PARK FACILITY DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

PLANNING FACILITIES THAT RESPECT THE SPIRIT OF PLACE

MARY BONNIE BLUE

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Department of School of Community and Regional Planning

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

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ABSTRACT

As the political, economic and cultural fabric of all regions of the British Columbia landscape grows more sophisticated, legislative remedies to environmental issues will become more difficult to execute. If our society's values towards resources are to change, the resource protection field may need to evolve from legislated protection to cultural protection based on appreciation and peer pressure. In this regard, natural park sites have the potential to influence the values which will be carried beyond that particular site.

Protective attitudes towards the environment often grow out of a feeling of connection to, and an understanding of, particular places. The act of conferring park status on a natural place acknowledges that we consider it to be special and hence worthy of protection. The way in which this environment is planned, designed and managed has the potential to demonstrate environmental protection values while educating people about the natural world and our impact upon it. Retaining the true "spirit of place" in a natural area park is a worthy goal but often difficult to achieve.

In British Columbia's Provincial Park System, a dual mandate to provide for recreational pursuits while protecting the environment creates problems for staff who must fulfill what is often a conflicting prescription. A detailed policy framework for facilities, based on explicitly examined values, would provide direction for decision making about park facilities.

This thesis looks at the topic of retaining a "sense of place" in natural area parks, examines the issue of values and tradeoffs in park management, and offers a planning framework to operationalize the B.C. Parks mandate to protect and present provincial parks.
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To my mother, who does not know that her love of "place" was the inspiration and the beginning for my work.
It may be that if we find beauty where we stand, we shall be moved to protect and preserve such beauty so that those who come after us may find, as we have found, locations which can make a continuing contribution to everyone's sense of place.

Alan Gussow, A Sense Of Place
1.1 Communicating Values

As concerns grow over treatment of our natural environment, there is a strong imperative to consider how facilities in natural area parks model respect for the protected landscapes where they are located. The act of setting aside a place as a park acknowledges that we consider it special and presumably desire to encourage protective attitudes towards it. I believe that respect towards the natural environment grows out of a feeling of connection to particular natural places, fostering ownership in the ideas, use, and maintenance of all environments. If a park requires facilities to accommodate human use (as all but wilderness areas generally do) then it follows that those facilities should be planned and designed in a way that acknowledges what is special about that place. The basic programmatic objective would be to help visitors appreciate the natural and cultural uniqueness of a site by bringing them physically closer to it. To achieve this, the development needs to be human-scaled and intimate so that sensory features of the native landscape, such as sights, smells, and sounds, are appreciated and preserved. The basic environmental objective is to achieve these experiences within acceptable limits of change. It is my opinion that if it is impossible to achieve this on the same site, the development is not justified.

It is the uniqueness of certain park environments that creates the curiosity for visiting them and the desire to experience their special recuperative, educational, or recreative qualities. In providing facilities and activities for visitors, special care must be taken not to destroy the very resources or qualities they come to experience. This care requires built environments that can sensitize and educate their users, providing learning experiences delivered overtly through various educational programs or inadvertently via example.
Park organizations have recognized this need for years through the use of interpretation as a communication tool. Yet, the value system interpretation communicates could be reinforced in most or all visitor experiences by defining those values and including them in the entire cycle of planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of facilities. This inadvertent setting of example is an important form of interpretation.

In this scenario, the design intent of development in a protected area would be to provide for the enjoyment of natural and cultural features of the environment in a manner that is not damaging and is consistent with the natural character of that place. Many refer to this natural character of a place as the "spirit of place" or "sense of place" (Berman, 1981; Dorward, 1990; Hiss, 1990; Hough, 1990). The straightest road, the most dramatic architecture, or the most efficient construction technique may have to be sacrificed during development to enhance and protect the park's resources and the visitor's experience. These sacrifices are trade-offs made at all levels of park planning but are especially evident at the site design and development stage. The tradeoffs have the potential to deliver or obscure a protected area's "sense of place" and benefit from being addressed through specific park development and design policies.

Clearly, it is important that any park system have a carefully articulated facility planning and design philosophy and a process to sustain that philosophy. Without such a basis, day to day pressures of economics, politics, or convenience will generally overwhelm the philosophical underpinning. This is evident in British

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1"Sense of place" or "spirit of place" is most often discussed as the inherent quality of a specific physical and / or social setting to evoke emotional, psychological, and meaningful attachment through a heightened awareness of experience. In this paper, the two terms are used interchangeably. Note that some researchers argue that every person's understanding of a place will be different and hence one cannot design for achieving a "sense of place". In my view, in protected areas such as parks the "sense of place" is derived from the natural environment and designing for "sense of place" is basically respecting what is naturally occurring.
Columbia's Provincial Park system where the agency, entrusted to manage approximately 400 parks, does not have a well-defined facility design and development policy (Bishop, 1993).

