

**TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE IN NORTHWESTERN BC PARKS:
EXPLORING PATHS TO RECONCILIATION AND SELF-DETERMINATION IN
PARK PLANNING AND OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT**

By

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Abstract

This research explores how Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) can be meaningfully integrated into BC Parks' planning and operations management to enhance socially and environmentally responsible management plans. The objectives of this study were to identify historical and current socio-political barriers to the inclusion of TEK in park planning and operations management and to develop recommendations for park planners and managers to integrate TEK that prioritize reconciliation and self-determination. There is a paucity of research examining the inclusion of TEK and the roles of reconciliation and self-determination in park planning and management at the provincial level in Canada. Qualitative semi-structured interviews with Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders and BC Parks North Coast Skeena regional staff were analyzed to develop practical recommendations for the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their Knowledges in BC Parks planning and operations management. These recommendations address relations of power and policies, and they prioritize reconciliation and self-determination as a strategy for social change. I argue that the inclusion of TEK is necessary to improve park planning and management and to address the larger social and environmental issues in society. The findings of this study contribute empirical evidence to ongoing academic discussions regarding Indigenous inclusion, TEK, reconciliation, and self-determination in park planning and management. This work responds to the federal government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and British Columbia's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and it is my hope that this project contributes to advancing reconciliation and self-determination in park planning and management.

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List of Acronyms

ABA: Atmospheric Benefit Agreement

BC: The Canadian Province of British Columbia

DRIPA: British Columbia's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

ECDA: Economic and Community Development Agreement

FCRSA: Forest Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreement

IPCA: Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area

IRSSA: Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement

ITA: Incremental Treaty Agreement

LRMP: Land and Resource Management Plans

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

RCMP: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police

SEA: Strategic Engagement Agreement

TEK: Traditional Ecological Knowledge

TRC: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

UN Declaration: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

UNDRIP: Same as above, used interchangeably in this thesis with UN Declaration

WSK: Western Scientific Knowledge

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Chapter One: Introduction

My research is concerned with the value and use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in BC Parks planning and operations management. Over a period of eight years, prior to my graduate studies, I was employed as a Park Supervisor, Park Operations Supervisor, Recreation Coordinator, Environmental Planner, and Trail Planner for federal, provincial and municipal government-operated parks. This work experience revealed to me an unfortunate lack of acknowledgement and application of Indigenous Knowledge systems within parks organizations. Canadian governments have historically relied on western scientific knowledge (WSK) and undervalued the importance of TEK in the environmental planning and management of parks and protected areas (Devin & Doberstein, 2004; Kadykalo et al., 2021; Lemieux et al., 2018). An appreciation of TEK is fundamental in achieving a comprehensive understanding of interconnected ecological and social realities of natural areas; hence, Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and knowledge should play a central role in planning and managing these lands (Folke, 2004). It is my contention that the inclusion of TEK is imperative for redefining parks planning and management approaches to address environmental problems more effectively, as well as issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion in broader society (Eckert et al., 2020; McGregor, 2004). This project was motivated by my desire to improve park agency awareness of TEK and relations with Indigenous Peoples by meaningfully integrating TEK into park planning and management. It is my hope that my research will contribute to increasing social justice, healing inter-generational wounds, and attaining full and fair Indigenous participation in BC Parks' planning and management.

My research took place in Northwestern British Columbia (BC), an area which comprises numerous First Nations Territories (see Figure 1). As direct rightsholders in environmental

management plans, Indigenous Peoples and their TEK are essential for strengthening and improving BC Parks' resource and environmental management. In this thesis project, I worked with Gitxsan First Nation and BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region to explore the application of TEK in BC Parks planning processes and operations management. In order to combat environmental degradation, a worsening regional biodiversity crisis, and support reconciliation in BC, park managers must prioritize Indigenous Knowledge and leadership (Gayton, 2008; Moola et al., 2007; Westwood et al., 2019). Indigenous Knowledge Holders should be recognized as experts by park managers and invited as co-creators of management solutions.

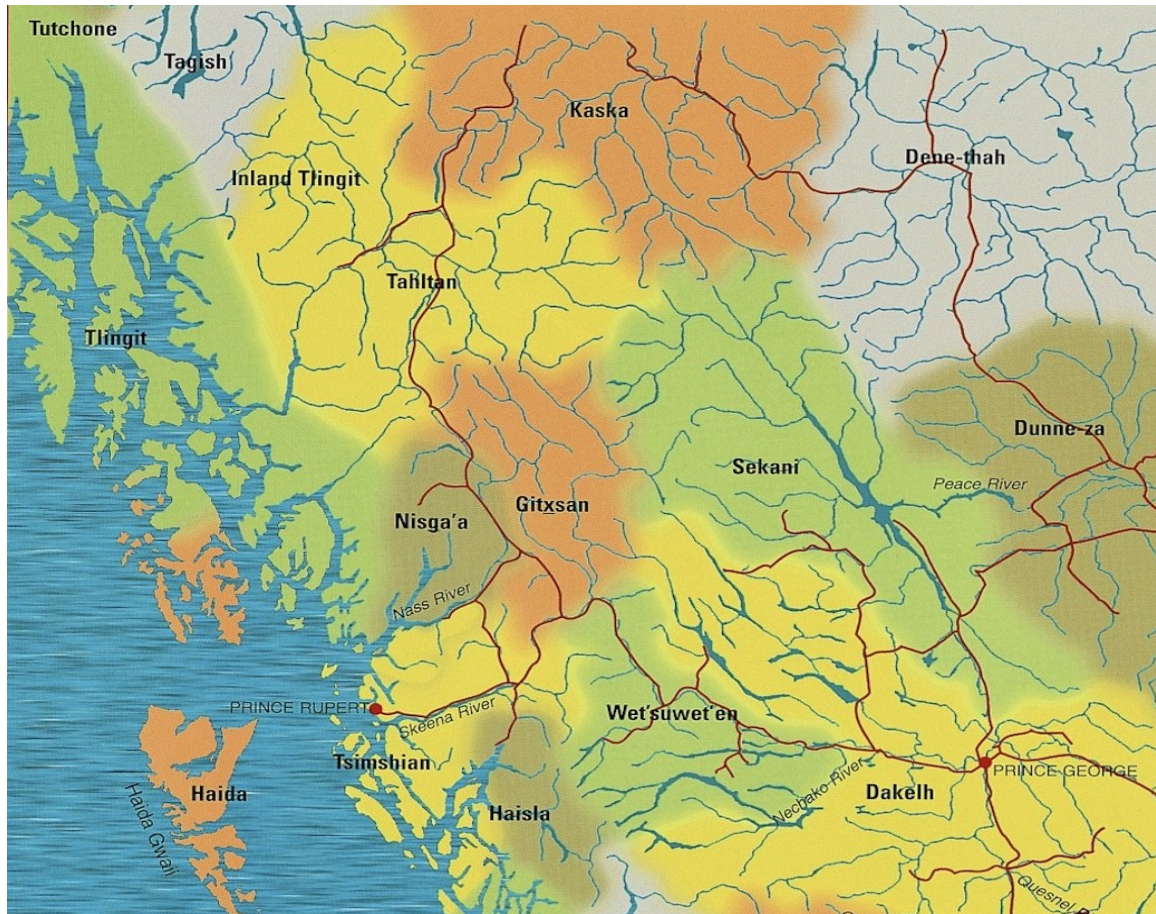


Figure 1. Northwestern BC First Nations Map. Reprinted from: Indigenous Peoples Resources, by Indigenous Peoples Media. First Nations Peoples of British Columbia Map, 2020, <https://indigenouspeoplesresources.com/collections/first-nations-maps/products/canada-first-nations-peoples-of-british-columbia-map>. Copyright 2020 by Indigenous Peoples Media. Reprinted with permission.

I use a case study methodology and two-eyed seeing theory to examine historical and current socio-political factors that influence the uptake of TEK in BC Parks planning and management. In terms of methodological steps, first, I conducted 28 individual, semi-structured interviews with Gitksan First Nation Chiefs and Elders, and BC Parks staff within Northwestern BC. Then, I analyzed the transcripts using thematic coding and analysis. My methodology was

motivated by the aim to understand how Indigenous participation and their TEK can be meaningfully integrated into BC Parks planning and operations management.

It is important to underline that BC Parks planning processes and operations, while related, have very different ways that TEK can be incorporated. Planning is defined as a process with different phases that occurs during a specific time period to develop management direction in the form of a park management plan or similar document (e.g., management direction statement) (BC Parks, 2013). Planning refers to the strategic process of developing park management plans for protected areas, which includes identifying the key features and values of the protected area (i.e., natural, cultural, recreational), conservation priorities, analyzing environmental impacts, and determining appropriate management activities, levels of use, development and recreational uses (BC Parks, 2023a). A management plan is the result of a planning process and it is developed with First Nations, local governments, the public and other interested parties (BC Parks, 2023a). Park management plans outline “the management direction and desired future condition for a protected area and how to achieve it” (BC Parks, 2013, p. 1). Operations is defined as the ongoing management of the park, which implements the management direction that is outlined in the management plan over time (N. White, personal communications, January 3, 2025). Operations refers to the day-to-day management of parks and protected areas, such as maintaining facilities, trails, enforcing park regulations, providing visitor information, and responding to emergencies (BC Parks, 2013). In short, planning focuses on the future vision of a park, while operations focuses on its current functioning.

This project initially aimed to explore the integration of TEK into BC Parks management plan development. However, while all of the BC Parks participants that I interviewed had been involved in developing park management plans, most of the BC Parks participants worked in

operations management positions, and not as planners. Therefore, the findings and recommendations of this study focus more on operations management than planning processes. Additionally, all of the BC Parks that are located in Gitxsan First Nation Territory have had their management direction developed since the early 2000s, and no new planning processes have taken place in Gitxsan First Nation Territory since this time due to the creation of many new parks and protected areas that have needed management direction (N. White, personal communication, November 8, 2024). Therefore, the Gitxsan First Nation participants that I interviewed had not been involved in any of BC Parks planning processes. Because of this, my discussions with Gitxsan First Nation participants were directed more towards consultation for statutory decision-making and operations management of parks in Gitxsan First Nation Territory than planning processes. Planning processes were only minimally discussed by BC Parks participants and not at all by Gitxsan First Nation participants. Nevertheless, this is not a limitation of my project, as operations management staff do have the agency and influence to meaningfully incorporate TEK in implementing the management direction of parks. Additionally, operations management staff are tasked with the day-to-day management of parks and protected areas in working with First Nations on the ground and applying TEK in ways which support the current functioning of a park.

The remaining sections of this chapter present an overview of my thesis project. First, I detail the historical context necessary to understand the current relationship of BC Parks with First Nations. Then, I discuss my background and who I am relative to this project. Following this, I detail the scope and purpose of the project and identify my research questions. Next, I explain how this project responds and contributes to existing literature. After that, I discuss my theoretical orientation and define the key terms and concepts that I used to explore and analyze

my topic. I conclude by describing the significance of my project and providing an overview of my thesis chapters.

Historical Context

Although Indigenous territories pre-date European settlement, Canada has had a long, odious history of expropriating, marginalizing, and stigmatizing Indigenous Peoples. The colonial view that Indigenous Peoples are ‘primitive savages’ has long provided a rationale for the government to treat them as obstacles in the way of “progress” (Harding, 2006). Indigenous Peoples’ land was seen by colonizers as stagnant and unproductive and in need of efficient, Western means of agricultural and commercial development (Harris, 2002; Simpson, 1999). In many cases, Indigenous Peoples were forcibly removed from areas in Canada where national and provincial park development was taking place and denied cultural use of the area, which resulted in displacement and a loss of cultural identity and values (Dearden & Rollins, 2009; Mason, 2021). As Mark Spence (1999) argued, wilderness is socially constructed—it had to be created before it could be preserved. He explains, “Indian removal has largely made parks into... symbols of wilderness” (Spence, 1999, p.7). Similarly, Bruce Erickson (2020) asserted that colonizers’ representations of the landscape as empty served to restrict Indigenous Peoples’ resistance to settler colonialism. Thus, the creation of parks in Canada coincided with efforts to restrict Indigenous Peoples to reserves and assimilate them into White settler-society. However, it is important to note that most BC Parks in the North Coast Skeena Region have been created within the last 20 to 30 years, with the exception of 54 parks created between 1930 and 1990 (N. White, personal communication, February 12, 2025).

In addition to stealing the land and resources, the federal government sought to restrict Indigenous Peoples’ movement and eliminate their cultures. During the early 1800s, and up until

the late 1990s, Indigenous Peoples were expropriated and relocated to reserves and residential schools to be assimilated and learn the Western curriculum as a mandatory requirement set forth in the Indian Act (1894). However, the reserve system in Canada has a longer history, with some reserves created earlier under Roman Catholic missionary orders and private individuals in New France during the 17th century. For example, the first reserve in Canada was established at Sillery, near Québec City, in 1637 (Stanley, 1950). Residential schools became mandatory under the Indian Act of 1894. The government took Indigenous children from their homes and placed them into residential school systems where they were no longer able to speak their Indigenous languages or continue their cultural practices. The children suffered physical and sexual abuse, among many other hardships; and many children did not come home (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012; Wilk et al., 2017). One of the first residential schools in Canada, the Mohawk Institute in Brantford, Ontario, began operating in Canada in 1828 (Eagle, 2021); and the last residential school to close in Canada was Kivalliq Hall in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, which stopped operating in 1997 (Epp, 2018). It is estimated that over 150,000 children attended these schools and approximately 6,000 children died there, however, the exact number of deaths remains unknown (Minton, 2019). In 2021, the unmarked graves at residential school sites received mainstream media attention when the first mass grave was discovered at Kamloops Indian Residential School in BC (Austen, 2021). The bodies of 215 children, “lost to their parents, their families, and their communities, were found callously discarded beneath the school” (Austen, 2021, p. 1). A month later, the remains of 751 Indigenous Peoples, mainly children, were discovered at the former Marieval Indian Residential School, located on the Cowessess 73 reserve in Saskatchewan (Austen, 2021). Today, unmarked graves continue to be found at residential school sites and investigations are ongoing (Thorne & Moss, 2022). According to the former premier of BC,

William Smithe, the Indigenous children “were little better than wild animals that rove over the hills” (British Columbia Sessional Papers, 1887). This quote exemplifies the marginalization and degradation of Indigenous Peoples by European settlers; it is indicative of early ethnocentric racism that continues to permeate our society today. Ethnocentrism refers to the predisposition of a group affiliated by race or ethnicity to view the world only in their culture’s context and to consider their group as holding a central position of cultural superiority (Bizumic & Duckitt, 2012). Therefore, the use of the residential school system by the Canadian government is an example of state-sponsored cultural genocide (Neu & Therrien, 2003; Tatz, 2003)

The racist, ethnocentric attitude of Canadian governments and Canadian park agencies began to shift for the better with the rise of the global environmental movement and legal recognition of Aboriginal rights and title. Beginning in the 1970s, parks policy has adjusted in response to global political pressures (Dearden & Rollins, 2009). Supreme Court rulings, land claim and treaty settlements, Aboriginal rights, inclusions made in Canada’s Constitution Act in 1982 (i.e., Sections 25 and 35), and amendments made to the National Parks Act in 1988 and 2000, have all contributed to BC Parks’ further consideration and involvement of Indigenous Peoples in park planning and management (Dearden & Rollins, 2009).

Supreme Court Rulings and Aboriginal Rights

A Supreme Court case to broaden Indigenous policy and law in Canada was the Calder case of 1973 (*Calder et al. v. Attorney-General of British Columbia*, 1973), which was an appeal by the Nisga’a to the Supreme Court of Canada. This court case marked the first time that the Supreme Court recognized Aboriginal title existed at the time of colonization. The court recognized that the claim to land was a legal right derived from its historical possession and

occupation, independent of any proclamation, legislative act, or treaty (Dearden & Rollins, 2009).

Canada's Constitution Act of 1982 extended and consolidated the British North America Act of 1867, and it included Sections 25 and 35 (Constitution Act, 1982), entitled "Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada," which became known as the 'common law doctrine of Aboriginal rights.' This doctrine claims that property rights and the customary and governmental institutions of Indigenous Peoples are assumed to survive the Crown's acquisition of North American territories (Dearden & Rollins, 2009).

The Guerin Case (*R. v. Guerin*, 1984) was a landmark Supreme Court decision which established the Crown's fiduciary duty to consult transparently with Indigenous Peoples before making decisions regarding use of their land, which fundamentally shifted the relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous Peoples. The Musqueam First Nation surrendered valuable surplus reserve lands in Vancouver to the Crown for lease to a golf club. However, the terms which were obtained were much less favourable than the terms which the Musqueam First Nation had approved, and the Indian Affairs Branch did not return to them for approving the revised terms. The trial judge found the Crown in breach of trust in entering the lease (Supreme Court of Canada, 2025).

Another influential case that historizes my project is the 1990 Sparrow case (*R v. Sparrow*, 1990). Ronald Edward Sparrow was a Musqueam man from BC who was charged under the Fisheries Act in 1984 for using a drift net longer than that which was permitted. Sparrow appealed this charge, and the appeal was taken to the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court's decision to uphold Sparrow's appeal affirmed that Indigenous Peoples have an unextinguished right to fish, which set up a framework for defining the existence and scope of

Aboriginal rights in Canada (Dearden & Rollins, 2009). Consequently, the Sparrow case directed the federal government to include Indigenous Peoples in the cooperative management of natural resources (Dearden & Rollins, 2009).

Seven years later, Gitxsan First Nation and Wet'suwet'en First Nation claimed rights to their traditional lands in Northwestern BC and appealed their case to the Supreme Court of Canada—a case known as the Delgamuukw (*Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, 1997). The court affirmed that oral historical accounts are valid in land claim cases (Dearden & Bennett, 2016, p. 381). As a result, the government amended the National Parks Act in 1988 and 2000 to allow specific First Nations to carry out traditional resource harvesting in certain parks.

In 2004, two Supreme Court cases involving rights and title—*Haida Nation v. British Columbia* (2004) and *Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia* (2004)—ruled that the Crown has a legal duty to consult with Indigenous Peoples and accommodate their interests when there is knowledge of potential existing rights and title and conduct that may adversely affect Indigenous Peoples (Dearden & Rollins, 2009). *Haida Nation v. British Columbia* (2004) and *Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia* (2004) both “gave more leverage to the First Nations in protected areas by increasing their role in strategic planning and natural resources policy making” (Houde, 2007, p. 2). In 2006, a Court Appeal in New Brunswick (*R v. Sappier; R v. Gray*, 2006) acquitted Mi'kmaq respondents on charges of unlawful cutting and possession of timber, which resulted in the Aboriginal right to harvest timber for personal use. In addition to these pivotal court appeals and decisions, the Canadian government's formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is an important action to analyze.

In 2006, Indigenous communities sued the federal government for the residential school system in the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history. This lawsuit led to the Indian

Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) and coincided with the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada in 2008 (Reid-Hresko & Warren, 2021). The TRC was established as one of the mandated aspects of the IRSSA. As per the IRSSA, a \$60 million budget over five years was allocated for the work of the TRC to take place. The TRC was active from 2008 to 2015 and documented the inter-generational impacts of residential schools for Indigenous communities (Reid-Hresko & Warren, 2021). The TRC's 94 Calls to Action (2015a) were created to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.

In 2014, the Supreme Court of Canada made a landmark decision. *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia* (2014) outlined what is required to establish Aboriginal rights and title in unresolved land claims, including as it pertains to semi-nomadic Indigenous Peoples. In this case, the court ruled that Aboriginal land title can exist on a territorial basis. Aboriginal title requires that Indigenous land occupation is sufficient, continuous, and exclusive. This ruling also found that Indigenous communities holding official land title have "a right to benefit from the land economically and determine how that land will be used by future generations" (Chapman & Schott, 2020, p. 931). Occupation sufficient to ground Aboriginal title is not confined to specific sites of settlement but extends to lands traditionally used by Indigenous Peoples for hunting, fishing, and other resources that they exercised effective control over at the time European sovereignty was asserted. The alleged breach in this case arises from the province's issuance of logging licenses in an area regarded as semi-nomadic Tsilhqot'in First Nation Territory. The Supreme Court found that the Forest Act's definition of "Crown timber" and "Crown lands" did not include timber on Aboriginal title lands. Therefore, once Aboriginal title is proven, the land

and its resources belong to the Aboriginal title holder and meaningful consultation is required when proposing to make decisions or conduct business on Indigenous territories.

Historic and Modern Treaties and the BC Treaty Commission

The British Crown established treaties in most parts of Canada with Indigenous Peoples before the Canadian Confederation. From 1701 to 1760, the Treaties of Peace and Neutrality were signed, which began with the Albany Deed in 1701 and ended with the Treaty of Swegatchy and the Huron-British Treaty of 1760 (Government of Canada, 2022). These treaties were signed with France's former Indigenous allies. From 1725 to 1779, the Peace and Friendship Treaties were signed between the L'nu (Mi'gmaq, Micmac, Mi'kmaq), Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet, Malicite), and British authorities in Québec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick (Government of Canada, 2022). The 1923 Williams Treaties ceded all lands located between Georgian Bay, Ottawa River, Lake Simcoe, and the lands west of the Bay of Quinte for a fixed one-time cash payment, similar to the Upper Canada Land Surrenders, which took place from 1764 to 1962 in the Great Lakes Region (Government of Canada, 2022).

James Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company, who was also the second Governor of Vancouver Island, “made 14 purchases of First Nations land between 1850 and 1854 at the request of the British Crown, and these transactions are known as the Douglas Treaties” (Government of British Columbia, 2024a, para. 5). At this time, the Colony of BC did not exist, and would not merge with Vancouver Island until 1866. Following the system of the 1850 Robinson Treaties (i.e., the Robinson-Huron Treaty and the Robinson-Superior Treaty), which were negotiated between the Crown and Ojibwa Chiefs on the shores of Lake Huron and Lake Superior, the Crown negotiated eleven other treaties with First Nations between 1871 and 1921, which are now known as the Numbered Treaties in Canada. The Numbered Treaties extend from

the “Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains to the Beaufort Sea” (Government of Canada, 2023, para. 5). The Numbered Treaties “promised reserve lands, annuities, and the continued right to hunt and fish on unoccupied Crown lands in exchange for Aboriginal title” (Government of Canada, 2023, para. 5). When BC joined the Confederation in 1871, the province did not recognize Aboriginal title, aside from the already existing Douglas Treaties on Vancouver Island.

In 1899, Treaty 8 was established, and it was signed by Crown representatives and various First Nations of the Lesser Slave Lake area (Mair, 2022) in efforts to resolve problems related to the Klondike Gold Rush (Government of British Columbia, 2010). It is one of the most comprehensive of the Numbered Treaties and extends over three provinces and the Northwest Territories. The Treaty 8 First Nations in Northeastern BC are: Doig River, Fort Nelson, Halfway River, McLeod Lake, Prophet River, Saulteau, West Moberly and Blueberry River First Nations (Government of British Columbia, 2024a). The Dominion of Canada continued to finalize treaties with Indigenous Peoples before the west was opened for expansion and settlement, however, in BC, this process of treaty-making was never completed (Government of British Columbia, 2024a), and claims and Aboriginal title for the rest of the province was left unresolved. The majority of Indigenous territories in BC remain unceded land today, as this land was never legally ceded, or given up to the Crown, through a treaty or other agreement (BC Treaty Commission, 2023). Apart from Treaty 8 and the Nisga’a Treaty, most Indigenous Peoples were unable to pursue their Aboriginal rights through the BC treaty negotiations process until 1993 (BC Treaty Commission, 2023).

In 1990, Canada, BC and the Nisga'a Tribal Council agreed to the Nisga’a Treaty, which came into effect in 2000 (BC Treaty Commission, 2023). Although negotiated outside of the current BC Treaty Commission framework, the Nisga'a Treaty was negotiated using a similar

process and is considered to be the first modern-day treaty in BC. In 1991, the BC Claims Task Force recommended the creation of a BC Treaty Commission to facilitate the negotiation process of modern treaties in BC (Stevenson, 2013). All modern treaties ratified after the Nisga'a Treaty have been through the BC Treaty Commission process. The modern treaties in BC refer to the four treaties, with eight First Nations, that came into effect in the 21st century: the Nisga'a Treaty, the Tsawwassen Treaty, the Maa-nulth Treaty, and the Tla'amin Treaty (Government of British Columbia, 2024a). Some of the main components of modern treaties finalized through the BC Treaty Commission are: "First Nations rights, self-government, land and resources, economic opportunities, fishing and forestry" (BC Treaty Commission, 2023, para. 5). Modern treaties provide a framework for Canada, BC, and a First Nation to identify common goals and build relationships through constitutionally protected understandings.

Kitselas First Nation and Kitsumkalum First Nation have been involved in treaty negotiations with the governments of Canada and BC since the early 1990s. While both Kitselas and Kitsumkalum First Nations are negotiating their treaties together, "the negotiations will result in two distinct, separate treaties" (Government of British Columbia, 2024b, para. 2). This treaty table includes Kitselas First Nation, Kitsumkalum First Nation, Canada, BC, the BC Treaty Commission, the Tsimshian First Nations Treaty Society, and local government representatives, including the City of Terrace. In June 2024, the Kitselas Treaty draft and the Kitsumkalum Treaty draft were both signed; therefore, these new treaties will be ratified soon (see Figure 2). Shortly after the signing of the Kitselas and Kitsumkalum Treaty drafts, in July 2024, the K'ómoks Treaty draft was also signed (Government of Canada, 2024). Several other First Nations are in the final stages of the BC Treaty Commission process; hence, it is likely that more modern treaties will be finalized in the coming years.

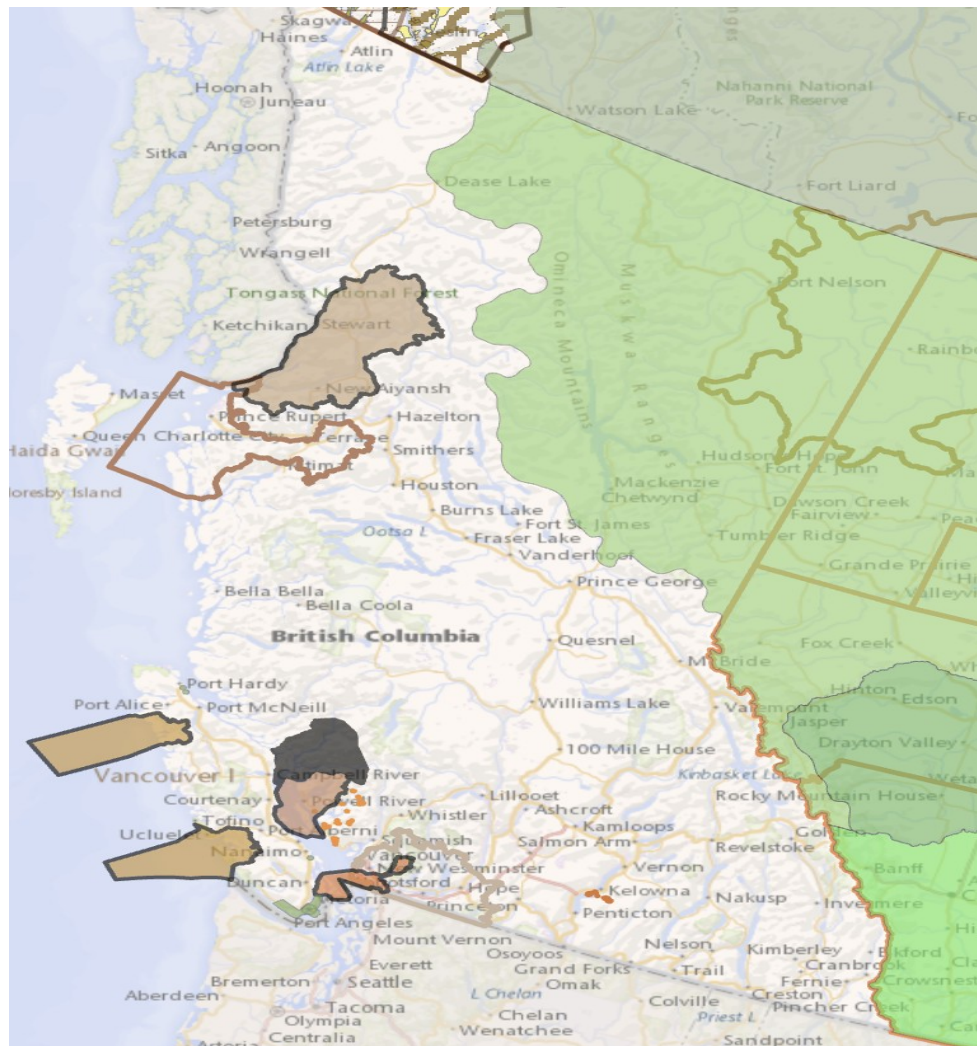


Figure 2. Treaties in British Columbia. The orange, green, brown and black filled-in areas in the map represent the ratified treaties in BC (i.e., the Douglas Treaties are orange; Treaty 8 is green; and the Modern Treaties are brown and black). The area with a brown outline and not filled-in represents the Kitselas and Kitsumkalum draft treaties, which are signed and almost ratified.

Adapted from: Government of Canada. Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System, 2025, <https://sidait-atris.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/SIDAIT-GEO-ATRIS/index-eng.html>

Other Collaborative Agreements Between First Nations and BC Government for Working Together in Advance of Treaties

The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation leads the Government of BC in pursuing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. The BC Government has various agreements with First Nations that provide cooperative ways of working together and providing benefits in advance of treaties. Some of these agreements include Incremental Treaty Agreements (ITAs), Forest Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreements (FCRSAs), Strategic Engagement Agreements (SEAs), Economic and Community Development Agreements (ECDAs), First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund Revenue-sharing Agreements, Reconciliation Agreements, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), Forestry Agreements, Atmospheric Benefit Agreements (ABAs), and Natural Gas Benefits Agreements.

ITAs allow First Nations and the Province to “enjoy shared benefits in advance of concluding a full treaty” (Government of British Columbia, 2024c, para. 1). ITAs are legally binding pre-treaty agreements, which are negotiated through a BC generated process by the Province and the First Nation or First Nations at a treaty table. ITAs “build trust among the parties, create incentives to reach further milestones and provide increased predictability over land and resources” (Government of British Columbia, 2024c, para. 2). ITAs do not replace treaties. Instead, they are an incremental step that advances treaty-related benefits for First Nations prior to reaching a final treaty agreement. FCRSAs and Forestry Agreements provide economic benefits directly to First Nation communities based on the harvest activities that occur in their territories (Government of British Columbia, 2024d). SEAs establish “mutually agreed upon procedures for consultation and accommodation” (Government of British Columbia, 2024e, para. 1) and allow First Nations to take a more active role in decision-making processes. ECDAs

are agreements between the Province and First Nations for sharing the “direct mineral tax revenue on new mines, major mine expansions, and mines coming out of care and maintenance” (Government of British Columbia, 2024f, para. 1). First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund Revenue-sharing Agreements are negotiated between the Province and First Nations to “provide revenue sharing opportunities for clean energy projects” (Government of British Columbia, 2024g, para. 1). Reconciliation Agreements are negotiated between the Province and First Nations to support reconciliation focussed on “closing socio-economic gaps that separate Indigenous People from other people living in BC and building a province where everyone can participate in a prosperous economy” (Government of British Columbia, 2024h, para. 2). MOUs facilitate “a more collaborative, coordinated and efficient approach to the management of land and natural resources; and develop new economic opportunities and initiatives that enable First Nations to make progress toward their socio-economic objectives” (Government of British Columbia, 2024h, para. 8). ABAs allow First Nations to demonstrate ownership of atmospheric benefits in BC. More specifically, ABAs utilize offset protocols in order to quantify greenhouse gas emission reductions from projects taking place in First Nations’ territories. These protocols ensure that standards are met for quantification, monitoring and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions (Government of British Columbia, 2024i). Lastly, Natural Gas Benefits Agreements are agreements between the Province and First Nations as part of the province's comprehensive approach to partnering with First Nations on liquefied natural gas (LNG) opportunities. These agreements also include the development of skills training and environmental stewardship projects with First Nations to provide mechanisms for First Nations to participate and benefit from the resource development taking place in their territories (Government of British Columbia, 2024j).

The BC government is currently incorporating First Nations into park planning processes and management through the use of the engagement processes listed above, which can range from consultation to collaboration, depending on the requirements of the engagement agreements that are in place, and the interest of a First Nation in participating and working with BC Parks. Some of these agreements include SEAs (BC Parks, 2024a), Collaborative Management Agreements (CMAs), Reconciliation Agreements, and Consultation Agreements (BC Parks, 2024b). While SEAs, Reconciliation Agreements and Consultation Agreements are agreements between the Province and First Nations, and not specifically with BC Parks, there may or may not be specific commitments for BC Parks within these agreements. CMAs are not publicly available documents and they are specific to park planning and management. However, some SEAs and Reconciliation Agreements do include provisions for collaborative park planning and management where a CMA doesn't already exist (N. White, personal communication, November 8, 2024). CMAs include principles that Parties will: 1) work together collaboratively on the planning and management of the PPAs in a manner that respects the interests of both the First Nation and the Province; 2) be informed by the best available traditional knowledge, technical information and science; and 3) work together collaboratively to steward the lands of the PPAs in a manner that is guided by their respective customs, polices, laws, & traditions (N. White, personal communication, February 5, 2025). CMAs can involve collaboratively writing park management plans, collaborative operations and management of parks, collaborative meetings, joint patrols, discussing park use permits, joint work plans, joint projects and research, and other collaborative activities (N. White, personal communication, November 8, 2024). Therefore, park management plans are only one way in which TEK can be considered and incorporated by BC Parks, as CMAs often require collaborative operations and management of protected areas as a

whole, and involve First Nations in a variety of ways. Relationships between BC Parks and First Nations are also not necessarily documented in park management plans, as these documents are not meant to be engagement agreements. Still, BC Parks has been working with different First Nations in the region and TEK is incorporated on the ground, in the field, and through relationships (N. White, personal communication, November 8, 2024).

The BC Parks Zoning Framework (BC Parks, 2012) is a management planning tool that includes Cultural Zoning to delineate areas that are of cultural importance to First Nations. Cultural Heritage Assessments may be undertaken before or during planning processes, where First Nations cultural values must be considered during the development of management direction. Nevertheless, due to conflict regarding First Nation territory overlaps, including cultural information in park management plans has been increasingly difficult. Therefore, where overlaps occur, BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region has been limiting the content within their management plans and incorporating cultural and other values and information into background documents that are supportive of the management plan and provide management direction for parks and protected areas. BC Parks' collaborative partners may also try to limit the content available within the management plan (N. White, personal communication, November 8, 2024). This method also ensures that the sensitivity of cultural information is protected from the public, which is often at the request of a First Nation.

Modern Legislation and Politics in BC

In November 2019, Members of the Legislative Assembly in BC unanimously passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) into law. DRIPA (2019) establishes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) (UNDRIP or UN Declaration) as the province's framework for reconciliation, as called for by Principle 43

of the TRC Calls to Action (2015a). DRIPA (2019) aims to create a path forward that respects the human rights of Indigenous Peoples, while introducing better transparency, accountability and predictability in embarking on a ‘New Relationship’ together (Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, Bill 41, 2019). It mandates that the province bring its provincial laws into alignment with the UN Declaration. BC responded to Principle 44 of the TRC Calls to Action (2015a) with an Action Plan (Government of British Columbia, 2022a), which outlines a collaborative approach with Indigenous Peoples to identify the important goals and actions to be achieved under DRIPA (2019). BC is the first and only province in Canada to enact Principles 43 and 44 in legislation. By following up its Declaration Act with an Action Plan, as mandated by the TRC (2015a), BC is demonstrating a commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. I utilize the TRC’s Calls to Action (2015a) and DRIPA (2019) to help position my research.

Progress towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in Canada requires political support from provincial and federal governments and our broader society. The current political administration in BC, the New Democratic Party (NDP), has taken significant steps towards reconciliation by responding to the TRC’s Calls to Action (2015a) and enacting DRIPA (2019). My research on the inclusion of TEK in BC Parks planning and operations management was certainly facilitated by this progressive political milieu during the early 2020s. The lead-up to the provincial election in October 2024 saw considerable push-back to reconciliation by the opposition conservative voices who garnered popular support by spreading fear and misinformation regarding DRIPA and proposed amendments to the Land Act (Kwetásel’wet Wood, 2024; West Moberly First Nation, 2024). The resulting political tensions threaten continued progress towards reconciliation in BC and highlight the significance of my project. There has been a substantial cultural shift since enacting DRIPA in 2019, and it is necessary that

research such as my own continue to shine a light on the possibilities of reconciliatory actions by government institutions.

Background and Positionality

I am a White, cis-gendered, middle class, able-bodied woman of Northern European settler descent (Swedish, Norwegian, and Scottish). I am from amiskwacîwâskahikan, which is the Cree name for what is now known as Edmonton, Alberta. It is situated on Treaty 6 Territory—the traditional territory of many Indigenous Peoples, including the Nehiyaw (Cree), Denesuliné (Dene), Nakota Sioux (Stoney), Anishnabae (Saulteaux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), and Métis. I grew up next door to Edmonton's Mill Creek Ravine, an arm of the city's river-valley park system, which is the largest contiguous area of urban parkland in Canada. My parents tell me I was always infatuated with trees and joke that I was a born 'tree hugger.' As a toddler, I would hug and kiss trees that seemed damaged or hurt. I remember many family vacations to parks, protected areas, and Indigenous territories. My parents were avid campers, and we were privileged to live in a province with many accessible parks and protected areas. The Rocky Mountain Parks of Jasper and Banff, arguably some of the most beautiful parks in the world, are only a few hours away from Edmonton. My mother tells me that I was only eight months old on my first camping trip, and we went every year after that, exploring different parts of Alberta and BC.

My interest in Northwestern BC and First Nations in the area stretches throughout my life. Some of my fondest childhood memories are of visiting Northwestern BC First Nations' territories and appreciating their lands, history, art and culture. Family vacations often entailed driving fifteen hours Northwest from our home in Edmonton, Alberta, to visit my uncle in Terrace, BC. He had many Indigenous connections and made a point of taking us to the various

First Nations Territories of Kitsumkalum, Nisga'a, Kitselas, Haisla, Gitxsan, Wet'suwet'en, and others. From the time I was a little girl, my family frequented Gitxsan First Nation Territory for the Kispiox Valley Music Festival. On these trips, I experienced Indigenous arts and crafts, heard Elders' stories, and learned about the cultural importance of their lands, rivers and salmon. These experiences encouraged me to learn and absorb knowledge outside of the western institutions in which I was socialized and formally educated. While each Indigenous culture is unique, at a young age I could recognize considerable differences between how Indigenous Peoples perceive the world and how settler-society sees it. Indigenous Peoples have a deep sense of cultural identity and generational knowledge that is intimately attached to the lands they inhabit. These formative trips and my early exposure to Indigenous cultures have been instructive. As a young girl, I could already recognize the cultural significance of places, and, because of these trips, I fell in love with the Northwest. I felt a deep connection to the area that grew stronger over the years and eventually compelled me to make it my home.

My appreciation for Indigenous culture continued to grow since moving to Northwestern BC. For the duration of most of my thesis research, I lived in Kitimat, which is located on Haisla Territory. I played women's soccer for Haisla Nation for four years, where we travelled and competed with First Nations throughout the Northwest region. I have many Indigenous connections in Northwestern BC and spent much of my recreational time in the Northwest with Indigenous friends, often hiking, fishing, kayaking or playing sports. From the time I moved to this region, I welcomed opportunities to take part in traditional ceremonies, medicinal plant gathering, and other cultural activities. I was exposed to Haisla First Nation and Gitxsan First Nation cultural values by my friends and their families. All of this helped to prepare me for my research-related meetings and conversations with Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders. This

project required early relationship-building and communication with First Nations communities in the region to establish rapport and trust prior to receiving approval for research activities (Ban et al., 2018; Tondou et al., 2014). Having valued Gitksan First Nation friends and mentors reinforced my sense of responsibility to First Nation communities. Having a community mentor is important for facilitating community input and involvement throughout the research process and maintaining responsibility to the community (Brown & Strega, 2015). The input of my Gitksan First Nation friends and mentors on designing my research questions helped to frame questions which were more relevant to community interests and priorities. While these relationships benefited my research, I was cautiously aware that my role as a researcher could change the character or quality of our friendships (Cotterhill, 1992; Kirsch, 2005; Puwar, 1997).

I am cognizant of the fact that my position, arguments, and choice of research methods are framed and influenced by social, political and historical factors. My positionality both enables and constrains the ways I access information, interact with participants, interpret findings and discuss results. Researchers make epistemological, methodological and personal choices in research that influence the research questions asked, how questions are asked and answered, and what is done with the research results (Smith, 2021). My academic training is in sociology and philosophy. This educational background renders me well equipped to understand how power and privilege manifest interlocking oppressions in society, and how this power is protected and maintained by the nation-state and institutions which frame understandings of the land and environment. My educational background has informed and shaped my approach to environmental concerns, imparting to me a beneficial appreciation of the interrelations between peoples and their environments. To my mind, the social is environmental; and the environmental is political. Research is inherently political because the entire research process is politically

bound and the knowledge it produces has political implications (Harding, 2004). Following Donna Haraway (1988), I assume that all knowledge is situated and partial—there is no research stance, including my own, that is free from culture, society, and power. Thus, it is necessary to explain who I am relative to this research project and reflexively examine my methodological choices and assumptions. The way I framed my research questions was influenced by my life and work experiences. This project has its origins in my long-standing interest in how Indigenous communities might be better included in park management decisions.

My identity and socialization as a White, middle-class woman, my academic history in social sciences and humanities, my previous work for various government parks, as well as my progressive political views, all influence the ways I approach, interpret, and analyze issues. I realize that I am socialized within White-settler culture, and that this has impacted my identity, worldview and research. With that awareness in mind, I must strive to acknowledge and extinguish prejudices that may spring from my background and training, try to be open to learning from all cultures, and to appreciate diversity in all its manifestations. By striving to recognize my own Eurocentric assumptions, and by tracing ideas through historical analysis, I am better able to examine how settler colonial, social, political, and institutional structures exercise and maintain power. My Whiteness and White privilege can both help and hinder my research. White privilege assumes the ethnocentric biases of European cultural superiority and connotes advantages and opportunities available to White society, by virtue of their skin colour and White-settler heritage (Collins, 2018; Hargrove, 2009). These advantages include a relative freedom from negative discrimination based on race or skin colour (McIntosh, 1989). White privilege manifests in a tendency to use Western perspectives and social norms as the sole basis

for thinking and for judging other cultures' knowledge, beliefs and social norms (Braun, 2003; hooks, 1992; Mohanty, 1984; Scott, 1991).

As Paulo Freire (1985) advised, I can unlearn discriminatory assumptions, stereotypes and understandings of 'other' people by increasing my critical consciousness and self-awareness. In building a stronger critical consciousness, I aim to respond to Bryan Grimwood's (2021) request for settlers to 'undo' themselves and shoulder more responsibility in resisting settler colonialism through practices of solidarity, allyship and accountability. I align with Leeyq'sun scholar, Rachel Flowers' (2015) assertion that I have a set of responsibilities to listen, learn, and act in relation to colonial indifference, and in solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty. As a settler, I ought to oppose rather than perpetuate "structures of domination and the settler position of privilege...recognizing opportunities and preconditions for ethical engagement based on respect, while keeping in mind that solidarity is not a temporal event but a 'long-term commitment to structural change'" (Flowers, 2015, pp. 34-35). Tuck and Yang (2012) remind me that by not bringing to the forefront an acknowledgment of my own privilege in the research process, I am "recentering whiteness, resettling theory and entertaining a settler-future by extending innocence to the settler" (p. 3). As Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar, Margaret Kovach (2015) suggests, non-Indigenous academics must do relational work by decolonizing their minds and hearts and truly engaging with Indigenous communities. I immersed myself in nearby Indigenous communities by being visible and available to those who reached out to me, responding to invitations for further involvement in the communities, and communicating my research to those who were interested.

Project Scope

Several research parameters defined the scope of my project. First, my research focussed specifically on BC Parks' North Coast Skeena Region (see Figure 3). This is an ideal location to research the inclusion of TEK in BC Parks planning and management, as it is home to myriad First Nations and many parks and protected areas. BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region contains 190 parks and protected areas and it covers approximately one-third of the province of BC (British Columbia Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, 2020). Of the 190 parks and protected areas within BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region, 98 parks and protected areas have valid management direction. Many of the 92 parks and protected areas that do not have valid management direction have never had a park management plan developed, and of those which have had management direction, it is no longer considered to be valid (N. White, personal communication, January 29, 2025). The region's fragile ecosystems are unique on our environmentally threatened planet and are of great cultural importance to First Nations (Gottesfeld, 1994; Turner & Spalding, 2013).

