principle is expanding public partnerships and engagement with BC Parks. Participation of people who love Kikomun will help protect the park and see it thrive in the future. This focus creates 'park lovers'.

Partnerships have many benefits to Kikomun. First, they build a local constituent of active supporters and champions. Locals could form the basis of a volunteer pool for campground hosts, assist with coordination/sponsorship of special events, act as guest speakers for unique one-of-a-kind experiences delivered perhaps as guided hikes or amphitheater presentations, and they could be the base for citizen science initiatives monitoring grassland restoration.

To achieve the vision of sustainable funding into the future, BC Parks is encouraged to strengthen local partnerships with groups like the local Wildsight-Elk Valley Branch and Sparwood/Fernie Fish and Wildlife Associations to expand the range of funding options for ecosystem restoration, a component of which must be interpretation. Partnering with non-profit societies, Kikomun could access grants like the CBT Environmental Grants, RDEK Community Initiatives, BC Hydro Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program and Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation. Through the BC Parks Foundation, individuals, families, community groups and businesses can give back to Kikomun through donations and sponsorships.

Interpretation also provides an opportunity to achieve another guiding principle, to redefine the relationship with the Ktunaxa Nation. The land, animals, plants and water at Kikomun provide a place-based opportunity to embrace a transformative relationship. BC Parks at Kikomun could reach out to the Tobacco Plains Indian Band at Grasmere to better understand place-names, traditional uses of species at Kikomun and oral traditions that strengthen conservation messages.

10. Evaluating Interpretation at Kikomun

How will BC Parks measure effectiveness of implementing the Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Interpretive Plan? Good interpretation should always ask "so what", why should people care about this and how will I know if the interpretive program is successful at meeting my objectives? Evaluation of interpretive programs occurs on two scales according to Veverka (1998):

1. Are the objectives of the total interpretive program being met at an acceptable* level?
2. Are the objectives of individual interpretive sites and specific programs being met at an acceptable* level?

*Veverka (1998) defines "acceptable level" as the percentage of accomplishment, stated that "at least half 51% plus" will, for example, know that the main reason Kikomun is a park is to protect rare and endangered open-forest grassland ecosystems.

According to Veverka (1998), an evaluation process should include six main parts:

1. Identify the objectives to be evaluated;
2. Select the most appropriate evaluation technique or tool;
3. Apply the evaluation technique and obtain results using a time table on when and how to do the evaluation;
4. Compare actual results to the desired results from the above objectives;
5. Analyze the results to determine success: why or why not;
6. Make recommendations for improvement.

Primarily taken from Veverka's Interpretive Master Planning resource (1998), listed below are methods of evaluation recommended for Kikomun with a description, pros and cons of each.

Evaluation Technique	**Description**	**Pro**	**Con**
Direct measure of behaviour	Determine which options visitors take when given a choice (i.e. read a sign vs. not read a sign)	Determines preference	Can determine what service visitors choose but not why
Questionnaire - could be paper or electronic (eg.Survey Monkey)	A written set of questions given to visitors to determine demographics and experiential data	Can be very specific and gather exactly what is required	Subject to written response bias. Time consuming to design, administer and evaluate.
Interviews	Similar to questionnaire but administered orally	Many people are willing to communicate orally rather than in writing	Time consuming to design, administer and evaluate, similar to questionnaires.
Suggestion box (es) placed at locations convenient for visitors e.g. washrooms or gate house	A locked box where visitors can drop any comments or suggestions	Anonymity	Usually get comments biased toward positive or negative extreme
Social media	Monitor visitor comments on Facebook	New technology offers opportunity for creating a community	Length of time/cost to administer and answer queries and posts.

		with two way communication	

Figure 42: Recommended Evaluation Techniques for Interpretation at Kikomun

11. Next Steps for Interpretive Planning at Kikomun

The Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Interpretive Plan (Plan) started with an overview of interpretation (Section 1), specifically in the context of BC parks and management at Kikomun Creek Provincial Park (Section 2). The Plan then summarizes the natural, cultural and recreational resources protected at Kikomun (Section 3) as well as the management of visitors at Kikomun (section 4). Section 5 identifies Kikomun's interpretive mission, goals, objectives, themes and messages and non-personal interpretive media unique to Kikomun.

The Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Sign Inventory (Section 6) summarizes the current state of all of the non-personal interpretation techniques currently at the park. The 31 sites have GPS coordinates, are mapped, photographed and with comments as to their condition. Section 7 examines the visitors to Kikomun and suggested media to match their characteristics.

Section 8 focuses on the implementation and operation considerations utilizing a detailed interpretive planning form to be filled out for the detailed planning required to implement the design, build and installation of recommended methods.

Implementation of successful interpretation at Kikomun in the future relies on successful partnerships (Section 9) suggesting specific partnerships with local communities and First Nations. Section 10 examines 'so what' using various evaluation methods to determine if Kikomun's interpretation implementation strategy is effective. Lastly Section 11 outlines next step considerations.

Outside of the scope of this planning process is the **Implementation Plan: Phase II of the Kikomun Creek Provincial Park Interpretive Plan**. Phase II will require BC Parks selecting priority sites and themes for development of interpretation, defining site and interpretive objectives, researching the storyline, writing the story text content, graphic design of interpretive methods or media, building infrastructure and installation, and designing evaluation techniques to monitor effectiveness.

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