1.2 Research Context And Significance To Planning

Major worldwide changes are underway in both our biophysical and social environments and public attitudes toward the environment appear to be changing as well (Gray, 1985; Berman, 1981). One example is the increased public interest in the well-being of our parks and park systems. From local groups focused on protection of a specific locale to larger interests lobbying for regional and national concerns, these groups are rapidly becoming a powerful influence on park designation and management. The way in which facilities "fit in" with the natural environment and how they foster respect for nature is part of this debate. Hence, achieving a "sense of place" fits into the context of public concern for the environment and interest in landscape integrity (Dearden and Rollins, 1993).

Some argue that the most fundamental factor influencing the destiny of our parks and protected areas is the level of public support enjoyed. Interpretation that "fills the visitor with a greater sense of wonder and curiosity" plays a fundamental role in this attempt (Dearden and Rollins, 1993,p. 1).\(^2\) Greater effort is being given by parks organizations to defining the boundaries of the appropriate experience provided by parks. Interpretation will increasingly focus on processes to educate and evoke emotional responses within visitors in support of park values (B.C. Parks, 1990).

\(^2\)Interpretation is most often understood as the traditional explicit form of explanation we think of in relation to learning environments where a phenomena is explained. However, values are also relayed through the setting of example which is a less direct form of interpretation. My point throughout this document is that this latter form of interpretation is just as important as the former.
This focus on a person's experience of different places has been the subject of research and debate among urban planners, park planners, geographers, architects and landscape architects for many years, and is especially important to the current interest in sustainable design criteria\(^3\) (US Department of the Interior, 1993). Although much has been written about planning for, designing for, and protecting a "sense of place" or a "spirit of place" in urban design, a very limited amount of research directly addresses this topic in parks and protected areas. Perhaps the dearth of specific research is because it seems unnecessary to address facility planning for natural parks. Many people simply accept the fundamental importance of protecting the natural spirit of a park. However, as illustrated in the following case study of B.C. Parks' facilities development process, planning and designing for "sense of place" is difficult to achieve without a defined policy that designates the value placed on a landscape's particular qualities.\(^4\) The implication for planning is that park systems need development policy that specifically addresses organizational values and that guides staff decision making in protecting and presenting a landscape.

Readers will see that many subject areas are relevant to this study of B.C. Parks' facility development process. The threads of such wide ranging subjects as organizational structure and behaviour, politics, cultural values, systems planning, sustainability, both philosophical and practical approaches to design, and learning theory are all woven into a complex fabric. This thesis concentrates on using a

\(^3\)There is a link between sustainable design criteria and the topic of respect for a "sense of place" in achieving that sustainability. Embodied within all sustainable design definitions is the belief that sustainability not only depends on technical solutions but also on human attitudes. The premise is that purposeful design can create a sense of connection to the environmental, social, and cultural character of a place fostering qualities that may lead to sustainability. The question is really about how developments fit in with the environment and how they do or do not work to foster respect and protective feelings about a place.

\(^4\)The terms "planning" and "design" are used to connote differences in geographic scale, level of specificity, and end product although a distinction between the two is often impractical. Planning is defined here as a large scale, general, objective, more abstract activity that results in guidelines, administrative policies, and statements of general intent. Design is defined as a smaller scale, specific, more subjective and detailed activity that results in physical changes in the environment.
value defining exercise to move from a philosophy of design to operationalized policy. The other topics, although very central to the discussion, are not addressed in depth in this document.

1.3 Purpose Statement

This thesis is a pursuit of the implications of planning for a “sense of place” in natural area parks. It advocates considering parks as special areas where, ultimately, facilities have a significant impact on how visitors perceive and use a park. Architecture and site treatment contribute to the understanding that they are special places that require special attitudes and behaviour. Attempting to achieve a “sense of place” models values that support sustainability.

Further, this thesis uses the British Columbia Provincial Park System to explore the implications of defining organizational values in a policy framework in order to support staff in their efforts to achieve a “sense of place”.

1.4 Scope

The focus of this thesis is facility planning and design in natural area parks. It broadly addresses two important topics, both of which would flow from value defining exercises:

- planning for “sense of place” as a design philosophy in natural area parks;
- translating that philosophy into operationalized facility development policy.

A case study is drawn from a previous report which documented current B.C. Parks facility development practice (See Blue, 1992). The case illustrates a typical circumstance that a park manager faces and compares the solution used in that situation with an alternative which models a respect for the parks' natural values.
Discussion does not directly address:

- park systems planning
- cultural or historic parks
- urban parks
- wilderness preservation and management
- other park management issues (land acquisition, park concessions, zoning, risk management systems, etc.)