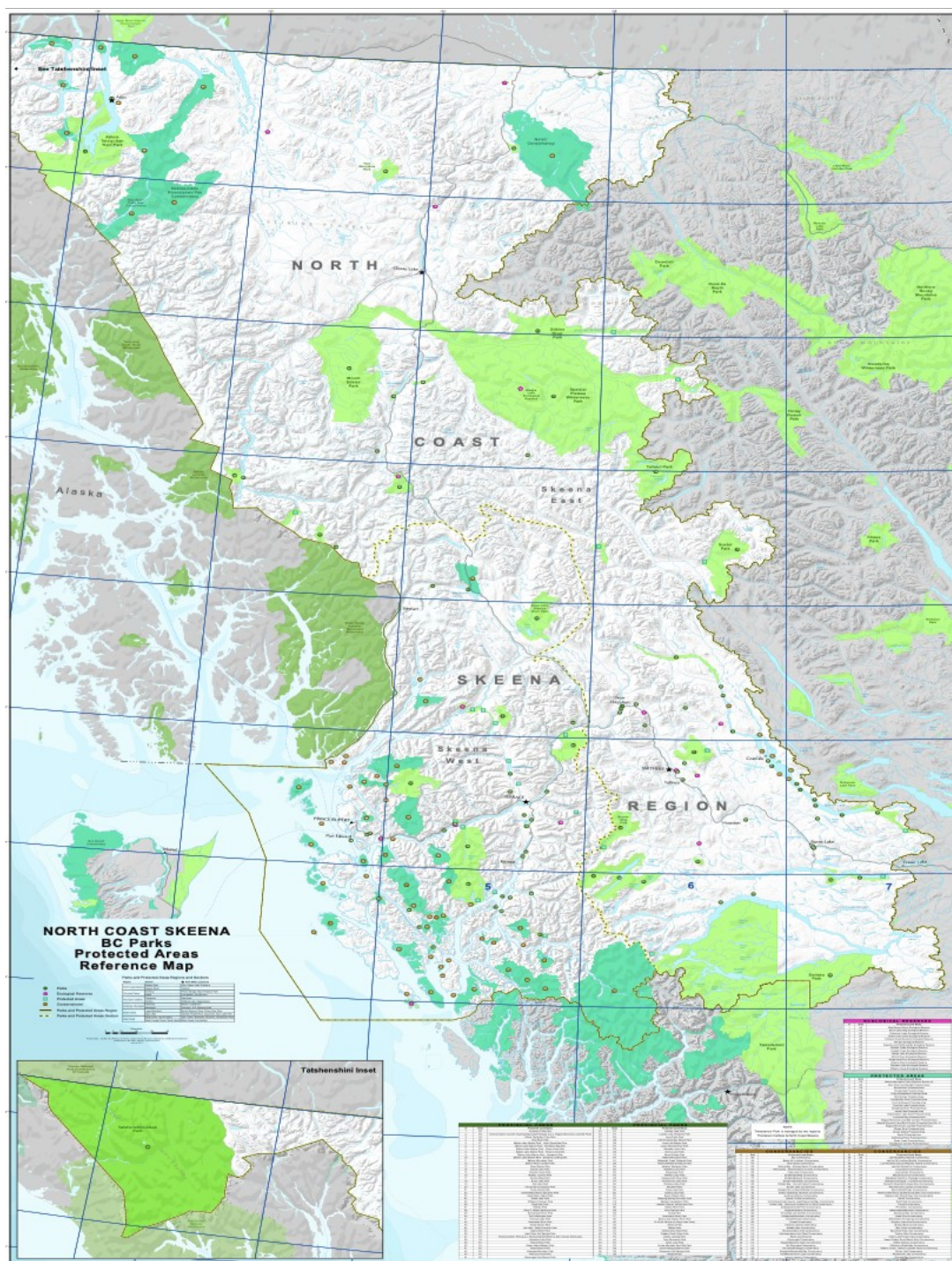


Figure 3. Map of BC Parks' North Coast Skeena Region. Reprinted with permission from personal communication with BC Parks: D. Brown, personal communication, October 28, 2024.

Second, I limited my sample of BC Parks participants to staff responsible for BC Parks management plan development in Northwestern BC (see Figure 4). As noted earlier, although all

of the BC Parks participants in my study had been involved in the process of developing park management plans, most of the participants worked in operations management positions, and not as planners. In developing a park management plan, a management planning project team is assembled by a project lead. The project lead is responsible for facilitating and completing the entire planning process, identifying and engaging potential partners, engaging First Nations and interested parties (communities, individuals, organizations) and getting required approval(s) of the project plan, draft management plan and final management plan. The project lead is typically a BC Parks Planning Section Head / Regional Planner (BC Parks, 2016). I was interested in how BC Parks staff perceive and utilize TEK in their work and what barriers they might reveal that prevent the inclusion of TEK in park planning and operations management.

Regional Staff	
Position	Key Responsibilities
Planning Section Head Regional Planner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically the project lead for management planning projects. The project lead assembles and leads the planning project team, develops management planning products and ensures that all required document reviews and approvals are completed. If not the lead, may provide project support including review of project documents or participate on the planning project team. Leads First Nations and public engagement in planning projects.
Conservation Specialist Recreation Section Head Area Supervisor Protected Areas Section Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide project support by reviewing documents or participating on the planning project team, with a focus on the appropriate program aspects of the management planning project (conservation, recreation, operations). May take a lead role in the implementation, monitoring or evaluation of the management plan.
Regional Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for ensuring that priority management plans are completed. Accountable for ensuring management plan is consistent with provincial policy direction and regional priorities. Accountable for ensuring that the management plan meets a high standard in terms of style and writing quality. Accountable for approval of the project plan, the draft management plan and the final management plan. Accountable for the implementation, monitoring and review of the final management plan.

Figure 4. BC Parks Regional Staff Responsible for BC Parks Management Plan Development.

Reprinted from: BC Parks, 2016, BC Parks Regional Staff Responsible for BC Parks

Management Plan Development. Retrieved October 12, 2024, from

https://nrs.objectstore.gov.bc.ca/kuwyyf/management_planning_manual_415d24c1ed.pdf.

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I contacted the Terrace, Smithers, Dease Lake and Atlin BC Parks offices (see Figure 5) in the North Coast Skeena Region by email and telephone to recruit participants. There are approximately 11 BC Parks employees that contribute to park management plans working in the offices I contacted. The North Coast Skeena Region has two Operations Section Heads, two Planners, one Conservation Specialist, and seven Area Supervisors. Each Area Supervisor has a Ranger below them. Senior Rangers with time, availability and knowledge may also contribute to park management plans. BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region has 10 Protected Area Collaborative Management Agreements with the following First Nations: Allied Tsimshian Tribes of Lax Kw'alaams First Nation; Metlakatla First Nation; Kitsumkalum First Nation; Kitselas First Nation; Gitga'at First Nation; Haisla First Nation; Gitxaala First Nation; Kitasoo Xai'xais First Nation (managed primarily out of the West Coast Region); Lake Babine Nation; and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation. Additionally, the Nisga'a Final Agreement Treaty document specifically informs management planning for certain protected areas on Nisga'a Territory.

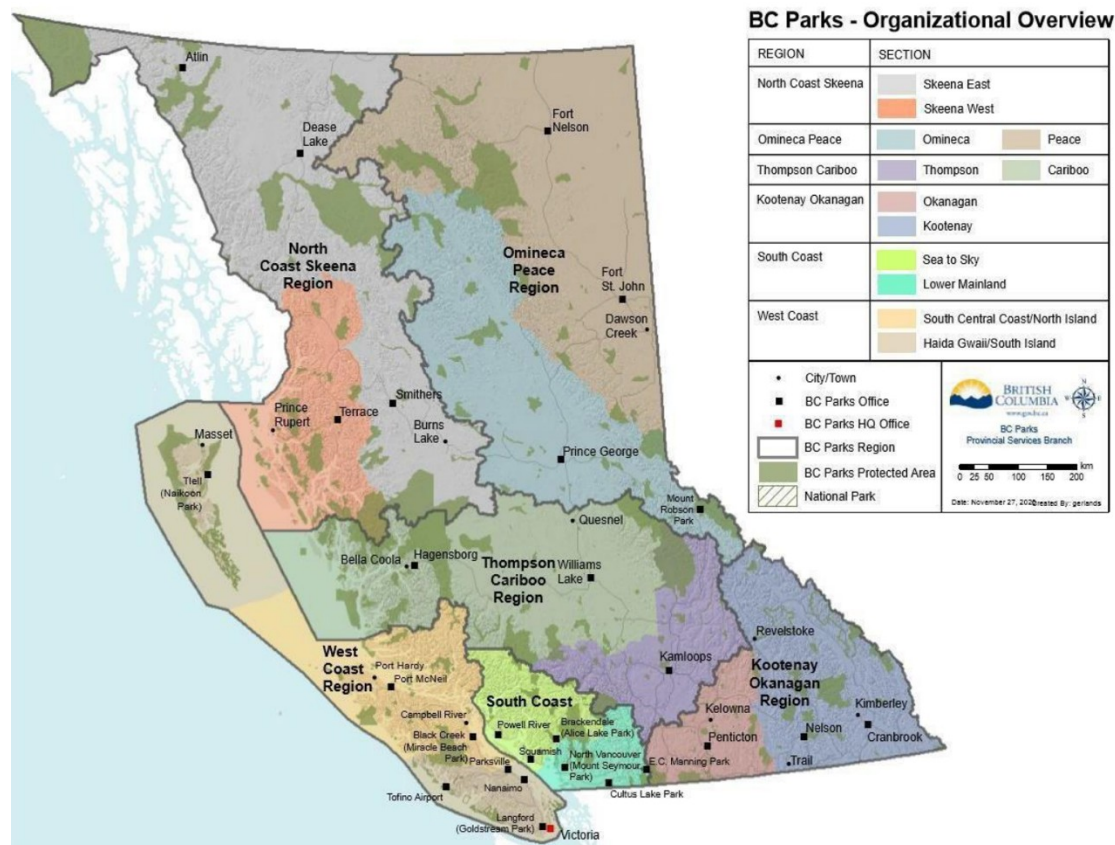


Figure 5. BC Parks Regions and Offices. Reprinted from: BC Parks, 2021, Park Contacts, Conditions, and Restrictions. Retrieved February 9, 2025, from https://portalext.nrs.gov.bc.ca/documents/processed_files/Park+Contacts+Conditions+and+Restrictions+2021-01-18.pdf. Copyright 2021 by BC Parks. Reprinted with permission.

Third, I only interviewed members of Gitxsan First Nation who identified as Chiefs or Elders. I made this choice because Chiefs and Elders are considered to be the members of a First Nation with authority to share TEK (Simpson, 2001). Gitxsan Huwilp Government has 60 Hereditary Chiefs (Simgiigyey), and of these 60 Simgiigyey, 38 Wilps (Houses) govern the Territory (Laxyip) (Gitxsan Huwilp Government, 2021a). Gitxsan First Nation Government operates according to a hereditary system that is based upon Wilp (house group), Ayook (law), and Adaawk (oral history) (Gitxsan Huwilp Government, 2021b). I wanted to understand how

TEK, oral history, and other aspects of culture can function to support planning and operations management, and how these findings can be applied by park agencies.

I chose to conduct my research with Gitxsan First Nation because of my personal connections with Gitxsan Peoples, the size of their Territory, and the number of BC Parks located within their Territory. Archaeological evidence supports the Gitxsan People's continuous habitation on Gitxsan Territory for at least 10,000 years (Harris, 1997). Gitxsan Laxyip is 33,000 km², which is approximately five times the size of Prince Edward Island (Gitxsan Huwilp Government, 2021a) and comparable in size to the state of Maryland in the United States, or the European country of Belgium. Gitxsan means "People of the Misty River." The Babine, Bulkley, Kispiox, Nass, Sustut, Suskwa, Kitseguecla, and Skeena Rivers are all located on Gitxsan Laxyip (see Figure 6). These watersheds provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife species and are ecologically important for maintaining the rich biodiversity of the Northwest region (BC Forest Service, 2007; Johnson, 2000). There are 18,000 Gitxsan Peoples that own the Gitxsan Laxyip (G. Sebastian, personal communication, March 25, 2023). Eastern Gitxsan includes the communities of Gitanmaax, Glen Vowell (Sik-e-dakh), and Kispiox (Anspayaxw). Western Gitxsan includes the communities of Gitwangak (Kitwanga), Gitanyow (Kitwancool), and Gitsegukla. There are ten BC Parks in Gitxsan Laxyip: Babine River Corridor Park, Swan Lake Kispiox River Park, Sustut Park, Damdochax Protected Area, Ross Lake Park, Anderson Flats Park, Bulkley Junction Park, Seeley Lake Park, Kitwanga Mountain Park, and Seven Sisters Park. All of these parks have management direction that was developed in the early 2000s. The management direction for Babine River Corridor Park, Ross Lake Park, Bulkley Junction Park, Seeley Lake Park, and Kitwanga Mountain Park was developed in 2000 (BC Parks Skeena District, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2000e). The management direction for Swan Lake Kispiox

River Park, Sustut Park, Damdochax Protected Area, and Seven Sisters Park was developed in 2003 (BC Parks Skeena Region, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d). And, lastly, the management direction for Anderson Flats Park was developed in 2007 (BC Parks, 2007).



Figure 6. Gitksan First Nation Laxyip Boundary Map. Reprinted from: Huwilp Gitksan Government, 2019, Gald'm Mahlasxw, Gitksan Laxyip. Retrieved May 1, 2022 from https://gitksan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Gitksan_MarchNewsletter_2019.pdf. Copyright 2019 by Gitksan Huwilp Government. Reprinted with permission.

The scope of this qualitative case study did not include the application of protected area management effectiveness (PAME) assessment tools, though these are useful for improving

protected area management and accountability (Hockings et al., 2006; Leverington et al., 2008). BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region has been involved in PAME evaluations in the past. For example, one PAME evaluation was completed with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations for Tatshenshini-Alsek Park in 2022 (N. White, personal communication, January 29, 2025). However, I intended to scope my research to focus on Indigenous-settler relations, the lived experiences of Gitksan First Nation members and BC Parks staff, and the appropriate and just participation of Indigenous Peoples in park planning and management. I did not attempt to perform an overall evaluation of BC Parks management performance or their delivery of protected area objectives (Hockings et al., 2006). A primary goal of this project was to identify historical and current socio-political barriers to the uptake of TEK in park planning and operations management. I hope my research will provide accessible, practicable recommendations for BC Parks to integrate TEK which prioritize the principles of reconciliation and self-determination in park planning and operations management.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of my research is to investigate how TEK can be meaningfully integrated into BC Parks' planning and management, so as to enhance socially and environmentally responsible management plans. My project was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) What historical and current social, political, and economic factors influence the understandings and uptake of TEK in park planning and management?
- 2) What values and beliefs about WSK and TEK are held within the institutional culture of BC Parks?
- 3) How do BC Parks employees incorporate or exclude TEK in park planning and management?

- 4) How do Chiefs, Elders and Parks personnel view self-determination and reconciliation in terms of park planning and management?

Relevance to Literature

There is a paucity of research examining the inclusion of TEK and the roles of reconciliation and self-determination in park planning and management at the provincial level in Canada. Most relevant research discusses the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge within federal parks operated by Parks Canada (Cook, 2020; Houde, 2007; Johnston & Mason, 2020, 2021; Moore, 2020), and it focusses mainly on environmental monitoring (Beausoleil et al., 2021; Berkes et al., 2007; Fitzsimmons, 2020; Popp et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2019; Tran et al., 2020; Turner & Clifton, 2009a; Wyllie de Echeverria & Thornton, 2019). To date, there are no studies that offer recommendations for including TEK in BC Parks planning and management. The only study that discusses the use of TEK in BC Parks was conducted by Andrew Kadykalo et al. (2021), who interviewed and surveyed BC government decision-makers from a variety of ministries. My project builds upon Kadykalo et al.'s (2021) work in that it focusses on BC Parks management and includes Indigenous Peoples' perspectives. While previous scholarship has examined Parks Canada's reconciliation policies (Bruce, 2024; Corntassel, 2009; Finegan, 2018), this literature has not analyzed the role of reconciliation in provincial park management agencies, or how self-determination can be best supported by park agencies and managers. My research attempts to address these literature gaps, with an emphasis on the ways in which socio-political factors influence the use of TEK in BC Parks, and how BC Parks can prioritize reconciliation and self-determination within their agency, work, and in their planning and management of protected areas.

Previous literature indicates that socio-political and economic factors play a primary role in environmental decision-making (Policansky; 1988) and impact park managers' valuation and use of TEK (Kadykalo et al., 2021; Lemieux et al., 2018; Young et al., 2016). Numerous studies have shown that environmental managers are hesitant to engage evidence and new ideas in making their decisions; they rely more on intuition, experience, values, beliefs and opinion (Cook et al., 2010; Fabian et al., 2019; Matzek et al., 2014; Pullin et al., 2016). This is despite the growing need to use multiple forms of knowledge in environmental planning, management, and decision-making (Esmail & Geneletti, 2018).

Kadykalo et al. (2021), Christopher Lemieux et al. (2018), and Helen Wheeler et al. (2020) lend support to my observation that TEK is lacking and undervalued in park planning and management. Their findings emphasize the need for accessible recommendations to integrate TEK. These recommendations must be clear, cost-effective, function with limited resources, and foster relationship-building. Wheeler and colleagues' (2020) study found that cultural assimilation and colonialism, uncondusive values, inequities, and dominant knowledge frameworks for the use of TEK limit the use of TEK in science.

Existing scholarship suggests that not enough work has been done to understand how power, politics, and colonialism structure and influence institutional decision-making for parks and protected areas (Kadykalo et al., 2021; Lemieux et al., 2018; Young et al., 2016, Wheeler et al., 2020). My project responds to this existing literature gap by seeking perspectives from BC Parks staff and Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders in Northwestern BC, to develop recommendations for including TEK in BC Parks planning processes and operations management.

Theoretical Considerations

Two-eyed Seeing Theory

Mi'kmaq Elders, Drs. Murdena and Albert Marshall, first coined the concept 'two-eyed seeing' (Bartlett et al., 2012). They theorized two-eyed seeing as a way to join Indigenous Knowledge systems with WSK, to illuminate the advantages of bi-focal vision for generating collaborative knowledge. It has been applied as a protocol, guiding principle, concept, theory and methodology in research (Wright et al., 2019). Cited in Reid et al. (2021), Dr. Marshall explained that:

Two-eyed Seeing (*Etuaptmumk* in Mi'kmaq) embraces learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all. (p. 243)

Two-eyed seeing provides a positive conceptual approach to the dichotomous relationship between WSK and TEK and upholds an Indigenous theoretical lens to assist with joining these two paradigms in park management. Two-eyed seeing requires: an ongoing commitment to relationships; ongoing personal efforts to understand positionality; acting upon responsibilities for relational reciprocities and accountabilities; and ongoing consideration of co-learning (Bartlett, 2017). Anishinaabe scholar, Cindy Peltier (2018) asserted that two-eyed seeing theory offers a relationship-based approach for non-Indigenous researchers to engage with Indigenous Peoples. Two-eyed seeing aligns with Indigenous worldviews and supports reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples by providing the opportunity to engage ethically, meaningfully and respectfully with Indigenous participants (Peltier, 2018).

While two-eyed seeing has many advantages, there is a long history of adverse experiences with misguided research on Indigenous Peoples that has made it challenging to change how Indigenous Peoples understand research and to build trust in this context (Smith, 2021). Therefore, applying two-eyed seeing theory in research requires the researcher to emphasize the resiliency of Indigenous Peoples, promote Indigenous self-determination and governance, and not further perpetuate negative stereotypes (Carter et al. 2017; Marsh et al., 2016; Martin, 2017). White settlers face epistemological and socialization-based limitations in the ability to interpret Indigenous Peoples' experiences on their own terms, and to develop understandings not explicitly or implicitly distorted by settler colonial privilege or White supremacy (Carlson, 2017; Kovach, 2021). These challenges and limitations require the researcher to practice humility, reciprocity, resistance and subversion to settler colonialism, relational and epistemic accountability to Indigenous Peoples, land engagement and accountability, and social location and reflexivity (Smith, 2021). With Indigenous theories and methodologies, the role of White-settler academics is "at the periphery, making space, and pushing back against colonial practices, mentalities, and land theft" (Carlson, 2017, p. 501). While the use of Indigenous methodologies by White settlers is limited, it remains a moral and ethical responsibility (Kovach, 2021). Indigenous theories and methodologies should be used by White academics to "foster the political mobilization to stop the colonial attack on Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Peoples...and require the recovery of Indigenous intellectual traditions, Indigenous control over Indigenous national territories, and the protection of Indigenous lands from destruction" (Simpson, 2004, pp. 381-382). The aims of two-eyed seeing theories must occur in relationship and dialogue with Indigenous Peoples, Knowledge Keepers, and draw upon the work of Indigenous scholars (Simpson, 2004; Smith, 2021). More broadly, to

help me make sense of colonial logics in park planning and management, I draw from conceptualizations of two-eyed seeing, decolonization, settler colonialism (Baldwin et al., 2011; Braun, 2002, Mason, 2014; Spence, 1999), place names, mapping, and recreational colonialism (Cruikshank, 2005; Erickson, 2020; Lowan-Trudeau, 2021).

Reconciliation efforts begin with an appreciation of the harms inflicted on Indigenous populations through historical and contemporary cultural, structural, political, economic and environmental inequities. I see two-eyed seeing theory as the most apt theoretical paradigm in which to ground my research because it allows me to recognize the multi-faceted and systemic racism that has afflicted and continues to impact Indigenous Peoples in Canada, while also identifying ways to meaningfully integrate TEK into BC Parks planning and management. Pertinent to my two-eyed seeing theoretical orientation are the key concepts of settler colonialism and decolonization.

Settler Colonialism

Settler colonialism is a distinct type of colonialism, in which settlers seek to remove and erase Indigenous Peoples through culturally genocidal practices, so as to facilitate the expropriation and use of their lands in perpetuity. Indigenous scholars, Eve Tuck (Unangax̂) and K. Wayne Yang (2012), define settler colonialism as a “violent structure and process wherein settlers transform Indigenous land into their new home and a source of capital, which disrupts Indigenous relationships to the land” (p. 5). This form of colonialism aims to replace the identities of Indigenous populations with a colonial identity—often through forcible means of assimilation—as in the case of Canadian colonial settlement (e.g., the Sixties Scoop and the Residential School system).

The issue of land is central to understandings of settler colonialism. Land is what is most valuable, contested and required. The disruption of Indigenous relationships to the land represents profound “epistemological, ontological, and cosmological violence” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5). Tuck and Yang (2012) assert that this violence is not temporally contained but is reasserted each day of occupation. Therefore, as Patrick Wolfe (1999) emphasizes, settler colonialism is a structure, not an event. The foundations of settler colonialism require continued institutional structures to control landscapes and resources. However, settler colonialism is also reproduced through more subtle mechanisms, including the modification of landscapes and claims to belonging (Tuck & Yang, 2012). In the process of settler colonialism, Indigenous land has been remade into government property through the creation of parks as wilderness spaces. This has restricted Indigenous relationships to their territories by limiting their capacity to maintain connections to these lands as dependent on their relationship with the government and its parks institutions.

Academic literature analyzing settler colonialism and how it structures understandings of the environment are crucial to my topic. Works discussing the settler colonial construction of wilderness spaces, parks (Braun, 2002; Mason, 2014, 2021; Spence, 1999), the North, and colonial (re)mapping of lands (Baldwin et al., 2011; Erickson, 2020; Cruikshank, 2005; Lowan-Trudeau, 2021), all inform my understanding of parks and how power has operated within park discourses to marginalize Indigenous Peoples. This scholarship encourages investigation of contemporary settler colonialism as a social, ideological, and institutional process through which the settler-state implicitly and explicitly ‘others’ (Said, 1991) and excludes Indigenous Peoples.

Decolonization

Decolonization involves the critical deconstruction and analysis of colonial systems (Smith, 2021). Scholars who inform my understanding of decolonization include Leslie Brown and Susan Strega (2015), Jenalee Kluttz, Jude Walker and Pierre Walter (2020), Rachel Flowers (2015), Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2004), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021), Tuck and Yang (2012), and Shawn Wilson (2008). Simpson (2004) describes decolonization as a shift in mindset from seeing Indigenous Peoples as a resource to extract to seeing them as articulate, relevant, living Peoples and First Nations, which requires individuals and communities to develop fair, meaningful, authentic relationships. One part of decolonization has focussed on examining how research is undertaken (Smith, 2021). Ian Hay and Meghan Cope (2021) discuss decolonizing research as “Research whose goals, methodology, and use of research findings contest imperialism and other oppression of peoples, groups, and classes by challenging the cross-cultural discourses, asymmetrical power relationships, and institutions on which they are based” (p. 418). My work centres reconciliation and self-determination by aiming to support increased Indigenous governance over parklands. Decolonial theories guide my research goals; they are valuable for analyzing systemic barriers to TEK inclusion and developing recommendations that facilitate meaningful engagement and collaborative management.

I am inspired by decolonial theories, as I am concerned with social justice. However, as Tuck and Yang (2012) explain, “decolonization specifically requires the repatriation of Indigenous land and life. Decolonization is not a metonym for social justice” (p. 21). Decolonization is a historical and political process which involves dismantling the power structures of settler colonialism, with the goal of repatriating Indigenous land and life (Simpson, 2004; Tuck & Yang, 2012). This entails decentering Euro-Western knowledge and taking stock

of how settler perspectives structure and rationalize inequality, in order to eliminate racism, dismantle imperialism, and return stolen land. With decolonial theories, colonialism is conceived of not as a historical memory, but as a present past (How, 2017). Considering the repatriation and dismantling of power structures that decolonization requires, this can sometimes conflict with the knowledge-sharing model of two-eyed seeing, as there is a risk that decolonization is reduced to mere collaboration (Brouwer, 2024; Townsend, 2022). However, fostering reconciliation and self-determination were key objectives of my project, and theories of decolonization informed my work and deepened my analysis in addressing settler colonialism and discrimination within park planning and management processes.

Key Concepts

There are several key concepts that ground my analysis. Western scientific knowledge (WSK) is a body of knowledge, associated with Western society, that is purported to be based on reason, scientific laws, evidence, facts, universality, objectivity, rationalism and deduction (Agrawal, 1995). I adopted a nested structure for defining Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in this thesis. I use the term Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives to refer to the diverse knowledge systems regarding Indigenous Peoples' cultures, histories, traditions and protocols, and I use the term TEK to discuss the application of Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives within Western environmental contexts, as this is how these terms were used by the participants in my study. It is also important to clarify that while TEK is often used as a synonym for Indigenous Knowledges in scholarship, it has also been applied more broadly to include non-Indigenous local knowledge systems (Ludwig & Poliseli, 2018). Nevertheless, in this thesis, the term TEK always refers to Indigenous knowledge systems.

I draw upon the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and Maria Tengö et al. (2017) to define Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives as: “a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief, evolving and governed by adaptive processes and handed down and across (through) generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment” (p. 17). Indigenous Peoples define their Knowledges as dynamic, place-based, and holistic systems of thinking and understanding the world, which are interconnected with their relationships to the natural and spiritual worlds and their ancestors (Absolon, 2022; Bruchac, 2014; Cajete, 1994; Cajete, 2013; Craft, 2016; Craft et al., 2021; Simpson, 2001). Indigenous Knowledges are passed down intergenerationally through oral traditions, cultural practices, ceremonies, and lived experiences. Indigenous Knowledges are holistic in that they are connected to phenomena across biological, physical, social, cultural, and spiritual systems. Inupiaq scholar, Heather Sauyaq Jean Gordon (2023) explains that Indigenous Knowledges are:

- 1) based on millennia of observations, 2) temporal and place-based, 3) living, 4) kinship-based, and 5) wholistic —with an added “w” to emphasize that it wholly encompasses all things, covering all areas of human life such as medicine, culture, and spirituality, as well as extensive Knowledge of ecology. (p. 1)

Indigenous Knowledges stem from and are based on Indigenous epistemologies (ways of knowing), ontologies (understandings of nature, human existence, and being), and axiology’s (values, value judgements, and ethics) (Bear, 2000; Cajete, 2021; Gordon, 2023; Smith, 2021; Tsosie et al., 2022). I use Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s (2001) definition of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). In Simpson’s (2001) words, TEK refers to all types of knowledge about the environment derived from “relationships, experiences,

storytelling, participating in ceremonies, the oral tradition, experimentation and observation, from the Elders, children, or from teachers in the plant and animal worlds” (p. 142). TEK is ancestral knowledge that is passed down orally through generations and is based on culture, history, spirituality, subjectivity, empiricism and induction. Simpson (2001) writes, “TEK ‘data’ or factual information is at the fore, rather than seeing our knowledge as worldviews, values and processes” (p. 139). It is important to underline that Indigenous Peoples have used TEK to “suit their own needs and live sustainably since time immemorial” (Simpson, 2001, p. 143).

Structures and institutions of dominant capitalist society marginalize and ‘other’ Indigenous Knowledges (Said, 1991) through pervasive colonial dichotomies regarding apprehensions of reality and what counts as Truth/fact. When considering this othering, another idea that helped me make sense of this is Donna Haraway’s (1988) concept of situated knowledges. This concept reveals that all knowledge is “situated, partial, contingent, and interpretive” (Haraway, 1988, p. 586).

I used a Foucauldian definition of discourse in my project. Michel Foucault (1977) defines discourses as systems of thoughts that are composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs, and practices that construct subjects and their understandings of the world. Foucault described discourses as instruments of power and forms of resistance. Discourse is “a historically contingent social system that produces knowledge and meaning” (Critical Legal Thinking, 2017, para 2). Discourse is never produced in the absence of context and cannot be properly understood without taking political, economic, and cultural circumstances into consideration (Foucault, 1977).

Another concept that is pivotal to my thinking and research approach is reconciliation. I adopted the TRC’s (2015b) definition of reconciliation:

Reconciliation is establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada [sic]. For that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior. (pp. 6-7)

Finally, self-determination informs my theoretical orientation. Self-determination is a First Nation's right to self-government of their lands, territories and resources. It is further defined by the TRC (2015b):

Self-determination is an animating force for efforts towards reconciliation... Self-determination requires confronting and reversing the legacies of empire, discrimination, and cultural suffocation...not to foster divisiveness but rather to build a social and political order based on relations of mutual understanding and respect. (pp. 187-188)

Significance of Study

This study collects instructive data through qualitative interviews with BC Parks staff, and Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders, to develop practical, reconciliatory recommendations for the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their Knowledges in BC Parks planning and operations management. These recommendations address relations of power, problematic policies and socio-political factors that limit the inclusion of TEK, and encourage action towards reconciliation and self-determination in park planning and management as a strategy for social change. This work contributes empirical evidence to ongoing academic discussions regarding reconciliation, self-determination, TEK and Indigenous involvement in park planning and management, in efforts to address the legacies and current realities of settler colonialism in government institutions.

The Chapters

My thesis chapters are arranged as follows. In Chapter Two, I review the literature that informs my project. I discuss relevant works on reconciliation, park history, settler colonial discourses in parks, Indigenous perspectives, challenges to TEK inclusion in parks, and ways forward with respect to integrating TEK in park planning and management. Chapter Three outlines my project's methodology. I explain my methods and examine some of the political and ethical considerations that require attention while conducting this research as a White woman on Indigenous land. Chapter Four discusses my findings from the semi-structured interviews with Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders and BC Parks employees. Chapter Five places these findings into conversation with the literature and my two-eyed seeing theoretical lens, to offer recommendations for park planners and managers to meaningfully include Indigenous Peoples and their TEK in park planning and operations management. Lastly, in Chapter Six, I summarize the project's main arguments and recommendations, discuss the significance and limitations of the work, reflect on my personal trajectory, and suggest areas for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Various disciplines and bodies of literature inform my project. I draw upon sociology, environmental studies, geography, history, First Nations studies, cultural studies, and leisure studies. This literature review places my work into conversation with the above fields of scholarship and helps to establish the parameters of my project. I also continue to clarify key concepts, so that readers can more readily follow my subsequent analyses. My literature review is organized into four main themes that support my analysis: reconciliation; park planning and management; settler colonialism; and Indigenous perspectives. These content areas provide context for understanding how park history and settler colonialism, as well as relations of power and inequality, impact TEK inclusion and reveal ways to overcome these challenges in meaningfully integrating TEK in BC Parks planning and management.

Locating My Research in Reconciliation: Responding to the Calls

Reconciliation is central to my ethical orientation. Two important documents that have guided my research and underpinned my political praxis are the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action (2015a) and Carmen Wong et al.'s (2020), "Towards Reconciliation: 10 Calls to Action to Natural Scientists Working in Canada."

This project responds to Principles 43, 44 and 79 of the TRC Calls to Action (2015a). Principles 43 and 44 of the Reconciliation Principles (2015a) state:

43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.

44. We call upon governments to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. (p. 4)

Principle 79 of the Commemoration Principles has four parts, two of which are relevant to my research: Principle 79 “i) Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat” and “iii) Developing and implementing a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada’s history” (p. 9). The TRC Principles (2015a) 43, 44 and 79 are directly related to park planning and management. As I mentioned in Chapter One, BC is the first and only province in Canada to enact Principles 43 and 44 in legislation. Principle 79 urges BC Parks to implement historic sites which include Indigenous Peoples and their history. Over the past twenty years, BC Parks has made progressive changes to its planning and management policies in working towards a ‘New Relationship’ that fosters trust and respect with Indigenous Peoples (Government of British Columbia, 2005; BC Parks Future Strategy, 2016). BC Parks is placing more emphasis on the cultural values of parks and protected areas. In addition to CMAs, SEAs, Reconciliation Agreements, Consultation Agreements, Conservancy designations, Cultural Zoning Frameworks, and Cultural Heritage Assessments, the agency has also implemented an Indigenous Reconciliation Program (BC Parks, 2022) and is organizing Indigenous Relations Projects funded through BC Parks Licence Plate Program, which brings in millions of dollars every year for park projects (BC Parks, 2025). For example, in fiscal year 2022/2023, there was ~\$10,000,000 in net revenue generated by the Licence Plate Program (BC Parks, 2024c), and in fiscal year 2021/2022, there was \$8,000,000 in net revenue generated (BC

Parks, 2023b). BC Parks has been renaming parks and trails to reflect traditional Indigenous place names, as well as implementing signage for territory acknowledgements. Additionally, BC Parks has implemented a Guardian Shared Compliance and Enforcement Pilot Program with the Nuxalk and Kitasoo Xai'xais First Nations, where First Nations members now exercise Park Ranger authorities in overseeing the management of their Territory (British Columbia Ministry of Environment and Parks, 2023). This program may be expanded to other Guardian Programs with other Indigenous Peoples in the future. Nevertheless, BC Parks must do more to further incorporate TEK into its planning and operations management practices and policies to align its work with the TRC Calls to Action (2015a).

In their article, Wong et al. (2020), outline 10 Calls to Action to natural scientists working in Canada. My project specifically responds to Call 1: “We call on natural scientists to understand the socio-political landscape around their research sites” (p. 772); Call 2: “We call on natural scientists to recognize that generating knowledge about the land is a goal shared with Indigenous Peoples and seek meaningful relationships and possible collaboration for better outcomes for all involved” (p. 772); and Call 3: “We call on natural scientists to enable knowledge sharing and knowledge co-production” (p. 774). My research aimed to be a direct response to Wong et al.’s (2020) Calls 2 and 3, by working with Gitxsan First Nation and BC Parks to understand my topic, develop and design my project, and by offering a set of recommendations for BC Parks to foster meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples and improve the application of TEK in park planning and management.

Reconciliation in Parks and Protected Areas

The Indigenous Circle of Experts (2018) outline several recommendations for supporting Indigenous-led conservation in their report, including the transformation of existing parks and

protected areas. Specifically, they call on “federal, provincial, and territorial governments to develop collaborative governance and management arrangements” (p. 59) for existing parks and protected areas (Recommendation 6.2). This research responds to their request by aiming to provide recommendations for park planners and managers to increase Indigenous governance and co-management approaches in parks and advance reconciliation efforts in parks and protected areas.

Political scientist, Chance Finegan (2018) conducted an analysis of reconciliation policies in Canada, Australia, and the United States to develop recommendations for achieving Indigenous reconciliation in protected areas. He identified reflection, acknowledgement, and justice as integral for achieving reconciliation in protected areas. He explained that reconciliation in parks requires an Indigenous-centred agenda that goes beyond efforts to ‘work better’ with Indigenous Peoples, to involve “truth telling, acknowledging harm, and providing justice in protected areas” (Finegan, 2018, p.1). This process should also afford more sovereignty to Indigenous Peoples managing their territories. Difficult conversations are an essential part of reconciliation, due to the interrelationship between land, sovereignty, and cultural continuity for Indigenous Peoples (Corntassel & Holder, 2008; Snelgrove et al., 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012), as well as the control exercised by parks for determining allowable activities of people on a land base (Kelly, 2015). It is important that reconciliation dismantles settler colonial systems and is “driven by and accountable to Indigenous interests rather than a sense of political expediency” (Finegan, 2018, p. 2). Thus, indigeneity must be integrated into settler colonial government institutions through recognizing reconciliation as a part of the past and future that strives towards community-based forms of justice (Finegan, 2018).

Finegan (2018) also provides important information about what reconciliation *is not* in park agencies. Reconciliation is not about ‘letting go’ of the past or assuming that “...the past is over and reconciliation is about forgiveness and moving on” (Nagy, 2012, p. 360). Instead, park institutions must understand how the past is reflected in Indigenous Peoples’ current lived experiences and build new relationships that provide atonement for wrongdoings in the form of restorative justice (Finegan, 2018; Sandlos, 2014; Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013). Finegan (2018) and other studies (Berkes, 2009; Langdon et al., 2010; Nadasdy, 1999) have also cautioned against co-management approaches as a strategy for reconciliation or increasing Indigenous self-determination in parks. This is because co-management approaches force Indigenous Peoples to fit within existing “settler-dominated government structures and processes” (p. Finegan, 2018, p. 11) and therefore fail to incorporate Indigeneity into park governance.

Cherokee Nation scholar, Jeff Corntassel (2009) argued in his research on ‘restorying’ Indigenous justice in Canada that truth-telling must be combined with community-centering actions for stories and truths to have meaningful effects and result in reconciliation. Corntassel (2009) described reconciliation as focussing on decolonizing actions, such as providing stories and acknowledging harm, which can also entail a formal apology. He explained that justice is accomplished in reconciliation through a meaningful, community-centred, and community-driven healing processes (Corntassel, 2009). The restorying process of changing narratives involves questioning the imposition of colonial histories on Indigenous Peoples and including Indigenous histories in reconciliatory actions (Corntassel, 2009). Corntassel (2009) stressed that is important for Canadians to educate themselves and their children on Indigenous history and colonization and for Canadian institutions to educate their employees. He explained that

reconciliation cannot be forced, as it is a process and will take time to mend relationships, build relationships, and develop meaningful actions for working together.

Kai Bruce's (2023) master's thesis in geography focussed on the role of Indigenous-led collaborations for reconciliation in Parks Canada. He used governance analysis and interviews to study Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives and understand how co-management of national parks might mobilize reconciliation. Bruce (2023) was also part of a community-partnered project to analyze relationship-building techniques with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Vuntut National Park. His results showed that co-management of national parks supports Indigenous-state reconciliation and renewing relationships. He found that self-determination, self-governance, and co-management agreements that "allow for consensus-based decision making...at the park level" (p. 77), are all key components in working towards reconciliation. However, Bruce (2023) also found that self-determination and self-governance can be undermined by co-management agreements because legislation upholds "the ultimate authority of the Minister over national parks" (p. 77). Therefore, co-management principles should be included in protected area legislation to develop a unified policy for working with Indigenous Peoples in protected area establishment, governance and management (Bruce, 2023).

Park Planning and Management

Studies have found that TEK is used less than WSK in park planning and management (Kadykalo et al., 2021; Lemieux et al., 2018). Conservation scientists Andrew Kadykalo et al. (2021) interviewed 65 BC government decision-makers and surveyed 403 BC government decision-makers from a variety of ministries. Their data revealed that environmental managers are more likely to draw on intuition, past experience, or opinion to inform important decisions, rather than rely on evidence (including TEK). Socio-economic and political interference

corresponded with lack of evidence (including TEK) in planning and management. According to Kadykalo et al. (2021), most government staff members witnessed underfunded and diminished research capacity within their ministry/branch and believed that there were insufficient resources to effectively fulfill their ministerial/branch mandate. Participants highlighted difficulties in assessing the reliability of TEK. In Christopher Lemieux et al.'s (2018) national survey of 121 Canadian protected area managers, they identified the following barriers to incorporating TEK: limited financial resources; lack of staff; inadequate timeframes for decision-making; a lack of monitoring programs; and a disconnect between researchers and decision-makers. Lemieux et al. (2018) indicated that government agencies lack the appropriate resources, tools and frameworks for proper utilization and inclusion of TEK. These findings show that the BC and Canadian governments are not allocating enough resources to reconciliation with, and fair treatment of, Indigenous Peoples in park agencies.

Scholarship has highlighted that structural and cultural barriers impede the use of TEK. There are structural impediments when it comes to funding, timelines, guidelines, policies, programming, resources and hiring capacity (Cvitanovic et al., 2016; Kadykalo et al., 2021; Lemieux et al., 2018). During their qualitative interviews with 24 park managers, Christopher Cvitanovic et al. (2016) identified factors responsible for the lack of TEK in park management, including: cultural differences between TEK and WSK; timeframes/insufficient resources (i.e., managers don't have time to gather TEK); poor guidelines, policies and program planning; and geographic isolation of Indigenous communities. They found that decision-makers are "typically focussed on day-to-day operations, and driven by... political, economic, and social drivers that reflect broader societal issues" (p. 870). These results indicate a limited capacity for

incorporating TEK, which can serve to perpetuate a culture in which TEK is not valued or used in decision-making processes.

Several studies demonstrate the ways in which socio-political factors impact park managers' valuation and use of TEK (Kadykalo et al., 2021; Lemieux et al., 2018; Wheeler et al., 2020). Helen Wheeler et al. (2020) surveyed 18 participants, of which 50% were Indigenous Knowledge (IK) Holders, 67% were working to support the use of IK, 50% worked for environmental decision-making organizations which involve IK, and 56% worked in monitoring programs that involve IK. The participants identified cultural assimilation and colonialism, values, inequities, and dominant frameworks for the use of knowledge as some of the key issues limiting the use of IK in science. Participants described the lack of frameworks for using TEK as a limitation and noted that frameworks proposed by Indigenous organizations are often ignored. They also identified insufficient involvement, power, and agency of IK Holders in scientific research. These findings stress the need for a process to integrate TEK in park management that is clear and fosters relationship-building.

Various studies have indicated that park planners and managers are more likely to draw on intuition, past experiences, or opinion than to rely on evidence (Cook et al., 2010; Fabian et al., 2019; Kadykalo et al., 2021; Matzek et al., 2014; Pullin et al., 2016). This finding is cited as being problematic, with critiques dating back to the 1980s. One instance of this critique is fisheries biologist David Policansky's (1988) research on National Science Research Council observation reports of freshwater resources, wetlands deterioration, and declining salmon populations in the Pacific Northwest. His findings revealed that resource management does not focus on science or evidence, but rather on economics, politics, values, beliefs, and other factors. Policansky's (1988) argument is supported by a large evidence base over 30 years, which raises

the question of why no changes have been made by now to address this problem in today's park management systems. I investigated this issue in my own study and asked BC Parks participants about how their values and beliefs influence their work in planning and operations management, as well as how current and historical, social, political, and economic conditions influence how TEK is utilized in their work. While there is only one statutory decision-maker in BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region, which is the Regional Director, there are some delegated authorities to the Operations Section Heads for small, operational decisions.

The only studies I found that have created frameworks to include TEK in provincial park management are those of Roger Spielmann and Marina Unger (2000) and David Cook (2020). Spielmann and Unger (2000) conducted interviews with 17 First Nations People and nine Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources officials and employees, and they found that design issues, lack of funding, absence of cross-cultural training of employees, poor recognition of Indigenous heritage and culture, and inadequate and rushed consultation all contributed to Ontario Parks' failure to properly engage with Indigenous Peoples in planning and management. They created a co-management model that offers an effective communication process for addressing the lack of opportunity for Indigenous Peoples to be equal partners in park management. The authors provided recommendations with examples for improving consultation, communication, policies and development and monitoring of joint stewardship programs, with increased TEK inclusion (Spielmann & Unger, 2000).

David Cook's (2020) research shows that there must be a set of rules and policies that provide consistency in the approach taken by protected area agencies when cooperating with Indigenous Peoples. Cook (2020) examined two case studies—Nahanni National Park and Reserve in the Northwest Territories and Whitefeather Forest Protected Area in Ontario—to

explore how TEK was being used in park management. He also analyzed relevant literatures and federal and provincial policies to determine that three main areas enhance the adoption of TEK in park management: standard policies; communications; and training of park and policy agencies and Indigenous communities. He found that Parks Canada and Ontario Parks agencies are failing to include TEK due to inconsistent policies for inclusion, budget cuts/lack of funding, and an overall lack of resources for guiding the incorporation of TEK in planning and management. Cook (2020) highlights that:

...in Ontario Parks as with Parks Canada, building relationships comes down to the individual parks' managers. In any given parks and protected area planning zone, there can be up to eight parks to a single planner covering vast areas of isolated communities. (pp. 43-44)

Cook (2020) stressed three main challenges for park planners and managers to incorporate TEK. These are: 1) Indigenous communities' lack of trust in the government 2) people's view that TEK is fanciful and the imposition of religion on Canadian citizens; and 3) a lack of collection and interpretation of TEK. For Cook (2020), given the variable, regionally specific nature of TEK, its adoption into park management is not always possible (p. 36). My research was also concerned with these challenges, and I explored them in my qualitative interviews.

It is my belief, bolstered by Cook's (2020) work, that TEK can be braided with WSK in park planning and management. Accordingly, my project responds to Cook's (2020) recommendations for future research:

While there is a growing academic field looking at TEK, there is not a lot of work being done on how to incorporate TEK into management plans. Few scholars discuss how to braid TEK with western science in a manner that can be easily reproduced. The

discussion around TEK acknowledges each community has TEK that is specific to their ecoregion, and for this reason there is a difficulty in working in the field. Despite the challenges, this is still an area needing much more research in multiple places. (p. 44)

Because my study involves one particular area and one particular First Nation, I cannot say that my findings are generalizable to other Indigenous Peoples and territories; however, the insights of the participants in my project are relevant beyond a single geographic location.

At the federal level, there is research on Parks Canada's inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their Knowledge within national parks. Sarah Devin and Brent Doberstein (2004) and Nicolas Houde (2007) each devised frameworks for the inclusion of TEK in Canadian parks management. Devin and Doberstein (2004) created an evaluative framework that outlined the beneficial contributions of including TEK in park planning and management. They applied their framework to a case study of Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve to demonstrate the presence or absence of TEK in management actions. Their paper set forth recommendations to improve the integration of TEK into Canadian parks management. Houde's (2007) framework identified "six faces" of TEK, including, factual observations, management systems, past and current land uses, ethics and values, culture and identity, and cosmology. His framework detailed the challenges and opportunities that each of these 'faces' poses to the co-management of natural resources in Canada.

The frameworks set forth for TEK inclusion in Canadian parks by Doberstein (2004) and Houde (2007) can be paired with the provincial co-management model for TEK inclusion by Spielmann and Unger (2000), to identify appropriate uses of TEK in BC Parks management plans and inform my own recommendations for BC Parks. In reviewing these frameworks for TEK inclusion, it is evident that literature on TEK in park management has been geared more

toward evaluating TEK for its potential to complement WSK and existing management approaches (Houde, 2007), than for its capacity to enhance social justice in park agencies and encourage new management approaches. In my own work, I contribute to this scholarly discussion by positioning social justice at the centre of my research design and recommendations, considering how reconciliation and self-determination are influencing BC Parks' planning and operations management.

Jason Johnston and Courtney Mason's (2020) research was more similar to my project in that it aimed to improve consultation and reconciliation in park planning and management. The authors conducted interviews with five Jasper National Park (JNP) managers and 12 members of the Jasper Indigenous Forum (JIF). They used Indigenous methodologies to guide their research. Their study collected the following qualitative data: the Indigenous history of JNP; current problems concerning JNP's consultation process with JIF; barriers to—and opportunities for—achieving respectful representations of Indigenous cultures in JNP; and “ways to improve the consultation process and support reconciliation in JNP” (p. 2). Their findings showed that there is underrepresentation and misrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in Jasper. They noted a lack of Indigenous content within signage and programming in the park and a limited understanding of Indigenous histories by JNP staff and visitors. Where Indigenous cultural history is present in the park, it is constructed through Eurocentric perspectives and emphasizes colonial use of, and expansion into, the area. As found by the authors, Indigenous Peoples disliked seeing their cultures presented through Eurocentric perspectives in interpretive programming (Johnston & Mason, 2020). Indigenous participants felt that their Knowledge was not valued, and their histories were not acknowledged. The Indigenous participants also indicated that there is an overall reluctance by JNP staff to learn about and share colonial histories. This reluctance seems

to stem from “Indigenous perspectives not matching the romanticized ideas of what Jasper was and is today” (Johnston & Mason, 2020, p. 12). The authors found that the lack of Indigenous representation in programs and signs in Jasper has contributed to misinformed ideas about Indigenous histories, especially on the parts of non-Indigenous visitors and JNP staff. Johnston and Mason’s (2020) instructive recommendations as to how parks can improve their work on reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples inform my own research.

Resource Management

Scholarship in fisheries, wildlife, and forestry has also analyzed the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their TEK, and these studies demonstrate how TEK can be woven with WSK to provide new insights in natural resource management. Fisheries studies have illustrated the importance of combining TEK with WSK to promote sustainable resource use and ecological resilience (Eisenberg, 2015; Hatch, 2016; Keenan, 2017; Berkes & Turner, 2006; Huntington & Wenzel, 2016; Turner & Clifton, 2009b; Gibson & Maru, 2020). Berkes and Turner (2006) applied a social-ecological-systems framework to analyze fisheries case studies working with Indigenous Peoples in the Pacific Northwest and the Great Bear Rainforest to better understand how TEK has been applied in fisheries management and how it is being integrated with WSK. They found that TEK can enhance fisheries management by providing comprehensive insights into ecological processes that Western science often overlooks, particularly in coastal and northern regions. Berkes and Turner (2006) note that Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives are especially valuable in environments where historical data can help predict ecological shifts that may not be apparent through WSK monitoring alone. The authors argue that that TEK can significantly contribute to adaptive management practices in fisheries management by providing

local, place-based knowledge about ecosystems and their changes over time (Berkes & Turner, 2006).

Huntington and Wenzel (2016) employed 30 interviews with Inuit Indigenous Knowledge Holders and analysis of policy documents to examine the role of TEK in fisheries management in Canada's Arctic. They used descriptive narratives and thematic analysis to identify how Indigenous communities observed fish populations, migration patterns, and environmental cues (e.g., ice conditions, water temperature), and how these observations can inform fisheries management in the Arctic. The authors found that TEK regarding fish migration patterns and seasonal cycles complements and strengthens WSK models to improve the accuracy of fishery predictions and demonstrate the interconnectedness of fish species with other fish and wildlife (Huntington & Wenzel, 2016). Turner and Clifton (2009b) underscore how integrating TEK in scientific monitoring has proved to be successful in Pacific Northwest salmon conservation. They found that because TEK is experiential, context-specific, and narrative-based and WSK is typically quantitative, systematic, and often standardized, these differences can lead to tensions or misunderstandings when attempting to combine the two knowledge systems (Turner & Clifton, 2009b). Additionally, institutional barriers impede the use of TEK, such as government reluctance to formally recognize TEK as a valid source of knowledge or the lack of trust in Indigenous Knowledge by certain stakeholders (Turner & Clifton, 2009b). Nevertheless, they found that managing fish stocks, setting fishing quotas, and determining fishing seasons are more effective when TEK is integrated due to the detailed understandings that TEK offers regarding spawning grounds, migration routes, and habitat conditions, which are crucial for managing and conserving species effectively (Turner & Clifton, 2009b). The authors argue that collaborative governance of fisheries allows for relationship-building, mutual respect and shared

responsibility, helping to create sustainable management practices that take both WSK and TEK into account (Turner & Clifton, 2009b). These studies illustrate that despite the challenges in reconciling these different epistemological frameworks, the weaving of TEK and WSK in fisheries management provides adaptive, context-specific, and culturally inclusive strategies for conservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources (Gibson & Maru, 2020).

Berkes et al. (2000) investigated the role of Indigenous Knowledge in the management of caribou populations in Northern Canada. Through interviews and participatory research with Inuit Peoples, they found that Indigenous hunters had a deep understanding of caribou migration, calving grounds, and behavioral patterns, which contributed to sustainable hunting practices and species conservation. Natcher and Hickey (2009) utilized 25 interviews with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and scientific data on bear populations in their study on grizzly bear management in the Yukon. They found that Indigenous Knowledge of bear behavior and habitat use provides important insights for improving grizzly bear conservation efforts. Stevenson (2006) explored the weaving of TEK and WSK in managing moose populations in Ontario, using 15 interviews with Indigenous hunters and Elders to collect TEK on moose behavior, habitat preferences, and seasonal movements. She found that TEK provides valuable information on seasonal moose movements and habitat preferences which WSK is unable to capture, thus improving the accuracy and reliability of scientific models for moose population dynamics. This is because the general and limited nature of scientific data in population modelling commonly lacks the details and specificity that TEK is able to provide (Stevenson, 2006). Lastly, Martin et al. (2016) interviewed 22 Indigenous trackers and 13 wildlife biologists to explore the use of TEK in managing wolves in the Northern Rockies. Their study found that TEK of wolf pack territories, behavioral patterns, and interactions with other species played a crucial role in

developing more effective conservation policies for wolves. These studies all underscore the value of combining TEK with WSK to manage wildlife sustainably, ensuring both biodiversity in conservation and cultural integrity in Indigenous communities. The inclusion of both knowledge systems enhances the adaptive management of wildlife species, improving the ability of wildlife managers to become more resilient and responsive to environmental shifts. Because TEK is flexible and adaptive to ecological changes on the landscapes that Indigenous Peoples reside within, particularly in the face of climate change and shifting ecosystems—as seen in the management of grizzly bears and moose populations (Natcher & Hickey, 2009; Stevenson, 2006)—TEK improves the ability of wildlife managers to adjust conservation strategies based on ecological changes.

Forestry scholars have explored the weaving of TEK with WSK to improve understandings of forest management, conservation, and ecological restoration. Parrotta et al. (2012) synthesized existing literature on community-based forest management and co-management of forests with Indigenous Peoples from various global contexts to emphasize that TEK, when integrated with scientific forestry practices, enhances biodiversity conservation and supports sustainable land use by promoting ecosystem health, species regeneration, and forest restoration. Turner et al. (2000) conducted 26 interviews with Elders in BC Indigenous communities on forest management practices and found that Indigenous forest stewardship is especially effective in the management of cedar and fir forests, as controlled burns and cultural harvesting practices contributed to forest health and species diversity. Lastly, Gadgil et al. (1993) analyzed case studies from India and North America and found that integrating TEK with WSK in forestry leads to more effective forest conservation and species preservation. Collectively, studies on TEK inclusion in forestry illustrate how TEK supports a holistic and long-term

perspective to forest management, offering critical insights into ecological balance, sustainable harvesting practices, and resilience to environmental changes, making it an instrumental body of knowledge to include and apply alongside WSK in modern forestry practices. Literature on TEK inclusion in fisheries, wildlife, and forestry highlight the importance of incorporating TEK in natural resource management and demonstrate how TEK can facilitate nuanced, context-specific adaptive management practices in addressing both social and environmental aspects of natural resource management.

Settler Colonialism

Scholarship on park planning and management suggests that the lack of TEK in park institutions stems largely from settler colonialism and that new approaches are needed to improve collaborative planning and management with Indigenous Peoples. To understand the context of settler colonialism in government parks, it is necessary to understand how park history and colonial policy inform power relations between park agencies and Indigenous Peoples. In what follows, I divide my review of scholarship on settler colonialism into two subsections. First, I discuss park history, then I examine ideas of wilderness and the North.

Park History

The Canadian nation-state was built upon theories that Indigenous lands were new (*terra nullius*) (Tuck et al., 2014) and vacant (*vacuum domicilium*) (Corcoran, 2018). This settler logic justified ignoring and erasing Indigenous histories, cartographies, land use, governance and practices. For example, cultural geographers have shown how the colonizer maps and names land to exert dominance, ensure a visible presence and to erase Indigenous residents and histories (Clayton, 2000; Cruikshank, 2005; Lucchesi, 2018; Monmonier, 2006). By navigating, (re)mapping and mastering so-called wild places, the colonizer exercises control over them. In

Greg Lowan-Trudeau's (2021) research on the taken-for-granted power of colonial cartography, he used a comparative analysis of colonial and Indigenous maps in Northwestern BC to convey how choosing colonial, rather than Indigenous, political regions and place names on a map denies political sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples and "is representative of how deeply colonial values and assumptions are imbedded in contemporary North American epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies" (p. 4). Lowan-Trudeau (2021) demonstrated that maps hold unquestioned power in shaping public opinion and perceptions of Indigenous lands and sovereignty. Colonial perspectives and values are propagated through the mapping of parks and protected areas, which have stolen and (re)mapped Indigenous lands, diminishing their cultures, histories, and sovereignty, while imposing settler names and conceptualizations on lands and waters.

Courtney Mason's (2014) case study of Rocky Mountains Park (now Banff National Park) found that conservation discourse is "intricately linked to the implementation of levels of discipline designed to foster the repression of Indigenous cultural practices" (p. 49). Competing ideas of conservation, between settlers and Indigenous Peoples, exacerbated divisions and fostered government policies designed to assimilate Indigenous Peoples. Mason (2014) writes:

Indian agents and the mounted police used section 114 of the Indian Act to ban the performing of Sun Dances. By 1914, stronger efforts were made to eradicate the cultural practices of the Plains peoples as it became illegal to wear Indigenous dress or perform traditional dances. (p. 62)

The government never consulted with or informed Indigenous Peoples prior to their physical removal from lands onto reserves for the creation of parks (Binnema and Niema, 2006; Mason, 2014; Moola & Roth, 2019; Spence, 1999; Stevens, 2014; West et al., 2006). The Indian Act of

1884 outlined the banning of cultural practices in parks (Stevens & De Lacy, 1997). The government's ban on the potlatch targeted communities on Canada's West Coast, while their ban on the Sun Dance impacted the Plains Peoples (Mason, 2014). Indigenous subsistence land uses, including hunting, gathering, trapping, and fishing, have long been a source of conflict between park managers and local Indigenous communities. Scientific studies and reports documented and supported the subjugation of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous ways of knowing (Mason, 2014). This finding illustrates how power and privilege are systemically enacted by and through parks. Mason's findings also demonstrate how parks have historically used biased application of science to protect the power and privilege of settler-colonial dialogue over Indigenous discourses in the area of conservation.

Environmental historians Ted Binnema and Melanie Niemi (2006) also elaborated on the history and removal of Indigenous Peoples from National Parks in their case study on the exclusion of the Stoney Peoples from Banff National Park between 1890 and 1920. The authors argued that the example of Banff National Park exhibits the exclusion of Indigenous Peoples in the interests of game conservation, sport hunting, tourism and 'Indian assimilation,' to ensure that national parks became uninhabited wilderness areas. Fellow environmental historians, Keith Thor Carlson and Jonathan Clapperton (2012), thematically analyzed discussions from a symposium titled: "Historical and Global Perspectives on Provincial and Local/regional Parks in Canada." The symposium was a gathering of mainly historians in 2010 at the University of Saskatchewan, and their discussion focussed on local and provincial parks. The authors found that park creation and management, by definition, are exercises in boundary maintenance that ignore the reality of exclusion. Carlson and Clapperton (2012) explained that: "Park creation is fundamentally about preserving a historical, culturally-specific understanding of how people

should interact with their non-human surroundings in a delimited space” (p. 482). The dominant discourse about parks is that they are spaces ‘for all to enjoy.’ However, environmental and heritage protection have promoted culturally insensitive, colonial notions about how parks are meant to be experienced and by whom, as well as who should be involved in their management (Carlson & Clapperton, 2012). Their research reminds me that power and privilege are often invisible, taken-for-granted, and woven into the narratives and socio-cultural norms of White-settler society. Put another way, the postcolonial scholar Edward Said (1991) stated that unreflective ‘insiders,’ do not recognize what it is to be those ‘outside,’ or, what it is to be “the other”.

In a more recent study, cultural geographer Courtney Mason (2021) analyzed colonial policy and evidence from the 19th century to ascertain how scientific inquiry, conservation ethics, and hunting and fishing policies have contributed to excluding Indigenous Peoples from parklands and reinforced the repression and assimilation of Indigenous cultural practices. Ecology and wildlife management policies were highly influential in colonizing Canada by shaping conservation practice and promoting principles that marginalize local use of wildlife (Mason, 2021). The government displaced Indigenous communities and made their sustenance hunting practices illegal. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) monitored Indigenous activities and were attentive to “the movements of their Indians” (Mason, 2021, p. 7). Therefore, government policies functioned to remove Indigenous Peoples from parklands and park management.

Anishinaabe, First Nations studies scholar, Mark Aquash (2013), discusses settler colonialism in Canada as being deeply rooted in paternalistic power structures and policies designed to control, repress, and devalue Indigenous Peoples. His study on geo-political policy

relationships between First Nations and Canada used Indigenous paradigms and historiography to relate settler colonialism to Foucauldian principles that are relevant to my topic. Michel Foucault defined domination in terms of relations of power (Miller, 2019). Foucault's (1991) concept of surveillance, as a means to maintain power, authority and control, can be linked to the ways in which colonial policies, such as the Indian Act and Rocky Mountains Park Act, have been used by parks to erase Indigenous cultures and histories. Foucault's (1991) concept of the panopticon can be used to make sense of the RCMP's surveillance and forcible removal of Indigenous Peoples from their lands for the creation of parks. Foucault's panoptic mechanism of power works to construct a pervasive form of moral control and broad form of behavioural regulation. In this Foucauldian sense, Canada's colonial policies have been instruments in maintaining the dominant White-settler ideology and a park mythos built on power structures that dispossess and exclude Indigenous communities in park management.

Aquash (2013) emphasizes that the Canadian public has remained largely uninformed and unaware of Indigenous history, treaties and imposed legislation that defines legal obligations to First Nations as Canadian allies. Much of the reason for this "lies in the historical and contemporary educational system practices, which offer comparatively little in curricula to teach, explain, and acknowledge First Nation realities" (Aquash, 2013, p. 129). This resonates with the findings of Johnston and Mason's (2020) study of Jasper National Park, wherein there is an underrepresentation and misrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in park interpretation, signage, and programming, and park staff and visitors have limited understandings of Indigenous and colonial histories in the park. With the recent discoveries of thousands of children buried in unmarked graves in Residential 'School' yards across Canada, there has been an increased recognition of Canada's dark colonial history. What the above studies make clear is that more

must be done in working towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and educating the public on settler colonial history in Canada.

Mason (2014; 2021), Binnema and Niemi (2006), Carlson and Clapperton (2012) and Aquash (2013) all bring awareness to the role of National Parks in colonization in Canada. In acknowledging this history and its tendrils into contemporary society, we can better address the intricacies of power relations sustained by ethnocentrism and settler colonialism, at both the individual and institutional level.

Wilderness and the North

A number of scholars have analyzed the settler colonial construction of wilderness spaces (Baldwin et al., 2011; Braun, 2002; Erickson, 2020; Lowan-Trudeau, 2021; Mason, 2014, 2021; Spence, 1999). Colonial policies have functioned to other (Said, 1991) Indigenous Peoples, remove them from their traditional lands, disregard their rights and title, and misappropriate parks as exemplary, colonial representations of Canadian heritage. In his book, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of National Parks*, Mark Spence (1999) analyzed the simultaneous development of national parks and ‘Indian reserves.’ He explains that “Indian removal has largely made these parks into...symbols of wilderness” (p.7). The creation of parks coincided with efforts to restrict Indigenous Peoples to reserves and assimilate them into White settler-society. It is important to note that while government parks have been used as a tool for settler colonialism, systems of land stewardship and protection did exist in Indigenous cultures prior to colonization.

Several scholars have demonstrated how colonizers uphold a human-centred approach that views the non-human environment as empty and passive (Erickson, 2020; Hudson-Rodd, 1998; Plumwood, 2003). In his chapter on North American Arctic tours that advocate on behalf

of environmental issues, cultural geographer and leisure studies scholar, Bruce Erickson (2020), explained that wilderness is "...a story of the North" (p. 71), which has been heavily influenced by colonialism. He asserted that these tours are part of a colonial legacy that has long pictured the North as a vast and empty landscape. This assumption erases the lived experiences and stories of people inhabiting Northern communities (Erickson, 2020). Explorers and scientists have shaped the way that colonial governments and southern markets valued northern lands for trade and natural resource extraction and exploitation.

Historical geographers Andrew Baldwin et al. (2011) recognized how the great Canadian outdoors, or the "Great White North," rests on colonial logic (p. 1). They examined the structural dominance involved in representations of Canada as the 'Great White North.' Baldwin et al. (2011) underlined the way in which parklands have been used to "invoke a metaphor of nature's purity to reinforce norms of racial purity" (p. 1). They described how the double meaning of the word 'White,' as embodied in the concept of the 'Great White North,' parallels a double movement in our "...social and cultural history both to assert the dominance of Whiteness as a cultural norm and to build a sense of national identity linked closely to nature and wilderness" (Baldwin et al., 2011, p.1). Non-White and Indigenous Peoples have been excluded from this norm since Canada's inception. 'Great White North' is synonymous with the values upon which the nation was built, and such values are upheld and reinforced in parks today by the ongoing exclusion of Indigenous participation in park management. The North draws together cultural value and identity to produce a metaphor of "imperial grandeur, innocence and sovereignty" (Baldwin et al., 2011, p. 2). Due to systemic racism and legacies of colonialism, wilderness spaces are codified as pristine "White spaces" (Finney, 2014).

Sport sociologists and leisure scholars have discussed how the Canadian wilderness has been socially constructed to empty the land of the presence of Indigenous Peoples and produce spaces where Whiteness is taken-for-granted, normalized, and naturalized (Braun, 2002; Coleman, 1996; Erickson, 2003; Lowan-Trudeau, 2021; Stoddart, 2012). Braun (2002) argues in his study on colonial logic in BC's forestry economy that the segregation and erasure of Indigenous populations from their traditional territories to transform these lands as national symbols of Canadian heritage ("wilderness") or to consume and exploit them by private industry, is "exemplary of how colonial logic persists in postcolonial environmentalism" (p. 29). African American leisure scholar and cultural geographer, Carolyn Finney (2014), explained that a "White wilderness" is socially constructed by the meanings that we attribute to the environment, which are grounded in race, class, gender, and cultural ideologies. Whiteness, as a way of knowing and reading the world, becomes the way to understand our environment. Through representation and rhetoric, Whiteness is normalized in educational systems, institutions, and personal beliefs and has the power to determine which voices are heard in environmental debates and which voices are not. Finney (2014) argued that, by placing ideas of wilderness in a historical context and deconstructing their explicit and implicit racial connotations, scholars can push past mainstream environmental institutions and larger society to consider alternate understandings of the outdoors.

Indigenous Perspectives

A foundational concept in most Indigenous perspectives on the environment is relationality. Indigenous Peoples live in relationship with the land, water, plants, animals, soil, and all other life forms on earth (Bear, 2000; Cajete, 2004; Kimmerer, 2021). In her Earth Day Keynote presentation, plant ecologist and member of Potawatomi First Nation, Robin Kimmerer

(2021) explained that many Indigenous languages lack a word for the English word “it”. Instead, a tree, animal or the earth is referred to as their teacher, mother, friend—a person. She claims that the objectification of the natural world by the English language using the term “it” absolves moral responsibility and opens the door to exploitation. She indicated that the pernicious influence of using English grammar and language to refer to nature as an object rather than as a subject has devastating everyday consequences that promote and sustain the exploitation and abuse of Mother Earth. When plants, animals and the earth are regarded as other beings, we can learn from this Indigenous way of understanding to give plants, wildlife, and the earth more care and respect. Kimmerer explains in her presentation that this relationality with Mother Earth informs the ethics that drive how Indigenous Peoples perceive their duties to humans, animals, land, water, climate, and every other aspect of the world(s) which they inhabit.

Leroy Little Bear (2000), professor emeritus at the University of Lethbridge and Kainai First Nation member, also highlights the role of Indigenous languages in understanding and relating to the land. He stresses that the either/or and animate/inanimate dichotomies which exist in the English language do not exist in Indigenous languages and epistemologies, as everything is one complete animate system in constant interaction and change. Consequently, Indigenous languages allow for the transcendence of boundaries, such as talking to trees, rivers, rocks, wildlife and fish, which is an allowance that is not accorded in English. If everything is animate, then everything also has spirit and knowledge. In the words of Little Bear (2000), when everything in the world is considered to have spirit and knowledge, “...then all are like me. If all are like me, then all are my relations” (p. 78). The idea of all life forms being in constant motion or flux leads to a holistic and cyclical view of the world.

Professor emeritus at Trent University and Mohawk First Nation member, Marlene Brant Castellano (2000), notes that storytelling is an integral part of Indigenous culture and environmental knowledge. She explains that:

...stories [about the land] are given by the Creator on how to relate appropriately with the beings of Creation. It is important to understand that in the Aboriginal worldview, knowledge comes from the Creator and from Creation itself. Many stories and teachings are gained from animals, plants, the moon, the stars, water, wind, and the spirit world. Knowledge is also gained from vision, ceremony, prayer, intuitions, dreams, and personal experience. (p. 38)

Castellano (2000) notes that Indigenous Peoples in Canada live in relationship with the Creator and assume the responsibilities given to them by the Creator. The relationship with Creation and its beings was meant to be maintained and enhanced, and the knowledge transferred intergenerationally through storytelling would ensure this was passed on for generations over thousands of years. Principles and values such as respect, coexistence, cooperation, honour, thanksgiving, reciprocity, balance and harmony, connectivity, and recognition of interrelationships among all of Creation are woven into the storytelling of Indigenous Peoples' cultures and still relevant in contemporary times (Castellano, 2000).

Leisure scholar, Margaret McKeon (2012), highlights a powerful Indigenous teaching that she learned from Mi'kmaq Elder, Kevin Barnes. This quote demonstrates the confluence of ideas intrinsic to Indigenous, biocentric worldviews:

What is this? Moss? Ground? Aboriginal peoples call this Mother Earth. What pops in your mind when you say the word mother? What does your mom do for you? What does Mother Earth do for us?" He speaks to the specialness of what Mother Earth does for us

(for free) and asks if we treat Mother Earth the way she should be treated. (McKeon, 2012, p. 134)

McKeon (2012) uses this teaching by Elder Kevin Barnes to argue that Western environmental visions are failing because they are anthropocentric and technocentric. She urges environmental educators to move away from “historical roots within the Western worldview” (p. 132) and look to Indigenous visions, teachings, and understandings. McKeon (2012) sees Indigenous visions as biocentric, concentrating on interconnectivity and wholeness (holism) of self with nature/land/place, storytelling, social relations, caretaking, and the environment, and she maintains that environmental education is fundamentally tied to environmental practice. Current environmental issues require that we become more open to new ideas and new ways of thinking, planning, and managing, to improve the ecological and cultural integrity of our environment. The literature outlined above offers an alternative to WSK in terms of knowing, engaging with, and relating to the world, which can provide a multitude of benefits when applied in park planning and management. Next, I review literature discussing how Indigenous values and understandings of the environment are being applied in parkland governance using Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs).

IPCAs are protected areas legislated under the jurisdiction and laws of individual Indigenous communities, governments and Nations to protect their lands and waters (Finegan, 2018). IPCAs are often established by Indigenous Peoples in BC when the province is not responsive or does not act on requests for a Conservancy designation (Simmons, 2021). IPCAs have been “framed as an opportunity for Indigenous Peoples to reclaim stewardship of their territories, create space for Indigenous resurgence and cultural revitalization, and transform approaches to protected areas in Canada” (Papadopoulos, 2021, p. vii). In Anastasia

Papadopoulos' (2021) environmental studies graduate research on Mi'kmaw perspectives on IPCAs in Nova Scotia, she found that IPCAs are managed and governed by the core values of the Mi'kmaq, which include sharing, generosity, inclusion, and reciprocity. Mi'kmaw communities' lifestyles and land management practices are based on the principle of "netukulimk," which translates into peaceful co-existence between the Mi'kmaq and the rest of Creation; netukulimk is embodied through taking only what is needed for self-support and well-being (McMillan & Prosper, 2016; Hanrahan, 2016). Through managing IPCAs based on this principle and set of values, the Mi'kmaw ensure the futurity of their land and culture (Papadopoulos, 2021).

Marine scientists Grant Murray and Danielle Burrows (2017) examine how Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation has exercised power and self-determination in the creation of their IPCA Wanachis-hilth-hoo-is Tribal Park (Meares Island). The creation of their IPCA took place in 1984 in direct response to logging plans on the island. In their declaration of the IPCA, the Tla-o-qui-aht claimed title to their land in the heart of Clayoquot Sound, insisting that visitors "...adhere to the Laws of our Forefathers, which were always there" (p. 763). The Tla-o-qui-aht's declaration further stated that protection of that land was necessary for "...the survival of our Native way of life" (p. 765). Thirty years later, the Tla-o-qui-aht implemented an ecosystem services fee, which involves negotiated payment to Tribal Parks representatives by ecotourism outfitters that travel to Wanachis-hilth-hoo-is. The agreement was that fees are visibly included (i.e., tourists know they are paying the fee) in the overall price that tourists pay the outfitters, and outfitters then remit the fees to Tribal Parks officials. This system has worked well and been economically advantageous to the Nation (Murray & Burrows, 2017). Murray and Burrows (2017) found that outfitters were supportive of the program because it supported Tla-o-qui-aht initiatives to steward their own land and to create jobs for their people. An area of general agreement was

identified related to a perceived need for both conservation action and the need to raise conservation awareness with tourists.

Environmental scientists, Tanya Tran et al. (2020) collaborated with the Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation to identify the key successes, challenges, and lessons from developing their IPCA. The authors used a mixed methods approach to summarize the Nation's rationale and process. They found that IPCA development is an iteration of ongoing efforts to address limitations of state protected areas to better reflect Kitasoo Xai'xais rights and responsibilities while preserving culture, biodiversity, and economic opportunity. The Kitasoo Xai'xais process was rooted in long-term Territory planning and contemporary stewardship capacity building. The Nation faces similar challenges to other protected areas and is additionally burdened by ongoing colonization impacts (Tran et al., 2020). To address these challenges, the Nation is seeking "state legislative IPCA recognition, applying Indigenous and complementary western stewardship approaches, and pursuing responsibility-based partnerships" (Tran et al., 2020, p. 3). Indigenous Peoples can achieve tangible benefits from partnering with other actors to manage their IPCAs. In some cases, partnering with state legislative agencies may increase the financial stability of IPCA management for Indigenous leaders (Smyth & Jaireith, 2012). Seeking state recognition and support can help IPCA managers access more resources for capacity building and increase political capital for Indigenous organizations. In addition, Indigenous actors can build partnerships to leverage funding and in-kind support to achieve management goals (Davies et al., 2013). Indigenous organizations embracing hybrid management approaches can benefit from both Indigenous and western conservation science and land management to create unique and adaptable planning and management tools, such as land use zoning with Indigenous law guiding principles in Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Park (Murray & King, 2012; Murray & Burrows, 2017).

Analyzing studies on IPCAs sheds light on the need to bridge TEK with WSK in a mutually beneficial relationship that empowers Indigenous Peoples. In working towards reconciliation and collaborative management approaches, parks managers should strive to appreciate and include Indigenous values in park planning and management.

Fisheries scientists, Jacqueline Chapman and Stephan Schott (2020) engaged two-eyed seeing as a methodology to present a knowledge ‘coevolution’ framework that integrates TEK and WSK into environmental practice. They applied their framework to a fisheries harvest management study in Gjoa Haven, Nunavut. Their coevolution framework prioritized Indigenous self-governance within the project’s governance, structure, implementation, and evaluation (Chapman & Schott, 2020). The authors explained that TEK must be meaningfully integrated to avoid tokenism, which is the “inclusion of TEK with the sole purpose of benefitting the researchers by appeasing formal requirements to simply ‘look good’” (Chapman & Schott, 2020, p. 932). Insincere tokenism, by making a show of minor engagement with select Indigenous representatives, presents a false image of a just fulfillment of obligations respecting Indigenous People’s involvement in matters such as management planning. Although new approaches are being developed by BC Parks in response to federal and global pressures for reconciliation and cultural restoration, these terms can serve as rhetorical cover for governments to disguise ongoing oppression and inequality; they can become hollow, mollifying catchphrases that help to protect and perpetuate institutional power and the status quo. A BC government decision maker’s quote in Kadykalo et al.’s (2021) study illustrates this point: “Much of these [Indigenous] obligations are just ‘paid lip service’, lacking action” (p. 8). Kadykalo et al.’s (2021) finding demonstrates how governments can subtly, and invisibly perpetuate power imbalances in society.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous environmental scientists, Aisling Rayne et al. (2020), used two-eyed seeing in their study on Indigenous-led conservation translocations. The authors layered genomic data of species with mātauraka Māori Knowledge in order to co-design conservation translocation decisions for fish and invertebrates with cultural significance for the Nation. Rayne et al. (2020) emphasized that TEK “extends to species...often underrepresented in Western science conservation management” (p. 516). This is because Western science often uses an ‘either/or’ approach to ecological restoration, whereas Indigenous approaches are more holistic and “likely to integrate both” (p. 516). Therefore, incorporating TEK can strengthen and expand environmental management actions by considering all of the interconnected aspects of an ecosystem and the cultural importance of them in decision-making.

Effective and appropriate braiding of WSK with TEK is a subject of ongoing, evolving discussion in academic literature. Amy Wright and colleagues (2019) conducted a review of 37 articles which applied two-eyed seeing as a theory or methodology to determine the requirements, benefits, and limitations of this approach. Wright et al. (2019) found that two-eyed seeing must go beyond an appreciation of Indigenous ways of knowing to incorporate “authentic relationships, reciprocal research, relational accountability, Indigenous involvement, Indigenous methodology, and Western deference to Indigenous leadership” (p. 15). This review is directly applicable to my project. Wright et al.’s (2019) study highlights that using two-eyed seeing theory requires a research design and objectives which align with and reinforce my responsibilities to the Nation and community members.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this chapter informs my research on the value and use of TEK in park management. Interlocking analyses of literature on reconciliation, park planning and

management, settler colonialism, and Indigenous perspectives, reveal complex environmental and social justice issues regarding the inclusion of TEK in conservation. The literature supports my argument that TEK and Indigenous leadership are necessary to address these issues in park planning and management.

Reconciliation principles demand that we make every effort to understand and counter Canada's colonial history with Indigenous Peoples. I take to heart the principles of reconciliation and incorporated them in designing and completing my research. Studies on TEK in park planning and management suggest that more research is needed to identify barriers to incorporating TEK and strategies for its inclusion in park planning and management. The scholarship that I reviewed indicates that the role of Indigenous Peoples in park planning and management has been historically, politically, and socially constructed—and restricted. One of the key takeaways of this literature review for my project is the importance of historicizing my discussions of WSK and TEK and recognizing these knowledge systems as relations of power that can operate in sometimes subtle or invisible ways. Literature discussing Indigenous perspectives on the environment, park governance and management, as well as research applying two-eyed seeing in environmental studies, provide context for exploring how TEK and WSK may be intertwined to enhance reconciliation and self-determination in environmental planning and management. I will expand upon how this informs my methodological decisions in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Methodology

My methodology is motivated by the aim to understand how Indigenous participation and their TEK can be meaningfully integrated into BC Parks planning processes and operations management. Chapters One and Two provide background for designing a research approach that is most appropriate for gaining a more detailed understanding of Indigenous-settler relations, and the local knowledges, perspectives and lived-experiences of First Nations and BC Parks staff in Northwestern BC. This project uses a case study methodology, and it uses the methods of individual semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to answer the questions and objectives introduced in Chapter One.

In this chapter, I discuss case study methodology and why this methodology was an appropriate choice for my project. I outline the strengths and limitations of case studies, as well as the strategies I used for addressing associated challenges. Following this, I detail some political and ethical considerations and explain the principles which guide my research with Indigenous Peoples. From there, I briefly review my theoretical approach and explain how two-eyed seeing guided my methodological decisions in coding and thematic analysis of transcripts. Next, I review the methods of semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis and clarify why I chose each of these to inform my work. Finally, I outline how I went about recruiting participants, and collecting and analyzing materials, clarifying the decisions I made in my data collection and analysis.

Case Study Methodology

Case study is a research methodology that explores a phenomenon within a particular context through a variety of lenses and data sources, in order to reveal its multiple facets (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case studies are often used in exploratory research. This methodology generates

new ideas and comprises an important strategy for applying theories and illustrating different, inter-related aspects of a case (Yin, 2009). John Gerring (2004) explains that a case study is an “intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units” (p. 342). In a case study, a phenomenon is explored within its naturally occurring context, with the consideration that different contexts yield different data (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999). The objective of a case study is to do intensive research on a specific case, such as an individual, a group, institute, community, process, space or event (Baxter, 2021; Punch, 2005). Gary Anderson (1993) and Robert Stake (2005) view case studies as being concerned with how and why things happen, allowing the investigation of contextual realities. Case studies enable the researcher to gain a holistic view of phenomena or events through a variety of methods, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups and observations (Gummesson, 1991; Noor, 2008).

My case study focusses on the institution of BC Parks, the TEK of Gitxsan First Nation communities, and the processes of BC Parks planning and operations management, within the context of Northwestern BC. Because my research is exploratory in nature, it is a theory-generating case study. By studying the real-world aspects of the case, my analysis of the data collected generated new concepts (theory) to explain my findings (Baxter, 2021). This study is a cross-sectional case study, conducted at one point in time (Yin, 2011).

A case study methodology was best suited for exploring my topic for a few reasons. First, in a case study, there is the prior development of a theoretical position to guide data collection (Dul & Hak, 2008; Ebneyamini & Sadeghi Moghadam, 2018; Yin, 2003), which I did by reading and learning about two-eyed seeing before collecting data. Recent studies have found that pairing two-eyed seeing with case study methodology is beneficial for exploring how to “bridge” Western science and TEK in studying how to mobilize knowledge and co-produce insights and

decisions (Abu et al., 2019; Reid et al., 2021; Wright et al., 2019). Second, the specificity of my research parameters constituted a ‘case’ (i.e., Northwestern BC Parks planning and operations management and Gitxsan First Nation TEK). Lastly, I used multiple methods to inform my work (i.e., interviews and thematic coding), which is characteristic of case study research (Baxter, 2021; Yin, 1989, 1994).

Strengths of a Case Study Approach

Case studies are useful in capturing the emergent and immanent properties of life in organizations and the ebb and flow of organizational activity, especially where it is changing fast (Hartley, 1994). Jerry Willis et al. (2007) explain that case studies allow the researcher to gather rich, detailed data in an authentic setting. This approach supports the idea that much of what we know about human behaviour is best understood as lived experience in the social context.

According to Phil Hodkinson and Heather Hodkinson (2001), case studies elucidate complex inter-relationships through their restricted focus, which facilitates in-depth understandings of a topic. Furthermore, case studies retain more ‘real life’ information than many other types of research because they can show the deep and complex processes involved in causal relationships (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). Good case studies are comprehensive—they synthesize data collected from various data collection tools to minimize bias and present findings that reveal multiple aspects of a case which demonstrate an integrated analysis of the topic being explored (Rashid et al., 2019; Yin, 1994).

Limitations of a Case Study Approach

Some scholars have criticized case studies for lacking generalizability (Baxter, 2021; Noor, 2008; Yin, 2003). Generalizability, also known as transferability, is the degree to which findings apply to other cases of the phenomenon in question (Baxter, 2021). Case study

generalizations are problematic, as they are based on the assumption that multiple cases can lead to a form of replication (Noor, 2008). Another limitation of case studies is that they are expensive and time-consuming. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) indicate that due to the tendency of case studies to utilize multiple methods, they can produce too much data for quick and easy analysis or comprehensive publication, and ‘cutting corners’ weakens the value and credibility of data and findings. This can present difficulty for early career researchers when analyzing their data and publishing their findings.

A Note on Generalizability in My Project

The parameters of my research are specific to Northwestern BC Parks and centre the TEK of Gitxsan First Nation. Consequently, my study provides recommendations which are most applicable in the context of Northern First Nations within BC Parks’ management system. It lacks complete generalizability for other parks and regions. But despite its limited focus, some elements of my work—including practical, adaptable recommendations for TEK inclusion—may be more generally useful. It can encourage appreciation and adoption of TEK elsewhere and promote a path of Truth and Reconciliation (2015a, 2015b) for park agencies and managers. Good case studies that comprise multiple aspects of a case and demonstrate detailed analysis of the topic can be applied in other contexts and settings (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001; Yin, 2009). It is possible for case studies to highlight general themes or considerations that apply beyond their specific locality (Meletis & Campbell, 2007).

Guiding Principles for Research with Indigenous Peoples

Research ‘on’ or ‘about’ Indigenous Peoples has been largely extractive and exploitative, reasserting colonial dominance, systemic racism and White privilege within academia (Smith, 2021). In extractive research, something meaningful is removed, such as the context, values, and

on-the-ground struggles of the people who provide data to the researcher (Brown & Strega, 2015). Extractive researchers have had little stake in preserving the integrity of extracted Indigenous Knowledge, as the Indigenous participants in these studies have rarely been considered the primary audience for research dissemination. Māori, Indigenous Studies professor, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021), provides guidance on how to conduct research ‘for’ and ‘with’ Indigenous communities. This requires maintaining respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relationships with Indigenous Peoples in research (Smith, 2021; Wilson, 2008). La Donna Harris and Jacqueline Wasilewski (2004) encourage researchers to adopt the four “R’s” of Indigeneity” into their work: relationship is the kinship obligation; responsibility is the community obligation; reciprocity is the cyclical obligation; and redistribution is the sharing obligation. Several other scholars have underscored the unique qualities of Northern and Indigenous research areas that necessitate community engagement (Hayward et al., 2021, 2021b; Mashford-Pringle & Pavagadhi, 2020; Mead et al., 1994; Tondu et al., 2014).

The above literature has prompted me to be meticulous in my collection and interpretation of cultural knowledge and to be cognizant of previous research that has perpetuated colonial discourses by misappropriating or misrepresenting Indigenous Knowledge. Acknowledging the historical and ongoing harms that have resulted from research involving Indigenous Peoples has improved my capacity to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples and plan a mutually beneficial, collaborative, community-based research process. Throughout this work, I have maintained a reciprocal and meaningful relationship with Gitksan First Nation and community members. I followed ethical guidelines and sought community involvement in determining the priorities and desired outcomes of the research project. I also

extended an invitation for co-authorship to the Gitxsan First Nation members who shared their Knowledge with me.

To avoid perpetuating the historical and contemporary traumas brought about by extractive colonial research, Indigenous research must be conducted in collaboration with Indigenous communities and in adherence to strict ethical guidelines (Mashford-Pringle & Pavagadhi, 2020). I followed the principles set forth in the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (2018) and the Assembly of First Nations Ethics Guide on Research and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (2016; 2009), which outlined the requirements for conducting ethical research with First Nations. I completed the First Nations Information Governance Centre's course on Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP Principles), and incorporated these principles into my study. The OCAP Principles are guiding principles for research with Indigenous Peoples that support Indigenous information governance, self-determination, and data sovereignty. These principles outline a set of ethical criteria relating to how Indigenous information must be "collected, stored, interpreted, protected, used and shared" (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2022, para. 3). There are several benefits to applying OCAP in research: rebuilding trust; improved research quality and relevance; decreased bias; meaningful capacity and development; and community empowerment to make change (Schnarch, 2004).

I communicated my research with Gitxsan Huwilp Government and provided the First Nation with drafts of my thesis proposal chapters to review. Gitxsan First Nation approved my research project and research activities in June 2022 (see Appendix A). I worked with Gitxsan Huwilp Government to develop a formal Research Agreement and Data-sharing Protocol in November 2022 (Appendix B). The Executive Director of Gitxsan Huwilp Government is also a

licensed attorney. His legal proficiency was instrumental in fashioning an official contract that translated complex legal concepts into precise legalese. This document clearly outlined the binding expectations between the First Nation and me regarding the collection, use, storage, disclosure, and analysis of data. Research Agreements and Data-sharing Protocols are used to eliminate misunderstanding and misconduct. They provide tools for protecting community interests, information and privacy. By following the Tri-Council policy, Gitxsan First Nation research protocols, the Assembly of First Nations Ethics Guide on Research and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (2016; 2009), and by ensuring First Nation ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP) of the TEK that was shared with me, I had clear direction on how to ethically proceed with the project. Gitxsan First Nation Government provided guidance as to how information was best collected, stored, shared and delivered.

How My Theoretical Approach Influenced My Methodology

My methodology was heavily influenced by two-eyed seeing theory. To recap, two-eyed seeing recognizes the benefits of seeing from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing, and to use both ways of seeing simultaneously (Iwama et al., 2009). Applying a ‘two-eyed way of seeing’ approach enables the researcher to combine these seemingly opposing worldviews so that they can work alongside one another with respect and balance (McKeon, 2012). Using a theory that considered both Western and Indigenous views throughout the research process offered a more balanced perspective in designing my interview questions, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data, and identifying patterns in the codes to determine themes. Instead of approaching my data analysis by separating BC Parks and Gitxsan First Nation interview transcripts, I chose to code all the interview transcripts together as one large dataset using the same steps and approaches,

weaving the different worldviews together in developing a thematic network. By analyzing all of the transcript data together, all transcripts were subjected to the same degree of rigour in data analysis. I made a conscious effort to design my methodology in a way that would capture the ideas of both BC Parks and Gitxsan First Nation participants by putting the two worldviews into conversation with each other in answering my research questions. For example, I asked both participant groups several of the same interview questions so that I could join both worldviews in my analysis. Where interview questions deviated, I still designed the questions in efforts to answer my research questions from the perspective of both participant groups.

A main goal of two-eyed seeing theory is to further collaboration and understanding by working to harmonize two different worldviews and recognizing them as complementary in solving problems (Wright et al., 2019). As outlined earlier in Chapter One, my thesis project aims to 1) identify historical and contemporary socio-political barriers to the uptake of TEK in park planning and operations management, and 2) to help overcome these barriers in developing recommendations to integrate TEK that prioritize reconciliation and self-determination in park planning and operations management. A theoretical grounding in two-eyed seeing and the key concepts of settler colonialism and decolonization helped me to incorporate Indigenous worldviews throughout the research design, analysis, and development of reconciliatory recommendations.

Individual Semi-structured Interviews

The Regional Director and Planning Section Head of BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region approved my research project and activities in September 2022 (see Appendix C). I sought participants for my semi-structured interviews using purposive convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques. Purposive convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability or

non-random sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate, are included for the purpose of the study (Etikan et al., 2013). Snowball sampling is a nonprobability method of sample selection that is commonly used to locate hidden populations. This method relies on referrals from initially sampled participants to other persons believed to have the characteristics of interest (Johnson, 2014). The Regional Director and Planning Section Head of BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region and the Executive Director of Gitxsan Huwilp Government helped to identify suitable participants and facilitate communication with them.

This project was approved by UNBC's Research Ethics Board (see Appendix D). Prior to conducting interviews, I provided all participants with an information letter and consent form (see Appendix E and F) to ensure fully informed consent regarding the project's rationale, purpose, questions, methods, and protocol for the management of shared information. Participants gave their informed consent to participate and were provided with all appropriate materials to make an educated decision on their participation. To ensure participant anonymity, each participant was assigned a pseudonym, and all contact information, audio recordings and transcripts were kept in a locked, secure, password-protected computer and a password-protected external hard drive. Any physical copies of notes or other materials with potentially identifiable information were stored in a locked office cabinet to which only I had access. All physical and electronic data will be destroyed after two years.

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews rather than surveys because they are an interactive form of qualitative data collection (Adler & Clark, 2011), which provide a more personalized exchange of information (Jain, 2021). Surveys are a common method for collecting

quantitative data (Shackleton et al., 2021), which was not of principal interest in my study. Semi-structured interviews also offer more flexibility than structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews have some degree of order and topical prompts, but they remain flexible in the ways that the participant can address issues (Dunn, 2021). I wanted participants to be able to deviate from my interview guide and express themselves by discussing what they think is important and offering examples or personal experiences that informed my research questions. One of the strengths of semi-structured interviews is that they provide some access to participants' social life—their interactions, notions of self, agency, and collective identities (Arksey & Knight, 1999). They are an excellent method for gaining access to information about places, events, opinions and experiences (Dunn, 2021).

I employed two interview guides—one for interviews with BC Parks staff (see Appendix G), and another for interviews with First Nations members (see Appendix H). Both guides included broad, open-ended questions and prompts (Creswell, 2014; Fetters et al., 2013) to gently steer interviews towards the project's research questions, yet still offered space for dynamic discussions. My interview questions aimed to collect information from BC Parks staff on social, political, and economic barriers to Indigenous inclusion in park planning and operations management, BC Parks policies and training for work with First Nations, and perspectives on TEK, self-determination and reconciliation in park planning and management. My interview questions for Gitksan First Nation Chiefs and Elders focussed on perceptions of BC Parks consultation and operations management, as none of the Chiefs and Elders I interviewed had been involved in BC Parks planning processes or the development of park management plans in their Territory. I also asked Chiefs and Elders about their historical and current inclusion/exclusion in BC Parks management, and strategies that they might recommend

for meaningful engagement, reconciliation, and self-determination in park planning processes and operations management. The questions for the Chiefs and Elders were developed as a result of discussions with Gitxsan Huwilp Government, Indigenous friends, and their relatives. I asked Gitxsan Huwilp Government what their interests and priorities were and what suggestions they had regarding my interview questions and incorporated their feedback into the research design. For example, a priority for the Hereditary Chiefs was to be engaged and consulted with at the House or Wilp level of governance. Therefore, my interview questions were reframed to ask Gitxsan First Nation participants about their Wilp's procedures for engagement, their cultural practices, culturally important areas, previous experience with BC Parks, their beliefs about BC Parks, and what they would recommend as engagement strategies with their Wilp.

Due to visitor restrictions and accessibility barriers, and for practical reasons of time, distance and cost, 21 out of 28 interviews were conducted online, through the Zoom video conferencing platform. Seven interviews were conducted in person at the Nora Building in Smithers, BC (i.e., North Coast Skeena Regional Headquarters) and at the Gitxsan Huwilp Government Treaty Office. There is a large body of literature that supports video-call interviewing as a method with many advantages (Archibald et al., 2019; Gray et al. 2020; Howlett, 2021; Marhefka, 2020; Reñosa et al. 2020; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2021). Previous research demonstrates that participants feel more comfortable discussing issues in the comfort of their own homes, at a safe distance from the interviewer (Gray et al. 2020; Nind et al. 2021). Online interviews can be less taxing for participants in terms of meeting the interviewer, less expensive in terms of time and resources, and timesaving in terms of automatic transcription options (Gray, 2020; Howlett, 2021; Nind et al., 2021). The main challenges to video-call interviews are risks of technological failures, unstable internet access, and lack of ethnographic context in relation to

face-to-face interviews (Dunn, 2021). I tried to mitigate these challenges by following the recommendations made by Stephanie Marhefka et al. (2020) and distributing a Zoom Interview Protocol Form (see Appendix I) as an interview preparation material. This form guides the participant on how to download and set up Zoom and ensure stable internet and clear audio during the interview.

I interviewed 11 BC Parks employees in the North Coast Skeena Region (see Table 1) and 17 Chiefs and Elders from Gitxsan First Nation communities (see Table 2). All participants met the interview criteria. All BC Parks participants had experience developing current or past park management plans in the North Coast Skeena Region and all Gitxsan First Nation participants were Chiefs and Elders with the right to share TEK as community Knowledge Holders. Individual demographics were not collected from the participants, aside from job position (BC Parks participants) and community (Gitxsan First Nation participants).

Pseudonym	Job Position
Dennis	Operations Management
Stanley	Planning Team
Theresa	Planning Team
Nelly	Operations Management
Brianne	Planning Team
Isabelle	Planning Team
Geoff	Operations Management
Darlene	Operations Management
Kenneth	Planning Team
Casey	Operations Management
Tammy	Operations Management

Table 1. Individual Interview Participants: BC Parks Employees (n=11)

Pseudonym	Community	Chief/Elder
Wesley	Gitwangak	Elder
Donald	Kispiox	Chief
Desiree	Kispiox	Elder

Herb	Gitanyow	Chief
Eddie	Gitanmaax	Elder
Annelise	Gitanyow	Chief
Mary	Glen Vowell	Chief
Roy	Gitanmaax	Chief
Gladys	Kispiox	Elder
Mia	Glen Vowell	Elder
Abigail	Gitsegukla	Chief
Danni	Gitwangak	Chief
Sheila	Gitsegukla	Chief
Spring	Kispiox	Elder
Krystal	Gitwangak	Chief
Jerry	Gitanyow	Chief
Fred	Glen Vowell	Elder

Table 2. Individual Interview Participants: Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders (n=17)

Within BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region, I interviewed two Planners, two Parks and Parks and Protected Area Section Heads, two Area Supervisors, one Senior Park Ranger, one Conservation Specialist, and the Regional Director of the North Coast Skeena Region. I also interviewed one Planner and one Parks and Protected Area Section Head from another Northern region, who both had previous experience working in Northwestern BC. This was at the recommendation of BC Parks administration, due to some employees being unavailable or on leave in the North Coast Skeena Region. However, I generalized the BC Parks participants' job positions in my study to protect the privacy and anonymity of the small sample of participants. Gitxsan First Nation participants were identified only by their community to provide context to their statements and permission was given to identify participants by their communities.

Interviews for this study began in March 2023 and were completed by July 2023. The interviews ranged from one to three and a half hours, with the average interview taking two hours to complete. Prior to each semi-structured interview, I introduced my project by reviewing the information letter and consent form and requesting consent for audio-recording. I took handwritten notes to capture any recurrent themes, connections, or other observations that

occurred to me during the interview. These notes were used to supplement the coding and analysis process. Post-interview, I transcribed the interviews verbatim in Microsoft Word. During transcription, I noted details such as pauses or laughter to give further context to what was said. Then I conducted member-checking (Birt et al., 2016) by providing each participant an electronic copy of their transcribed interview and giving them an opportunity to review their transcript and suggest additions, deletions, or revisions. Participants elaborated, clarified, or removed sections as they saw fit. The member-checking process was completed by November 2023 with a 100% response rate. Next, I uploaded the transcriptions to the coding software NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2023) and started thematic analysis.

Data Analysis: Thematic Coding

My individual interview transcripts totalled 743 single-spaced pages. I used thematic analysis to code the interview transcripts in the coding software NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2023). Thematic analysis focusses on themes or patterns that emerge from the data in an attempt to explore and understand an issue (Aronson, 1995; Attride-Stirling, 2001; Cope, 2021). Thematic analysis requires a great deal of familiarity with the data (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Guest et al., 2012; Nowell et al., 2017). As O'Reilly (2009) explains, "We seek patterns in the data like putting together building blocks: moving, re-aligning, and building until patterns emerge that make some sense" (p. 36). Patterns in the data, or themes, can be identified by using two primary approaches: an inductive "bottom up" approach (i.e., data-driven), or a deductive "top down" approach (i.e., theory-driven) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An inductive approach uses data-driven coding, wherein the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves. Inductive analysis is therefore "a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions" (Crabtree & Miller, 2022). A

deductive approach is driven by the project's research questions and theories and is thus more explicitly analyst-driven (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011).

Coding is a process of data reduction and organization to identify sections of text that represent the basic themes that have emerged from the first review of transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Cope, 2021; Saldaña, 2021; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Coding entails assigning codes that have been previously defined or operationalized in a codebook to raw data. This allows researchers to engage in data reduction and simplification. It also allows for data expansion (making new connections between concepts), transformation (converting data into meaningful units), and reconceptualization (rethinking theoretical associations) (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Therefore, through coding, researchers make connections between ideas and concepts. Applying codes to raw data enables the researcher to begin examining how their data supports or contradicts the theory that is guiding their research as well as enhances the current research literature. Coding is, in essence, a circular process in that the researcher may then revisit the raw data based upon theoretical findings and the current research literature (Adu, 2019).

If a group of codes are repeated in a patterned way and in multiple situations, they have potential to become a theme. Comparison has the capacity to reveal the link between codes and nominate themes using researchers' intellectual judgment (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Testing propositions and asking questions of similarities and differences between codes enables the detection of a theme (Adu, 2019; Saldaña, 2021). The more the same code occurs in a text, the more likely it can be considered to be a theme, but the constitution of a theme through the frequency of repetitions has to be decided by researchers' judgment (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Analyzing data is an opportunity to test interconnections between codes, and to find themes that fit the data (Knudsen et al., 2012). The researcher finds and compares participants' similar

discussion points to assess whether they can be explained by the theme as an umbrella (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Codes and subcodes are instruments of data analysis which are used to identify the multiple realities of the phenomenon being explored. Code categorization and finding themes from code categories and analytical insights will present an overall story line of the data (Cho & Lee, 2014; Connelly & Peltzer, 2016; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Themes can further be divided into subthemes to cover the different levels of similarities and differences (Indulska et al., 2012; Egberg Thyme et al., 2013; Snowden & Martin, 2011). Therefore, in thematic coding, themes are the final products of data analysis, and codes, code categories, and their subdivisions, including code subcategories and subthemes, are the analytical products of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022, 2006).

I sorted and labelled the data to identify and assign meaning, using descriptive, interpretive, and conceptual theory-and-data-driven codes (Cope, 2021). I began my analysis by developing four theory-driven codes directly from my research questions and the relevant literatures, so that I could answer the research questions that I had posed for my study. I then developed codes from the topics raised in the data using line-by-line coding. Line-by-line coding is very tedious and time consuming, but it is a thorough and reliable approach which identifies ideas and concepts that come directly from the data in building a detailed list of data-driven codes (Chenail, 2012; Cunningham & Carmichael, 2017). I continued line-by-line coding until saturation was reached and the same codes were reoccurring, with no new codes emerging from the dataset. Saturation refers to the point in data collection and analysis when no additional codes are emerging from the data, and all relevant codes have been identified, explored, and exhausted. This signals that the code categories are “saturated”, and the emerging theory from the codes is comprehensive and credible (Hennink et al., 2017). Once all the interview transcripts had been

coded using theory-and-data-driven codes, I reviewed the long list of codes and created code categories (parent codes) to guide my next stage of analysis. By bundling together similar or related codes, and merging them into more inclusive codes, I was able to create code categories which effectively organized the data. Refocussing my analysis at the broader level of themes, rather than codes, I organized and sorted the different code categories into potential themes, collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. In this step, I analyzed my codes to consider how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme. In addition to NVivo, I used tables and mind-maps, and I wrote the name of each code with its brief description on a separate piece of paper and played around with it by organizing the various codes into candidate theme-piles. Following this, I refined these themes by reducing the data again into data sets that represented sets of salient, significant, and common themes. Finally, I organized these sets into similar groupings, adding a relational element to the interpretation of data (Cope, 2021), which became the thematic network (Aronson, 1995; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Saldaña, 2021), or what some scholars refer to as a code tree. By drawing meaning from the data and identifying relationships between themes, I was able to produce a narrative. Using NVivo, I applied codes which created a code tree of themes and subthemes, which eventually was developed into the final thematic network (see Figure 7); I will discuss the findings of my thematic network in Chapter Four. In my data analysis, I differentiated between themes and subthemes based on relationships between the ideas and concepts discussed in the data, total word frequencies of words used in different contexts across the dataset, and the number of interview transcripts in which those words occurred. It is important to note that some themes developed solely from the Chiefs and Elders' transcripts, and some were identified solely from

the BC Parks employees' transcripts. This is because I used different interview guides for the participant groups, as not all my questions were relevant or appropriate to ask both groups.

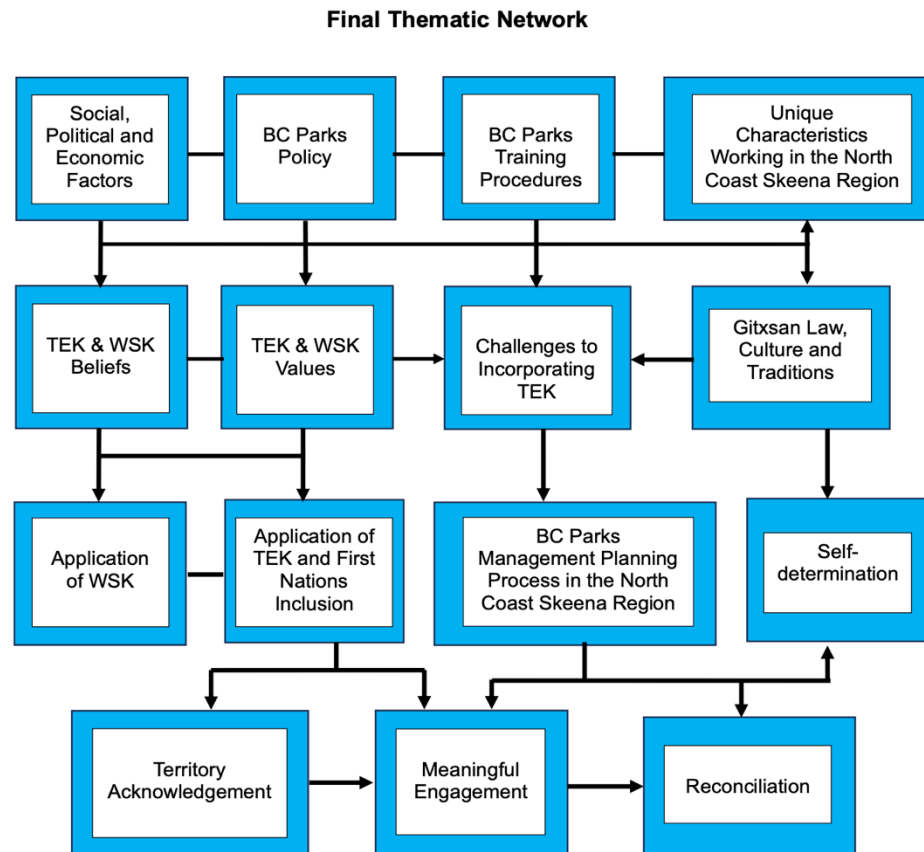


Figure 7. Final Thematic Network. The author's final thematic network. The image was created by the author. S. Graham, 2024.

In a codebook, I described the decisions I made about how the themes are grouped (Cope, 2021). A codebook is a set of codes, definitions, and examples used as a guide to help analyze interview data. Codebooks are essential to analyzing qualitative research because they provide a formalized operationalization of the codes (Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Fonteyn et al., 2008; MacQueen et al., 2008). Like codes, codebooks are developed through an iterative process that necessitate revising definitions as the researcher gains clearer

insights about the interview data (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). The more specificity and detail in a codebook, the easier it is for coders to distinguish between codes and to determine examples from nonexamples of individual codes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). MacQueen et al. (1998) suggest that the structure of codebooks should consist of six components, including the code name/label, brief definition, full definition, inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, and examples. However, in this study, I chose to structure my codebook using three components: code name/label, full definition (an extensive definition that collapses inclusion and exclusion criteria), and examples (see Figure 8). I did not include the examples in my codebook in the version pictured in Figure 8, or in my full codebook that I have attached to this thesis (see Appendix J), because I wanted to protect sensitive information collected from the participants.

Code Categories and Definitions for Thematic Framework

Name	Description	Files	References
Application of TEK and First Nations Inclusion	Refers to statements on how TEK is currently being included and/or excluded by BC Parks employees in park planning and management. It will also include general discussions about Nation engagement and collaboration. This code will include current approaches, strategies, practices, policies, and procedures for including TEK in BC Parks but will not include historical, social, political, or economic discussions regarding the use of TEK in BC Parks.	24	78
TEK Inclusion	This code is a child/sub-code of "Application of TEK and First Nations Inclusion." It refers to statements about how TEK is currently being included in park planning and management.	9	22
Recommendations for TEK and First Nations Inclusion	This code is a child/sub-code of "Application of TEK and First Nations Inclusion." It refers to recommendations for the inclusion of TEK and First Nations in BC Parks management planning. These recommendations can come from First Nations or BC Parks interviews.	20	56
Application of WSK	Refers to statements which discuss the application of Western science in park management planning or management plan decisions. It is different from the application of TEK and First Nations inclusion. Examples of WSK application are archaeological studies for parks/heritage sites or wildlife/bird surveys to support and inform decision-making in parks.	9	36

Figure 8. Codebook. This image illustrates how codes were organized in the author's codebook.

The image was created by the author. S. Graham, 2024.

I developed and refined my codebook in four stages. First, I identified four, overarching, deductive code categories directly from my research questions and defined them in my codebook using the structure outlined above. I applied these four deductive codes to all 28 transcripts.

Second, using inductive, line-by-line coding, I reviewed and coded 19 transcripts (seven BC

Parks employees' transcripts and 12 Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders' transcripts), until no new codes were emerging from the data. At this stage, not every code was defined. Third, I defined the code categories that arose from my inductive line-by-line coding, and I combined these data-driven code categories with my four deductive code categories to develop a preliminary codebook. Then I applied the preliminary codebook and its code definitions to the next nine transcripts, being mindful of potential modifications. Fourth, I refined the codebook according to how the codes could be organized and grouped within different themes and reapplied the refined codebook to all 28 transcripts.

Following one round of revisions of the draft thesis by the Executive Director of Gitxsan Huwilp Government and the Regional Director and Planning Section Head of BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region, a final review of the transcripts was completed to address the comments and feedback which were provided. This transcript review entailed deductively coding for cases of collaboration with First Nations in park planning processes and operations management within other areas of the North Coast Skeena Region. The intention for this transcript review was to shed light on current collaborative management planning processes and operations that are occurring within other First Nations Territories in the North Coast Skeena Region. This context is important, as BC Parks had not worked with Gitxsan First Nation on planning processes since the early 2000s. Gitxsan First Nation participants in my study indicated that they had no experience being involved in planning processes; therefore, the findings and recommendations of the case study are centred more on consultation for statutory decision-making and operations management than planning processes or park management plans.

Conclusion

The Indigenous research principles that underscored my methodology provided insights for weaving WSK with TEK. The data I collected through qualitative interviews with BC Parks staff and Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders led to more nuanced understandings of the inclusion of TEK in park planning and operations management. In the next chapter, I present my findings.

Chapter Four: Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings from my thematic analysis of 28 interview transcripts with both Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders and BC Parks employees. I organize the findings into sections that connect to my four research questions. In referencing the participants' words and ideas, I identify each participant by their chosen pseudonym, and, with permission, either their community (Gitxsan First Nation participants) or job position (BC Parks participants).

The chapter is divided into four sections, each with supporting evidence from participants. First, I outline the historical and current social, political, and economic conditions affecting park management, the policies and training procedures that guide BC Parks employees' work, and the unique characteristics of working in the North Coast Skeena Region. Second, I present the values, beliefs and traditions that influence the application of TEK in park planning and operations management, including BC Parks employees' values and beliefs about WSK and TEK, and Gitxsan First Nation members' laws, culture, and traditions. Third, I discuss how BC Parks is applying TEK in park planning and operations management, and the challenges of doing so. Fourth, I examine the actions recommended by participants for fostering reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination in park planning and operations management. As discussed in Chapters One and Three, the research findings are centred more on consultation and operations management than planning, due to the majority of BC Parks participants working in operations roles, and the lack of Gitxsan First Nation participants' experience with BC Parks planning processes.

1. Historical and Current Social, Political and Economic Factors

To answer my first research question, in my interviews I asked BC Parks participants to describe the current and historical social, political, and economic factors that influence Indigenous involvement in park planning and operations management. Then, in my interviews with Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders, I asked if any social, political, or economic factors have influenced their relationship with BC Parks. I asked these questions because I wanted to understand the current and historical context of BC Parks' relationship with Gitxsan First Nation and identify how social, political, and economic factors might be influencing park planning and operations management.

For clarity, I decided to refer to any events before the year 2000 as historical, and any events after this time as current (especially when my participants did not indicate if they saw certain events as historical or current). I chose the year 2000 because BC Parks' more recent approaches to Indigenous inclusion, such as engagement agreements with First Nations (BC Parks, 2024a; 2024b) and the Conservancy park designation (BC Parks, n.d.), occurred after this time. From my interviews with both BC Parks employees and Gitxsan First Nation members, I found that First Nations' lack of trust in the government, climate change, reconciliation, treaty negotiations, funding, staffing, and budget timelines all interact to shape BC Parks planning processes and operations management. These factors, as well as BC Parks policies and training procedures, also influence how TEK is included in park planning processes and operations management.

Sixteen out of the 17 Gitxsan First Nation participants described historical tensions in their relationship with the province, arising from settler colonialism, the residential school system and assimilation policies. The participants expressed how a dark history has made it difficult to work with and trust the government. Krystal (Chief, Gitwangak) stated: "Our ancient

traditional livelihoods and political systems were broken down by the federal and provincial governments of Canada and BC...so how do you trust them when they say they want to work together?” Danni (Chief, Gitwangak) talked about the history of her family and Wilp (i.e., House Group) with BC Parks: “My mom and grandma remember not being able to use parks for medicine gathering anymore, or other sustenance uses practiced by my Wilp there for thousands of years before BC Parks were established.” The repression of First Nations’ sustenance uses of parks was the result of assimilation policies under the Indian Act, which banned cultural practices, such as feasts and other activities. Mia (Elder, Glen Vowell) explained: “Historically, there was no consideration for our People’s social, ceremonial or cultural use of the Park.” These statements demonstrate the loss of cultural practices in parks and the lack of trust for the government because of this history.

Eight BC Parks employees described First Nations’ lack of trust in the government—which developed historically and continues to have implications today—as a major social barrier in park planning and management. As Casey (Operations) stated, “employees must build relationships with First Nations that have historically been undermined, mistreated, and exploited by government policies and relationships.” It is difficult for employees to overcome this mistrust in their work. Nelly (Operations) explained: “Being a provincial representative... unless you have those good relationships, you’re just whitewashed with all the other ministries and agencies. It takes a lot of time to build those relationships and understandings, working at the community level on them.” Working towards creating better relationships with First Nations is necessary to build trust and increase their inclusion in park management (Nelly, Operations). Seven BC Parks employees expressed that relationship building can be difficult when there are frequent changes in staff, both within the province and within First Nations governments. For

example, Isabelle noted that: “It’s a lot harder for the Nations when you have a rotational door of government [staff] coming in, and you have to re-train everybody to have the same understanding.” Dennis (Operations), Stanley (Planning), and Tammy (Operations) all stated that frequent staff turnover can damage relationships with First Nations. These findings show that relationships with First Nations are fragile and building relationships can be compromised by changes in staff. Engagement and consultation with First Nations are the responsibility of regional staff, and, with limited capacity and staff changes, relationship building with First Nations can sometimes be difficult.

The main socio-political factors that BC Parks participants described as currently influencing park planning and operations management were reconciliation, climate change, and treaty negotiations. As Tammy (Operations) explained: “Well, right now, its climate change, DRIPA, reconciliation, treaty negotiations—those are at the forefront of our work right now. Planning and management is being influenced by all those social and political factors.” Brianne (Planning) provided examples to illustrate what inclusion of these socio-political factors looks like in practice: “There’s a lens on things like UNDRIP and climate...and you see the different groups having to come together at tables to discuss these and having to problem-solve, and having to accommodate these new agendas that are really important.” Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders discussed the same social and political factors outlined by BC Parks employees. As Fred (Elder, Glen Vowell) specified: “I think they are considering us more in their [operational] decision-making now with the DRIPA legislation, climate change, and treaties in the final stages.” Annelise (Chief, Gitanyow) similarly claimed: “Government wants to...mend our relationship. They’re interested in co-managing and collaborating with us. They’re not getting every single part of it right yet, but that’s to be expected, they’re just trying to figure

things out with the treaty negotiations.” Gitxsan First Nation participants discussed how the climate research on First Nations territories is becoming more collaborative. As Wesley (Elder, Gitwangak) explained, “There’s been some climate research in Gitanyow on the glaciers, where their lands department partnered with government. Some of the other Northern Nations are working with government to understand climate change in their territories too.” It is evident that reconciliation, climate change, and treaty negotiations are shaping approaches to park planning and operations management, as well as the work of BC Parks employees, and these current issues are encouraging new areas of collaboration between First Nations and government.

Ten BC Parks participants described how the political environment impacts how areas are prioritized in planning. Casey (Operations) discussed this in his interview: “We have to sort of rank areas that don’t have management plans in priorities and that’s usually based on political issues or social pressures.” BC Parks employees cited issues of species habitat conservation, user-group conflicts, natural resource industry, and treaty negotiations as examples of political and social pressures. Theresa (Planning) explained how pressures from the social and political environment have also changed the park management planning process: “It’s really about... instead of thinking about this big, huge planning process for every single park and protected area, it’s customizing it to what is actually needed here and what will work in the political environment that we are working in.” Using a tailored approach allows planners to be nimble and flexible in adapting their planning process to the current political landscape.

Nine BC Parks employees indicated that funding allocations have influenced park planning and operations management, as well as the involvement of First Nations in them. Casey (Operations) stated: “Economic, financial barriers have been big factors in both the development and implementation of management plans.” The BC Parks participants expressed that in the

1990s there was a lack of funding for Indigenous engagement and collaboration, and often First Nations couldn't afford to increase their involvement in park management plans. The LRMP process was long, and while it provided for a collaborative engagement process, First Nations could not always afford to attend meetings consistently. Tammy (Operations) reinforced this point: "[First Nations] had opportunities to engage, but...most people wouldn't be able to say, 'I can take the next three years and not get paid just to be able to ensure my interest is recognized in this plan.'" Darlene (Operations) discussed the consequences of these financial barriers: "To expect [First Nations] to volunteer that amount of time, I don't think was reasonable...and if everyone is not equal at the table—which they are supposed to be—you see what was really represented as there, which was industry and government." This finding illustrates that First Nations require funding to participate in BC Parks management plans and BC did not provide adequate funding to support First Nations participation in the 1990s.

Current economic factors influencing Indigenous involvement in park planning and operations management include funding, budget timelines, and staffing. As Kenneth (Planning) stated: "Usually a Planner has five or six park plans they're working on at a given time and we will kind of help... So, right off the bat, you're starting with a planning process where it's very challenged financially to move through the process." Stanley (Planning) described that, partly due to these financial challenges, the ideas that are put into park management plans have become less imaginative and more specific over time; these plans now often only contain basic, relevant and necessary information to maintain ongoing management direction of a park. Additionally, the goals of park management plans have become "more focussed and realistic" (Kenneth, Planning). Isabelle (Planning) explained that "with limited staff and finances to implement projects and plans, it is important to narrow the scope of a plan to what is needed to ensure that a

plan is achievable.” Dennis (Operations) outlined the budget timeline for implementing Indigenous projects and programs in operations management: “We are sometimes constrained by a fiscal year-end... You get your budget in May if you’re lucky and then you only have until March 31 to spend it.” These budgets are a fiscal responsibility which can create challenges and place pressure on BC Parks employees to begin and complete projects involving First Nations within a limiting time frame.

Six out of the 11 BC Parks participants described past park management plans as being lengthy documents that allowed for more research. Darlene (Operations) noted: “Management plans of the past were much more lengthy documents...when I first started with BC Parks it seemed to me that Parks were better researched.” Kenneth (Planning) similarly explained that past park management plans were more elaborate: “in the older plans you would see much greater ideas in terms of what are we going to do in this park? From gondolas to other sorts of things.” Tammy (Operations) corroborated this: “Our Stikine Country Management Plan is, you know, probably a 400-page document. Our Seven Sisters Management Plan is, you know, 200 pages. It’s a pretty thick document. Whereas now, they might be three to four pages.” Geoff (Operations) stated that one of the reasons why park management plan documents have scaled down in size over time is because the older plans were often too detailed to fulfill management directives, or too restrictive to accommodate the activities emerging in parks.

All 11 BC Parks participants discussed Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs). According to Darlene (Operations), LRMPs guide the current decisions in park management plans, and they are important for understanding the historical context of park management planning. The creation of LRMPs in BC, and their use as tools to help resolve land use conflicts, accelerated in the early 1990s (Jackson & Curry, 2002). LRMPs are strategic, sub-regional land

use plans in BC that guide the management of Crown land resources. They are consensus-based decision-making processes, which were designed to integrate First Nations and other interested parties into the park planning and designation process, and they provide direction for managing resources to sustain biodiversity, and to balance the needs and interests of different user groups (British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, 2020). The purpose of a LRMP is to identify resource management zones and protected areas, and to outline the objectives and strategies that govern how the land and resources are managed within a sub-region (Peter, 2007). However, BC Parks is not involved in developing LRMPs anymore. BC's Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship is now responsible for LRMPs and works in partnership with First Nations, local government, industry and other interested parties. As Stanley (Planning) explained: "BC Parks is consulted with or notified of potential candidate protected areas, but now other ministries negotiate with stakeholder groups and First Nations for creating new designated land statuses." Instead, BC Parks created a new designation, Conservancies, in 2006, to explicitly recognize important areas to First Nations for social, ceremonial, and cultural uses. Theresa (Planning) stated that the Conservancy designation and Collaborative Management Agreements that BC Parks now has with specific First Nations emerged from the Coastal LRMP processes.

BC Parks Policies

In my policy-related conversations with BC Parks participants, we discussed BC Parks statutory decision-making, BC Parks programs, and consultation. None of the Gitksan First Nation participants had been involved in BC Parks management plans, programs, or projects, so my conversations with them focussed instead on their experiences participating in consultation for statutory decision-making and park operations. Consultation is very different from planning

processes, which, as discussed earlier in Chapter One, may be collaborative in nature (N. White, personal communication, January 3, 2024). Consultation for the purposes of statutory decision-making must meet legal requirements and has prescribed timelines. This type of consultation is done by the operations staff for the purposes of permitting. Consultation usually refers to the Province's legal duty to consult, which is often in a specific format within specific timeframes, and it is usually for the purposes of statutory decisions. BC Parks consults First Nations on a variety of issues, such as park management plans, park use permits, and proposed activities, and the level of engagement and type of consultation required varies according to the specific circumstances of the project and the protected area, as well as the engagement agreements that are in place (BC Parks, 2023a). Engagement for planning processes is led by planning staff and can include consultation with certain First Nations, but it is often an ongoing, collaborative process (N. White, personal communication, January 3, 2025).

Collaboration in terms of policy refers to ongoing engagement and cooperation between BC Parks and a First Nation. This type of engagement is typical for management planning processes, particularly if there is a Collaborative Management Agreement in place. There are no specified timeframes or format and the process is often co-designed with First Nations (N. White, personal communication, February 5, 2025). BC Parks policies guide planning processes, operations management, consultation, programming, hiring practices, and the roles and duties of employees. BC Parks policies also structure how BC Parks engages with First Nations by outlining who engages with First Nations, how they are engaged, the level of engagement, and how much they can be integrated into planning and operations. Therefore, policy changes are a principal mechanism for increasing the inclusion of TEK in park planning and operations management.

Four of my interview questions for BC Parks' employees were about how First Nations may be involved in park planning and operations management. All 11 BC Parks participants explained that despite the lack of staff in the North Coast Skeena Region, the regional team does its best to incorporate First Nations in their work. Dennis (Operations) underlined this in his interview: "We integrate with the Nations as tightly as we possibly can within the capacity that we have. I think that every decision that we make...we are looking for consensus on it. Even on the day-to-day." In operational decisions, BC Parks employees begin the park season by identifying where the priorities of the province and First Nations align and what opportunities exist for collaboration on projects (Tammy, Operations). Casey (Operations) stressed that "staff aim for consent-based decision-making with the Nations that they work with." Employees are continually trying to improve and have higher-level engagement with First Nations (Nelly, Operations). Brianne (Planning) emphasized that "while the province is the decision-making body, the final decision usually rests with the Nations" in park planning. Kenneth (Planning) noted that: "...where we've got better relationships, we're having shared governance in making decisions." This finding reinforces the importance of the earlier finding regarding building trust and relationships with First Nations.

In my conversations regarding operations with BC Parks employees, six BC Parks participants observed that much of the operational budget decision-making in BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region is done by employees working at the BC Parks Headquarters office in Victoria. As Nelly (Operations) stated: "You have all these folks making these decisions down South. And I've always said, come up and give me at least two weeks, and let me introduce you to these Nations and show you these places. This isn't... Joffre Lakes [laughs]." In her interview, Nelly highlighted that understanding the challenges of navigating unceded territories in

Northwestern BC is difficult for the people working down South: “[they] don’t understand the challenges when, you know, these aren’t treaty folks... I think that there is kind of a disconnect between who’s making those larger decisions and providing these budgets for these folks in the North.” Kenneth (Planning) echoed this sentiment, “I feel like lower mainland people [employees in the South] are quite divided, like they don’t really understand the North, it’s kind of out of their realm or whatnot.” Five employees noted that it would be ideal for the regional operations management teams to make their own budget decisions, as they are more familiar with the areas being managed. These findings support my findings regarding unique characteristics of working in the North Coast Skeena Region, and I will return to these in my Discussion Chapter.

BC Parks is implementing several programs that include First Nations in operations management and nine BC Parks participants made note of these in their interviews. Seven employees cited the Indigenous Guardian Shared Compliance and Enforcement Program. This program provides training and career opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to work as equal partners with government in their role as Land Guardians for BC Parks. They are trained alongside Park Rangers and the program designates selected Indigenous Guardians with the same legal authorities as BC Parks Rangers (Government of British Columbia, 2022b). Dennis (Operations) gave an overview of the program: “There’s a shared compliance and enforcement pilot program role where we... appoint select Indigenous Guardians from each Nation with Park Act authorities—similar to that of a Park Ranger—but they are employed by their Nation, not BC Parks.” Kenneth (Planning) indicated that the province has provided approximately 8.9 million dollars in funding over the past three years to support the training in Guardian Programs. Isabelle (Planning) explained that the programs support reconciliatory goals that First Nations

have for increasing their “...autonomy over the land-base and also around decision-making too.” Guardian Programs have resulted from BC Parks’ working relationships over the years with several First Nations (Dennis, Operations). Five BC Parks employees stated that First Nations are developing the program to manage important components of their culture (e.g., culturally significant areas, wildlife, marine habitat, etc.).

Two other programs discussed by BC Parks participants were the Licence Plate Program and the Indigenous Funding Program. Theresa (Planning) stated: “We have an Indigenous Funding Program that we draw from for participation from the First Nations... we also have the Licence Plates Program—which is *a lot* of money.” Theresa (Planning) noted that “the Licence Plate Program which brings in millions of dollars every year for park projects. In 2024, we reached a milestone of 500,000 plates sold.” All of BC Parks funding programs have an Indigenous component through which employees can apply for funding to support First Nations collaboration or engagement. For example, an Area Supervisor can put an application in through the Licence Plate Program to fund a cultural camp in a park. My conversations with BC Parks employees indicated that this happens more often where there are stronger relationships with First Nations and when employees have the time and workload capacity to apply for this funding. As discussed above, budget timelines also constrain the ability of employees to help fund and organize projects with First Nations.

All 11 BC Parks employees stressed that hiring regionally located Indigenous Relations staff to support regional employees with their consultation, engagement and relationship-building with First Nations in their areas would be beneficial. Darlene (Operations) discussed the emergence of an Indigenous Relations Branch in BC Parks: “Just in the last 10 years maybe, we saw BC Parks agency develop the Indigenous Relationship Branch, but it was *one* person. I think

they ballooned into three people now, but that's down in headquarters! That's not in our regions.” The current Indigenous Relations Branch is housed in the Provincial Services Branch in Victoria, BC, and these staff are focussed on policy, and not engagement or consultation with First Nations (N. White, personal communication, January 3, 2025). The BC Parks participants explained that having an Indigenous Relations specialist located within the region with the purpose of assisting them with engagement and consultation with First Nations was important, because having designated staff that hold localized knowledge of the landscape and Northwestern First Nations would provide helpful information for employees to complete their engagement and consultation work. Casey (Operations) stressed this in his interview: “...it's something that we all talk about in parks like kind of across the board, that each region really needs its own Indigenous Relations folks so that they can understand the nuances of each Nation.” This recommendation was made by all 11 BC Parks employees, and I discuss this finding with more detail in the following chapter.

Seven BC Parks participants emphasized the lack of Indigenous representation within the region and agency as an issue of concern. Isabelle (Planning) stated: “I feel there is a lack of diversity among employees within BC Parks, it would be great to hire more Indigenous Peoples, and other People of Colour, in our regions and across the agency.” Tammy (Operations) also supported this point in her interview: “Most of BC Parks is White, which is a bit problematic... as I feel we should have a more diverse workforce.” Six BC Parks participants recommended hiring more local Indigenous Peoples within the region to support their work.

The Gitksan First Nation participants discussed what works well and what does not work well in terms of consultation for statutory decision-making, and they provided suggestions to government agencies. All 17 Gitksan First Nation Chiefs and Elders explained that being

respectful, kind, transparent, and dedicated to collaboration are what is needed in consultation processes. As Jerry (Chief, Gitanyow) explained:

Consultation... What doesn't work is walking in and assuming you're in control. Or assuming you're the boss. Taking the attitude of hey, I'm here to tell you how this is gonna' work. You might as well not show up...I would say what does work is a genuine and sincere interest in how to do it better.

Donald (Chief, Kispiox) stated: "A very common question that you'll see when a group of Chiefs are sitting with someone who is not from their band is: "Is this being check marked for consultation?"'" Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders explained that this is because when organizations or agency representatives come to meet with their First Nation to discuss a project or a decision, the meeting is often not clarified to be consultation, yet a short time later the Nation becomes aware that a major decision was made or is being executed without their actual consent or agreement. This finding relates to Nelly's (Operations) earlier comment, in which she explained that building relationships is necessary to avoid being perceived as "whitewashed" together with other ministries and agencies. These findings demonstrate the need for BC Parks to be transparent about consultation; otherwise, the agency risks facing resistance, due to having the same poor consultative practices that First Nations have experienced with other ministries and agencies.

BC Parks Training

Training procedures structure how BC Parks employees are trained to engage with First Nations and determine their degree of preparedness for this engagement. To gain a better understanding of the nature and extent of their training, I asked BC Parks participants about their instruction in four pertinent areas: cultural awareness, TEK, First Nations collaboration, and

parks history. The findings in this section offer suggestions for improved training and enhancing overall Indigenous engagement. BC Parks participants recommended that a mentorship program be put in place to ensure that important background information about park history and First Nations within the areas can be passed down to new employees. Both participant groups expressed their desire for more Indigenous-led training opportunities in First Nations territories, with Gitxsan First Nation members stressing the importance of learning their laws, culture and history.

The BC Parks operation management participants suggested that training should be revised to better prepare operations employees for consultation negotiations, including their consultation for statutory decision-making. Five BC Parks participants expressed that they received no training for consulting with First Nations, two employees stated that the training they received was minimal and optional, and one employee noted that the agency provided “basic consultation training” (Geoff, Operations). The BC Parks employees expressed that, due to the paucity of formal training procedures, they learned how to consult from their own experiences on-the-job and through requesting advice from senior employees. Isabelle (Planning) explained that “there's lots of people that have to do consultation, because we don't have dedicated people to do it. Which is fine, but it's a big learning curve for those of us that have to learn.” Consulting with First Nations can be challenging. As Dennis (Operations) shared: “I didn’t do the wrongs of the past, but I am still wearing the uniform and working for the ones that have, so, you have to be able to understand that’s what your role is going in there.” Kenneth (Planning) reviewed the traditional approach to consultation for statutory decision-making which was most often used by BC Parks prior to DRIPA: “the historical process was...how does this impact Aboriginal rights and title? That was kind of the post-1990s up until the Declaration Act process...it’s more the

fiduciary duty.” After DRIPA, there has been movement to “try and reconcile the Aboriginal rights and title and Aboriginal laws and interests with the province so...it’s a big period of change in trying to figure that out” (Kenneth, Planning). Since BC’s enactment of DRIPA in 2019, there has been a legislative shift in the government’s approach to Indigenous consultations for statutory decision-making. As indicated in interviews with BC Parks employees and Gitksan First Nation Chiefs and Elders, training in such consultations has historically been scant and remains so today. Furthermore, what training there is has not kept pace with modern legislation and has not been given the heightened level of importance that it deserves in our contemporary context. More and better consultative training for BC Parks operations employees is needed.

Kenneth (Planning) summarized some of the standard training procedures that all newly hired employees receive: “We present a basic history of the Park Agency to new staff that talks about our background from a Western perspective...first parks designated, the development of the system, land use planning, and those sorts of things.” All BC Parks employees explained that their knowledge of the history of parks they work in or manage has come from “lots of self-study” (Nelly, Operations) and on-the-ground experiences, such as meetings with First Nations. Planning employees working on park management plans “try to gain awareness of the areas they are planning through discussions with the Nations, mentorship from other employees, and learning from previous plans for the area or surrounding area” (Isabelle, Planning). Through my interviews with BC Parks participants, I found that in areas where formal training was lacking, employees learned instead from their experiences on-the-job and from senior employees.

Six BC Parks employees recommended a mentorship program to support employees in their training. Darlene (Operations) stated:

I do worry, for successors, like that's a lot of paper to go through to *maybe* come across *some* of this information, so how do we ensure the next line of park managers have that information moving forward? Something the world is struggling with right now with the baby boomers set to retire, how much mentorship do we really have?

To address what Isabelle (Planning) has articulated as “the loss of information from employees retiring and newer employees moving into their positions,” Tammy (Operations), Darlene (Operations), Casey (Operations), and Isabelle (Planning) suggested a job-shadowing program in BC Parks, where new hires learn from senior employees. Because employees’ knowledge of how to engage with First Nations is largely learned through working on-the-job, and a lot of information can be lost when employees retire, the need for a mentorship program is an important finding, and I discuss the implications of this in the next chapter.

BC Parks offers several formal and informal training sessions that are available to employees. According to Tammy (Operations): “The province does a good job of having informal and formal training opportunities. I've been on a ‘writing for Indigenous content’ training course before, and they're really leaning on Indigenous contractors these days for those types of things.” Dennis (Operations), Stanley (Planning), Brianne (Planning), Theresa (Planning), Nelly (Operations), and Kenneth (Planning) mentioned several other training workshops on the topics of cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, cultural heritage information, colonialism, the residential school system, diversity and inclusion, partner engagement, and First Nations’ perspectives. When asked about his formal and informal training experiences in BC Parks, Dennis (Operations) articulated:

We talked about colonialism, TEK, and reconciliation in a workshop... It was voluntary, so you could sign-up. In terms of mandatory training, there are cultural awareness

workshops and those are mandatory. Otherwise, it's been the eye-opening components for me...getting out on the land and seeing that there has been human presence here since time immemorial...having Nations show you these sacred sites to say, "Here, this is why this area is protected. This is why it's really important to us." Experiences led by First Nations are the ones you learn the most from.

All 11 of the BC Parks participants expressed that working with Elders and Chiefs is beneficial for their work. Nine employees stated that they learned the most in their jobs from working with First Nations and from Indigenous-led training opportunities. Five employees noted that this was their favourite part of their work. As Nelly (Operations) claimed: "it's all learning and it's the best kind of learning. When you have somebody who is telling you those stories, you're talking to Elders, and you can get out on the land with them...that's *so* special. It's my favourite part." These findings stress the importance of being on the land with Indigenous Peoples and having the time to build trust and relationships with First Nations members.

While getting out on the land with Elders in communities is a great way to learn and build relationships with First Nations, due to funding and staffing constraints, this is not a regular training activity. Stanley (Planning) outlined this well: "Getting out on the ground with some of the representatives of the Nations and some of the respective House Chiefs and Wing Chiefs and groups is an invaluable learning experience but limited by our regional capacity." In a similar way, all 17 of the Gitksan First Nation participants recommended that BC Parks employees go out on the land with Elders to learn the history of parklands and the areas important to their First Nation. Sheila (Chief, Gitsegukla) indicated that the role of Indigenous Peoples in BC Parks should be "educating the parks department on the history of the land. They should teach them in

training how to consult with Elders.” Wesley (Elder, Gitwangak) also emphasized the importance of learning from Elders:

If you want to go onto the land and learn everything about that land, I know it’s best to find an Elder and to go out with them for a walk or a tour of their territory. Ask them about the history of that Nation, community, or area more generally. Because BC Parks employees could never learn that in the same way or capacity without walking with an Elder. The cuts in the trees, the burial boxes, food caches, pictographs... you must ask to speak with the Elders to know about and protect these.

There are many important cultural resources within First Nations territories. Thirteen Gitxsan First Nation participants explained that they would like to work with BC Parks to increase protection of their Territorial resources and artifacts; however, they feel unable to do so, due to poor relationships with government and a lack of strong legislation supportive of their Territorial claims.

Fifteen Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders stated that understanding their laws, culture and history is important for improving working relations with them. As Desiree (Elder, Kispiox) claimed, BC Parks employees should be educated on “our laws, culture, and history, to develop more understanding and respect for our protocols and improve their opportunities for engagement and working with us on different projects in parks.” Eddie (Elder, Gitanmaax) noted that “you need to understand [Gitxsan] laws, customs, traditions—our culture—to work together and collaborate.” Five Gitxsan First Nation participants recommended that, prior to meeting with Indigenous Peoples, BC Parks employees should “do their research online on the First Nations’ website, read information about the Nation, talk to community members, or people living nearby the communities who are culturally aware and do their best to learn some basic cultural

protocols” (Annelise, Chief, Gitanyow) to get a sense of how to appropriately engage with them. There was a broad consensus among all participants that it is crucial that employees be trained to engage with First Nations in the best ways that they can to foster relationship-building and meaningful engagement.

Unique Characteristics of Working in the North Coast Skeena Region

I asked each BC Parks participant to describe what made working in the North Coast Skeena Region unique. All 11 BC Parks participants cited living and working in proximity to First Nations, the emphasis on First Nations engagement in employees’ work, and the remoteness of the region as the top three unique factors. Nelly (Operations) described the integrated nature of communities in the region: “Terrace is about half White, half Indigenous. In Dease Lake more than half is Indigenous. That’s life in the North...living and working closely with First Nations is a unique aspect of this region.” Tammy (Operations) also spoke to this in her interview: “living with First Nations is a part of our social fabric in the North. You’re interacting with them every day—you’re a part of the community together and there’s not space between your community and the First Nations communities.” For BC Parks participants, working in the North Coast Skeena Region comes with a heavy emphasis on working with First Nations. For example, Stanley (Planning) outlined his experience in the North: “I have been very fortunate to have collaborated and worked with many of the First Nations, with a fair bit of differences amongst the Nations, and then the capacity and levels of implementation and the activities.” In the North Coast Skeena Region, employees are provided with a broad range of experiences working with a variety of First Nations.

Another unique characteristic discussed by eight BC Parks participants was the region’s remoteness and low population density. In the words of Dennis (Operations): “In the North,

you're really working in these remote wilderness settings, versus the South Coast or lower mainland where you're working in densely populated areas... not having denser populations is unique." Because the landscape is large and quite remote, day-to-day activities are not focussed on visitor-use or recreation management. As Brianne (Planning) stated: "We're not... my counterparts down South. So, a lot of their work consists of trying to figure out how they can account for and accommodate 6,000 people pooping or mountain biking a week, like our work is quite different." Instead, BC Parks North Coast Skeena Regional employees focus on managing a large and "diverse landscape with diverse politics" (Theresa, Planning). Six BC Parks participants indicated that there is a wide array of different governance structures on the land base, with many First Nations governments, and various provincial and federal government agencies managing different areas as well. There are also natural resource extraction activities (forestry, oil, gas, and mining) taking place across the landscape, which have created political tensions and conflict due to the different values and goals held by interested parties across the region. The Coastal GasLink LNG pipeline is a good example of this; some First Nations support the pipeline (e.g., Nisga'a First Nation) while others strongly oppose it (Tammy, Operations; Stanley, Planning). BC Parks made two park boundary adjustments within Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Provincial Park to allow for the development of the LNG pipeline through the park in response to support from Nisga'a First Nation, who desired the economic benefits of the pipeline for their communities (Stanley, Planning).

Seven BC Parks participants described operating across large geographic areas as a unique characteristic of working in the Skeena Region. Kenneth's (Planning) thoughts on this are emblematic of this finding: "In the Northern positions, people operate in very large geographic areas...it's a gigantic land mass and we've got a lot less people than the lower mainland." Six

BC Parks participants explained that working in a large region with a small number of staff makes it difficult to become intricately connected to parks in the same ways that staff in other regions can be. However, “the ecological and cultural diversity of the landscape offers special opportunities for staff, such as exposure to a variety of cultures and developing an assortment of skills” (Casey, Operations). For instance, Brianne proudly recalled: “I’ve worked with caribou experts, I’ve sat down at park tables with Nations and talked about how one of them grew up right inside the park that we are planning.” Positions in the North offer the ability to “hear all these different voices from a really wide variety of backgrounds and incorporate them in your work without the noise of an intense number of people or visitors” (Brianne, Planning). While working in a large landscape has its own set of challenges, employees gain a strong background in working with rich cultural diversity and mediating environmental issues or resolving conflicts with a variety of different actors.

Five BC Parks employees highlighted The Nisga’a Treaty and Aboriginal case law as unique aspects of working in Northwestern BC. As Nelly (Operations) explained, “the Nisga’a was the perfect example of a modern-day treaty and something that the Nations around them can see how successful that is.” The Nisga’a Final Agreement came into effect in 2000, and it was the first modern-day treaty in BC. It set an example for other First Nations who may choose to go through the BC Treaty Commission process to establish ownership over their lands (Nelly, Operations; Stanley, Planning). As discussed in Chapter One, Aboriginal case law has largely taken place in Northwestern BC. Theresa (Planning) described the North Coast Skeena Region as being the “leading edge of change that happens in the province” because of “Aboriginal case law that comes out of our region...Those cases happen here! It feels like things start here and then they kind of roll out around the province. Often pilot projects...start in the Skeena and then they

roll out.” The North Coast Skeena Region’s vast area provides a variety of landscapes and communities to trial programs and projects. This has been beneficial for employees to learn and hone new strategies and techniques for planning and managing parks.

2. Values, Beliefs and Traditions

In the interviews, I asked BC Parks participants what values and beliefs they had regarding WSK and TEK and how these values and beliefs might influence their park management plan decisions. Through my interviews, I found that WSK is viewed by BC Parks employees as being neutral and that TEK is viewed as having more utility when WSK confirms it. Both participant groups expressed that much of the TEK within many Indigenous communities has been lost because of settler colonialism and the residential school system. I also found that BC Parks and Gitxsan First Nation participants shared similar values in terms of environmental protection. Both groups place high value on conservation and protection of natural systems. Understanding the beliefs and values BC Parks holds regarding WSK and TEK provides important context when considering the applications of TEK in park planning and management.

Eight BC Parks participants associated WSK with neutrality. In the words of Isabelle (Planning), it provides a “neutral place to start” in management planning. Theresa (Planning) captured this idea well: “I’m trying to keep it as neutral as possible... It’s like here, we have these types of trees and these red and blue listed species, and everyone can agree on that and there’s not a lot of debate about it.” Then, she went on to say, when a First Nation wants to add TEK to a management plan, “...it’s not really something that needs to be debated.” (Theresa, Planning). Similar statements about science being neutral were made by other employees. Tammy (Operations) claimed: “I think Western science is more neutral...its objective knowledge

that everyone agrees with.” Casey (Operations) explained how he sees and uses WSK and TEK in his work in operations management:

Western science tends to be our main tool for informed decision-making and TEK is good to include when it isn't contentious, sensitive, or too subjective. If a group of Chiefs or Elders agree on that TEK of the community, it is more likely to be taken seriously and utilized. A family's TEK might be considered, but TEK is stronger at the community level. Science isn't up for debate and that's just how I've seen them both in my work.

Eight BC Parks participants described TEK as valuable, but more valid and reliable when it is supported with findings from Western science. Nelly (Operations) maintained that “if you can prove it [TEK] on a scientific level, there is going to be more leverage across the board to use it.” Isabelle (Planning) explained that park management plans are based on “Western science with the ecological assessment first, and then the First Nations, TEK piece comes in based on interest.” Thus, in terms of utility, TEK is an additional piece in park management planning that is integrated based on interest and after scientific data is collected.

Six BC Parks participants indicated that “a lot of TEK has been lost within communities” (Casey, Operations). Dennis (Operations) described how settler colonialism, the residential school system, and other strategies of cultural genocide used by the Canadian government have removed TEK from communities: “This TEK is *so* broken in *so* many Nations with all the colonization, the smallpox epidemic, residential schools... the oppression that’s been placed on these Nations. So, when I think TEK, I just think of what’s lost... it’s so hard.” Dennis’ thoughts coincided with the statements made by Gitxsan First Nation participants. Eleven Chiefs and Elders expressed a loss of culture, language, and TEK in their communities as the result of settler

colonialism, which has severely damaged their traditional ways of life. For example, Danni (Chief, Gitwangak) observed:

We have lost so much of our TEK over the years...along with our language and the Gitxsan laws... a lot of that is lost now within my family and community. It makes me pretty sad that so much has been lost because of the colonization, the oppression, assimilation... but it makes me happy I do know what I know still...what was passed down to me I will pass on to my kids.

Incorporating and implementing TEK in BC Parks is difficult when there are few First Nation members who have this Knowledge; however, as Danni points to, there is also resilience within her community and TEK continues to be passed down to younger generations.

Seven BC Parks participants and 13 Gitxsan First Nation members stated that BC Parks and First Nations have similar goals and values in terms of conservation, protection, and enjoyment of land. As Wesley (Chief, Gitwangak) stated: “We have a lot on our plate and at least align more with what parks’ reasoning is... Our conservation interests and goals overlap.” Stanley (Planning) summarized BC Parks overlapping values with First Nations: “We have so many common values and that’s always a great way to start and how to resolve any conflict is pointing out common ground or values and working towards those.” Both BC Parks and Gitxsan First Nation participants expressed the importance of ecosystem health and environmental protection and said that these values provide a “common ground” when working together.

Gitxsan First Nation Laws, Culture, and Traditions

The laws, culture and traditions of Gitxsan First Nation inform park management practices by providing direction on how best to engage and collaborate with them in park management. While each First Nation has its own distinct cultural protocols, laws and traditions

that guide negotiations, the Gitxsan First Nation participants iterate that reciprocity, kindness, and respect are common among them. By taking time to understand the cultural protocols of First Nations, BC Parks can work with them in more culturally appropriate and respectful ways. From the transcripts I analyzed, becoming culturally informed about each First Nation's specific practices, and implementing these in meetings as a sign of respect would help build relationships and trust with First Nations.

Gitxsan First Nation is made up of four clans and House Groups called Huwilp led by Simgiigyet (Chiefs) who hold the Daxgyet (governance authority). The traditional, matrilineal society is governed by a system of laws (Ayook) and oral histories (Adaakw), which are all carried out in a feast hall (Lilliget). As Jerry (Chief, Gitanyow) explained: "Feasts have protocols and work within the clan system. Feasts take place for a death in the community, for pole-raising, marriage...Ceremonies take place for the first born, first kill, to celebrate manhood, womanhood and the first salmon."

All 17 Gitxsan First Nation participants emphasized the importance of the land to their identity. In Mia's (Elder, Glen Vowell) words:

Everything growing from the land is a part of the Gitxsan. The plants and animals are our relatives, they are our family. That is why Gitxsan respect this land and it is sacred...All the teachings, protocols, and ceremonies we have...they all teach our People responsibility, reciprocity, humility, respect, connection, and balance in caring for our family members, and that contributes to good stewardship of the Territories.

Wesley (Elder, Gitwangak) similarly said "the land is who we are. We are intricately connected to all living things—animals, plants, the fish, the rivers, the mountains, the sky, the changes in

weather—our culture is based in and on this land.” Gitxsan Peoples are intimately linked to their environment and ensuring protection of their land is necessary for preserving their culture.

The Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders that participated in my study discussed key aspects of their laws, culture and traditions that affect their relationship with BC Parks and other government agencies. Fourteen Gitxsan First Nation participants referenced the trespassing law and the law against recreational fishing on the Anaat (traditional fishing holes owned by the Gitxsan) as the two most important laws affecting their relationship with government. As Wesley (Elder, Gitwangak) summarized nicely: “Within our culture, it is taught that you do not play with your food. We are against recreational fishing, and this is tied to our Ayook.” Gitxsan First Nation has had no-trespass or sport fishing laws on their Anaat enforced by Hereditary Chiefs since 2019, when salmon populations began declining rapidly. Their reasoning for this is that “When you catch and release you are playing with fish. This breaks centuries-old traditional Gitxsan law. We understand that catch and release will cause higher fatality” (Herb, Chief, Gitanyow). Nevertheless, BC government continues to issue sport fishing licenses to anglers who are unaware of Gitxsan First Nation’s laws, and campers continue to camp at BC Parks in Gitxsan Territory to sport fish. As Mary (Chief, Glen Vowell) explained, “Sport fishermen are banned from the Gitxsan Territory, and the Fishing and Angling Permits issued by the BC government do not authorize trespass. Under Gitxsan law, fishing is not a sport.” This issue was further stressed by Desiree (Elder, Kispiox), who stated: “Campers, archaeologists, parks employees, and sport fishermen are daily trespassers that have little or no respect for Gitxsan People or our Laxyip.” This finding illustrates tensions between Gitxsan First Nation and the BC government, resulting from the province lacking awareness and knowledge of Gitxsan First Nation laws regarding sport fishing, or knowing but neglecting to uphold these traditional laws.

Fifteen Gitxsan First Nation participants discussed the importance of bringing food to meetings as a cultural tradition that influences relationship building with government. As Annelise (Chief, Gitanyow) explained: “You should always just bring food to any meeting... Because if you come out here, there's salmon for you.” Desiree (Elder, Kispiox) also reinforced this point: “Always bring food when you meet us...we will always have a meal for you if we invite you to a meeting. Reciprocity is so important. And just showing that you genuinely *care* and appreciate meeting with us!” In many Northwestern First Nations, bringing food symbolizes reciprocity and thoughtfulness. If you are a guest on their territory, you will receive traditional food for your time and attendance and the same is expected in return.

3. Applications of TEK in BC Parks Planning and Operations Management and Associated Challenges

In my interviews, I asked BC Parks planning and operations staff how they involved TEK in their work and what challenges they faced incorporating it. In BC Parks, WSK has been the norm for collecting baseline data and other information on ecosystems in parks. In recent years, TEK has gained more interest within the agency; however, there is not yet any specific approach for weaving it into their work. By reviewing how TEK and First Nations are currently being included in park planning and operations management, and identifying the challenges to integrating their TEK, a greater appreciation is gained for the intricacies involved in applying TEK in park planning and management. Questions of territorial overlap and sensitive treaty negotiations present many challenges to incorporating TEK in signage projects, renaming of parks, and in park management plans generally. However, employees are coping with these challenges as they arise and continue to do their best to integrate TEK and build relationships.

Eight BC Parks employees maintained that they are still learning how to use TEK in their work. It is an important aspect of park planning and operations management, but, according to Kenneth (Planning), BC Parks hasn't "invested the time or the resources to really find a way to bring that TEK into the system in a way that's on par with WSK." BC Parks has commitments to engage with First Nations, but "it's very ad hoc and there's not the strong tools to do that yet" (Kenneth, Planning). There are very different ways that TEK can be incorporated in both park planning and operations management, and in what follows, I present the participants' perspectives on this.

Applications of TEK in Park Planning

BC Parks employees apply TEK in park planning in a variety of ways. This can be through fully involving First Nations in co-writing park management plans, integrating their TEK into park management plans where First Nations deem it is appropriate to do so, co-designing the park planning process with First Nations, integrating TEK into background studies (e.g., cultural heritage studies), jointly-led background studies, or documents that inform the management direction and management objectives of a park, and through First Nations leading or jointly-leading community meetings and public meetings (N. White, personal communication, February 5, 2025). The BC Parks participants discussed several collaborative planning processes where TEK is being integrated in the North Coast Skeena Region. Five BC Parks employees discussed the application of TEK in Bishop Bay – Monkey Beach Conservancy management plan, which is the most recent collaboratively developed management plan for the region. Bishop Bay – Monkey Beach Conservancy management plan was co-written with Haisla First Nation, Gitga'at First Nation, and Gitxaala First Nation. Collaborative First Nation partners, who have Collaborative Management Agreements with BC Parks, are given the opportunity to provide

input for all of the content in park management plans. Most often, First Nations provide their input on cultural value objectives, identification of areas for cultural zoning, and allowable use tables in park management plan development (N. White, personal communication, January 29, 2025). However, every planning process is different, and it depends on the level of involvement a First Nation desires. The development of park management plans is an iterative process and there is ongoing engagement with First Nations as they work through the content of park management plans together with BC Parks. Additionally, cultural information is often shared informally with BC Parks planners on the ground during joint field visits (N. White, personal communication, January 29, 2025).

Brianne (Planning), Stanley (Planning) and Kenneth (Planning) all explained that BC Parks has a collaborative management board and a joint decision-making process with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations for Tatshenshini-Alsek Park and for the Conservancies located within their Territories. As Brianne (Planning) stated, “Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, who have the majority of their Territories in Tatshenshini-Alsek Park, have a Tatshenshini-Alsek Park Board where TEK is discussed and can be utilized in planning processes.” Kenneth (Planning) noted that “In terms of applying TEK within a cultural heritage study, we’ve done that in a management planning process with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in Tatshenshini-Alsek Park, so that’s a component where a study has been developed as part of an input into a planning process.” Planning processes involving TEK vary greatly, as there is a high level of variability in BC Parks’ working relationships with First Nations (Stanley, Planning).

Stanley (Planning) highlighted that BC Parks has a strong working relationship with Nisga’a Lisims Government, where TEK is integrated into planning: “We have a very strong

working relationship with Nisga’a Lisims Government and joint decision-making processes that involve TEK in Nisga’a Memorial Lava Bed Park and other Conservancies and areas around it. We have collaborative management frameworks for planning and operations.” Kenneth added that “In Nisga’a Memorial Lava Bed Park we have a pretty reasonably functioning board with Nisga’a First Nation where they will share their stories and histories. This TEK is often applied in documents, studies, or signage.” Additionally, relationships with Cheslatta First Nation, some of the Carrier Nations, Tahltan First Nation, and Taku River Tlingit First Nation are also fairly strong, due to “a stronger connection with these First Nations based upon some of our history and historical connections from the older, longer-standing parks in their territories—one example being Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Park in Tahltan First Nation Territory, established in 1975” (Stanley, Planning). Brianne (Planning) also discussed collaborative work involving TEK in planning with Taku River Tlingit: “They have a Government-to-Government table I sit on that was established under the Land Use Planning tables—the Wóoshtin Wudidaa—in 2011.” The Taku River Tlingit’s work with BC Parks on Wóoshtin wudidaa Atlin Taku Land Use Plan in 2011 formulated “a collaborative management framework, as it was negotiated under a shared decision-making framework for land use and wildlife management between the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and the Province” (Stanley, Planning).

Stanley (Planning) and Isabelle (Planning) also noted that BC Parks has good relationships with several First Nations on the coast, where strategic engagement agreements or collaborative management agreements are in place and TEK is sometimes applied there in planning. Where there are stronger relationships with First Nations, First Nations are co-authoring management plans and providing substantial background information and TEK to BC

Parks for consideration during the development of management plan objectives (N. White, personal communication, January 3, 2025).

Theresa (Planning) shed light on some of her own experiences working with First Nations and trying to incorporate TEK in park planning:

We all agreed that the first thing that would be done was...collecting the background Western science... an ecosystem overview assessment would be collected by a contractor, and it will be shared out to the Nations. Then they can weave in their TEK. It's just when we start treading into how many archaeological sites are there and the history of that—that becomes *extremely* sensitive. Especially in a treaty negotiation environment, where everyone is trying to assert that they have been somewhere the longest, or it's their cultural features.

Seven BC Parks participants expressed that the sensitive cultural information and TEK that First Nations want to include in a park management plan are often not public facing; rather, this information is usually contained within a background document (Isabelle, Planning). This means that some of the information guiding management directives may not be available to the public to ensure the privacy and interests of a First Nation. When I asked Stanley (Planning) about TEK inclusion in background documents, he explained that:

...cultural zones are usually set aside and it's up to the Nation if they want to disclose that or why that area is culturally significant, and I know a lot of background documents have information like TEK or cultural heritage and history that will or can be in management plans. But [First Nations] don't want it open to the public because it's sensitive information.

Four BC Parks participants told me that background documents ensure the protection of culturally sensitive information and are often used in park management plans with First Nations who are in treaty negotiations. While TEK is often incorporated into background documents to avoid sharing this information publicly, the management direction and objectives for a park are built on that information. A background document can be separate from a scientific study, although the background document may incorporate that scientific information as needed. Background studies can also include cultural heritage assessments—although this is difficult in areas of territory overlap (N. White, personal communication, January 3, 2025). There are multiple ongoing collaborative planning projects taking place at this time in the North Coast Skeena Region, however, these cannot be mentioned with specificity due to territorial overlap issues.

Applications of TEK in Park Operations Management

The BC Parks participants highlighted three primary ways through which they are incorporating TEK into operations management: scientific studies; renaming parks; and creating park signage. Six BC Parks employees discussed the application of TEK in scientific studies. For example, Dennis (Operations) discussed BC Parks’ ongoing collaboration with Nuxalk First Nation and the University of Victoria on grizzly bear research:

We collaborate with the Nations in programs and research such as for bear-viewing. Bear-viewing is a great one that we are working on right now with the Nuxalk. We have sort of this tri-party working group between the Nuxalk First Nation, BC Parks and the University of Victoria around the grizzly bear study on the Atnarko River. Kate Field has been working closely with us and the Chris Darimont lab for the past four years on grizzly bear research, essentially looking at behavioural effects on grizzly bears from

recreational activities along the Atnarko River. So...that's for the Nuxalk Nation and BC Parks. And the research crew are working together with WSK and also trying to bring in TEK into there to ensure everything being reviewed is reviewed in the TEK lens as well to ensure that the knowledge is brought in.

Brianne (Planning) discussed how operations staff have integrated TEK into renaming parks and park signage:

Boya Lake Park, which was renamed Tā Ch'ilā Park, it's on Highway 37 North, just South of the Yukon border, and it's one of the major stops for camping along that area. That site has been really cool to implement some TEK. We sat with an Elder who... talked us through all the traditional names of the plants. He grew up in the park, so, we were able to capture a lot of his stories about the history of the area, both like ecologically and socially...and we were able to capture that with his permission, and it's on signage up there with an audio component.

Six BC Parks participants discussed the signage implemented at Driftwood Canyon Provincial Park as another example of integrating TEK in signage, where there is audio attached to a sign that tells a Wet'suwet'en Elder's story of the canyon in the Wet'suwet'en language.

Five BC Parks participants expressed that BC Parks also engages First Nations in archaeological assessments. As Tammy (Operations) explained: "When we do cultural heritage assessments, they are contracted in where it's utilized. Sometimes requested by the First Nations. Even on the contracting in, you have very technical expertise on your archaeological sites." Certain areas in the North Coast Skeena Region have known burial grounds where "there's a very high chance that you're 'gonna come across an artifact or evidence of previous use" (Darlene, Operations). When there is risk of disturbing any artifacts or graves in culturally

significant areas, it is common for trained First Nations members to attend the archaeological assessments and be present to ensure that there are no finds (Dennis, Operations). Additionally, other ways TEK is applied in park operations management are through working with First Nation Guardian Programs in place with First Nations to coordinate patrols and site visits, coordinating site visits with other First Nation members, joint cultural projects funded through BC Parks Licence Plate Program or the Indigenous Funding Envelope, and First Nations cultural camps held in parks (N. White, personal communication, February 5, 2025).

Challenges to Applying TEK in Planning and Operations Management

Eight Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders stated that they would not want to share information on cultural resources in their Territory with government or tourists. Spring (Elder, Kispiox) noted that due her lack of trust in government agencies and the impacts of settler colonialism on her community,

I would not feel safe sharing *any* information about our culturally important areas with government employees... for fear they would use that information against us and take advantage of the resources we rely on.

Four Chiefs and Elders explained that they would like to disclose some information on culturally important sites to BC Parks to be able to increase the protection of certain areas for future generations. Jerry (Chief, Gitanyow) explained that there are some fishing and harvesting sites in the Territory that could benefit from BC Parks' cultural zoning, "But we would not want to attract tourists or visitors there...so this information would need to be kept private and away from the public eye." Hence, my discussions with Gitxsan First Nation participants further stressed the importance of BC Parks background documents in park management planning.

Ten BC Parks participants noted that signage projects are not simple and there are many intricacies involved with them. They involve having knowledge of territory overlaps, boundaries, and being certain that the territory that they are going to be located acknowledges the correct First Nation (Theresa, Planning). With much territorial overlap throughout the Northwest region, it can be difficult to ascertain where exactly the lines are on maps delineating First Nations territories. For example, Darlene (Operations) spoke of a time when BC Parks accidentally placed a sign in the wrong location:

We had this sign out there and I remember one of the other House Chiefs, they got mad at one of the Parks staff...I think they actually physically removed it like, 'this doesn't belong here!' And Parks was really clueless because we weren't educated, and we certainly didn't know that it was on the wrong territory.

Once BC Parks became aware of the misplacement of the sign, they promptly relocated it to the appropriate location (Darlene, Operations). This example demonstrates how a sign can be perceived by First Nations as laying claim to a territory and how placing it in the incorrect territory can cause unintended conflict between First Nations. Therefore, while it's extremely important to implement signage and showcase the stories and histories of First Nations, it is a delicate issue as to where signs are located (or not). Kenneth (Planning) specified some other issues with signage projects: "You find out that the artwork that they've selected is not from that Nation, or it's not the right symbol, or the right money wasn't paid to have access to it." With all this in mind, it can be difficult to "do things right" (Brienne, Planning) in signage projects and avoid issues with implementing TEK.

Six BC Parks participants discussed the importance of trust and transparency in gathering TEK from communities. For example, Kenneth (Planning) said that: "a lot of it is knowing how

the data or information is going to be used. The trust that comes...there's some reason of why it's being shared, and that it will be used appropriately." Casey (Operations) also observed that: "TEK and stories are really important and valuable to First Nations. So, there is a challenge of using that information inappropriately by sharing it with other First Nations who might adopt the story as their own." Eleven Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders also spoke to the role of trust in sharing information. In their interviews, Krystal (Chief, Gitwangak), Fred (Elder, Glen Vowell), Sheila (Chief, Gitsegukla), and Herb (Chief, Gitanyow) all noted that trust is integral to sharing TEK and cultural information. Sheila (Chief, Gitsegukla) explained that due to the lack of trust that exists from historical mistreatment and cultural oppression by the province, sharing of TEK only happens if there has been work done by government officials and agencies to establish better relationships.

All 11 BC Parks participants noted that integrating TEK can become highly politicized when First Nations are in the process of treaty negotiations. Many of the Northwestern First Nations are now in the final stages of the BC Treaty Commission process. Having most First Nations in the North working to finalize their treaties with the government presents difficulties when trying to involve them and integrate their TEK in park management plans. According to Geoff (Operations), some of the greatest barriers are territory-overlap issues: "Some Nations are okay with the different overlaps and some Nations won't even talk to each other and have longstanding rivalry, and that makes it almost impossible to move forward working with them in a management plan." Theresa (Planning) iterated: "I can barely do any management planning right now and that's because there is a lot of treaty negotiations going on." The tensions between First Nations that result from overlapping territories and treaty negotiations pose serious challenges for developing park management plans collaboratively.

Another finding that emerged from seven of the BC Parks transcripts was the problem of multiple, disparate, engagement protocols and agreements for First Nations. Casey (Operations) elaborated on this topic: “All of our engagement agreements with First Nations are different, and we have many. That also makes it challenging to learn the proper protocols for engaging with First Nations, when there is no one-size-fits-all approach.” As I discussed in Chapter One, engagement agreements can come in many different forms. Some of the agreements that are most commonly utilized by BC Parks employees are Collaborative Management Agreements, Strategic Engagement Agreements, Reconciliation Agreements and Consultation Agreements. Theresa (Planning) described the different engagement protocols and agreements she uses in park planning when First Nation territories overlap: “If I have five different First Nations overlapping in a protected area, I have to work out who my collaborative Nations are, who my consultative Nations are, and then what level I’m engaging with for each one, then funding for each one.” This finding demonstrates that the lack of a uniform approach for engaging First Nations can present difficulty for employees tasked with identifying how to properly involve them in park planning processes. While BC Parks’ various engagement agreements with different First Nations can be challenging for employees to learn, follow, and deliver, I recognize that a one-dimensional approach to working with Indigenous Peoples is not appropriate. This is because each Indigenous community has its own values, priorities and interests in park management plans. A uniform approach to engaging with Indigenous Peoples is unable to appreciate or address the complexities of each Indigenous community. This is an important finding that I return to in the following chapter.

Despite the complexities involved with integrating TEK, nine BC Parks participants expressed excitement and optimism about the future possibilities for greater inclusion of

Indigenous Peoples and their TEK in their work. Nelly (Operations) stated: “Now it’s becoming a little bit more of an open floor and a stage, there’s lots more ways for the communities and Indigenous Governments to tap-in and be heard and see the outcomes that they are looking for.” Brianne (Planning) explained: “[The future is] really exciting to think about...since working here I’ve gone through two Park name changes and a number of the Parks that have been recently developed are being developed with Conservancies and with the Indigenous name.” Dennis (Operations) noted that “The Nations on the coast, they’re looking at the Park Act and joint decision-making around the park legislation, and we’ve had conversations that go there too, which is exciting!” All 11 BC Parks participants observed that the contemporary emphasis on reconciliation and working with First Nations within the agency has increased pressure to include them in park management in a variety of new ways. The political support for reconciliation and involving Indigenous Peoples within government presents both a new chapter and a learning curve for BC Parks.

4. Reconciliation and Self-determination in Park Planning and Operations

Management

In my interviews, I asked each BC Parks and Gitxsan First Nation participant how they define reconciliation and what roles reconciliation and self-determination can play in park management planning. Their responses tell me that reconciliation is difficult to clearly define, measure and achieve. It is also defined in different ways by First Nations. Both participant groups underlined the importance of meaningful engagement and territorial acknowledgements for reconciliation. BC Parks participants recommended creating a checklist or directive summary for reconciliation. They also suggested documenting the goals and priorities of specific First Nations for other employees to access. Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders recommended co-

management approaches, and noted the importance of being kind, sincere, and respectful in meetings. Gitxsan First Nation participants emphasized that maintaining communication and relationships with First Nations communities is important for reconciliation. These findings help to clarify the meaning of reconciliation for these participants and can inform how BC Parks should engage in reconciliation with First Nations.

Gitxsan First Nation participants discussed self-determination as relating to more control and governance over their Territory and having more power in park planning and operations matters that concern them. Both participant groups referenced IPCAs as an important strategy for asserting self-determination in parks. BC Parks employees indicated that they anticipate new legislation and major policy changes in the coming years. These findings inform how self-determination is viewed by both Gitxsan First Nation members and BC Parks employees, and how strategies to increase First Nations governance of their lands are being considered and incorporated by BC Parks.

All 11 BC Parks and all 17 Gitxsan First Nation participants discussed territorial acknowledgements as a strategy for working towards reconciliation. BC Parks participants mostly discussed territory acknowledgements in terms of signage projects. Kenneth (Planning) explained the process for implementing signage: “You get the House group, where it’s located, then you get the language title holders, and it can be quite a process to do it right?! But it’s one thing that we’re building a little bit of skill.” As discussed earlier, signage projects can be complicated, but they are important as “it’s a way of representing some of their oral history and their connection to the land base” (Darlene, Operations). Gitxsan First Nation Elders and Chiefs expressed that territorial acknowledgements are one of the most important components of reconciliatory work. As Roy (Chief, Gitanmaax) said:

All we want is acknowledgement, that's all. We just want a piece of metal out there on the front of a trail or park, saying, look, *tell the truth of this land*. This land is Gitxsan land. If it's something which came down to a specific claim, this was stolen by the federal and provincial government, this was then settled, it is now open for everybody to enjoy.

Please respect our land, and that's it!

For Eddie (Elder, Gitanmaax), “Reconciliation is simply a matter of admitting where the mistakes were made and owning up to it. Acknowledge our Territory, let us tell our story. And that’s it.” Additionally, 14 Gitxsan First Nation members indicated that signage should be written in their language. Gladys (Elder, Kispiox) claimed: “all signs in parks should incorporate the Indigenous language. That is part of reconciliation. Here at Kispiox River, Swan Lake or even over in Seven Sisters...those signs in those parks should all have both English for visitors and Gitksenimx for us.” Sheila (Chief, Gitsegukla) offered an example that could be applied for signage describing cultural artifacts: “Instead of ancient fridge, or cache...have it written in Sim Algyax, or, more specifically, in Gitksenimx. Language is such a *huge* thing.” Wesley (Gitwangak, Elder) stated that the best way to reach out to First Nations to incorporate TEK into signage is to ask them:

If you were to put a sign up, what would you put up? And then leave it to the Nation. If they don't get back to you, it's on them. But if somebody gets back and says, ‘Hey, here's a 20-second history of it.’ Great!

Nine Gitxsan First Nation participants stated that BC Parks should ask First Nations’ land departments and Chiefs what they would like in a territorial acknowledgement. There is always a person that knows the history of the land and that is the best person to talk to in signage projects (Danni, Chief, Gitwangak). The Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders expressed that all First

Nations have land departments and their “job is to study and know the history of the lands” (Fred, Glen Vowell, Elder). Seven Gitxsan First Nation participants even suggested setting up contracts with Elders for signage programs, where they could have employees go out with Elders on a regular basis to identify culturally important areas for signage and discuss them.

All 11 BC Parks participants and 14 Gitxsan First Nation participants noted meaningful engagement as being integral to meeting reconciliatory goals. Reconciliation was defined by 10 BC Parks participants as being reliant on collaboration, consistent communication, relationship building, and partnerships. For example, Tammy (Operations) explained that “I would define reconciliation as dependent on collaboration, ongoing engagement...making those relationships and building partnerships in working together.” Dennis (Operations) claimed:

Reconciliation to me, is what I can do within the protected areas system and within the framework that I operate in? How can I best support what the Nation is advocating for? It’s working with the Nations, trying to figure out how to best work with the Nation on their reconciliation goals. Whether that is supporting them through youth programs and engagement or in management planning, joint decision-making, or, whatever that looks like for the Nation.

Eight BC Parks participants also discussed reconciliation in terms of education, awareness of the past, responsibility, and having respect for First Nations. As Casey (Operations) stated:

“Reconciliation is done by collaboratively through developing those [management] plans with the Nations to bring forward TEK into the management and protection of that land-base through a traditional lens. So, to me, that is honouring how it’s been managed in the past, educating ourselves on that, and acknowledging our history too.” This finding illustrates the importance of

understanding and acknowledging the history of BC government with First Nations to move forward in creating better relationships today.

Seven BC Parks employees stated that BC Parks' collaborative arrangements with First Nations are a good start in working towards reconciliation. Theresa (Planning) stated that in collaborative arrangements, "BC Parks is sitting down at the table talking about special places with the Nations. And we're not just writing plans together, we're going out on the land with them, and they are telling us stories and sharing information." The province has committed to reconciliation in its policies; however, "the government is still trying to figure out...how we are actually going to implement it" (Theresa, Planning). BC Parks is trying to "bring First Nations into management plans and be partners with them, which has led to a better relationship with many First Nations" (Casey, Operations). Six BC Parks participants discussed renaming place names with Indigenous names and telling stories from two sides as a part of reconciliation. For example, Stanley (Planning) observed that "Renaming parks with Indigenous names and telling both stories is a way I've seen BC Parks do reconciliation...so, instead of telling only the colonial story, they're telling the story that First Nations want to be on the park signage." Kenneth (Planning) described the importance of reconciliation within the North Coast Skeena Region:

It's huge! It's one of the *key* pieces to be a viable and relevant park agency, is to be fully engaged in reconciliation and to have all levels...engaged in making that a key work goal. I really like to think that that is a focus within our region. Have we clearly defined the focus and all the goals that go along with that? I don't think so, but the commitment to having that is there.

From my interviews with BC Parks employees, it is evident that reconciliation is at the forefront of BC Parks' work. While no formal approach to reconciliation has been created by the agency, the primary strategies for building relationships and partnerships with First Nations are collaborative management agreements, renaming parks, and signage projects.

In my interviews with Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders, kindness, respect, consideration, and sincerity were the most common terms used to describe reconciliation. Roy (Chief, Gitanmaax) asserted that "Kindness and respect go a long way with Chiefs and Elders—if you don't show respect, you don't get it in return." Abigail (Chief, Gitsegukla) similarly declared, "That's what it comes down to...working with Indigenous Peoples and working on reconciliation, it's the humanity of the person rather than the political agenda. Show us your *humanity*. Don't tell us what to do, or what should be done. Show that you care about our relationship." The Gitxsan First Nation participants encouraged BC Parks employees to "go do those small things. When you're invited, attend the ceremonies, sit at the feasts, go to the fish camps, experience and learn the culture...and respect it. That is all part of reconciliation." (Donald, Chief, Kispiox). Sixteen Gitxsan First Nation participants expressed the importance of having ongoing communication with First Nations communities for reconciliation. Spring (Chief, Kispiox) urged BC Parks employees to "If you want to do the work reconciliation requires, you need to reach out to the communities, the Chiefs, the Wilps. Communication is so important! Reach out, be curious, be sincere, be respectful and polite. Then, stay in contact with those communities." In Gitxsan First Nation culture, it is important to "walk slowly" (Abigail, Chief, Gitsegukla) and be considerate of the time it takes to build relationships. It is also important to respect one another in "all that you do and wherever you go, so you do not dirty your blanket"

(Herb, Gitanyow, Chief). Dirtying a blanket is a metaphor in Gitxsan First Nation teachings for disrespecting someone.

Thirteen Gitxsan First Nation participants commented that reconciliation requires increased engagement, meaningful discussions about the past, and co-management approaches and opportunities. Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders had opinions similar to the BC Parks participants in terms of collaboration, meaningful engagement, and telling both sides of the story in signage projects; however, Gitxsan First Nation participants more frequently noted co-management approaches as a key component of reconciliation. Fred (Elder, Glen Vowell) stated: “It’s important they acknowledge our stories in reconciliation projects they do like signage...but unless we have co-management of the parks, how we wish to manage *our* land is not being incorporated. To me, that’s what’s necessary in reconciliation for parks.” Roy (Chief, Gitanmaax) also spoke to this point: “Land back. Land back. Land back! They need to learn more than collaboration, they need policy or legislation changed to allow for co-managed park frameworks, beyond just seeking our knowledge and input.” These findings demonstrate that co-management approaches are important to First Nations for increasing their control over management of their Territories.

Eddie (Elder, Gitanmaax) explained that: “Collaboration, meaningful conversations, building partnerships, coming out with our Elders, learning our culture and our stories—finding common ground with our own day-to-day tasks on the Territory, that’s reconciliation, but it must be defined by each Nation.” Just as each First Nation has its own cultural protocols, it also has its own priorities and idea of what constitutes reconciliation. All 17 Gitxsan First Nation participants and six BC Parks participants stressed the importance of discussing what reconciliation means to each specific First Nation, by asking them “what kind of relationship

they would like to have [with the agency]” (Jerry, Chief, Gitanyow) and “how BC Parks can achieve that in their work” (Tammy, Operations). Gladys (Elder, Kispiox) articulated “What is DRIPA if it isn’t defined by Indigenous Peoples? No one is asking us ‘what do you want? What rights do you want in managing this protected area?’” This finding demonstrates that it is necessary for BC Parks employees to discuss with individual First Nations how they perceive reconciliation and what their priorities are.

Five Gitxsan First Nation participants expressed a strong dislike for the term reconciliation and stated they did not understand its meaning. Krystal (Chief, Gitwangak) expressed her frustration with the term: “I think the government made up a fancy word to deflect complaints and they use this word reconciliation *over and over and over*. I think it’s nonsense to be honest.” Mia (Elder, Glen Vowell) conveyed anger with the lack of action by the province for mending relationships with First Nations: “The government talks all about these catchwords or buzzwords like reconciliation, DRIPA, their five-year Action Plan... Where is the action? It’s all talk, no action. And action is what is *needed* to build relationships, not catch phrases and tokenism.” This finding speaks to the need for BC Parks to increase their engagement with communities and build relationships, as reconciliation must be exhibited through agency actions.

Five of the BC Parks participants expressed their desire for a working definition of reconciliation with objectives or strategies to guide this in their work. Tammy (Operations) recommended guiding materials for reconciliation: “I would prefer if we could create a working definition with supporting elements to validate that kind of work. Even like a checklist or written directive summary of sorts.” Having a collaborative document to guide the work of employees would be helpful; however, this may not be feasible (Casey, Operations). Therefore, it may be best to identify the priorities of First Nations on a case-by-case basis and then document their

priorities in a written summary to pass along this knowledge to other (and future) employees engaging with the First Nation (Darlene, Operations). Theresa (Planning) noted that: “Often staff will say: “How do I do reconciliation?” And there’s no checklist [laughs]—it’s all about the way you treat people and how we bring them in and how we partner on things...And it takes time.” These findings highlight the lack of formal guidelines or protocols available to BC Parks employees in their work on reconciliation.

The Gitxsan First Nation participants discussed self-determination in parks as relating to more control, agency, governance, and power in park planning and operations matters and statutory decision-making concerning their Territory. As Mary (Chief, Glen Vowell) explained: “We want more control over our land and waters; we want our own governments to have more agency. More stake in parks, in the natural resources and park visitation decisions. We want to feel like our opinions are considered.” Abigail (Chief, Gitsegukla) similarly said: “We want to be equal decision-making partners and consulted with regularly on major decisions affecting our harvesting sites, sustenance grounds, the Anaat and our fishing camps. We want future generations to have this land for seven generations ahead.” Fifteen Chiefs and Elders explained that self-determination is about giving the land back. It is about the land and resources in the territory and giving it back to the First Nation. Desiree (Elder, Kispiox) underscored this in her interview: “This is our land. It will always be our land. And we want it back.” This finding underlines the need for park co-management and the desire of First Nations to have more agency in the governance of their territories.

Self-determination and reconciliation were sometimes used interchangeably when discussed by BC Parks participants. As Darlene (Operations) indicated: “I would say reconciliation would be either co-management or seeing the management of some of these areas

go to First Nations. There should be self-determination in governing their respective landscapes.” Eight BC Parks participants discussed the future of parkland ownership following treaty settlements. As Brienne (Planning) explained: “There are conversations and policies being developed that will hopefully speak to what happens with lands that are protected areas in treaty, and how those are managed moving forward. And I think that's really exciting to think about!” Theresa (Planning) clarified that: “We are not lined up for legislative changes at least for five years. That’s really challenging because we have to navigate that while Nations are wanting to do all sorts of interesting things in parks that have never been done.” Management partnerships and collaborative planning processes are the main ways that BC Parks is adapting its management planning structure to meet new reconciliatory expectations; nonetheless, final management decisions can only be made by BC Parks (Kenneth, Planning). While First Nations govern themselves, parks are still managed under the Park Act and currently the only decision-maker is government (Theresa, Planning).

Seven BC Parks participants and six Gitksan First Nation participants referenced IPCAs when discussing self-determination in parks. IPCAs are protected areas legislated under the jurisdiction and laws of individual Indigenous communities, governments and Nations to protect their lands and waters (Finegan, 2018). IPCAs are a common way that Indigenous Peoples are asserting their governance over protected areas. Herb (Chief, Gitanyow) discussed the Gitanyow IPCA:

Our Nation established an IPCA right beside Hanna-Tintina Conservancy. We named it Wilp Wii Litsxw Meziadin IPCA. There was much pressure on us to...protect that area to ensure food security for our Nation who depend on the salmon. Our Territory has been changing due to climate change and mineral exploration impacts, which has severely

affected the already struggling salmon populations. Salmon from the Meziadin watershed are a staple in our communities as our main sustenance food and are culturally important.

When BC was taking too long to collaborate in protection of the area, we had to act.

BC Parks participants explained that IPCAs demonstrate how First Nations have been asserting their self-determination and agency by establishing conservation areas in their territories. Nelly (Operations) noted that “Sometimes things happen and roll out slowly within the government, and Nations just want to use their own authority to see something protected, so they forge ahead with an IPCA and their own management structures too.” IPCAs are being established as a response to the time government can take to designate co-managed protected areas. Stanley (Planning) stated: “from a self-determination standpoint, I can see why a Nation or Nations would say: ‘well, you missed a lot! And we are going to proceed with a designation that we need to see put into place.’” IPCAs offer an effective method for protecting natural areas with Indigenous laws and governance.

Eight BC Parks participants underlined the likelihood of new legislation and major policy changes in the coming years. Kenneth (Planning) explained that looking at new ways of delivering park and protected area management in the future might include strategies of self-determination for First Nations: “I think we could be... looking at new ways of delivering protected areas. If it’s funded, it might be with the Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, such as creating new designation tools for First Nations-run parks and protected areas.” Casey (Operations) explained that “Things have been consistently changing, treaties are becoming finalized, and [BC Parks] will be looking at making new policies and legislation in the coming years to increase Indigenous collaboration, governance of parks and inclusion in management.” Increasing Indigenous inclusion and expanding Indigenous governance are expected to be vital

drivers of impending changes within BC Parks. Meanwhile, during this period of much change, new ideas and various challenges (Kwetásel'wet Wood, 2024), BC Parks employees can best use their time to engage and collaborate with First Nations in new ways that build ever stronger relationships.

Conclusion

The findings from my interviews with BC Parks North Coast Skeena Regional staff and Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders provided new insights in the areas of park planning and management, applications of TEK in parks, reconciliation, and self-determination. First, I found that staff capacity, funding availability, budget timelines, policies, and training procedures all structure and shape the inclusion of TEK in BC Parks' planning and operations management. There were calls for revisions to BC Parks training on consultation and First Nations culture and history, and to build trust and improve relationships with First Nations. There is also a need for regionally located Indigenous Relations staff to support and facilitate engagement with First Nations. Second, the values and beliefs of employees regarding WSK and TEK, and the laws, culture and traditions of First Nations, influence the application of TEK in park management plans. Third, TEK is informally integrated into park planning processes through fully involving First Nations in co-writing park management plans, integrating their TEK into park management plans where First Nations deem it is appropriate to do so, co-designing the park planning process with First Nations, integrating TEK into background studies (e.g., cultural heritage studies), jointly-led background studies, or documents that inform the management direction and management objectives of a park, and through First Nations leading or jointly-leading community meetings and public meetings (N. White, personal communication, February 5, 2025). TEK is formally integrated into operations management through scientific studies,

renaming parks and in park signage. Other formal ways TEK is integrated in park planning and operations management occurs through working with the First Nation Guardian Programs when in place with First Nations to coordinate patrols and visits, First Nation cultural camps in parks, joint cultural projects funded by BC Parks Licence Plate Program or Indigenous Funding Envelope, joint park management boards (e.g., Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park and Tatshenshini-Alsek Park), Collaborative Management Agreement meetings to discuss operations, management and planning, and contracts to support direct operations of parks with First Nation employees (e.g., Khutzymateen Park and Tatshenshini-Alsek Park) (N. White, personal communication, February 5, 2025). Nevertheless, employees must work with First Nations to identify territorial overlaps and ongoing treaty negotiations, to avoid issues when implementing TEK in their work. Fourth, territorial acknowledgements and co-management approaches are both important actions for reconciliation. However, the reconciliatory goals of each First Nations community are different, and employees should have discussions with First Nations to identify what actions are needed to complete this work. Lastly, self-determination requires increased control, agency and governance of First Nations territories. This can be best supported through shared governance of parks and policies and programming which facilitate First Nations participation in park planning and operations management. In the following chapter, these findings are presented in relation to the literature and my two-eyed seeing theoretical lens.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter takes the findings from my thematic analysis and places them into conversation with previous research summarized in the literature review and my theoretical lens of two-eyed seeing, which includes the key concepts of settler colonialism and decolonization. My discussion is organized into four sections: park planning and operations management; TEK inclusion; reconciliation; and self-determination. In each section, I expand on Chapter Four's findings to offer recommendations for BC Parks—particularly park planners and managers—in their efforts to meaningfully include First Nations and their TEK in park planning and operations management.

Park Planning and Operations Management

The findings from my study coincide with previous research that has identified funding, timelines, guidelines, policies, programming, resources and hiring capacity as structural barriers faced by park planners and operations managers working with First Nations (Cvitanovic et al., 2016; Kadykalo et al., 2021; Lemieux et al., 2018; Spielmann & Unger, 2000). The BC Parks participants observed a decline in research capacity within the agency since the year 2000. This decline in research capacity is likely due to capacity issues more than funding availability, as the BC Parks Licence Plate Program brings in millions of dollars every year, and BC Parks staff are able to submit applications to this program for funding research and projects with First Nations in their areas (N. White, personal communication, January 3, 2025). This finding aligns with Kadykalo et al. (2021), who found that BC government staff had experienced a diminished research capacity within their ministry/branch over the years. This underfunding is not unique to parks agencies alone; within a broader political economy of neoliberal capitalism, there has been a reduction in government spending since the late 1970s and early 1980s (Andrews & Silk,

2012). A neoliberal ideology aims at cutting expenditures on public goods in order to enhance corporate profitability (Andrews & Silk, 2012).

The BC Parks participants stressed that current social and political factors, specifically, reconciliation, climate change, and treaty negotiations, influence park planning and operations management. This is not a surprising finding, as reconciliation, climate change, and treaty negotiations are all at the forefront of BC's current political agenda, therefore, they are valued and prioritized in planning and management. These findings support Policansky's (1988) study, which revealed that resource management is influenced by economics, politics, values, beliefs, and other factors. Cvitanovic et al. (2016) found that decision-makers are "typically focused on day-to-day operations, and driven by... political, economic, and social drivers that reflect broader societal issues" (p. 870). Hence, because the BC Parks employees indicated that reconciliation with First Nations is considered an important social and political driver of their work under the DRIPA legislation (2019), this can lend support for integrating TEK in park management plans. Several other studies have found that values and beliefs influence management planning decisions (Cook et al., 2010; Fabian et al., 2019; Kadykalo, 2021; Matzek et al., 2014; Pullin et al., 2016). These studies also found that there is a lack of evidence-based decision-making within natural resource agencies. However, my research did not support this finding. Although BC Parks participants expressed having a diminished research capacity, they highlighted that background studies, ecological assessments and cultural heritage assessments support park planning processes and operations management and that a conservation specialist provides ecological, scientific data to support decision-making within the region.

One insight garnered from my interviews with BC Parks operations management staff was that BC Parks' employees in Victoria, BC, who are disconnected from and unfamiliar with

the local context of the region, make operational budget decisions for the North Coast Skeena Region. However, this issue was not discussed by planning staff and did not apply to park planning. This finding of a centre shaping the periphery has been reported in studies on other topics. For example, Hutton (1997), Martin (2013), and Vernon (2007) discuss how decisions are made by Southern BC for Northern BC in BC's forestry sector, despite the livelihoods and economies of these two areas being vastly different. Hutton (1997) characterizes the power struggles and conflict that result from this asymmetrical and dichotomous spatial decision-making framework as a "dominant, industrialized, and metropolitan 'core' [i.e., Vancouver and Victoria]" (p. 69) exercising its power over the natural resources of "a vast, underdeveloped 'periphery' [Northern BC]" (p. 69). This asymmetry in decision-making is largely defined by the metropole's "command-and-control" (Martin, 2013, p. 112) functions over the periphery, where Southern BC enjoys a privileged position as the primary decision-maker for the rest of the province. The forestry sector in Northern BC has responded to its dependence and vulnerability from the imbalanced power relationship by maintaining local control over forest products using community forestry models and community-company relationships (Kathrin, 2019; Martin, 2008). Some BC Parks operations management staff explained that it would be ideal for the regional operations teams to make their own decisions, as they are more familiar with the areas being managed. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that if budgets for the area continue to be made by headquarters office in Victoria, there must be further consideration of the diverse context of working in Northwestern BC. Therefore, one recommendation would be that BC Parks develop a shared decision-making process for creating operational budgets, which allows regional operations employees to have their thoughts and opinions captured in budgetary decisions for their areas. A second recommendation emerging from BC Parks participants

transcripts would be that BC Parks hire Indigenous Relations specialists within the regions, to assist BC Parks regional planners and operations staff with consultation, engagement and relationship-building with First Nations in their areas.

Since this research took place, BC Parks' North Coast Skeena Region has reorganized to amalgamate with Recreation Sites and Trails BC. The region has split into a Strategic Priorities team, which is for both the North Coast Skeena region and the Omineca-Peace region, and an Operations team, which includes all of the operational staff for both BC Parks and Recreation Sites and Trails BC. The Operations team is still for the North Coast Skeena Region, and there is an equivalent Operations team in the Omineca-Peace Region. The Planners and Conservation Specialists are now in the Strategic Priorities team and there is a Senior Indigenous Relations Advisor on that team. There is an additional Indigenous Relations Advisor assigned to the Operations team (N. White, personal communication, February 12, 2025). These changes are still underway and the Indigenous Relations positions are not yet up and running, so, it is unclear whether the hiring of new Indigenous Relations staff will focus on policy or engagement and consultation with First Nations (or both).

BC Parks' employees also expressed a desire for more Indigenous representation both within the North Coast Skeena region and throughout the agency. Previous literature has identified socio-cultural factors, discrimination, and Whiteness as the primary reasons for the lack of diversity in government parks (Scott & Lee, 2018; Den Hoed & Parks, 2008). Within North America, parks have been portrayed as White spaces (Baldwin et al., 2011; Carlson & Clapperton, 2012; Finney, 2014); and the history of colonization in North America has led to the common understanding that exploring and visiting parks is a White activity (Braun, 2003). Floyd and Stodolska (2014) claim that the differences in leisure activities and outdoor recreation

among ethnic groups stem from different cultural norms, value systems, and socialization practices. In this way, socio-cultural factors both facilitate and constrain participation in different recreation and leisure activities. Discrimination by other visitors is cited as the most common form of mistreatment experienced by Black, Indigenous and other racialized people in parks, which ranges from hostile stares to physical attacks (Sharaievska et al., 2014; Scott & Lee, 2018; Stanfield McCrown, 2013; Floyd & Stoldolska, 2019). Racialized people have also expressed that they have been the victims of discrimination from park employees (Fernandez & Witt, 2013).

Austin (1997) found in his study on Black people in national parks that Black people often feel unwelcome, unsettled, out-of-place, and awkward in national parks and remain on their guard. He explained that a 'White racial frame' makes it intimidating for Black, Indigenous and other racialized people to participate in outdoor activities, especially in parks. Fernandez and Witt (2013) note that park staff may be inattentive to the needs and interests of racialized people. This overlaps with Freire's (1985) argument that: "The dominant ideology which serves the interests of the socially powerful [White settlers] makes the world opaque to us" (p. 18). Similarly, Sara Ahmed (2017) argued that White spaces make non-White bodies feel uncomfortable, exposed, visible, and different. She refers to the norms and rules of institutionalized Whiteness as a "sea of whiteness" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 159) that restricts what Black, Indigenous and other racialized people can perceive and do in those spaces. Put yet another way, Edward Said (1991) articulated that the institutional discourses that structure and maintain the dominant, Western ideology in White-settler society have impaired the ability to think about the racialized, marginalized 'other.' These findings align with literature by leisure, feminist and critical race scholars (Ahmed, 2017; Beames et al., 2019; Braun, 2003; Harrison,

2013; hooks, 2000; Mills, 2024). By drawing attention to Whiteness and White privilege, these scholars have challenged normative ideas about a White racial identity as neutral, and they instead recognize that Whiteness “operates as a force in actualizing and extending social inequality through everyday modes of exclusion” (Harrison, 2013, p. 319). Taking stock of this body of research and my discussions with BC Parks employees, I recommend that BC Parks hire more Black, Indigenous and other racialized people(s) in the agency to increase the diversity of their workforce and help facilitate work with Indigenous Peoples and First Nations.

Academic literature on park management has identified inadequate and rushed consultation processes with Indigenous Peoples by park agencies in Canada (Johnston & Mason, 2020; Spielmann & Unger, 2000). BC Parks employees recommended improving consultative training to meet the legislative changes set forth by DRIPA, which require more frequent and meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples throughout the province. Section Three of DRIPA (2019) mandates that the province must “take all measures necessary” to bring its “... laws, policies and practices into alignment with the UN Declaration in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples.” This legislation necessitates that consultative training be revised to provide employees with the tools and resources they need to consult with Indigenous Peoples appropriately and effectively (United Nations, 2007).

Scholarship on settler colonialism tells us that government parks are stolen Indigenous lands (Braun, 2002; Mason, 2014, 2021; Spence, 1999), and that the dispossession of these lands has damaged Indigenous Peoples’ relationships to their territories (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wolfe, 1999). The ability of Indigenous Peoples to preserve their connection to their territories is now dependent on developing positive relationships with government agencies (Baldwin et al., 2011; Erickson, 2020; Cruikshank, 2005; Lowan-Trudeau, 2021). Therefore, in responding to DRIPA

(2019) and calls for social justice by decolonial scholars (Smith, 2021; Tuck & Yang, 2016; Tuck et al., 2014), government parks and their employees have an obligation to help support and re-establish Indigenous Peoples' relationships with their lands (Tebrakunna Country & Lee, 2019). I recommend that BC Parks update their training policies and programming to train employees to have a more thorough understanding of how to facilitate the various regional engagement agreements and consultation for statutory decision-making with First Nations, so that employees are knowledgeable in these areas before meeting with First Nations. By revising its consultation training, BC Parks can implement the legislative requirements of DRIPA (2019) and "support the affirmation of, and develop relationships with, Indigenous governing bodies" (Section 2).

Both participant groups expressed their desire for more Indigenous-led training opportunities in First Nations territories. This finding aligns with McKeon (2012), who found that Indigenous-led training and education are important for environmental practice because Indigenous teachings are land-based, centred on a spiritual connection, and require care and responsibility for relationships. She claimed that environmental education programs "...should be designed and delivered with and by Indigenous peoples, using Indigenous worldview as method and content" (p. 133). Two-eyed seeing theorists have stressed the importance of learning from Indigenous teachings to better understand TEK, culture and history, as Indigenous ways of knowing are best taught by Indigenous experts and Knowledge Holders (Arsenault et al., 2018; Desmarchelier, 2016; Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012; Nelson & Shilling, 2018; Sha, 2021).

Some BC Parks employees indicated that creating a mentorship program would be beneficial to help retain information about First Nations in the agency after employees leave or retire. Many other Canadian park agencies have implemented mentorship programs to prevent

the loss of information in their departments. For example, Parks Canada has a mentorship program for its employees to engage in new areas of work and pass down information from senior employees (Culverson, 2002); Alberta Parks has a mentorship program for new park rangers (Alberta Parks, 2024); Ontario Parks has a mentorship program for parks personnel to translate information from senior employees to new hires (Government of Ontario, 2024); and Yukon Parks has a mentorship program to ensure that knowledge about locations, guides, and sustainable tourism operations in their regions are passed down to its employees (De la Barre, 2009). Research has found that mentorship programs can be employed in park agencies to increase the diversity of a workforce and the perception of inclusiveness in an organization through purposeful recruitment, hiring, and training practices that foster a positive attitude towards diversity (Allison & Hibbler, 2004; Ebron et al., 2011; Roberts & Outley, 2002). Hence, a mentorship program could help support BC Parks with hiring more Black, Indigenous and other racialized people. Mentoring can also help to communicate job-related skills and to ensure positive and continued relationships with interested parties and Indigenous rightsholders (Riley et al., 1998; Bedini et al., 2000; Roberts & Outley, 2002). Several BC Parks participants noted that the relationships senior employees have built with First Nations can be jeopardized and damaged by having to ‘start over’ with newly hired staff. Establishing a mentorship program in BC Parks could help ensure that the relationships employees have with First Nations are not lost in staff turnovers.

Gitksan First Nation members’ discussions of park operations management and consultation focussed on increasing communication, building relationships, and improving BC Parks’ understanding of their laws, culture and traditions. Literature on Indigenous involvement in park management has outlined that cultural assimilation, colonialism, and a lack of trust in

government impact government employees' work and relationships with First Nations (Cook, 2020; Wheeler et al., 2020). The results of my study supported these findings. Both participant groups agreed that lack of trust is a major social barrier in park planning and operations management where the relationship with a First Nation is poor or underdeveloped. Many Gitksan First Nation participants explained that sharing of TEK relies on trust, therefore, working towards better relationships are necessary. Gitksan First Nation participants explained that this is best done through increasing cultural awareness within the agency and educating employees on settler colonialism and Indigenous history. BC Parks employees explained that they have taken part in informal training experiences on the topics of cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, cultural heritage information, colonialism, the residential school system, diversity and inclusion, partner engagement, and First Nations' perspectives. However, the employees explained that only the cultural awareness workshops were mandatory. The TRC Calls to Action (2015a) and the UN Declaration (2007) both specify that government agencies have a responsibility to educate and train their employees about the history and impacts of residential schools, and colonial history more generally. Additionally, decolonial scholars, Tuck and Gorlewski (2016) argue that education on Indigenous culture and history should be integrated into the education platforms of institutional spaces to dismantle settler colonialism. Rashkow (2014) highlights the importance of place-based understandings of Indigenous history in parks. She explains that understanding the history of colonialism in the place that one works and lives is integral to changing attitudes and promoting actions to support Indigenous Peoples. Without understanding the context of Indigenous lived experiences and colonialism, parks employees are unable to have an improved understanding of the local impacts of colonization (Rashkow, 2014). A recommendation derived from these findings is for BC Parks to implement more mandatory

training for employees on settler colonialism and Indigenous history that focusses on regionally specific content and hire Indigenous Peoples within the regions to assist with this training.

Johnston and Mason (2020) and Spielmann and Unger (2000) both found that parks employees have a limited understanding of Indigenous heritage and culture in the parks in which they work. Additionally, Aquash's (2013) study found that the Canadian public has remained largely uninformed and unaware of Indigenous history due to the failure of contemporary educational system practices and curriculum to "teach, explain, and acknowledge First Nation realities" (p. 129). My conversations with BC Parks participants echoed these findings, further supporting my recommendation for more mandatory training on Indigenous history. BC Parks' employees noted both staff capacity and working across large geographic areas as limiting their ability to learn the cultural history of the many parks they work in and manage. Due to the lack of training in this area, employees indicated that they learn cultural history through their work with First Nations and through cultural heritage assessments or archaeological studies in parks. A recommendation that surfaces here concerns BC Parks' cultural heritage assessments and archaeological studies and the potential of these reports to be shared with staff to increase their knowledge of First Nations history (if, of course, deemed permissible by the participating First Nations). However, archaeological reports are protected by the Archaeological Branch, and employees are often unable to share them with other staff members (N. White, personal communication, January 3, 2025). It seems that further discussion between BC Parks, the Archaeological Branch, and First Nations would be helpful in this respect. McCormack's (2017) archaeological work on the cultural use of Northeastern Alberta by Indigenous Peoples supports this recommendation. She underlines that without utilizing archaeological investigations, which can identify the traditional use of areas by First Nations, projects for development are often

approved based on incomplete information about Indigenous land use and meanings. She explains that it is not only a failure to consult with First Nations that contributes to such errors, but also a failure to employ archaeological investigations. Her study stresses the importance of archaeological assessments in understanding First Nations history.

Previous literature on Indigenous perspectives has demonstrated that although each Indigenous community has its own distinct cultural protocols, laws and traditions, overarching ideas of reciprocity, kindness, and respect are shared among them (Bear, 2000; Cajete, 2004; Castellano, 2000; Kimmerer, 2021; McKeon, 2012). BC Parks can work with First Nations in more culturally appropriate and respectful ways by becoming educated on the individual cultural protocols of First Nations. Gitxsan First Nation members emphasized the importance of parks employees learning their laws, culture and history, advising that having this information will help BC Parks improve engagement with their First Nation and communities. They stressed that becoming culturally informed about each First Nation's specific practices, and implementing these in meetings as a sign of respect can help build relationships and trust with First Nations. The Gitxsan First Nation participants discussed their tradition of bringing food to meetings, as this symbolizes reciprocity and thoughtfulness. Gitxsan First Nation members also highlighted two laws that impact their relationship with BC government—the 'no trespass' and 'no sport fishing' laws. They explained that because BC government continues to issue fishing licenses that allow recreational anglers to trespass into their Territory and sport fish in BC Parks, this compromises their traditional fishing holes (Anaat).

First Nations sustenance harvesting activities, such as hunting, trapping, fishing, and collecting medicinal plants, have long been a contested area in park management. Cultural use of parks was prohibited from 1884 to 1951 (Mason, 2021). Binnema and Niemi (2006) and Mason

(2021) outline how the federal government enacted hunting and fishing policies in the 19th century when parks were first created to restrict Indigenous Peoples onto reserves and ban Indigenous use of parklands. Indigenous Peoples were excluded from parks in the interests of game conservation, sport hunting, tourism, and assimilation policies, to ensure that national parks could become “uninhabited wilderness” (Binnema & Niemi, 2006, p. 724) for tourists and visitors.

Despite the development of Treaties, land claims, and Aboriginal rights and title across Canada, which have guaranteed hunting and fishing rights for First Nations, many government agencies still do not value or protect these rights. Consequently, conflict persists between Indigenous Peoples and government officials over the Indigenous right to hunt and fish on traditional lands (McKenna, 2021; Minke-Martin, 2020; The Canadian Press, 2024). For example, Indigenous groups have recently criticized Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) for the "gross mismanagement" of aquaculture in BC (CBC News, 2024). In 2021, Kekinusuqs, president of Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council, claimed DFO’s current fishing quotas only offer of a minimal number of fish, “...they’re giving more fish to the sport fisherman, and to the other commercial fishermen...even when there’s excess, they don’t think about giving it to the First Nations—they give it to the other sectors. It just isn’t fair” (Auger, 2021). In 2024, the Heiltsuk First Nation filed a lawsuit in BC Supreme Court against the Attorney General of Canada due to the DFO’s 2022 management plan for Pacific herring on the central coast, which closed the First Nation’s commercial fishery (The Canadian Press, 2024). It was only a few years ago that Heiltsuk resolved a claim against the Government of Canada over similar issues (The Canadian Press, 2024). Indigenous Foundations (2009) at the University of British Columbia claim that Indigenous Peoples are not ‘stakeholders’ in fisheries—they have conducted their traditional

fisheries since time immemorial, and Indigenous harvesting practices have rights under Canadian law. For thousands of years, Indigenous communities successfully managed the fishery without the help of the Canadian state (Indigenous Foundations, 2009). Dr. Josh Reid, a University of Washington historian and member of the Snohomish Tribe, states that when he sees disputes over Indigenous fishing rights, he sees the legacies of settler colonialism (Braun, 2022).

All BC Parks in Gitxsan First Nation Territory allow visitors to fish, and some of the parks allow hunting as well (i.e., Swan Lake Kispiox River Park; Babine River Corridor Park; and Sustut Park). This is a source of conflict, as under Gitxsan First Nation's Ayook (law), visitors are prohibited from trespassing onto the Laxyip (Territory) without permission from the appropriate Sim'ooget (Chief), and sport fishing in the Laxyip is illegal. These laws are in place to protect their resources for future generations (Roy, Gitanmaax, Chief; Mia, Glen Vowell, Chief). Gitxsan First Nation members hope to maintain healthy fish and wildlife populations in their Territory to ensure the futurity of their lands, people and culture. However, BC Parks has not recognized or supported Gitxsan First Nation's law in their own regulations. For First Nations, hunting and fishing rights can be seen as equivalent to human rights, as their cultural sustenance practices are integral to their identity and culture (Simon, 2009). Nonetheless, when fish and wildlife populations are threatened by non-Indigenous tourists, the First Nation's ability to sustain their cultural practices and steward their own resources is greatly impacted. While BC Parks does not regulate fishing and hunting—as these activities are managed under the Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship's Wildlife Act, and salmon are managed by DFO—in consideration of these findings, I do recommend that BC Parks ban sport fishing as an allowable activity within parks in Gitxsan First Nation Territory. For BC Parks and other ministries and agencies in BC to meet the legislative requirements of DRIPA, there must be

greater appreciation for Indigenous laws and culture. Section Seven of DRIPA (2019) states that the province must “enter into agreements with... Indigenous governments... to exercise statutory decision-making authority together.” Therefore, Gitxsan First Nation’s laws should be respected and applied alongside provincial laws and regulations in parks.

TEK Inclusion

Academic literature has shown that government agencies lack the appropriate resources, tools and frameworks for working with Indigenous Peoples and integrating TEK (Cvitanovic et al., 2016; Devin & Doberstein, 2004; Fabian et al., 2019; Houde, 2007; Lemieux et al., 2018; Wheeler et al., 2020). BC Parks participants stated that the policies and engagement agreements that guide their work with specific First Nations vary greatly, and that this discrepancy can pose difficulty for working with First Nations, because of the learning required to understand and follow the different engagement agreements and their corresponding approaches. This finding resonates with Cook’s (2020) study on Parks Canada and Ontario Parks, which found that government employees struggle to work with First Nations when there are inconsistent policies and rules for engagement. Logic might yield a simple solution: agencies should have a consistent approach in rules and policies for working with Indigenous Peoples. However, while it might seem helpful for BC Parks employees to have standard policies and guidelines for working with First Nations, each First Nation has its own distinct laws, culture, history, language, and priorities for park management plans (Moore, 2020; Shaw, 2012; Spielmann & Unger, 2000; Wildcat & Voth, 2023). Thus, having a single approach for engagement may not be appropriate.

Indigenous Peoples in BC are “heterogeneous, vast and diverse” (Rebonne, 2024, p. 64). Rebbonne (2024) argues in her master’s thesis on Indigenous engagement and partnership in Canada that Indigenous communities must be treated as individuals because their histories and

cultures are unique. She claims that as "...a best practice towards decolonization and reconciliation, organizations can ask Indigenous communities what they need help with or how they can support them, with no strings attached" (p. 64). BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region works with a wide variety of unique First Nations. For this reason, a one-size-fits-all approach cannot properly address the intricacy of each Indigenous community. While I do believe that having different engagement agreements for each individual First Nation is appropriate, these engagement agreements should be designed in conversation with Indigenous communities to reflect their preferred approach to engagement and individual priorities in park planning and management. Furthermore, BC Parks employees must have in-depth, focussed training on each engagement agreement to make sure that employees have a thorough understanding of them before they are prepared to utilize and follow these agreements in meetings with First Nations.

Previous research has found that TEK is used less than WSK in park planning and management, and structural and cultural barriers impede the use of TEK (Kadykalo et al., 2021; Lemieux et al., 2018). BC Parks participants associated WSK with neutrality, as the normative knowledge system, and a 'neutral place to start' (Theresa, Planning Team) in park planning. They underlined that WSK is the primary knowledge system for informed decision-making, and TEK is included when it is agreed upon at the 'community level' (Casey, Operations) and when it isn't too contentious, sensitive, or subjective. If TEK is agreed upon at the community level, or by a group of Chiefs and Elders, it is more likely to be utilized, as it is considered more reliable. The employees also emphasized that TEK has more utility when WSK confirms it. My findings concur with Houde's (2007) work, which found that TEK is more valuable for park managers when WSK supports and complements it. These findings demonstrate that WSK is used as a basis for considering whether TEK is adopted into park management planning. By using WSK to

evaluate TEK, park managers fail to appreciate “other” (Said, 1991) ways of knowing and incorporate new and important ideas into park management plans. In environmental science and protected area management, TEK is often othered and seen as less reliable compared to WSK. This assumption upholds colonialist ideas, reinforces inequalities in society and prevents the integration of different ways of knowing into scientific discourse and park management planning. Using Western thought as the ideal, or archetype, for rationality devalues and unfairly represents knowledge from other places and cultures.

Many scholars have criticized the neutrality and objectivity of WSK. For example, Dusek (2006) argues that scientific theories or ‘facts’ are simply “collective representations” (p. 165) that develop in group structures as “social processes of consensus and knowledge dissemination” (p. 174). WSK is commonly thought of as universal, rational and superior when compared with non-Western or Indigenous Knowledges, which are assumed to be primitive, local, irrational and inferior (Dusek, 2006). Those who proclaim the universality of science adhere to the idea that scientific laws (e.g. laws of thermodynamics, $E = mc^2$, etc.) are logically, spatially, temporally and geographically applicable, and infer that other forms of knowledge cannot provide this degree of certainty in their application. However, WSK is not universal or superior in its rationality, and WSK is not applicable in a non-Western context (Dusek, 2006). The professed confidence in and widespread affirmation of Western science’s superiority, the universal agreement on the applications of WSK, and its far-reaching use in laboratory and field settings around the world, has caused it to become a sort of widespread local knowledge (Dusek, 2006). However, being a branch of knowledge native to Western society, it is like any other local knowledge and is not certain to be any more true or reliable than other knowledge systems (El-Hani & Souza de Ferreira Bandeira, 2008). Scientific knowledge has proven to be mutable and

fallible (Wesselius, 2014). This can be verified when looking at claims to Truth that science has declared in the past, such as: expanding Earth theory (disproven by plate tectonics) (Kragh & Kragh, 2016), Einstein's static universe (cosmology, disproved by Hubble's relation between redshift and distance) (Krauss, 2015), planet Vulcan (Baum & Sheehan, 2013), luminiferous aether (disproven by diffraction and Einstein's theory of special relativity) (Rubik & Jabs, 2018), Fleischmann-Pons nuclear fusion (Tcvetkov, 2022), phrenology (Lyons, 1998), etc.

Feminist scholars Scott (1991), Rosaldo (1980), and Haraway (1988) also criticized the neutrality of WSK. These scholars argue that no knowledge system is complete or completely 'true,' explaining that an appreciation for cross-cultural understandings is necessary to better understand the world. Haraway (1988) refers to this cross-cultural understanding as "situated knowledges" (p. 581). She argues for knowledges of location, positioning and situating, "...where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims" (p. 589). While these authors take different approaches, they all assert that knowledge and experience is subjective, and that this subjectivity should be endorsed when documenting history and science. Considering the literature outlined above, I recommend that BC Parks employees appreciate and value TEK in the same way that they do WSK. BC Parks employees should be open to other ways of knowing to further integrate TEK into their work.

BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region has a small staff, and employees must span their resources over a vast landscape. Cvitanovic et al. (2016) showed that cultural differences between TEK and WSK, timeframes, insufficient resources, poor guidelines, policies and program planning, and geographic isolation of Indigenous communities all contributed to the lack of TEK in park management. Cook (2020) found that in any protected area, there can be up to eight parks assigned to a single planner covering vast areas of isolated communities. These

findings were reflected in my interviews, wherein BC Parks employees claimed that a single planner is often working on five or six park management plans at a time in vast, isolated areas, with various Indigenous communities that require the use of several different engagement agreements. The employees explained that their ability to integrate TEK is influenced by staff and funding capacity, as these limit the ability of staff to build relationships and trust within communities. In the interviews, employees noted that park management plans can take up to 11 years to develop and that there is a lack of training and resources for utilizing TEK in park management plans.

Both participant groups expressed that a great deal of TEK has been lost within many communities, due to settler colonialism and the residential school system. This depletion of communities' TEK constitutes yet another impediment to its access and inclusion in park planning and operations management. This finding aligns with Anishinaabe lawyer and decolonial scholar, LaPorte's (2023) research on the impacts of colonization and genocide on TEK. LaPorte (2023) explains that settler colonial violence intentionally sought out to systematically destroy Indigenous Knowledges. She states that Indigenous ways of knowing and being were viewed by settlers as "inferior, savage, primitive, or uncivilized," (p. 220) and notes that in many spaces these ideas remain prevalent today. Settler colonial policies have resulted in: "distrust; historical trauma; loss of language, culture, and tradition; loss of generations; loss of land; and loss of traditional food" (Laporte, 2023, p. 216). Moreover, LaPorte (2023) found that TEK is lost and fragmented in communities due to the ongoing efforts of colonial governments to eradicate Indigenous Peoples. Thus, the continuance of TEK despite being continually under threat is a direct result of the resilience of community members who have resisted the impacts of genocide (LaPorte, 2023). Laporte (2023) stresses that TEK should not be used if actions

towards decolonization are absent, as it is the shared responsibility of settlers to address the impact of settler-violence on Indigenous communities.

BC Parks planning staff stated that TEK is informally applied in park planning through the full involvement of First Nations in co-writing park management plans, integrating their TEK into park management plans where First Nations deem it is appropriate to do so, co-designing the park planning process with First Nations, integrating TEK into background studies (e.g., cultural heritage studies), jointly-led background studies, or documents that inform the management direction and management objectives of a park, and through First Nations leading or jointly-leading community meetings and public meetings (N. White, personal communication, February 5, 2025). Park management plans are often collaboratively written with First Nations and TEK is threaded throughout these documents as well as any other supporting documents for the management plan. BC Parks operations staff explained that scientific studies, park names, and park signage were the three primary ways in which TEK had been formally included in park operations. Other formal ways TEK is integrated in park planning and operations management occurs through working with the First Nation Guardian Programs when in place with First Nations to coordinate patrols and visits, First Nation cultural camps in parks, joint cultural projects funded by BC Parks Licence Plate Program or Indigenous Funding Envelope, joint park management boards (e.g., Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park and Tatshenshini-Alsek Park), Collaborative Management Agreement meetings to discuss operations, management and planning, and contracts to support direct operations of parks with First Nation employees (e.g., Khutzymateen Park and Tatshenshini-Alsek Park (N. White, personal communication, February 5, 2025). Nevertheless, even these positive, inclusive efforts can be problematic. Employees

identified issues around territorial overlap and sensitive treaty negotiations that hinder the incorporation of TEK in signage, parks names and park management plans.

In Northwestern BC, many First Nations territories are overlapping, and it can be difficult to ascertain where exactly the borders are on First Nations maps. BC Parks staff have access to spatial data to identify where exactly First Nation-identified consultative areas are located, however, First Nations often have their own maps, with different levels of governance within their First Nation's defined boundaries. For example, a First Nation may have one map at the hereditary level of governance, and another map at the First Nation Council, community, or band level of governance, with discrepancies regarding territory boundaries and overlap (Donald, Kipiox). Additionally, a First Nation may have ongoing territorial disputes with another, bordering or overlapping First Nation. This fact alone can cause serious complications. Although it is extremely important to implement signage and showcase the stories, histories, and languages of First Nations, even signage placement and artwork can become a delicate and incendiary matter. Theresa (Planning) explained: "if there are disputes about territory due to asserted overlaps, the signage projects can become a serious point of contention. Making a territorial acknowledgement can be very difficult and may have to be generalized to avoid causing offence." As I highlighted in my findings, placing a sign on the wrong First Nation's territory can signify laying claim to a territory and cause unintended conflict and damaged relationships. A recommendation arising from these findings is that thorough consultations be undertaken with Chiefs and Elders of First Nations and their bordering First Nations in the early stages of signage projects, in order to ensure consensus and obviate potential disputes over design, content and placement of signs. This recommendation is supported by Beck's (2021) work on land acknowledgements and park interpretation. He states that signage projects with First Nations are

a collaborative process which should involve consulting with all local Indigenous communities that have “ties to the land” (p. 35), to avoid inaccurate and offensive messages in signs. He explains that collaboration with First Nations in signage projects provides an excellent opportunity for relationship building and learning for Parks employees, which can instill a commitment to further action. The UN Declaration (2007) demands that “governments acknowledge First Nations land” (p. 3), however, this must be done appropriately and respectfully. Two-eyed seeing theorists have identified signage projects as a powerful tool for improving government and public understandings about Indigenous culture, history and worldviews (Bartlett et al., 2012; Whiting et al., 2018; Moorman et al., 2021).

Another insight I gained from this research is that most First Nations in Northwestern BC are in the final stages of the BC Treaty Commission process. This endeavour to finalize treaties brings with it its own set of challenges, with respect to involving these First Nations in integrating their TEK in park management plans. BC Parks employees explained that some First Nations have longstanding rivalries and have no desire to work with government until they have completed their treaties and resolved their territorial overlaps. They also noted that the areas where they work will often have five or six overlapping First Nations territories. In these complex cases of territorial overlap, uncertainty, and contention, BC Parks employees claimed they are unable to complete management plans. Unfortunately, until land claims and treaties have been finalized, there is little BC Parks can do in these situations aside from taking available opportunities to collaborate with First Nations and continuing to address their priorities and interests in park management plans, navigating these challenges the best they can.

Several of the Gitksan First Nation participants noted that they would not want to share their TEK with BC Parks. Therefore, it is important to discuss the ethical implications and

responsibilities of government agencies when TEK is shared or withheld. If the Indigenous Peoples in a community do not want to share their TEK, this must be respected. If TEK is shared, there are a set of ethical responsibilities related to the inclusion, representation, storage, and management of TEK data. First, TEK must only be included by government agencies in the ways which are considered to be appropriate by the Indigenous Peoples and communities that are disclosing their TEK. Drawing on the work of Smith (2021) and Wilson (2008), government agencies have an ethical obligation to maintain respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relationships with Indigenous Peoples disclosing their TEK. Additionally, Harris and Wasilewski (2004) explain that the four “R’s” of Indigeneity” should be adopted when utilizing TEK: relationship is the kinship obligation; responsibility is the community obligation; reciprocity is the cyclical obligation; and redistribution is the sharing obligation. Other scholarship has underlined the importance of ongoing community engagement with Northern and Indigenous communities sharing their TEK (Hayward et al., 2021, 2021b; Mashford-Pringle & Pavagadhi, 2020; Mead et al., 1994; Tondu et al., 2014). The Assembly of First Nations (2016) provides a valuable guide for how TEK should be incorporated, stored, managed, and shared. Another valuable resource is the First Nations Information Governance Centre’s course on Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP Principles). I recommend for government employees incorporating TEK to review the Assembly of First Nations (2016) ethics guide on TEK and take the First Nations Information Governance Centre’s OCAP course. The OCAP course outlines ethical criteria relating to how Indigenous information such as TEK must be “collected, stored, interpreted, protected, used and shared” (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2022, para. 3). I also recommend that when working with Indigenous communities, as well as when

TEK is included, that a respectful and reciprocal relationship and ongoing communication is maintained.

Reconciliation

A central finding from my project was that reconciliation is difficult to define, measure and achieve. It is also defined differently by each First Nation. Gitxsan First Nation members expressed that each Indigenous community has different interpretations and values regarding what reconciliation in parks means to them. These findings complement the work of Finegan (2018) and Cornthassel (2009), who both argued that definitions of reconciliation vary, as reconciliation is grounded in community-based forms of justice. These authors found that reconciliation must entail meaningful, community-centred, and community-driven healing processes. BC Parks participants indicated that although the TRC Calls to Action (2015a) and DRIPA (2019) are adopted into agency policy, no formal approach to reconciliation exists, which makes it difficult to measure and achieve. To provide more direction in meeting reconciliatory goals, the BC Parks participants recommended creating a checklist or directive summary for reconciliation and documenting the principles and priorities outlined by First Nations for achieving reconciliation. This would entail BC Parks representatives meeting with First Nations in their respective areas for the purpose of clarifying how they define reconciliation and how they envision working together toward reconciliation, then documenting this information to share with other employees.

Gitxsan First Nation members and BC Parks employees both stressed the importance of meaningful engagement and territorial acknowledgements for working towards reconciliation. The TRC Calls to Action (2015a) commemoration principle 79 demands that government institutions acknowledge and include the cultural history of First Nations. Therefore, BC Parks

should continue to work with First Nations to showcase Indigenous history in signage when and where it is possible and appropriate. Garcia Chumash's "Guide to Indigenous Land and Territorial Acknowledgements For Cultural Institutions" (2018) defines land acknowledgements as recognizing "the Indigenous peoples who have been dispossessed from the homelands and territories upon which an institution was built and currently occupies and operates in" (p.1). She notes that this can be complex for First Nations because they may no longer have ancestral ties to government lands that they used to reside in due to "dispossession and displacement through colonization" (Garcia Chumash, 2018, p. 2). Finegan (2018) claims land acknowledgements are most meaningful when they name the relevant Indigenous communities, recognize their continued presence and "explicitly state the problematic nature of the park's creation" (p. 15). Beck (2021) provides an example of a land acknowledgement from the Whitney Museum of American Art which contains these elements:

The Whitney Museum of American Art acknowledges its building at 99 Gansevoort Street [New York City] is built on unceded Indigenous lands, specifically the territory of the Lenape. As a museum of American art, the Whitney recognizes the continual displacement of Native people by the United States and is committed to working to dismantle the ongoing effects of this colonial legacy. (p.2)

LaPorte (2023) claims that land acknowledgments only "occasionally acknowledge the historical atrocities that occur, and almost always abrogate responsibility or complicity. They are rarely accompanied by an action. More specifically, land acknowledgments fail to give land back" (p. 217). I will discuss the Land Back movement later in this chapter, however, LaPorte's (2023) decolonial critique of land acknowledgements highlights the importance of dismantling settler colonialism. Lonetree (2012) explains that decolonizing and indigenizing parks "lies in

transforming these sites of colonial harm into sites of healing, and restoring community well-being” (p. 25). Thus, a starting point for such reconciliation is working with First Nations on creating land acknowledgements (Beck, 2021). I recommend that BC Parks implement territorial acknowledgements that follow this structure of naming the Indigenous communities, recognizing their continued presence, and stating the problematic nature of the park’s establishment. BC Parks must collaborate with Indigenous communities in sign development, and the wording of each sign will vary (and may change over time, so arranging a follow-up process after sign implementation is important). Nevertheless, this structure of naming provides meaningful recognition of the First Nation and the harms of land dispossession.

Scholarship on reconciliation in protected areas has stressed the significance of acknowledging colonial history in mobilizing social justice and working towards reconciliation with First Nations (Finegan, 2018; Nagy, 2012; Sandlos, 2014; Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013). The TRC (2015b) defined reconciliation as establishing a mutually respectful relationship with First Nations, noting that this involves “...awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior” (pp. 6-7). Both participant groups agreed that BC Parks employees must be educated in colonial history and have difficult and meaningful discussions about this history with First Nations to facilitate an informed awareness of the past and responsibility for the future. It is fundamentally important to understand how the past has affected the contemporary lived experiences of community members. Dennis (Operations Management) illustrated this well in his interview:

You go to a stewardship office and you’re going to sit down with the Nation, and you’re going to be flooded with the absolute wall of atrocities that have been done to the Nation.

And you're the White person with a government uniform, and you're going to have to be able to sit there and work through that and take that responsibility on now.

These findings accord with the work of Corntassel and Holder (2008), who explain that states must be accountable for the past wrongdoings and that governments often fall short of offering “meaningful avenues for rectifying ongoing injustices centred on land dispossession and self-determination” (p. 466). This is likely because government employees do not fully understand the past and present trauma experienced by Indigenous communities.

Another important piece of reconciliation is that it must go beyond tokenism, or “hollow, symbolic gestures” (Corntassel & Holder, 2008, p. 467). To put it briefly, tokenism is the practice of doing something at a minimal, symbolic level to mitigate criticism and give the appearance that people are being treated fairly. Government can exhibit tokenism when they consider that merely attending consultation meetings satisfies their reconciliatory obligations, however, simply showing up to consult and being there is not a sincere or active effort towards reconciliation and does not neutralize a history of wrongs (Corntassel & Holder, 2008). Rigby (2001), the Director of the Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies, refers to these symbolic gestures of tokenism as “cheap reconciliation” (p. 142). He argues that decolonization and restitution are paramount to reconciliation and needed to transform relations with Indigenous communities in “the way justice requires” (p. 64). Furthermore, my finding of the importance of understanding how the past affects the contemporary moment is supported by Finegan (2018), Snelgrove et al. (2014), and Tuck and Yang (2012), who asserted that due to the connections between land, sovereignty, and cultural retention, it is crucial to have difficult conversations and work through trauma to achieve reconciliation. Some BC Parks participants recommended that BC Parks develop formal training for BC Parks employees about the trauma of Indigenous

communities to become better educated on how to communicate and work with First Nations that express their intergenerational trauma.

A possible path to reconciliation within parks entails normalizing Indigenous presence (back) on the landscape by hosting Indigenous events or programs (Rebonne, 2024). Examples of this are hosting cultural and traditional activities in parks or creating spaces or developing infrastructure “for Indigenous people to connect or be themselves” (Rebonne, 2024, p. 62). Creating space and culturally appropriate opportunities for Indigenous Peoples, especially Indigenous youth, is a way to contribute to reconciliation, decolonization and self-determination efforts (Sutherland, 2021).

A large body of literature has studied the legacy of conservation policies, particularly the establishment of parks, that have contributed to the displacement of Indigenous Peoples in Canada (Binnema and Niema, 2006; Mason, 2014; Moola & Roth, 2019; Spence, 1999; Stevens, 2014; West et al., 2006). This literature highlights how conservation policies removed Indigenous Peoples from their homelands and forced them onto reserves for the creation of parks and criminalized the cultural and sustenance activities of First Nations within parks (Stevens & De Lacy, 1997; West et al., 2006). Six Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders reflected on the repression of their cultural practices in parks and their inability to maintain connections to the land that they once lived on because of park creation and restrictive management policies. The Gitxsan First Nation participants recounted that they had never been contacted by BC Parks’ employees or involved in any of BC Parks programs or projects, and several Chiefs and Elders asserted that their ongoing exclusion in park management is a historical extension of these colonial policies. These findings illustrate the need for BC Parks employees to increase their outreach and engagement with Indigenous communities and build more relationships with First

Nations in their areas, as reconciliation must be demonstrated through action (Corntassel, 2009; Finegan, 2018; Lonetree, 2012; National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, University of Manitoba, 2024).

Gitxsan First Nation participants explained that maintaining communication and building relationships with First Nations communities are essential for reconciliation. They also stressed the importance of being kind, sincere, and respectful in meetings. Gitxsan Chiefs and Elders recommended that BC Parks form more partnerships and use more co-management approaches in parks within their Territory to address unequal power relations and achieve reconciliation. BC Parks employees also emphasized partnerships, collaboration, and co-management approaches with First Nations as important strategies for reconciliation. A recommendation that can be drawn from these findings for BC Parks is to work with First Nations at the community level and to create flexible co-management arrangements in parks that work within the interests and capacity of each community.

These findings contrast with the literature which has found that co-management approaches are not a strategy for reconciliation in parks due to their inability to integrate indigeneity into park governance (Berkes, 2009; Finegan, 2018; Langdon et al., 2010; Nadasdy, 1999). Berkes' (2009) research on cases of co-management over 20 years indicated that co-management fails to “look beyond government, toward public-private-civil society partnerships, as a way of dealing with the shortcomings of a single agency, top-down management” (p. 1692). Langdon and colleagues (2010) case study on co-management of parks with Indigenous Peoples in Parks Canada explained that in top-down processes for co-management by agencies, governments still hold the final authority for park management decisions. Hence, Langdon et al. (2010) claim that this approach does not always lead to partnership, and it is not the best way to

address issues cultivated by the eviction of sovereign Indigenous Peoples from their homelands. Finnegan's (2018) study analyzed reconciliation policies in Canada, Australia, and the United States to develop recommendations for achieving Indigenous reconciliation in protected areas. For Finnegan (2018), co-management "is not a vehicle for Indigenous Peoples to reclaim authority over their traditional territories, nor does it identify truth, acknowledge harm, or provide restorative justice" (p. 11). Further, he argues that co-management co-opts Indigenous Peoples into "existing settler-dominated government structures and processes" (p. 11). Nadasdy's (1999) study on the politics and power of TEK inclusion in resource and environmental management illustrates that because resource managers, rather than Indigenous Peoples, will be using the integrated TEK, the "project of knowledge integration actually serves to concentrate power in administrative centres, rather than in the hands of Aboriginal people" (p. 1). Lastly, Swerdfager and Armitage's (2023) study on co-management in Canadian fisheries and marine contexts explains that successful co-management in Canada has remained "the exception rather than the rule, and especially so in jurisdictions not covered by a comprehensive land claims agreement" (p. 1). The authors note that several institutional conditions can impede broader adoption of co-management approaches in Canada: antiquated and incomplete legislative arrangements; a co-management policy which fails to address Indigenous Peoples' expectations for co-governance; an absence of knowledge co-production systems and two-eyed seeing frameworks for decision-making; and financial and human resource capacity limitations (Swerdfager and Armitage, 2023).

Considering the arguments of these authors, BC Parks should be mindful about the inclusion of TEK and the top-down power dynamics which are sustained in co-management structures. One reason why participants in my study may have preferred co-management

approaches is due to the lack of capacity of both BC Parks and Gitxsan First Nation to establish other arrangements. However, co-management approaches have also been supported in literature on two-eyed seeing. Aikenhead and Michell (2011) argue that Indigenous and Western knowledge systems can be combined through co-management to meet a challenge or task at hand.

Parks Canada (2023) created a guide for Indigenous leadership in park management planning to inform and support “Indigenous governments as they engage with Parks Canada’s management planning process in its current form” (p. 1). This document outlines their collaborative approach to management planning, and it details various opportunities for Indigenous involvement in the park management planning process. Parks Canada created this guide to help facilitate the “shift away from colonial conservation strategies, and towards models and practices rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems, designed in accordance with Indigenous law, and developed through relationships forged in ethical space” (p. 1). The document was developed in recognition of their commitment to reconciliation and in adherence to the federal government’s UNDRIP Act (2021). I recommend that BC Parks develop a similar guide for First Nations, to better support Indigenous self-determination and leadership in park planning and management. Developing a guide that outlines BC Parks management planning process, and information on collaborative and co-management opportunities with First Nations, will make these opportunities for collaboration more accessible to First Nations.

Another approach to reconciliation and supporting Indigenous self-determination over lands is IPCAs. Townsend and Roth (2023) contend that IPCAs can be pathways for reconciliation if governments support IPCAs “in ways that are consistent with the recommendations of Indigenous leaders” (p. 1). This requires dismantling the barriers arising

from settler institutions and knowledge systems which impede IPCA establishment and Indigenous stewardship. They explain that if governments support IPCAs, Indigenous and decolonial futures can be advanced.

Self-determination

Gitxsan Chiefs and Elders and BC Parks employees agreed that First Nations should have more agency in governing parks within their respective territories. BC Parks participants often used self-determination and reconciliation interchangeably, and this was because the employees viewed increasing Indigenous self-determination as a key component of reconciliation. When discussing self-determination, BC Parks participants claimed that they would like to see more co-management frameworks in parks or have the ownership and management of some areas to be given (back) to First Nations. As many First Nations in the Northwest are nearing completion of their treaties with the BC Treaty Commission, and parks are subject to treaty negotiations, there were several BC Parks employees who indicated that they anticipate upcoming changes in legislation regarding park governance. They referred to these changes as pertaining to increasing Indigenous inclusion and expanding Indigenous governance over parklands. This is also evident in the ‘without prejudice’ statements found in BC Parks documents regarding future treaty negotiations. For example, the North Coast LRMP outlines that: “Products from the North Coast LRMP are without prejudice to First Nations and the Province with respect to land and resource management issues in future Treaty negotiations” (British Columbia Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, 2005, p. 22). The further inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in park management planning and the possibility of returning the governance of parks to First Nations denotes a progressive way forward in support of Indigenous self-determination. It is likely that these changes will be seen as treaties are finalized in the coming years.

A common statement made by Gitxsan First Nation participants was “we want our land back.” The Land Back movement is an Indigenous-led movement that advocates for the return of Indigenous lands to Indigenous Peoples. It is about restoring Indigenous sovereignty and stewardship over their ancestral lands and recognizing historical injustices (Kepkiewicz, 2020). The term “Land Back” originated with Indigenous artists and was popularized by social media and memes (Dhillon, 2020). This movement has been ongoing for decades but has gained momentum in recent years. In 2018, the movement received much attention and momentum after Aaron Tailfeathers, a member of the Kainai Tribe of the Blackfoot Confederacy of Canada, wrote Land Back in his Instagram post (Bender, 2022). In response, #LandBack rapidly became a hashtag on clothes, beadwork, and other art (Dhillon, 2020). In August 2020, the advocacy group, NDN Collective, launched landback.org with a LandBack Manifesto entitled “The Reclamation of Everything Stolen from the Original Peoples” (NDN Collective, 2020), which was followed by a campaign launch on Indigenous Peoples Day (i.e., a National holiday that takes place on October 14 in the United States and June 21 in Canada). The NDN Manifesto (2020) is a “meta political, organizing, and narrative framework for which Indigenous Peoples work toward collective liberation” (p.1) and it encompasses Indigenous land, language, ceremony, food, education, health, governance, medicine, and kinship relations. These developments in the Land Back movement brought the movement back into the public eye, challenging the Canadian state and private property regimes to give land back to First Nations (Kepkiewicz, 2020; DeLancey, 2023).

In DeLancey’s (2023) research on decolonizing the evaluation of Indigenous land-based programs, she writes from a settler perspective on what we can learn from the Land Back movement. She claims that the Land Back movement calls for the relinquishing of settler

colonial control over lands and the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty by “returning land and restoring Indigenous decision-making” (p. 179) on Indigenous lands. She states that the decolonization that is demanded by the Land Back movement necessitates that governments stop requiring Indigenous Peoples’ programs to demonstrate their validity through the constructs of WSK (DeLancey, 2023). This relates back to my earlier discussion on evaluating TEK based on WSK, and how this operates to devalue and discredit the rationality of TEK—which reinforces and endures the ongoing violence against Indigenous Peoples and their Knowledges. Scholars have also discussed how Land Back movements and increased representation on a landscape creates space for decolonization (Coulthard & Simpson, 2016; Ermine, 2007). In a recent case of the Land Back movement that is taking place within the North Coast Skeena Region, Wet’suwet’en First Nation land defenders have been seen in the media with Land Back signs protesting the Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline (Bellrichard & Barrera, 2020). Coastal GasLink’s pipeline is currently being constructed through Wet’suwet’en Territory, despite opposition from some Chiefs who claim that they never consented to the pipeline (Amnesty International, 2024).

I received varied responses from Gitxsan First Nation participants about how to increase self-determination and foster reconciliation. While some Gitxsan First Nation community members noted co-management agreements as the best way forward, others stressed territorial acknowledgements and Indigenous programs, and some wanted their land back. It is important to underscore the diversity of perspectives within one First Nation. Hence, circling back to my earlier discussion on engagement agreements, a one-dimensional, uniform approach by BC Parks to engaging with Indigenous Peoples or to increasing Indigenous self-determination and mobilizing reconciliation, is unable to capture the complexity of perspectives within one Indigenous territory. Community-level engagement is crucial to accurately understand and

document the varied interests of each First Nation community. It is also necessary to facilitate the community-based forms of justice that decolonization requires.

BC Parks participants explained that BC Parks programs for Indigenous inclusion aim to increase First Nations' autonomy over the land-base and in park decision-making. The Indigenous Guardian Shared Compliance and Enforcement Program is a good example of this, wherein First Nations are developing the program to manage important components of their culture (e.g., culturally significant areas, wildlife, marine habitat, etc.). As discussed in Chapter Four, this program trains and employs First Nation members to obtain and exercise the same legal authorities as BC Parks Rangers (British Columbia, 2022), which increases their power and control in governing and regulating activities within their territories. More programs such as this one would be beneficial for increasing Indigenous self-determination. Parks Canada also offers an Indigenous Guardian and Watchman program to support Indigenous land management and stewardship of their Territories (Parks Canada, 2024). This program provides training and career opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to work as equal partners with government to protect and manage land and resources. Reed and colleagues (2021) conducted a systematic review of peer-reviewed literature on Indigenous guardian and watchmen programs in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa-New Zealand, and the United States. They explored whether guardian approaches are representative of Indigenous approaches to environmental governance. They found that guardian programs do support Indigenous governance, as they can empower indigenous resistance to reconstitute power relationships. Several studies have used two-eyed seeing to analyze the role of Indigenous land guardians in monitoring fish, wildlife and resources on a landscape (Popp et al., 2020; Thompson et al., 2019; Tran et al., 2020). These studies all found that Indigenous guardian programs utilize TEK to create cohesive solutions in resource management and provide a

positive opportunity for relationship building and community-level participation in monitoring and management.

Both participant groups identified IPCAs as an important strategy for asserting self-determination in parks. Previous literature has described IPCAs as opportunities for “Indigenous Peoples to reclaim stewardship of their territories, create space for Indigenous resurgence and cultural revitalization, and transform approaches to protected areas in Canada” (Papadopoulos, 2021, p. vii). This new land designation, which is often implemented by Indigenous Peoples that act as the sole governing bodies but can also be created in partnership with provincial or federal government agencies, is a growing mechanism for asserting self-determination and ownership over Indigenous lands. IPCAs are managed and governed by the values, laws and culture of Indigenous Peoples and function to protect the lands within Indigenous territories and ensure the futurity of Indigenous land and culture. In their research on the Wanachis-hilth-hoo-is Tribal Park (Meares Island), Murray and Burrows (2017) found that IPCAs can have economic benefits for Indigenous communities that implement user fees for tourists and fishing/hunting guides that visit their park. IPCAs can also provide jobs in Indigenous communities by employing Indigenous Peoples to conduct their own outfitting and tours within the designated area. Community members can employ their land departments to monitor, regulate and oversee fisheries, wildlife, and vegetation within the protected area and manage biodiversity across the landscape (Tran et al., 2020).

An IPCA in Gitxsan First Nation Territory that was highlighted in many of my interviews with Chiefs and Elders is the Wilp Wii Litsxw Meziadin IPCA, which was designated by Gitanyow First Nation in 2021 adjacent to Hanna-Tintina Conservancy. When Gitxsan First Nation noticed that salmon populations in BC Parks Hanna-Tintina Conservancy were declining

and exploration activities in Strohn Creek and Meziadin Lake were increasing—an area not protected under the original management plan—the Hereditary Chiefs decided to designate the region an IPCA (Simmons, 2021). After waiting over five years for support from the provincial government in the face of their declining salmon stock, the Gitanyow independently forged ahead with new protections under traditional law and custom for 54,000 hectares of land and water, which were threatened by mining projects (Simmons, 2021). In 2023, Gitanyow created a park management plan for the IPCA (Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs and Hlimoo Sustainable Solutions, 2023). They are also developing partnerships with Gitanyow and Wilp-led businesses and have plans to build culturally significant infrastructure, including a long house building to host visitors and a climate monitoring centre (Make Way, 2024). BC Parks participants expressed that they expect more IPCAs to be created over the coming years in the Northwest region. IPCAs are a new form of conservation tool, and each IPCA is unique, however, IPCAs are not necessarily the same as a BC ‘Park’. Some of the IPCAs being established by First Nations may eventually be designated under provincial legislation (possibly the Park Act), but it is Ministry of Water, Lands and Natural Resource Stewardship that undertakes the land use planning processes with First Nations and works out the designation tool rather than BC Parks.

I recommend that BC Parks support First Nations with their IPCA designations in the ways that they can until IPCAs become recognized by the province, by working or partnering with them to build relationships. Once IPCAs receive official recognition from the province (and possible designation under the Ministry of Water, Lands and Natural Resource Stewardship’s Park Act), I recommend providing official recognition of IPCAs in maps, brochures, and resources for visitors and tourists to access online or in person. These publicly available materials should also outline the allowable activities and regulations in IPCAs, as well as the

laws, culture, history and protocols on First Nations lands. Providing these resources for tourists and visitors would increase the public's awareness of Indigenous laws and culture and would help build government-to-government relationships with First Nations by supporting their self-determination and ensuring the preservation of their lands, culture, laws, and way of life.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed my findings in relation to the literature and my two-eyed seeing theoretical lens. I found that settler colonialism, the residential school system, and assimilation policies have resulted in First Nation's lack of trust in the province. This lack of trust, as well as treaty negotiations, overlapping territories, and multiple engagement agreements between the Province and First Nations, complicate the inclusion of TEK in park planning and operations management. The current political climate's focus on reconciliation, climate change, and treaty negotiations lend support for the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their TEK in park planning and operations management. I heard from BC Parks participants that the North Coast Skeena Region is limited in capacity, and operational budgets for the North Coast Skeena Region are set by employees in Southern BC. BC Parks' employees called for an Indigenous Relations specialist, with familiarity of the areas they work in, to be located within their regions to advise planning and operations staff on consultation, engagement, and relationship-building with First Nations. From Gitksan First Nation participants, I heard that every First Nation community interprets reconciliation differently and has its own reconciliatory goals and that Indigenous self-determination requires increased control, agency, and governance of First Nations territories. Lastly, BC Parks participants anticipate upcoming legislative changes to better support Indigenous self-determination.

Overall, my transcripts revealed the need for a clear approach to TEK inclusion that is adaptable to individual First Nations' priorities, that can function with limited resources, and that fosters relationship-building. While TEK is community specific and only applies within the location it originates from, it must be supported as valid knowledge by parks personnel and braided with WSK into new paradigms for park management.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

I remember learning about the removal of Indigenous Peoples from their homes and territories for the creation of parks in Canada during my undergraduate degree. When I reflect on my notes from that day during my park management class at the University of Alberta, I am fuelled with the same frustration that compelled me to embark on this thesis project. During that class, an Indigenous speaker and Elder gave her testimony of forced relocation from her traditional territory to a reserve for the creation of a government park. At that time, in 2016, I was working for a municipal government's parks department managing vegetation and wildlife within city limits. I was shocked to realize that I had already worked two years for parks without knowing this history—the history of settler colonialism in government parks and the cultural construction of wilderness.

My conclusion seeks to accomplish four things: (1) revisit the main arguments and recommendations; (2) illustrate the practical and theoretical significance of the work; (3) reflect upon my personal trajectory throughout the project; and (4) outline some of the limitations of the project and suggest future research directions.

The Main Arguments and Recommendations

This research project explored how TEK can be meaningfully integrated into BC Parks planning and management. My central argument was that the inclusion of TEK is necessary to improve park management and to address the larger social and environmental issues in society. It is my belief that if we are to contend successfully with the environmental problems which threaten us—global climate change, loss of biodiversity, marine degradation, etc.—the inclusion of TEK in current environmental management systems is not merely a prudent undertaking, it is essential (Eckert et al., 2020; McGregor, 2004). By researching this topic, I was able to delineate

new possibilities for park planning and management. My recommendations were devised to address relations of power, problematic policies, and socio-political factors that often limit the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge, and it is my hope that they will help promote reconciliation and self-determination.

Several recommendations emerged from the analysis of the transcripts. The first of which is establishing a shared decision-making process for operational budgets between regional employees and employees in Victoria for regional park operations decisions. It is important that the employees who are making operations decisions for parks within different regions have familiarity with and knowledge of the parks that their operational decisions will impact. Additionally, Indigenous Relations staff should be hired within BC Parks regional offices, with localized knowledge about the First Nations that they are advising on, to better assist regional staff in their work on engagement, consultation, and relationship-building with First Nations. Another is for BC Parks to hire more Indigenous and other racialized peoples throughout the agency. Alongside this, it would be beneficial for BC Parks to revise its consultation training to meet modern legislation (i.e., DRIPA and UN Declaration) and to provide employees with an understanding of all the engagement agreements and processes that they will use for working with and consulting First Nations. Participants expressed a need for more mandatory training on settler colonialism and Indigenous history in parks facilitated by local Indigenous Peoples. Developing a mentorship program would help to prevent the loss of information about First Nations and parks over time from staff changes. Also, creating a guiding document for First Nations to access that outlines information on opportunities for collaboration and co-management with First Nations in parks would make this information more accessible and help support work with First Nations.

I recommend that cultural heritage assessments and archaeological studies in parks result in reports for employees to read and review. BC Parks employees should become educated on individual First Nations' cultures, histories, laws and protocols before working with them, to be knowledgeable in these areas before formal meetings commence. First Nations' laws should be recognized and respected together with provincial laws and regulations in parks. To promote and facilitate TEK inclusion, BC Parks employees should value and appreciate TEK in the same ways that they do WSK in park planning and operations management. They should also remain open-minded to other ways of knowing. In signage projects, BC Parks employees need to consult with Chiefs and Elders in First Nations and bordering First Nations to ensure signs are mounted in the correct place and provide the correct information. A similar process should be used for park names and any other information displayed about a First Nation. I recommend that BC Parks employees work with First Nations at the community level to identify their interests and priorities in park management and for reconciliation in parks, then document this information for other employees. Despite the challenges of treaty negotiations and territory overlaps in parks, BC Parks employees should increase their work with First Nations and build relationships with them in the best ways that they can. Territory acknowledgements need to be developed in consultation with Chiefs and Elders of a First Nation and should outline the name of the community, their ongoing presence on the landscape, and the problematic nature of the park's establishment. More programs such as the Indigenous Guardian Shared Compliance and Enforcement Program should be implemented by BC Parks, to support Indigenous self-determination and increase Indigenous governance of parks in their territories. Lastly, IPCAs should be formally recognized by the Province of BC.

Significance of the Study

In terms of its practical significance, this research has the potential to benefit Gitxsan First Nation and BC Parks. It provides findings that encourage the inclusion of TEK in BC Parks planning and operations management. BC Parks and other park agencies can utilize the recommendations outlined in this chapter to overcome barriers to Indigenous involvement and advance the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their TEK in planning and operations management. I developed presentations for BC Parks and Gitxsan First Nation summarizing my findings, as well as a final report for the participants to review. My interviews with Gitxsan First Nation Chiefs and Elders and BC Parks employees provided this study with empirical evidence to inform strategies for the inclusion of TEK in park planning and operations management—strategies that centre Indigenous Peoples’ interests and Knowledge. Gitxsan First Nation members had opportunities to discuss how BC Parks can improve consultation and have a greater appreciation for their culture, interests, goals, and objectives in future planning and current operations management. Both participant groups were provided with opportunities to discuss how they define reconciliation and reflect on the role of reconciliation and self-determination in park management. Few studies have aimed to reveal how reconciliation and self-determination can be mobilized and achieved in park planning and management. This study makes a novel contribution to the literature by providing information for park planners and managers on how to support Indigenous Peoples in mobilizing self-determination and achieving more reconciliatory goals.

As discussed in Chapter One, progress towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples requires political support. One of the conditions that made my research possible was the current administration’s (the BC New Democratic Party) support for reconciliation policies during the

early 2020s. This administration has made significant progress in advancing reconciliation by responding to the TRC's Calls to Action (2015a) and enacting DRIPA (2019). Nevertheless, considerable back-peddling was seen by opposition parties in the lead-up to the 2024 election, who gained popular support by spreading fear and misinformation regarding DRIPA and proposed amendments to the Land Act (Kwetásel'wet Wood, 2024; West Moberly First Nation, 2024). In light of these developments in the political environment, this project may be harder to fulfill in the coming years, and BC Parks employees may have been less inclined to participate in my study. This stresses the importance of my research project in the contemporary moment and I hope that research in this area continues to explore reconciliation and decolonization in government institutions.

With respect to its scholarly significance, this project adds to ongoing discussions about the barriers to the uptake of Indigenous Knowledges and TEK in park planning and operations management. Academic literature on TEK inclusion in provincial park planning and management is lacking, as is research concerning the impacts and implications of social, political and historical relations of power that frame the inequality of Indigenous Peoples in park planning and management. Previous research on TEK in park planning and management has not studied BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region or included Indigenous perspectives. The earlier studies have also not focussed on exploring the role of reconciliation and self-determination in park planning and operations management. Responding to the calls of Cook (2020), Kadykalo et al. (2021), and Lemieux et al. (2018) for further research on this topic, this work contributes empirical evidence to ongoing academic discussions regarding Indigenous inclusion, TEK, reconciliation, and self-determination in park management. It also responds to the federal

government's TRC Calls to Action (2015a) and BC's DRIPA (2019) by addressing the legacies and current realities of settler colonialism in government institutions.

With respect to its theoretical significance, this project adds to scholarship about community-based research with Indigenous Peoples and two-eyed seeing. My community-based research approach and case study methodology allowed for a focussed, contextualized exploration and analysis of the topic in a particular location. I was able to build relationships within the communities I was studying and work with Gitxsan First Nation and BC Parks to design a project that would benefit both participant groups. Two-eyed seeing was a useful theory for weaving together the perspectives of local Indigenous communities and BC Parks employees in the Northwest region. Two-eyed seeing allowed me to bring together two knowledge systems side-by-side and accord both perspectives appreciation (Kadykalo et al., 2021). Using two-eyed seeing theory in combination with the concepts of settler colonialism and decolonization further strengthened my commitments to the First Nation. This approach impelled me to better understand the harms and traumas experienced by communities and increased my resolve to fashion a project that would help empower Indigenous Peoples, advance their self-determination and promote reconciliation generally.

One of my project's significant methodological contributions is its Research Agreement and Data-sharing Protocol (Appendix B), which formally outlines my commitments to Gitxsan First Nation in formal legalese. The Research Agreement and Data-sharing Protocol helped to guide the research process and minimize any concerns that the First Nation had regarding their participation. I gifted my Research Agreement template to Gitxsan First Nation, so that they can use it for creating legally binding research agreements with other researchers in the future. Gitxsan First Nation granted me permission to share my Research Agreement template with the

University of Northern British Columbia and other student researchers to support their work with Indigenous Peoples. I gave my Research Agreement and Data-sharing Protocol to Secwépemc scholar, Penina Harding, to make available for other researchers at the University of Northern British Columbia's First Nations Centre and Office of Indigenous Initiatives. Research Agreements with Indigenous governments are scarcely available and difficult to locate (especially agreements written by an Indigenous lawyer in clear and precise legalese), therefore, this is a significant contribution for future graduate students who want to pursue research with an Indigenous government.

In terms of methods, this project also has value for demonstrating how inductive and deductive approaches to coding can be applied together to complement each other in qualitative research. Employing both coding approaches in thematic analysis provided me with a valuable toolkit to code according to my research questions and theory, while also coding to reveal findings in the data that were not obvious to me. Inductive, data-driven, line-by-line coding illuminated various themes in my analysis that I had not anticipated, confirming for me that inductive coding is valuable in letting 'the data speak for itself' (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). This could prove useful for future graduate students to refer to in choosing methods for thematic analysis.

Reflection on my Personal Trajectory

I have learned valuable lessons in this research project that have contributed to my personal growth as a scholar. First, Indigenous research must be conducted *for* and *with* the communities being studied, and not on or about the communities (Smith, 2021). Second, building relationships with partners in community-based research takes time, and working with government partners requires many meetings, especially in the early phases of the research.

Third, community-based research with government partners requires that the researcher commit to upholding their responsibilities and demonstrate this through respect, collaboration, and reciprocity in building and maintaining relationships (Harris & Wasilewski, 2004). Fourth, remaining accountable and open to different ideas and suggestions for improvement by partners is necessary for building trust and establishing good rapport. Lastly, the trust, transparency and other fundamentals of good relationships with research partners and participants can only be maintained through ongoing, respectful communication.

This thesis provides another example of working with a First Nation and a provincial government in research and the process of building relationships and trust with two government partners. By conducting community-based research that incorporated the ideas of Gitxsan First Nation and BC Parks into the research design, I learned fundamental aspects of working in partnership with two governments in a graduate research project. It was instructive and gratifying for me to learn and practice the necessary responsibilities, perspectives and behaviours that succeeded in fostering these fruitful relationships. The project required a vigilant commitment to always demonstrate respect for my partners while maintaining ongoing, open communications. I practiced truly listening to them, asking questions and seeking their feedback wherever their expertise could provide answers and augment my understandings of the current realities or historical context of Northwestern BC. Gitxsan First Nation and BC Parks provided constructive feedback throughout the research process, which helped clarify what would be beneficial and important to them in the investigation of my topic.

When working with an Indigenous government, it is important to first understand the multi-faceted and systemic racism that has afflicted Indigenous Peoples in settler colonial society. The cumulative, oppressive burden of this long-sanctioned racism has resulted in multi-

generational trauma; and it is necessary to understand this trauma prior to engaging in research activities involving Indigenous Peoples (McGuire-Adams, 2020). Therefore, I did much reading on Indigenous research paradigms and how to develop my skills in performing such research. I read academic literature and various books on Gitxsan First Nation history, laws and culture to become familiar with the areas I was studying. Gitxsan First Nation friends and mentors helped to facilitate a thorough understanding of Gitxsan First Nation cultural protocols and a basic understanding of the Gitxsan language (i.e., Sim Ałgyax language family, referred to as Gitxsanimx/Gitksenimx), and this greatly enhanced my meetings with community members. I also actively engaged in researcher reflexivity, documenting my thoughts, ideas, and insights in a research diary (Nadin & Cassell, 2006) to reflect on my role and responsibilities as a White researcher working in partnership with a First Nation and a government park agency. As Johnson et al. (2006) stress, reflexivity is a central component to research with Indigenous Peoples. We must be self-conscious about who we are, why we ask the questions that we do, and what our prior relationships might be to our objects of study. The authors write: “openness to others depends on a certain confidence about where we stand” (p. 24). I was self-consciously attuned to the privileging of partial perspectives and situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988) throughout my study, as consciousness of our own partiality is an essential part of the dialogue with the other (Johnson et al., 2006). This self-aware consideration helped me to recognize how my own subjectivity and positionality might influence the research. Reflecting on my own middle-class, White privilege helped me maintain humility and self-awareness throughout the project.

Limitations and Future Directions

My research was a case study that was limited in its size and scope by working with one First Nation and one specific region of BC Parks. I believe that broadening my research to

include more regions with their Indigenous governments, communities and Parks offices, would have proved beneficial; gathering more data from a larger and more diverse sample can advance or affect the quality of insights and perspectives (Baker & Edwards, 2017). Interviewing more planning staff from BC Parks and Indigenous Peoples who had been involved in recent collaborative planning processes with BC Parks would have informed findings and recommendations that were less focussed on consultation for statutory decision-making and operations, and more focussed on planning processes. The complexities and nuances of other Indigenous cultures, protocols, beliefs, values, priorities and ideas were not captured in this study; however, focussing on one First Nation, the Gitxsan First Nation, permitted a detailed analysis of multiple communities within the First Nation, and engendered a strong relationship between the First Nation government and myself.

Although I established good relationships with Gitxsan First Nation government, community members and BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region employees, I nevertheless remained an ‘outsider’ (Smith, 2021; Merton, 1972) in this project, as I am neither Indigenous nor a BC Parks employee, and I was not born in Northwestern BC. Trust and relationships were slow to develop with Gitxsan First Nation government employees, community members, and BC Parks employees; however, I was patient and respectful, and demonstrated that my intent in this project was in good faith. During the research process, Gitxsan First Nation and BC Parks had other ongoing priorities which led to Gitxsan First Nation members and BC Parks staff having limited time to meet and discuss the research. As the project progressed, time also became a limiting factor for participants’ review of interview transcripts and for the review of thesis chapters by government representatives. I respected their time constraints and allowed extended time frames to receive their feedback and input (e.g., I allowed one month for participants to

review their interview transcripts). Using email for this process proved valuable, as it permitted flexibility for participants to view and respond to my questions and requests on their own schedules.

In retrospect, I believe that asking more questions regarding current and previous planning processes and cultural use of parks would have benefitted my study. It would have been interesting to ask Gitxsan First Nation members how BC Parks can improve their access to culturally important areas and how they would like to see this managed and regulated. Another area where more insight could have been gained concerns the role of IPCAs in self-determination. I did not ask specific questions regarding IPCAs, although these were frequently highlighted by both participant groups as an important pathway toward self-determination in protected areas on Indigenous Territories. As I've discussed earlier, BC Parks employees identified the ongoing development of treaties and existing territorial overlaps as significant barriers to Indigenous and TEK inclusion in park planning and management. It might have been revealing to find out how Gitxsan First Nation members view the BC Treaty Commission process and how it influences their relationships with BC Parks and other agencies; however, the Gitxsan First Nation participants did not speak in detail about this matter, and I did not specifically question them about it. I also would have liked to ask them how territorial overlaps with other First Nations might affect their negotiations and work with the province.

Due to the limited scope of any master's research project, several topics are not included in this research, including knowledge co-production, knowledge exchange, social-ecological systems, adaptive management, collaborative stewardship, protected area management effectiveness (PAME) assessment tools, and Indigenous environmental monitoring, which are all areas that could advance literature on this topic and understandings of TEK inclusion in park

planning and management. Through my research design and research questions, I chose to focus on Indigenous-settler relations, the lived experiences of Gitksan First Nation members and BC Parks staff in Northwestern BC, and the just and appropriate inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their Knowledges in park management. This is because I wanted to understand how BC Parks staff were incorporating Indigenous Peoples and their TEK in park planning and operations management and identify the barriers to TEK inclusion. I also wanted to investigate how colonial structures and discourses might operate to exclude Indigenous Peoples in park management. Lastly, I was interested in the role of reconciliation and self-determination in park planning and management.

I have several suggestions for future research directions. First, future research on this topic should explore the perspectives of other Indigenous Peoples and park agencies in different areas across Canada to identify best practices in the equitable, sustainable planning and management of parks, while also helping to fulfil the goals of Truth and Reconciliation. By collecting more data on how reconciliation and self-determination are understood and realized by other park agencies and Indigenous Peoples, future work on this topic can investigate new areas for Indigenous collaboration and inclusion in park management. Second, I suggest using Indigenous methodologies, feminist methodologies, visual methodologies, photovoice methodologies, case studies, qualitative longitudinal research, participatory action research, and ethnographies as frameworks for analysis in future work. In terms of methods, I believe that surveys, interviews, focus groups, participatory workshops, participatory mapping exercises, and photo elicitation techniques could all be beneficial for gathering data on the lived experiences of park employees and Indigenous Peoples and facilitating knowledge exchange and co-production on the topics of park planning and management, TEK inclusion, reconciliation and self-

determination. Third, future research on this topic should focus on the role of IPCAs and park agency policies and programs in fostering self-determination. A fourth area requiring future research is Indigenous access to cultural sites within parks and park visitor activities which compromise cultural use of parks. Finally, research on the recognition and implementation of Indigenous laws in parks is lacking, and this is a significant gap that should be explored in future studies.

Next Projects

My master's research provided me with the necessary skills to work in partnership with government agencies, Indigenous Peoples, and communities. I am excited for my doctoral research—I recently began a Ph.D. in Forest and Conservation Sciences at the University of Montana—and other future projects, as I have become a more interdisciplinary and reflexive scholar because of my master's project. This thesis has further broadened my diverse research background and helped to shape in me a unique perspective that views social justice, community-based research, decolonization, and Indigenous collaboration as central to my work.

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Appendix A: Gitxsan First Nation Approval of Research Project and Research Activities

UNBC Student Thesis Proposal and Pre-ethics Approval Request

📎 2 ▾ 📧



Gordon Sebastian <gsebastian@gitxsan.ca>

To: Sophia Graham

Cc: Jennifer Wigglesworth

📎 👍 ↩ ⏮ ⏭ ⋮

Wed 6/22/2022 1:37 PM

CAUTION: This email is not from UNBC. Avoid links and attachments. Don't buy gift cards.

Dear Ms. Graham

Yes, this confirms the pre-ethics approval by Gitxsan

Gordon

...

Got it!

Ok, thanks.

Got it, thanks!

🗨️ Are the suggestions above helpful? **Yes** No

↩ Reply

⏮ Reply all

⏭ Forward

Appendix B: Research Agreement and Data-sharing Protocol with Gitxsan First Nation

Research Agreement and Data Sharing Protocol

Indigenous Community Body:	Gitxsan First Nation
Principal Investigator at the University of Northern British Columbia:	Sophia Graham
Research Project Title:	Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Northwestern BC Parks: A Framework for Socially Responsible Environmental Planning and Management
Effective Date:	November 21, 2022
End Date:	November 21, 2024

BACKGROUND:

1. The **Indigenous Community Body** (the “ICB”) is the coordinating body for one or more Indigenous communities involved in the Research (as defined below). Among other things, it has responsibility for approving and facilitating research that engages or involves members of its community and/or its Lands.
2. The ICB wishes to collaborate with the University of Northern British Columbia, as presented by the **Principal Investigator**, for the purpose of undertaking the Research Project described above and more fully in this Agreement under the heading **ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT** and in Appendix A (the “**Research**” and Thesis Proposal).
3. The Principal Investigator is committed to adhering to the University of Northern British Columbia’s institutional policy of integrity in scholarly research, the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research, its institutional policy on Ethics of Research Involving Human Participants, the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2, 2018), including Chapter Nine, entitled: “Research Involving First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada,” the Assembly of First Nations Ethics Guide on Research and Traditional Knowledge (2016), and the First Nations Information Governance Centre’s Principles on Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP Principles).

PREAMBLE:

WHEREAS the purpose of this Agreement is to:

- Define the relationships between the Parties involved in the Research Project and the responsibilities of each Party in order to facilitate the carrying out of the Project;
- Secure the access to and define the control of the data used for the Research Project and the results of the data analysis;
- Define how the intellectual property issues regarding “Traditional Knowledge” will be addressed;

WHEREAS during the course of this Research Project, all efforts will be made by the Researcher and the Research Committee, to incorporate and address the local concerns, advice and recommendations of the **Participating First Nation**;

WHEREAS Sophia Eve Graham, Master of Arts student in the Natural Resources and Environmental Studies program at the University of Northern British Columbia, is the principal investigator for this Project (“**Principal Investigator**”); **WHEREAS Dr. Jennifer Wigglesworth, Assistant Professor at the University of Northern British Columbia**, is the supervisor of this Project (“**Supervisor**”);

WHEREAS Gitxsan First Nation will participate in this Project;

NOW AND THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:

AGREEMENT:

1. Each Party (**Gitxsan First Nation and the Principal Investigator, Sophia Graham**) acknowledge and agree that entering into this Agreement and collaborating in the Research, it wishes to be bound by the terms set out below.
2. The ICB will retain ownership of all “**Indigenous Data**” (as defined below), including extracts of it. Subject to applicable laws and any Ethical Requirements (as defined below), the Principal Investigator will do the following:
 - a) maintain a reciprocal and meaningful relationship with the ICB. The ICB is involved in determining the priorities and desired outcomes of the research project.
 - b) seek the ICB’s guidance on how this project’s findings will be shared and delivered to the community and larger audiences.


- c) be transparent with the Nation throughout the research process and protect Nation community interests, information and privacy;
 - d) provide each person I interview with the opportunity to review their interview and suggest additions or deletions to the transcript that I would then incorporate into the study;
 - e) only use information with informed consent, and interviewees could choose to remove themselves from the research at any point in the process;
 - f) collect, create, use, disclose, store and/or destroy Indigenous Data in the manner set out in this Agreement and in accordance with Governing Principles and the requirements/approvals established by the applicable Ethics Boards (collectively, the “**Ethical Requirements**”);
 - g) disclose or share Indigenous Data only with those persons involved with the Research throughout the research process who have agreed to maintain its confidentiality (not including Publishing, see below);
 - h) protect the privacy and confidentiality of the Indigenous Data using the same standards and security measures it would use for personal information of a similar nature. The storage, analysis and reporting of data is further detailed below in the section on **INTERPRETATION OF DATA, REPORTING AND DATA MANAGEMENT**;
 - i) provide the ICB with access to Indigenous Data upon request;
3. The ICB acknowledges that the data collected in the Research will be used to develop a Thesis Paper for the completion of the Principal Investigator’s degree in Master of Arts in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies.
 4. The ICB acknowledges that this Thesis Paper will be documented in the University of Northern British Columbia Library Thesis Collection Database.
 5. Notwithstanding anything else in this Agreement, the Principal Investigator may **Publish the Results** (as defined below), with the following qualifications. Prior to Publishing any Results, the Principal Investigator intends to Submit (the “**Draft**”) to the ICB for review, whereupon the ICB will have thirty (30) days (the “**Review Period**”) in which to review the Draft for Indigenous Data. If the ICB wishes the Principal Investigator to remove any Indigenous Data from the Draft, it will notify the Principal Investigator in writing of this prior to the expiration of the Review Period. The Principal Investigator will then cause such Indigenous Data to be removed from the Draft, after which they may Publish the Draft. Notwithstanding anything else in this Agreement, if the ICB does not respond to the Principal Investigator during the Review Period to remove particular Indigenous Data contained or referenced in the Draft, the Principal Investigator may Publish the Draft and any such unidentified Indigenous Data.

6. The ICB acknowledges that the Principal Investigator plans to present the Research Project at two conferences from 2022-2023: BC Protected Areas Research Forum (BCPARF), and the BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) Symposium. The conference papers and/or presentations for these conferences, and for any other conferences the Principal Investigator may attend, will be provided to the ICB to review upon their request.
7. The ICB acknowledges that the Research is exploratory and that no particular results can be guaranteed.
8. This Agreement will take effect on the date set out above and expire on the end date set out above unless extended by mutual consent. Either the ICB or the Principal Investigator may terminate this Agreement for any reason by providing the other Party with ten (10) days' written notice. If this Agreement is terminated early, the Parties will cooperate in good faith for the completion of the Thesis Project.
9. This Agreement and the Thesis Proposal (Appendix A) embody the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the Research and subject-matter of this Agreement supersedes all prior agreements, representations, understandings, negotiations and discussions, whether oral or written

[NAME OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY BODY]

Per: Gitxsan First Nation


Print Name: Luutkudziiwus (Gordon Sebastian)

Signature: 

Date: Nov. 17, 2022

[NAME OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR]

Print Name: Sophia Graham

Signature: 

Date: Nov. 20, 2022

DEFINITIONS:

1. Research Agreements

where a community has formally engaged with a researcher or research team through a designated representative, the terms and undertakings of both the researcher and the community should be set out in a research agreement before participants are recruited. A research agreement is a document that “serves as a primary means of clarifying and confirming mutual expectations, and where appropriate, commitments between researchers and communities” (TCPS 2, 2018). All research involving Indigenous Peoples where a community has formally engaged with a researcher or research team through a designated representative shall set out, in a research agreement, the terms and undertakings of both the researcher and the community before participants are recruited.

The exact content of a research agreement will vary based on the nature of the research project as well as the values and priorities of the community that the researcher plans to engage with.

2. Community

describes a group of people with a shared identity or interest that has the capacity to act or express itself as a collective. A community may include members from multiple cultural groups. A community may be territorial, organizational, or a community of interest. “Territorial communities” have governing bodies exercising local or regional jurisdiction (e.g., members of First Nations who reside on reserve lands). “Organizational communities” have explicit mandates and formal leadership (e.g., a regional Inuit association or a friendship centre serving an urban Indigenous community). In both territorial and organizational communities, membership is defined and the community has designated leaders. “Communities of interest” may be formed by individuals or organizations who come together for a common purpose or undertaking, such as a commitment to conserving a First Nations language. Communities of interest are informal communities whose boundaries and leadership may be fluid and less well-defined. They may exist temporarily or over the long term, within or outside of territorial or organizational communities (TCPS 2, 2018).

An individual may belong to multiple communities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous (e.g., as a member of a local Métis community, a graduate students’ society and a coalition in support of Indigenous rights). An individual may acknowledge being of First Nations, Inuit or Métis descent but not identify with any particular community. How individuals define which of their community relationships are most relevant will likely depend on the nature of the research project being proposed (TCPS 2, 2018).

3. Community customs and codes of research practice

may be expressed in written or oral form. Consistent with the world views of particular First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, community customs and codes of research practice may embody kinship networks and responsibilities that include multi-generational obligations to

ancestors and future generations. Ethical obligations often extend to respectful relations with plant, animal and marine life (TCPS 2, 2018).

4. Community engagement

is a process that establishes an interaction between a researcher (or a research team) and the Indigenous community relevant to the research project. It signifies the intent of forming a collaborative relationship between researchers and communities, although the degree of collaboration may vary depending on the community context and the nature of the research. The engagement may take many forms including review and approval from formal leadership to conduct research in the community, joint planning with a responsible agency, commitment to a partnership formalized in a research agreement, or dialogue with an advisory group expert in the customs governing the knowledge being sought. The engagement may range from information sharing to active participation and collaboration, to empowerment and shared leadership of the research project. Communities may also choose not to engage actively in a research project, but simply to acknowledge it and register no objection to it (TCPS 2, 2018).

5. First Nations, Inuit and Métis lands

include Indian reserves, Métis settlements, and lands governed under a self-government agreement or an Inuit or First Nations land claim agreement.

6. Indigenous Data

means information and data collected from the ICB's Indigenous community members in the course of the Research

7. Indigenous Knowledge:

see Traditional Knowledge.

8. Indigenous Peoples:

a term used in international or scholarly discourse. In the Canadian context, the term "Indigenous Peoples" typically refers to persons of Indian, Inuit or Métis descent, regardless of where they reside and whether their names appear on an official register. Self-identification is a fundamental criterion for defining Indigenous Peoples. The term "Indigenous" does not reflect the distinctions among First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, who have their own histories, cultures and languages, so an attempt has been made to limit use of the term in this document to instances where a global term is appropriate. Indigenous Peoples commonly identify themselves by distinct nation names such as Mi'kmaq, Dene or Haida, and as First Nations (TCPS 2, 2018).

9. Traditional Knowledge

the knowledge held by First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. Traditional knowledge is specific to place, usually transmitted orally, and rooted in the experience of multiple generations. It is determined by an Indigenous community's land, environment, region, culture and language. Traditional Knowledge is usually described by

Indigenous Peoples as holistic, involving body, mind, feelings and spirit. Knowledge may be expressed in symbols, arts, ceremonial and everyday practices, narratives and, especially, in relationships. The word “tradition” is not necessarily synonymous with old. Traditional Knowledge is held collectively by all members of a community, although some members may have particular responsibility for its transmission. It includes preserved knowledge created by, and received from, past generations and innovations and new knowledge transmitted to subsequent generations. In international or scholarly discourse, the terms “Traditional Knowledge” and “Indigenous Knowledge” are sometimes used interchangeably (TCPS 2, 2018).

10. Respect for Persons

is expressed principally through the securing of free, informed and ongoing consent of participants. The concerns of First Nations, Inuit and Métis for their continuity as peoples with distinctive cultures and identities have led to the development of codes of research practice that are in keeping with their world views. Indigenous codes of research practice go beyond the scope of ethical protections for individual participants. They extend to the interconnection between humans and the natural world, and include obligations to maintain, and pass on to future generations, knowledge received from ancestors as well as innovations devised in the present generation (TCPS 2, 2018).

11. Concern for Welfare

is broader, requiring consideration of participants and prospective participants in their physical, social, economic and cultural environments, where applicable, as well as concern for the community to which participants belong. This document acknowledges the important role of Indigenous communities in promoting collective rights, interests and responsibilities that also serve the welfare of individuals.

Indigenous peoples are particularly concerned that research should enhance their capacity to maintain their cultures, languages and identities as First Nations, Inuit or Métis peoples, and to support their full participation in, and contributions to, Canadian society. The interpretation of Concern for Welfare in First Nations, Inuit and Métis contexts may therefore place strong emphasis on collective welfare as a complement to individual well-being (TCPS 2, 2018).

12. Publish

means to publish, disseminate, present and/or publicly disclose

13. Results

means all interpretation and analyses of the Indigenous Data and the results of the Research but not the Indigenous Data itself.

14. Confidential Information

shall include all **First Nation** Traditional Knowledge and interviews with members of the **Gitksan Nation** communities, all Results, as well as any and all other knowledge, whether patentable or not, know-how, information, and/or techniques, disclosed by one Party

(referred to in this capacity as the “**Gitxsan Nation members**”) to another (referred to in this capacity as the “**Principal Investigator**”) in the course of the Research Project.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE:

1. First Nation guardianship of Traditional Knowledge

First Nation Traditional Knowledge, its creation, discovery, development and transmission and every matter relating thereto, forming part thereof and arising therefrom are vested in the **First Nation** and the **First Nation Peoples** are the sole guardians of this knowledge which is held for the benefit and use of the **First Nation Peoples**.

INTERPRETATION OF DATA, REPORTING AND DATA MANAGEMENT:

1. Progress Reports and Queries

The Principal Investigator shall provide the research participants (Gitxsan Chiefs and Elders) and the ICB with progress reports upon request, and if this is desired by the ICB. During the course of the Research Project, the Principal Investigator will make her best efforts to be available to respond to particular questions that may arise from members of the Participating First Nation and research participants. The final project report will be distributed to the ICB and all Chiefs and Elders interviewed in the Research Project. The ICB and Chiefs and Elders who participate in the Research Project will be kept informed of the Results by way of the review of publications as described below.

2. Publications and Collaboration between the Indigenous Community Body and the Principal Investigator Concerning Interpretation of Data

The data collected in the Research Project will be used to develop a Thesis Paper for the completion of the Principal Investigator’s degree in Master of Arts in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies. This Thesis Paper will be documented in the University of Northern British Columbia Library Thesis Collection Database.

Publishing Results in peer-reviewed journals is important to the Principal Investigator, as this allows her to contribute empirical evidence to the current body of literature on her research topic. As outlined earlier in the Agreement: Prior to Publishing any Results, the Principal Investigator intends to Submit (the “Draft”) to the ICB for review, whereupon the ICB will have thirty (30) days (the “Review Period”) in which to review the Draft for Indigenous Data. If the ICB wishes the Principal Investigator to remove any Indigenous Data from the Draft, it will notify the Principal Investigator in writing of this prior to the expiration of the Review Period. The Principal Investigator will then cause such Indigenous Data to be removed from the Draft, after which it may Publish the Draft. Notwithstanding anything else in this Agreement, if the ICB

does not respond to the Principal Investigator during the Review Period to remove particular Indigenous Data contained or referenced in the Draft, the Principal Investigator may Publish the Draft and any such unidentified Indigenous Data.

The Principal Investigator wants to recognize the contributions of interviewees and the Nation (when this is desired by them). Therefore, an invitation for co-authorship of publications is extended to the Huwilt, Elders, and Simogyet who share their knowledge in this Research Project.

3. Review of Publications and other Related Documents

Any disclosure to third parties of Results, such as in public reports, scientific publications, abstracts, presentations or other similar documents, must follow the process outlined above.

The Review procedure aims to achieve a number of objectives:

- a) Collaboration concerning interpretation: Because this Research Project involves a contribution of knowledge from both Chiefs and Elders, the procedure provides for discussions concerning the Results and the proposed publications as well as an obligation on the part of the Principal Investigator that wishes to publish, to attempt to integrate the comments made by the ICB and **First Nation Peoples**.
- b) Extraction of Confidential Information: If the publication, abstract or similar document contains Confidential Information (such as **First Nation** Traditional Knowledge) that some Parties do not wish to be disclosed to third parties, the Parties must negotiate a version of the disclosure which is acceptable to all.
- c) Recognition of **First Nation** contribution to the publication: The procedure provides for the appropriate recognition of the contribution of Chiefs and Elders in the form of authorship or an acknowledgement, depending on the circumstances and the wishes of the Chiefs and Elders.

4. Storing of Data and other materials during the Research Project and Disposal of the Data

During the research process, digital files of the interview recordings, transcriptions, and notes will be stored on a password protected computer of the Principal Investigator and backed up on a password protected memory stick. Hard copies of transcripts and notes, and consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet in the Principal Investigator's home office. After the completion of the Project, the recordings will be destroyed. The hard copy data will be retained for two years and then destroyed. Digital copies of the transcripts, which will include no identifying information, will be maintained in a password protected file on the researcher's computer.

FINANCING OF THE PROJECT:

This Project is being supported by the following scholarships and grants:

- Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master’s – Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Joseph Armand Bombardier
- BC Recreation and Parks Association Scholarship
- Parks Canada Research Grant

There are no restrictions placed on the Research by any of the Principal Investigator’s research project funders.

TERM AND TERMINATION OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND OF THE AGREEMENT:

This Agreement will be effective from **November 21, 2022** (the “**Effective Date**”). The Research Project will end on **May 1, 2023** and the Agreement shall be terminated on **November 21, 2024** (the “**Normal Termination Date**”) in order to provide time to the Parties to complete the preparation and review of publications. The Parties may agree to extend the termination date through a written undertaking for that purpose.

ETHICAL ISSUES AND BENEFITS:

1. Ethical Approvals

Ethical approval will be obtained for the Research Project (the Research) from the University of Northern British Columbia’s Research Ethics Board.

2. Ethical Considerations

The Parties wish to carry out the Research Project in the following manner in order to be respectful of the individual participants, the Participating First Nation, and the **First Nation** as a whole. Consequently, the Parties shall act, to the best of their knowledge and in good faith, according to the following:

- a) Individuals’ identity should not be disclosed without their consent;
- b) the research should be carried out in a way that makes participants feel respected;
- c) the Results and the **First Nation** Traditional Knowledge should be used in ways that are socially, morally and/or culturally respectful (as discussed during the Research Project with the Participating First Nation representatives);

- d) the Participating First Nations' right to confidentiality should be respected;
- e) the Results should not be reported in a way that stigmatises the Participating First Nation.

3. **Benefits**

Benefits likely to be gained by the Principal Investigator from the Research:

- a) The Principal Investigator will try their best efforts to publish papers in peer-reviewed journals and make presentations at conferences. This will enhance her career as a researcher and help to secure future financing for new projects.
- b) The Research Project will also help the Principal Investigator to develop new relationships within the region and this may help them to secure Agreements for future projects in the region or with other First Nations or Northern communities.

Benefits likely to be gained by the Participating First Nation and their members:

- a) This study could benefit Gitxsan First Nation by exploring how to improve BC Parks consultation with First Nations and learning how the government can take a more respectful and inclusive approach towards Nation interests in park planning and management.
- b) Discussions with Elders and Chiefs will provide this study with empirical evidence to inform a framework for integrating TEK into BC Park management. This framework would aim to center First Nations interests and knowledge in decision making practices that concern their land and People.
- c) This exploratory study will contribute empirical evidence to support an understanding of TEK and its constructive role in park management. It will identify factors that influence the adoption of TEK and enable the development of a practicable framework for its inclusion in BC Parks management. Furthermore, this work makes a positive response to our government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

REQUESTING PROGRESS REPORTS AND ACCEPTING INVITATION FOR CO-AUTHORSHIP:

The Principal Investigator shall provide the research participants (Gitxsan Chiefs and Elders) and the ICB with progress reports upon request, and if this is desired by the ICB.

**Please check here if the Indigenous
Community Body wishes to receive
progress reports:**

If so, how often?

**Please check here if the Indigenous
Community Body would like to be a Co-
author on Publications:**

ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

1. Purpose of the Research

Canadian governments have historically relied on western scientific knowledge (WSK) and undervalued the importance of Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in the environmental management of parks and protected areas (Devin & Doberstein, 2004). An appreciation of TEK is fundamental in achieving a comprehensive understanding of interconnected ecological and social realities of natural areas; hence, Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and knowledge should play a central role in planning and managing these lands (Folke, 2004). Northwestern British Columbia comprises numerous First Nations territories; nevertheless, many parks continue to be managed without the involvement of the Indigenous communities that border them.

There is a paucity of research examining the integration of TEK in park management frameworks at the provincial level in Canada. Most relevant research discusses the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge within federal parks operated by Parks Canada (Cook, 2019; Houde, 2007; Johnston & Mason, 2020; Johnston & Mason, 2021; Moore, 2016), and it focuses mainly on monitoring (Beausoleil et al., 2021; Berkes et al., 2007; Fitzsimmons, 2020; Popp et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2019; Tran et al., 2020; Turner & Clifton, 2009; Wyllie de Echeverria & Thornton, 2019). To date, there are no studies that offer a framework for including TEK in BC Parks planning and management. The only study that discusses the use of TEK in BC Parks was conducted by Andrew Kadykalo et al. (2021), who interviewed and surveyed BC government decision-makers from a variety of ministries. Their focus was not specific to BC Parks management and did not include First Nations' perspectives. My research will address this literature gap, with an emphasis on the ways in which socio-political factors influence the use of TEK in BC Parks.

As direct stakeholders in environmental management plans, Indigenous Peoples and their TEK are essential for strengthening and improving BC Parks' resource and environmental management. In the proposed project, I will be working with Gitksan First Nation to explore the application of TEK in BC Parks management plan development. In order to combat environmental degradation, a worsening regional biodiversity crisis (Gayton, 2008; Moola et al., 2007; Westwood et al., 2019), and support reconciliation in BC, park managers must prioritize Indigenous knowledge and leadership. Indigenous knowledge holders should be recognized as experts by park managers and invited as co-creators of management solutions.

The Research Project aims to 1) identify historical and contemporary socio-political barriers to the uptake of Indigenous knowledge in park planning and management, and 2) to help overcome these barriers in developing a framework to integrate TEK that prioritizes reconciliation and self-determination in park management plan development.

Specifically, the project is designed to address the questions:

- What historical and current social, political, and economic factors influence understandings and uptake of TEK in park planning and management?

- What values and beliefs about WSK and TEK are held within the institutional culture of BC Parks?
- How do BC Parks employees incorporate or exclude TEK in park planning and management?
- How do Chiefs, Elders and Parks personnel view self-determination and reconciliation in terms of park planning and management?

2. Research Methods

- a) In the fall of 2022, I plan to contextualize my research and inform my data collection tools through a discourse analysis of government documents. I will read and analyze BC Parks management plans and familiarize myself with BC Parks guidelines and policies for consultation, planning and management. The documents I will discursively analyze are: the Ross Lake Park Management Plan (2000); the Bishop Bay – Monkey Beach Conservancy Management Plan (2022); British Columbia’s Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management First Nations Consultation Guidelines (2004); British Columbia’s Updated Procedures for Meeting Legal Obligations When Consulting First Nations (2010); BC Parks Strategic Management Planning Policy (2013); and BC Parks Protected Area Management Planning Process Manual (2016). I chose these documents because analyzing BC Parks management plans, policies and guidelines will help me to understand how planners and managers include/exclude First Nations in making decisions about parkland areas.
- b) I plan to conduct individual, semi-structured interviews with Gitksan First Nation Chiefs and Elders (n=15), and BC Parks staff (n=11) during the late fall and winter of 2022. Interviews will be used to collect information regarding Chiefs’ and Elders’ perspectives on their roles in park planning and management processes, and BC Parks planners’ and managers’ use and perception of TEK. Participants will be selected through purposive convenience sampling (i.e., from those individuals already known to the researcher) and snowball sampling (i.e., additional individuals suggested by participants). Due to ongoing, community health restrictions and accessibility barriers, and for practical reasons of time, distance and cost, I will conduct my interviews online, through the Zoom video conferencing platform.
- c) I will employ two interview guides—one for interviews with BC Parks staff, and another for interviews with First Nations (see Appendix A - **Thesis Proposal**). Both guides include open-ended questions to gently steer interviews towards the project’s research questions, yet still offer space for flexible discussions. My interview questions will aim to collect information from BC Parks staff on social, political, and economic barriers to Indigenous inclusion in park planning and management, BC Parks policies and training for work with First Nations, and perspectives on TEK and reconciliation in park planning and management. My interview questions for Chiefs and Elders will focus on perceptions of BC Parks management planning and consultation processes, historical and current inclusion/exclusion in BC Parks management plans, and identifying strategies for meaningful engagement, reconciliation and self-determination in park management. I anticipate that each interview will take about one hour to complete. Prior to conducting

any interviews, I will send all participants an information letter and consent form (see Appendix A - **Thesis Proposal**) electronically, to ensure fully informed consent regarding the project's rationale, purpose, questions, methods, and protocol for the management of shared information. If I have not received a signed consent form electronically in advance of the interview, prior to beginning each semi-structured interview, I will introduce my project by reviewing the information letter and consent form and request consent for audio-recording by way of hand written signature. I will transcribe interviews verbatim and I will provide each person I interview with the opportunity to review their interview and suggest additions or deletions to the transcript. I will only use information with informed consent, and interviewees can choose to remove themselves from the research at any point in the process.

- d) I will use thematic analysis to code the interview transcripts. I will sort and label the data to identify and assign meaning, using descriptive, interpretive, and conceptual codes (Cope, 2021). Next, I will review the coded data, looking for salient, significant and common themes. This re-reading of the texts in already coded segments allows for the identification of underlying patterns that were not obvious during the initial reading of the texts (Saldaña, 2021). I will then refine these themes by reducing the data again into data sets that represent sets of significant themes. Finally, I will organize these sets into similar groupings, adding a relational element to the interpretation of data (Cope, 2021), which become the thematic networks (Aronson, 1995; Braun and Clarke, 2012; Saldaña, 2012). I will use thematic analysis and method triangulation to identify factors that are perceived to impede and facilitate the use of TEK in park planning and management and develop a framework to integrate TEK that prioritizes reconciliation and self-determination in park management plan development.

As a graduate student, I will be involved in all aspects of this research. No other student researchers will be involved. Dr. Jennifer Wigglesworth, my supervisor, will oversee the research methods and process to ensure reliability. My committee members, primarily my supervisor, will advise in the process of conducting and analyzing the interviews.

3. Possible Risks

The potential risk of the individual interviews is no greater than what participants would experience in everyday conversations, as the interview scripts will not include specific questions related to sensitive or personal issues; however, it is possible, given the open nature of interview discussions that a participant might raise sensitive or personal issues. Should any individual interview participant show signs of distress or discomfort, I will pause the interview and ask if the participant feels able to continue. I will assure the participants that they may withdraw from the discussion or withdraw from the project entirely. If a participant were to withdraw, I would remove all of their comments from the interview transcript up until the time of the publication of results. I will also be prepared to offer contact information about relevant local support services. No personal identifying information will be collected and pseudonyms will be used for participants. This is written into the Letter of Information.

Appendix C: BC Parks Approval of Research Project and Research Activities

Revised Thesis Proposal Sections for Review and Approval

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White, Nancy N ENV:EX <Nancy.White@gov.bc.ca>

📧 👍 ↩️ ⏪ ⏩ ⋮

To: Sophia Graham

Thu 9/8/2022 8:54 AM

Cc: Brown, David R ENV:EX <David.R.Brown@gov.bc.ca>

Hi Sophia,

Thanks for considering our comments on the proposal. BC Parks is supportive of your research and is interested in participating in the interview process you have described. Some of the staff can still be quite busy in the late fall, so it's recommended that you schedule your interviews well in advance. Please be aware that we will likely need to route any communications such as interview transcripts through our government communications team before we can release them for your project. We look forward to working with you.

Thank you,

Nancy White

Planning Section Head – Skeena West Section

BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails

Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Smithers, BC

Ph (250) 876-7111 Cell (250) 643-2353



BC Parks

Appendix D: Research Ethics Board Approvals



RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

MEMORANDUM

To: Sophia Graham
CC: Jennifer Wigglesworth

From: Chelsea Pelletier, Vice-Chair,
Research Ethics Board

Date: January 11, 2023

Re: E2022.1018.058.00
Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Northwestern BC Parks: A Framework for
Socially Responsible Environmental Planning and Management

Thank you for submitting revisions to the Research Ethics Board (REB) regarding the above-noted proposal. Your revisions have been approved.

We are pleased to issue approval for the above-named study for a period of 12 months from the date of this letter. Continuation beyond that date will require further review and renewal of REB approval. Any changes or amendments to the protocol or consent form must be approved by the REB.

Please refer to the [Chair Bulletins](#) found on the REB webpage for updates on *in-person* interactions with participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. If questions remain, please do not hesitate to email reb@unbc.ca.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Pelletier', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dr. Chelsea Pelletier, Vice-Chair,
Research Ethics Board

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

MEMORANDUM

To: Sophia Graham
CC: Jennifer Wigglesworth

From: Chelsea Pelletier, Vice-Chair,
Research Ethics Board

Date: March 15, 2023

Re: **E2022.1018.058.00(a)**
Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Northwestern BC Parks: A Framework for
Socially Responsible Environmental Planning and Management

Thank you for submitting a request for amendments to the Research Ethics Board (REB) regarding the above-noted proposal. The amendments have been approved. Prior to conducting any interviews at the BC Parks North Coast Skeena Regional Headquarters Office (Nora Building) or the Gitksan Huwilt Government Treaty Office, please also obtain site permissions from those locations and provide copies of same by email to reb@unbc.ca.

The amendments have been approved until the date as provided in the original protocol approval for this project (i.e., January 10, 2024). Continuation beyond that date will require further review and renewal of REB approval. Any further changes or amendments to the protocol or consent form must be approved by the REB.

Please refer to the [Chair Bulletins](#) found on the REB webpage for updates on *in-person* interactions with participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. If questions remain, please do not hesitate to email reb@unbc.ca.

Good luck with continuation of your research.

Sincerely,



Dr. Chelsea Pelletier, Vice-Chair,
Research Ethics Board

Appendix E: Gitxsan Research Information Letter and Participant Consent Form



Information Letter

Project Title: Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Northwestern BC Parks: A Framework for Socially Responsible Environmental Planning and Management

Who is conducting the study?

The research is being conducted by a UNBC Natural Resources and Environmental Studies graduate student, supervised by Dr. Jennifer Wigglesworth. This research will contribute to Sophia's Master's thesis, and will therefore be part of a public document.

Graduate Student Researcher:

Sophia Graham (she/her)
MA Student – Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (Outdoor Recreation, Conservation and Tourism)
University of Northern British Columbia
Lheidli T'enneh Territory
Prince George, BC, V2N 4Z9
grahams0@unbc.ca
T. 250-279-5210

Faculty Supervisor:

Jennifer Wigglesworth, Ph.D. (she/her)
Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management
Ecosystem Science and Management Department
University of Northern British Columbia
Lheidli T'enneh Territory
jennifer.wigglesworth@unbc.ca
T. 250-960-5659

Who is funding the study?

The study is being funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, BC Recreation and Parks Association and Parks Canada. These funding agencies are not imposing any restrictions on access to or disclosure of information.

Purpose of Project

The study will explore the role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in BC Parks management plan development within Northwestern British Columbia. The project has two goals: 1) to identify historical and current socio-political barriers to the uptake of Indigenous Knowledge in park planning and management, and 2) to help overcome these barriers in developing a framework to integrate TEK that prioritizes reconciliation and self-determination in park management plan development. This work responds to the federal government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and British Columbia's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Why are you being asked to take part in this study, and what would you be asked to do?

You are being asked to participate in the study because of your membership in Gitxsan First Nation. Participating in this research project will involve an individual interview using Zoom video conferencing platform.

I will conduct an individual interview with you using Zoom video conferencing platform to ask you about: your thoughts on BC Parks and their park management planning and consultation process; BC Parks historical and current inclusion or exclusion of your Nation in park management planning; your thoughts on the role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), oral history and other aspects of culture in park management planning; and the role of reconciliation and self-determination in parks and park management. This interview should take 60 minutes and the transcript review will take approximately 60 minutes.

Research Ethics

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. You are able to withdraw from this study at any time and you are free to not answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any information you have provided up to that point will also be withdrawn and securely destroyed. There are no consequences for withdrawing.

With your permission, I would like to audio record the individual Zoom interview to help with transcribing, notetaking and to improve the accuracy of information. I do not need to record any personal identifying information about you, and I will not be attributing specific comments by name because pseudonyms will be used. However, I cannot guarantee that people will not be able to identify you.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

UNBC's Zoom license will be used for this study. Using UNBC's Zoom license ensures enhanced security features and meets provincial privacy review standards. Your individual interview contributions will not be seen, or heard, by anyone but me and my supervisor. After your interview, I will transcribe interviews verbatim and provide each person I interview with the opportunity to review their interview and suggest additions or deletions to the transcript. The information will be stored on a secure computer for the development of a thesis paper for the completion of my degree. Upon completion, this thesis paper would be documented in the

UNBC Library Thesis Collection database. I may, thereafter, and only with participants' consent, publish portions of this paper. Once the data has been analyzed and published, all interview recordings and any identifying information will be deleted.

Research Benefits and Risks

This study would benefit Gitxsan First Nation by exploring how to improve BC Parks consultation with First Nations and learning how the government can take a more respectful and inclusive approach towards Nation interests in park planning and management. Discussions with Elders and Chiefs will provide this study with empirical evidence to inform a framework for integrating TEK into BC Park management. This framework would aim to center First Nations interests and knowledge in decision-making practices that concern their land and People.

I do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you. Some of the questions I ask might upset you. Please let me know if you have concerns. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to. If, at any point in the study, you feel uncomfortable or upset and wish to end your participation, please notify me immediately and your wishes will be respected. If you were to withdraw from the study, I would remove all of your comments from the interview transcript up until the time of the publication of results. I will also be prepared to provide contact information about relevant local support services. The potential risk of the individual interview is no greater than what you would experience in everyday conversations, as the interview script will not include specific questions related to sensitive or personal issues; however, it is possible, given the open nature of interview discussions, that you may raise sensitive or personal issues. I have listed relevant support services on the last page of this Information Letter.

Indigenous Data Management, Ownership and Research Agreement with Gitxsan First Nation

The Principal Investigator is committed to adhering to Gitxsan Nation research protocols, the Assembly of First Nations Ethics Guide on Research and Traditional Knowledge (2016), and the First Nations Information Governance Centre's Principles on Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP Principles).

As outlined in the Principal Investigator's Research Agreement with Gitxsan First Nation, Gitxsan Nation will retain ownership of all Indigenous Data. Indigenous Data is defined in the Research Agreement as: information and data collected from Gitxsan First Nation's community members in the course of the research. Indigenous Data includes Traditional Knowledge. I will maintain a reciprocal and meaningful relationship with Gitxsan First Nation. Gitxsan Nation is involved in determining the priorities and desired outcomes of the research project. I will seek Gitxsan Huwilt Government's guidance on how this project's findings will be shared and delivered to the community and larger audiences. I will be transparent with the Nation throughout the research process and protect Nation community interests, information and privacy. I will collect, create, use, disclose, store and/or destroy Indigenous Data in the manner set out in the Research Agreement with Gitxsan Nation and in accordance with the requirements/approvals established by the University of Northern British Columbia Research

Ethics Board and the Tri-Council Policy (TCPS 2, 2018). The Principal Investigator wants to recognize the contributions of interviewees and the Nation (when this is desired by them). Therefore, an invitation for co-authorship of publications is extended to the Huwilp, Elders, and Simogyet who share their knowledge in this Research Project. An invitation for co-authorship is located at the bottom of the consent form.

Participant Agreement

If you agree to participate in the individual Zoom interview, please complete the informed consent form at the end of this document.

Contact

If you would like further information on the research results, please contact myself, Sophia Graham (grahams0@unbc.ca) or Jennifer Wigglesworth (jennifer.wigglesworth@unbc.ca). Our names and telephone numbers are listed at the top of the first page of the Information Letter. A copy of the research results will be provided to you upon your request.

Who can you contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the UNBC Office of Research at 250-960-6735 or by e-mail at reb@unbc.ca.

Study Results

To share the results of my research, I will produce a final report that will be distributed to each participant. I will also prepare a conference presentation for the BC Protected Areas Research Forum and BC Recreation and Parks Association Symposium. A full copy of the research results will be provided to you upon your request.

Thank you!

Sophia Graham

Appended List of Services for Participants to Access

Gitxsan Health Society:

7700 Sik-e-dakh Rd.

Glen Vowell, BC

V0J 1Y0

Phone: 250-842-6876

Gitxsan Child and Family Services:

4215 Government St.

Hazelton, BC

V0K 1Y0

Phone: 250-842-2258

First Nations Health Authority:

501 – 100 Park Royal South
Coast Salish Territory
West Vancouver, BC
V7T 1A2
Phone: 604-693-6500
Toll-free: 1-866-913-0033
Email: info@fnha.ca
Professional Counselling Services:
Phone: 1-877-477-0775

The Crisis Prevention, Intervention, and Information Centre for Northern BC:

2700 Queensway #100
Prince George, BC
V2L 1N2
Northern British Columbia Crisis Line:
Phone: 250-563-1214
Toll-free: 1-888-562-1214
British Columbia Suicide Line:
Phone: 1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-784-2433

KUU-US Crisis Line Society:

4589 Adelaide St.
Port Alberni, BC
V9Y 6N2
Phone: 250-723-4050
Toll-free: 1-800-588-8717

National Residential School Crisis Line:

Toll-free: 1-866-925-4419

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Crisis Line:

Toll-free: 1-844-413-6649

First Nations, Inuit and Métis Hope for Wellness Help Line:

Toll-free: 1-855-242-3310

Participant Consent and Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study or to end your participation at any time. You may choose to withdraw from the study without giving a reason and without any negative impact. If you have already provided some information, such as a partial interview, please inform me whether you want that contribution to remain in the study or to be removed.

Any data and/or information you have provided for this project will be treated in the following manner:

- Your participation in the project is entirely voluntary and you are of legal age to provide informed consent;
- You are free to withdraw from the project at any time without disadvantage;
- Personal identifying information from any notes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project or within two years;
- I will not attach your name or any other obvious identifier to the information you provide; There is no remuneration or compensation to be made for your participation, nor will the information provided be used for any commercial purpose;
- You understand that only me, the principal researcher, will have access to the information provided and that it will be stored securely for two years and then destroyed;
- Data/information that is collected will be used to develop a final report, workshop and other presentations;
- You agree that the interview will be audio recorded to improve the accuracy of information.

CONSENT

I have read or been described the information presented in the Information Letter about the project:

YES NO

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this project and to receive additional details I requested.

YES NO

I understand that if I agree to participate in this project, I may withdraw from the project at any time up until the report completion, with no consequences of any kind.

YES NO

I have been given a copy of this form.

YES NO

I understand that while the intent is to maintain confidentiality of participants by removing participants' identifying information the nature of participation in an interview with relatively few participants means that anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

YES NO

I agree to be recorded

YES

NO

Please provide an email address to review a copy of your transcript:

Please check here if you would like to receive a PDF copy of the final report:

Please check here if you would like to be a co-author on publications:

If you would like to be a co-author on publications, please provide the name you wish to be used in publications here (this can be your name or hereditary/Chief name):

Signature:

Name of Participant (Printed):

Date:

Thank you!

Sophia Graham

Appendix F: BC Parks Research Information Letter and Participant Consent Form



Information Letter

Project Title: Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Northwestern BC Parks: A Framework for Socially Responsible Environmental Planning and Management

Who is conducting the study?

The research is being conducted by a UNBC Natural Resources and Environmental Studies graduate student, supervised by Dr. Jennifer Wigglesworth. This research will contribute to Sophia's Master's thesis, and will therefore be part of a public document.

Graduate Student Researcher:

Sophia Graham (she/her)
MA Student – Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (Outdoor Recreation, Conservation and Tourism)
University of Northern British Columbia
Lheidli T'enneh Territory
Prince George, BC, V2N 4Z9
grahams0@unbc.ca
T. 250-279-5210

Faculty Supervisor:

Jennifer Wigglesworth, Ph.D. (she/her)
Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management
Ecosystem Science and Management Department
University of Northern British Columbia
Lheidli T'enneh Territory
jennifer.wigglesworth@unbc.ca
T. 250-960-5659

Who is funding the study?

The study is being funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, BC Recreation and Parks Association and Parks Canada. These funding agencies are not imposing any restrictions on access to or disclosure of information.

Purpose of Project

The study will explore the role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in BC Parks management plan development within Northwestern British Columbia. The project has two goals: 1) to identify historical and current socio-political barriers to the uptake of Indigenous Knowledge in park planning and management, and 2) to help overcome these barriers in developing a framework to integrate TEK that prioritizes reconciliation and self-determination in park management plan development. This work responds to the federal government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and British Columbia's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Why are you being asked to take part in this study, and what would you be asked to do?

You are being asked to participate in the study because of your employment with BC Parks. Participating in this research project will involve an individual interview using Zoom video conferencing platform.

I will conduct an individual interview with you using Zoom video conferencing platform to ask you about: your job at BC Parks; BC Parks policies and training for work with First Nations; how your work involves or does not involve First Nations; your thoughts on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), park management decision-making, and reconciliation in parks and park management. This interview should take 60 minutes and the transcript review will take approximately 60 minutes.

Research Ethics

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. You are able to withdraw from this study at any time and you are free to not answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any information you have provided up to that point will also be withdrawn and securely destroyed. There are no consequences for withdrawing.

With your permission, I would like to audio record the individual Zoom interview to help with transcribing, notetaking and to improve the accuracy of information. I do not need to record any personal identifying information about you, and I will not be attributing specific comments by name because pseudonyms will be used. However, I cannot guarantee that people will not be able to identify you.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

UNBC's Zoom license will be used for this study. Using UNBC's Zoom license ensures enhanced security features and meets provincial privacy review standards. Your individual interview contributions will not be seen, or heard, by anyone but me and my supervisor. After your interview, I will transcribe interviews verbatim and provide each person I interview with the opportunity to review their interview and suggest additions or deletions to the transcript. The information will be stored on a secure computer for the development of a thesis paper for the completion of my degree. Upon completion, this thesis paper would be documented in the UNBC Library Thesis Collection database. I may, thereafter, and only with participants' consent,

publish portions of this paper. Once the data has been analyzed and published, all interview recordings and any identifying information will be deleted.

Research Benefits and Risks

This study would benefit BC Parks employees by exploring consultation processes with First Nations and inclusive approaches for involving First Nation interests in park management plan development.

I do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you. Some of the questions I ask might upset you. Please let me know if you have concerns. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to. If, at any point in the study, you feel uncomfortable or upset and wish to end your participation, please notify me immediately and your wishes will be respected. If you were to withdraw from the study, I would remove all of your comments from the interview transcript up until the time of the publication of results. I will also be prepared to provide contact information about relevant local support services. The potential risk of the individual interview is no greater than what you would experience in everyday conversations, as the interview script will not include specific questions related to sensitive or personal issues; however, it is possible, given the open nature of interview discussions, that you may raise sensitive or personal issues. I have listed relevant support services on the last page of this Information Letter.

Participant Agreement

If you agree to participate in the individual Zoom interview, please complete the informed consent form at the end of this document.

Contact

If you would like further information on the research results, please contact myself, Sophia Graham (grahams0@unbc.ca) or Jennifer Wigglesworth (jennifer.wigglesworth@unbc.ca). Our names and telephone numbers are listed at the top of the first page of the Information Letter. A copy of the research results will be provided to you upon your request.

Who can you contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the UNBC Office of Research at 250-960-6735 or by e-mail at reb@unbc.ca.

Study Results

To share the results of my research, I will produce a final report that will be distributed to each participant. I will also prepare a presentation for the BC Protected Areas Research Forum and BC Recreation and Parks Association Symposium. A full copy of the research results will be provided to you upon your request.

Thank you!

Sophia Graham

Appended List of Services for Participants to Access

The Crisis Prevention, Intervention, and Information Centre for Northern BC:

2700 Queensway #100

Prince George, BC

V2L 1N2

Northern British Columbia Crisis Line:

Phone: 250-563-1214

Toll-free: 1-888-562-1214

British Columbia Suicide Line:

Phone: 1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-784-2433

The Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC:

Mental Health Support Line:

Toll-free: 310-6789 (no area code needed)

The Northern Health Authority:

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Programs by Community:

Accessible through the website: <https://www.northernhealth.ca/services/mental-health-substance-use/services-by-community>

Participant Consent and Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study or to end your participation at any time. You may choose to withdraw from the study without giving a reason and without any negative impact. If you have already provided some information, such as a partial interview, please inform me whether you want that contribution to remain in the study or to be removed.

Any data and/or information you have provided for this project will be treated in the following manner:

- Your participation in the project is entirely voluntary and you are of legal age to provide informed consent;
- You are free to withdraw from the project at any time without disadvantage;
- Personal identifying information from any notes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project or within two years;
- I will not attach your name or any other obvious identifier to the information you provide; There is no remuneration or compensation to be made for your participation, nor will the information provided be used for any commercial purpose;

- You understand that only me, the principal researcher, will have access to the information provided and that it will be stored securely for two years and then destroyed;
- Data/information that is collected will be used to develop a final report, workshop and other presentations;
- You agree that the interview will be audio recorded to improve the accuracy of information.

CONSENT

I have read or been described the information presented in the Information Letter about the project:

YES NO

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this project and to receive additional details I requested.

YES NO

I understand that if I agree to participate in this project, I may withdraw from the project at any time up until the report completion, with no consequences of any kind.

YES NO

I have been given a copy of this form.

YES NO

I understand that while the intent is to maintain confidentiality of participants by removing participants' identifying information the nature of participation in an interview with relatively few participants means that anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

YES NO

I agree to be recorded

YES NO

Please provide an email address to review a copy of your transcript:

Please check here if you would like to receive a PDF copy of the final report:

Signature:

Name of Participant (Printed):

Date:

Thank you!

Sophia Graham

Appendix G: Interview Questions for BC Parks Staff

1. What are the roles and duties of your current position with BC Parks?
 - a) What decisions do you make within the parks you work in/plan/manage?

- b) What other park agencies or BC Parks regions have you worked for? How do you find working for the North Coast Skeena Region compares to these? What makes working for the North Coast Skeena Region unique?
- c) If you have not worked for other park agencies/BC Parks regions, how does working for BC Parks compare with your previous work experiences? How do you find working in the North compares with other work experiences you have had elsewhere? What makes working in the North unique?

2. How might park management plan decisions be influenced by economic factors / financial barriers?

- a) How might park management plan decisions be influenced by the social climate? (political factors)
- b) How might your own experiences and values influence park management plan decisions?

Definitions provided:

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) – Leanne Simpson (Anishinaabe scholar) refers to all types of knowledge about the environment derived from relationships, experiences, story-telling, participating in ceremonies, the oral tradition, experimentation and observation, from the Elders, children, or from teachers in the plant and animal worlds. TEK is ancestral knowledge that is passed down orally through generations and is based on culture, history, spirituality, subjectivity, empiricism and induction.

Western scientific knowledge (WSK) is a body of knowledge, associated with Western society, that is purported to be based on reason, scientific laws, evidence, facts, universality, objectivity, rationalism and deduction.

3. How does your work involve First Nations?

- a) What role (if any) does Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), information or data play in your work / decision-making for park management plans?
- b) What role (if any) does Western scientific knowledge (WSK), information or data play in your work / decision-making for park management plans?

4. What challenges do you face incorporating TEK into your work?

- a) What are the struggles of getting TEK?
- b) What are the struggles of implementing TEK in park planning or management?

5. What cultural training have you participated in regarding the use of use of TEK? (e.g., workshops)

- a) What formal and/or informal training have you received regarding the history of parks you work in/plan/manage?
- b) What formal and/or informal training have you received regarding the First Nations/cultural history of parks you work in/plan/manage?
- c) What training have you received for collaborating with First Nations?

Definitions provided:

Reconciliation (TRC) is establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada. For that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior.

Self-determination is defined as: a First Nation's right to self-government of their lands, territories and resources.

6. How would you define the role of reconciliation in your work/workplace?
 - a) What do you think is the role of reconciliation in park management planning/ plan development?
 - b) What do you think is the role of self-determination in park management planning / plan development?
7. The province recently adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. Have you seen any changes as a result of this? If so, can you elaborate upon this?
 - a) How has the province's recent adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act changed your roles and duties within the department?
8. What changes would you recommend for further incorporating First Nations and their TEK in park management plan development?
9. Is there anything we have not talked about yet that you would like to share?

Appendix H: Interview Questions for First Nations Chiefs and Elders

11. What do you think of BC Parks?
 - a) What does your family think of BC Parks? What does your Wilp/House or Clan think of BC Parks?
 - b) How should your family's knowledge and perspectives be included in BC Parks' management plans?

2. How has your family and Wilp, Clan or Community been involved in BC Parks' management planning?

- a) What factors might influence meaningful engagement with BC Parks?
- b) What factors could improve meaningful engagement with BC Parks?

3. How would you describe your Wilp's relationship with BC Parks?

- a) How should your family's culture and history be acknowledged in parks?

4. What do you think of BC Parks consultation process?

- a) What works well, and/or what could be improved?
- b) What advice would you give park staff to improve their work with First Nations?

Definition provided:

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) refers to all types of knowledge about the environment derived from relationships, experiences, story-telling, participating in ceremonies, the oral tradition, experimentation and observation, from the Elders, children, or from teachers in the plant and animal worlds. TEK is ancestral knowledge that is passed down orally through generations and is based on culture, history, spirituality, subjectivity, empiricism and induction.

5. How can TEK, oral history, and other aspects of culture support park management plans?

- a) What is the role of TEK in park management plans?
- b) How should TEK be incorporated into park management plans?
- c) How could TEK improve park management plans? Could you provide an example?
- d) What would you like to see happen in terms of BC Parks consultation, planning and management of parks in your Laxyip/Territory?

6. How would you define reconciliation?

- a) How would you define reconciliation in terms of park planning and management in BC?
- b) What steps are BC Parks taking, or could BC Parks be taking, to work towards reconciliation with First Nations?
- c) What do you think is the role of reconciliation in park planning and management?

Definition provided:

Reconciliation (TRC) [may not be needed] is establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada. For that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior.

Self-determination is defined as: a First Nation's right to self-government of their lands, territories and resources.

7. What do you think is the role of self-determination in park planning and management?

- a) How has your Nation's relationship with BC Parks changed since their implementation of reconciliation policies? (e.g., UNDRIP, DRIPA, TRC Calls to Action)

8. Is there anything we have not talked about yet that you would like to share?

Appendix I: Interview Preparation Material

Zoom Interview Protocol Form	
1. Before Interview	<i>Technology and Related Materials</i> ✓ Download Zoom Video Communications software before the interview

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Set up Zoom Video Communications software to minimise technical difficulties during the interview ✓ We suggest calling a friend on Zoom prior to the interview, using both audio and video, to familiarise yourself with the software <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This will ensure your device does not have a problem using the videoconference software ✓ Ensure good internet connection ✓ When possible, join from a wired connection to reduce challenges with internet quality ✓ Use headphones/earbuds during the interview to protect your privacy and ensure good audio ✓ 15 minutes before start time, turn on computer and join the video-call; apply and connect headset/earbuds; test both audio and video ✓ Click on the Zoom Meeting link in your email or calendar and the meeting will open <p><i>Environment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be in a private and quiet room with a locked door. If outside distractions are a concern, put sign on outside of door requesting quiet. Minimise other noises as much as possible
2. During Interview	<p><i>Process—General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allow audio and video (unless you prefer audio only) ✓ Use headphones/earbuds ✓ Speak clearly and slowly

Appendix J: Codebook

Codebook: Code Categories and Definitions

The final group of codes that make up the complete codebook used for qualitative data analysis. Codes were compiled and then exported from NVivo as a codebook.

Name	Description	Files	References
Application of TEK and First Nations Inclusion	Refers to statements on how TEK is currently being included and/or excluded by BC Parks employees in park planning and management. It will also include general discussions about Nation engagement and collaboration. This code will include current approaches, strategies, practices, policies, and procedures for including TEK in BC Parks but will not include historical, social, political, or economic discussions regarding the use of TEK in BC Parks.	24	78
TEK Inclusion	This code is a child/sub-code of “Application of TEK and First Nations Inclusion.” It refers to statements about how TEK is currently being included in park planning and management.	9	22
Recommendations for TEK and First Nations Inclusion	This code is a child/sub-code of “Application of TEK and First Nations Inclusion.” It refers to recommendations for the inclusion of TEK and First Nations in BC Parks management planning. These recommendations can come from First Nations or BC Parks interviews.	20	56
Application of WSK	Refers to statements which discuss the application of Western science in park management planning or management plan decisions. It is different from the application of TEK and First Nations inclusion. Examples of WSK application are archaeological studies for parks/heritage sites or wildlife/bird surveys to support and inform decision-making in parks.	9	36
BC Parks Policy	Refers to statements regarding BC Parks policy, procedures and guiding principles. This does not include provincial laws like DRIPA but does include BC Parks policies,	12	206

Name	Description	Files	References
	procedures and guiding principles for application and use of TEK and the consultation process required by BC Parks for consulting with First Nations (e.g., Strategic Engagement Agreements, Reconciliation Agreements, Collaborative Management Agreements, Consultation Agreements, etc.).		
BC Parks Statutory Decision-making	This code is a child/sub-code of “BC Parks Policy.” It refers to how BC Parks employees make decisions, who makes what decisions and the process of decision-making in park management planning. This code is different from “Application of TEK” and specifically pertains to discussions regarding decision-making.	16	47
Indigenous Relations Branch	This code is a child/sub-code of “BC Parks Policy”. It refers to statements discussing BC Parks Indigenous Relations Branch/Division. This branch is based out of Victoria. This code is not related to BC Parks consultation or management planning process, which are separate codes.	7	18
BC Parks Programs	This code is a child/sub-code of “BC Parks Policy.” It refers to statements discussing the various programs at BC Parks. For example, BC Parks has a recreation program, conservation program, Land Guardian program, signage program, etc. This code is different from WSK and TEK values or beliefs.	13	22
Consultation	This code is a child/sub-code of “BC Parks Policy.” It refers to the policies and processes necessitated by BC Parks for consultation procedures with First Nations. It includes the engagement strategies that are required by BC Parks and factors that necessitate consultation (i.e., potential for adverse effects and strength of Land Claims). It is different from challenges to incorporating TEK, although consultation can be challenging, this is a different code. It is also different from meaningful	23	119

Name	Description	Files	References
	engagement.		
Park Management Planning Process	Refers to statements discussing the management planning process that is used by BC Parks planning team and recommendations to improve it. This is different from “BC Parks Employee Roles and Duties,” as it refers specifically to the management planning process and includes suggestions made by employees who are not a part of BC Parks planning team.	14	85
Background Information	This is a child/sub-code of “Park Management Planning Process.” It refers to statements discussing background information in park management plans which is not available to the public but serves park managers in their decision-making and anticipated governance of a park.	6	10
Conservancies	This is a child/sub-code of “Management Planning Process.” It refers to this specific BC Parks park designation, which is different from Class A, B, C Parks and Ecological Reserves or Protected Areas. This designation was created specifically for areas with First Nations interests and to protect cultural values of an area.	14	17
Cultural Zoning	This is a child/sub-code of “Management Planning Process.” Cultural Zoning is part of BC Parks Zoning framework.	8	19
Recommendations for Improving Park Management Planning Process	This is a child/sub-code of “Management Planning Process.” Refers to statements outlining any recommendations to improve the park management planning process. This is different from Recommended Training Procedures and Recommendations for TEK and First Nations Inclusion. This code must refer to recommendations specific to the process of park management planning.	10	39
Challenges to Incorporating TEK	Refers to any statements discussing the challenges to incorporating TEK and First Nations inclusion. For example, this may be competing interests, inconsistent	21	144

Name	Description	Files	References
	engagement protocols (i.e., different binding agreements with First Nations), previous experiences of racism or discrimination, and staff capacity to work with First Nations and consider their knowledges/perspectives. This code does not refer to the application of TEK or meaningful engagement or recommendations for improvement.		
Inconsistent Engagement Protocols	This code is a child/sub-code of “Challenges to Incorporating TEK.” It refers to statements regarding BC Parks inconsistent engagement protocols/policies for engaging with First Nations. This does not refer to BC Parks training procedures regarding engagement or consultation or employee roles and duties.	7	33
Lack of Engagement	This is a child/sub-code of “Challenges to Incorporating TEK.” Refers to statements outlining the lack of engagement had by First Nations with BC Parks. This code does not include recommendations for including TEK or Indigenous perspectives in the future and is meant to identify statements that indicate BC Parks lack of engagement with a First Nation.	20	41
Overlapping Territory	Child/sub-code of “Challenges to incorporating...” Refers to overlapping Territory of First Nations which has not yet been determined by court proceedings or the BC Treaty Commission. This does not include Territory/Land Acknowledgements and is specific to the conflict/tension which can arise from territorial overlap when working with/engaging with BC Parks. This code may include discussions of the BC Treaty Commission Process but is different from BC Parks policy.	8	21
Staff Retention and Capacity	Child/sub-code of “Challenges...” Refers to statements discussing the capacity of BC Parks and First Nations to work together and collaborate. Capacity relies on staffing numbers and staff retention. Seasonal employees and high employee turnover	16	49

Name	Description	Files	References
	leads to a ‘revolving door’ of employees which makes building relationships difficult. This does not refer to BC Parks employee roles and duties, policies, and refers specifically to staffing levels of both BC Parks and First Nations and capacity for engagement.		
Treaty Negotiations	Child/sub-code refers to discussions about current and past Treaty negotiations with Northwestern First Nations. This does not include statements regarding “Overlapping Territory,” as this is a different code which indicates statements highlighting conflict or tension regarding Territory which have not yet been resolved in court/Treaty negotiations. This code refers to Treaty Negotiations themselves and more generally, as well as finalizing a Treaty. This is different from asserting self-determination.	12	18
Gitxsan Culture, Law, Traditions	Refers to statements about Gitxsan culture, law, practices, traditions, generational knowledge, values, beliefs and storytelling. The meanings of these statements are constructed by Gitxsan cultural background/teachings. This does not include general statements about First Nations/ Indigenous Peoples culture, law, practices, traditions, generational knowledge, values, beliefs and storytelling more broadly, and is specific to Gitxsan First Nation culture.	17	106
Social, Political and Economic Factors	Refers to statements about historical and current social, political, and economic factors that influence the use of TEK in park planning and management. This code includes specific references to social, political and economic factors impacting TEK integration (according to the subcategories of this code) but it does not include general statements about incorporating TEK or participants' values and beliefs about TEK.	25	147
Current Economic	This code is a sub/child-code of “Influential Factors.” It refers to statements about	10	10

Name	Description	Files	References
	current economic factors that influence TEK integration. For example, available funding for a program or action, or new developments in collaborating with First Nations to develop economic opportunities such as jobs. These factors may be related to but are different from BC Parks decision-making.		
Current Political	This code is a sub/child-code of “Influential Factors.” It refers to statements about current political factors that influence TEK integration. For example, the political office in parliament and how the NDP might be affecting decisions in parks or how current events have impacted the roles and duties of employees. These factors may be related to but are different from BC Parks decision-making and employee roles and duties.	20	43
Current Social	This code is a sub/child-code of “Influential Factors.” It refers to statements about current social factors that influence TEK integration. For example, social pressures on parks employees or the social climate which underpins changing relationships with First Nations. These factors may be related to but are different from BC Parks decision-making and TEK and WSK values and beliefs.	22	27
Historical Economic	This code is a sub/child-code of “Influential Factors.” It refers to statements about historical economic factors that influence TEK integration. For example, previous funding available for plans in parks, park zoning or designation decisions which were made in light of resource industries, or opportunities that were designed in parks to generate income in parks. These factors may be related to but are different from BC Parks decision-making.	11	12
Historical Political	This code is a sub/child-code of “Influential Factors.” It refers to statements about historical political factors that influence TEK integration. For example, colonial laws	18	16

Name	Description	Files	References
	and regulations that restricted and undermined First Nations inclusion. Or, the prior distribution of responsibilities under different ministries. These factors may be related to but are different from BC Parks decision-making.		
Historical Social	This code is a sub/child-code of “Influential Factors.” It refers to statements about historical social factors that influence TEK integration. For example, social tensions between Indigenous groups and government and how First Nations were treated by the government in previous engagement opportunities. These factors may be related to but are different from BC Parks decision-making and TEK and WSK values and beliefs.	21	39
Meaningful Engagement	Refers to statements explaining how to meaningfully engage with First Nations. Such statements may include direction on how to meet with/approach First Nations. For example, statements outlining reciprocity or being polite, respectful, sincere, kind, and bringing food to meetings would all fall under this larger code of meaningful engagement. Statements regarding BC Parks policies, protocols, legislation, or discussions about racist/discriminatory interactions are not included here.	26	133
Engaging with Elders, House Groups and Chiefs	This is a child/sub-code of “Meaningful Engagement.” It refers to statements about engagement with Elders, House Groups (Wilps), and Hereditary or Elected Chiefs. This is different from the consultation process required by BC Parks policy, however, the information within this code may inform this process and form recommendations for inclusion.	17	52
Bring Food	This is a child/sub-code of “Meaningful Engagement.” It refers to statements about bringing food to meetings with Elders, Chiefs or House Groups to acknowledge the	14	29

Name	Description	Files	References
	time and resources of First Nations attending a meeting. Bringing food is symbolic for Indigenous values such as respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships. Bringing food to a meeting is a sign of respect and demonstrates the genuine intention to meaningfully engage.		
First Nation Priorities	This is a child/sub-code of “Meaningful Engagement.” It refers to statements regarding priorities of a First Nation. This may refer to the priorities set forth by a First Nation during engagement, consultation or management planning. First Nation priorities may include mapping of cultural heritage sites, signage, Territorial acknowledgement, or increased engagement, however, they are not necessarily grouped within any of these other codes and are entirely dependent on the First Nation. Each First Nation has its own priorities and will be reflected as such.	18	21
Relationship Building	This is a child/sub-code of “Meaningful Engagement.” It refers to statements discussing relationship building. This is related to Reconciliation and Consultation, however, it may or may not be discussed in terms of reconciliatory efforts and may inform opportunities for improvement of including First Nations and their knowledges. In order for reconciliation and better consultation/ Nation engagement to take place, relationships must be built/mended.	21	31
Reconciliation	Refers to statements about reconciliation and reconciliatory actions, practices, policies, protocols, procedures and recommendations. This does not include discussions about self-determination or any policy unrelated to reconciliation. The code may appear in statements regarding politics, society, or history but must specifically refer to reconciliation.	27	37
DRIPA	This code is a child/sub-code of	19	28

Name	Description	Files	References
	“Reconciliation.” It refers to statements discussing BC’s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA). This code must refer specifically to the DRIPA Act own the Action Plan and how this legislation has influenced or might influence park management plans and park management plan decisions.		
Self-determination	Refers to statements about self-determination in park planning and management. This must include discussions relating to First Nations rights, title, self-government, control or agency over lands and waters in the Territory and will not include discussions of reconciliation or co-management.	24	55
IPCAs	This code is a child/sub-code of “Self-determination.” It refers to statements discussing Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs). IPCAs are just one of many strategies being adopted by First Nations to exercise and assert more agency, power and control over the lands, waters and resources within their Territory. This is not a parks designation or related to BC Parks policy.	13	22
TEK and WSK Beliefs	Refers to statements of belief that BC Parks participants have about WSK and TEK. Beliefs are assumptions or generalizations about WSK and TEK held to be true which affect morals / values. A belief is an acceptance that something is true, based off a participants’ values, attitudes, personal experiences, opinions and morals. These beliefs can be positive or negative but the code must be applied in terms of a belief about WSK and TEK and not how they are valued.	10	33
TEK and WSK Values	Refers to how BC Parks participants value WSK and TEK. A value is how WSK and TEK are viewed in terms of utility and importance. These values can be positive or negative, but the code must be applied in	11	39

Name	Description	Files	References
	terms of how WSK and TEK are valued and not applied for statements of belief about WSK and TEK. Values relate to a participant's judgement of what's important, whereas a belief is an assumption or generalization about importance based upon opinion and morals.		
Conservational and Ecological Values	This code is a child/sub-code of "TEK and WSK values." It refers to statements regarding conservational and ecological values which denote the value of TEK or WSK in BC Parks work. It is not associated with recreational values or IPCAs. It is also different from competing interests, TEK/WSK beliefs and influential social, political or economic factors.	16	19
Recreational Values	This code is a child/sub-code of "TEK and WSK values." It refers to recreational values and push for these values emulated in the examples of creating more trail systems or recreational opportunities such as fishing or hunting. It is not related to conservation or ecological values or TEK and WSK beliefs. It is also different from competing interests, TEK/WSK beliefs and influential social, political or economic factors.	6	10
Territory Acknowledgement	Refers to statements about acknowledging First Nations Territory and Land. This may or may not be used in discussions of signage, reconciliation, treaty negotiations and self-determination, but does not include BC Parks training or policy. May become a child code for application of TEK or Reconciliation.	24	61
Cultural Heritage Sites	Child/sub-code of "Territorial Acknowledgement." It refers to statements regarding cultural heritage sites or culturally significant artifacts and objects such as food storage bins, petroglyphs or tree markings. This is different from statements pertaining to signage and mapping more broadly and must outline specific places or items for protection or how these might be protected	21	26

Name	Description	Files	References
	as suggested by both BC Parks and First Nations participants.		
Signage	Refers to statements about: BC Parks signage projects with First Nations, consultation regarding signage projects, or implementation of signage that indicates information about First Nations. This does not include other BC Parks signage which does not involve First Nations. A territorial acknowledgement may be included in signage, however, “Territory Acknowledgement” is a larger parent code which is reserved for specific references to Territorial Acknowledgements that may include signage projects.	17	35
Training Procedures	Refers to statements regarding BC Parks formal and informal training for employees working with First Nations and incorporating their TEK. It does not refer to statements regarding any formal or informal training that does not involve working with First Nations. Training procedures are different from education and do not refer to BC Parks policies or employee roles and duties, as training procedures are outlined by the agency and not the employees themselves.	22	91
Current Training Procedures	Child/sub-code of “Training Procedures.” It refers to statements regarding BC Parks current and past formal and informal training for employees working with First Nations and incorporating their TEK. It does not refer to statements regarding any formal or informal training that does not involve working with First Nations. It also does not include future recommendations of informal/formal training for employees working with First Nations and incorporating their TEK.	7	22
Recommended Training Procedures	Child/sub-code. Refers to statements regarding future recommendations of formal or informal training to improve BC Parks work with First Nations and integration of	13	34

Name	Description	Files	References
	their TEK. It does not refer to statements regarding any formal or informal training that does not involve working with First Nations or current or past BC Parks training practices. This may be referred to in discussions of training employees on First Nations cultural literacy, cultural heritage, consultation, programming or partnerships.		
Learning from Coworkers and Mentorship	This is a child/sub-code of “Training Procedures.” Refers to statements made by BC Parks employees that discuss learning from their coworkers as a facet of employee training and recommendations for seeking mentorship and knowledge from coworkers in the agency. This will be a sub-code/child code to “Recommended Training Procedures.” Mentorship programming is emerging as a recommendation for improving Indigenous involvement in BC Parks management planning.	8	19
Self-learning	This is a child/sub-code of “Recommended Training Procedures.” It refers to statements discussing self-learning on the job rather than any informal or formal training procedures.	8	16
Unique Characteristics of Working in North Coast Skeena Region	Refers to statements describing what makes working in the North Coast Skeena Region unique compared to other BC Parks Regions. This is different from “Employee Roles and Duties” and is meant to draw out information regarding the unique circumstances of working in Northwestern BC. These statements can provide necessary information for developing practical recommendations within the context of the research area.	10	19
Employee Roles and Duties	Refers to statements about the roles and duties of the position of a BC Parks participant. This includes what the role of	8	16

	the worker is and their duties necessary within this role as well as what their work does and does not involve. Such statements clarify the job description and duties of each position at the employee level in BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region and do not refer to the laws, policies, regulations, or procedures of the agency.		
Other Cases of Collaboration with First Nations in BC Parks Planning and Operations Management	Refers to statements about current cases of collaboration with other First Nations in BC Parks North Coast Skeena Region in park planning and operations management. This was an additional code added to account for current collaborative management planning processes and operations that are occurring within other First Nations Territories in the North Coast Skeena Region.	5	10