However, all of these topics would influence the formulation of a facilities development policy if B.C. Parks chose to introduce one.

1.5 Objectives

This thesis will:

- Develop a line of thought between facility development planning in parks, respect for the natural "sense of a place," and visitors' attitudes towards protected areas;
- Examine the issue of values and tradeoffs in park facility planning;
- Offer a planning framework to operationalize the B.C. Parks mandate to protect and present provincial parks;
- Propose specific recommendations for facility development policy in B.C. Parks.

1.6 Methodology

This thesis uses British Columbia's Provincial Park system in a case study of how a "sense of place" could be incorporated into policy via a value defining exercise. All of the views expressed are the author’s opinion and may not be the approach B.C. Parks would favour if they went through the hypothetical value defining exercise outlined here. The approach includes:

- An overview of the topic of "sense of place" and its relationship to current thinking about sustainability;
- A look at values and their influence on decision making;
- A hypothetical value defining exercise from which detailed objectives and criteria can be derived;
• Suggested facility development policy which flows from organizational values;
• An example of traditional site treatment compared to an alternative.

1.7 Operational Definition of "Sense of Place"

In this paper, "sense of place" or "spirit of place" is defined as the inherent physical qualities of a specific setting and its ability to evoke emotional, psychological, and meaningful attachment through experience. Some authors name this the experiential or the personal aspect of place. The physical aspects of place and the experiential / personal aspects of place are the subject here.
The potentiality of parks to shape and reflect social values is still by no means fully appreciated or understood.

G. Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*
2.1 What Is "Sense of Place"?

The term "place" is a rich one, having a mix of physical, social, and personal implications (Canter, 1977). The physical properties of place provide the context for a setting and can be perceived through the senses: they can be seen, smelled, heard, touched and maybe even tasted. These physical elements can be meaningful to individuals or for entire societies (Tuan, 1976). The social aspect of place involves the societal setting in which it exists, including all of its attendant cultural attitudes and values. The personal factors of place include the individual experiences which are inspired by places and which result in feelings of connection with the particular ecological, cultural, and economic characteristics of a place (Hough, 1990; Relph, 1976). All of these aspects influence the development of a “sense of place”. However, the latter aspect, the personal factors, are particularly important to engendering protective attitudes towards the natural environment in parks. It is these personal aspects of place that protected area developments must strive to affect while continuing to recognize the physical and social factors.

2.2 Place Concepts In History And Current Literature

The concept of place can be traced to ancient Greece and the writings of Aristotle. In his view, place or "topos" was the "where" dimension in people's relationship to the physical environment, conjuring up a feeling of belonging (Sime, 1986). The sanctuary of Delphi, one of classical Greece's architectural masterpieces, expresses a oneness with the natural site which is the epitome of what Romans would later call "Genius Loci": the "spirit of place". A genius was the guardian spirit of a physical location. Genius loci was space plus the inherent character of site combined in a superb expression of harmony. "The essence of
intuitive Greek site planning was that all architecture, whether temple, theater, agora or dwellings, was subsidiary and composed to the natural landscape" (Jellicoe, 1987). Indeed, the recognition and expression of the spirit of particular places is one of the most enduring legacies of ancient Greece.

Today, there appears to be a revival of the concept of place in the theoretical discussions of many academics within architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, geography, and psychology (See Hough, 1990; Hiss, 1990; Relph, 1981; Seamon, 1985; Steele, 1981; Buttimer, 1980; Canter, 1977; Tuan, 1975). Whole journals of "place" have also begun to appear (See PLACES: a quarterly journal of environmental design, 1983-present). Clearly there is a growing interest in the experiential aspects of particular settings as well as the physical aspects. The increased interest appears to be a corollary to the latest wave of environmental concerns and the topic of sustainability. It is perhaps even a paradigm shift. Berman (1981) characterized this shift as an attempt to understand how we can regain some sense of being part of nature rather than separate from it. The implicit message in all of these writings is that people should be able to closely identify with an environment. This identification creates strong emotional ties, temporary or long-lasting, between a person and a particular physical location; engendering a positive, satisfactory experience and, by extension, a desire to protect and sustain that environment (Norberg-Schultz, 1979).

The discipline in which the concept of place has seen the greatest revival is humanistic geography (Sime, 1986). These writers criticize the destruction of natural landscapes and the repetitive nature of modern urban design (See Relph, 1981; Buttimer, 1980; or Seamon, 1985). The focus of this body of literature is the

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1Experiential aspects of a place are those aspects of a setting that most influence how we understand, behave, and remember a particular place.
landscape and the loss of a “spirit of place”. Relph (1976) coined the term “placelessness” to refer to physical locales no longer having an identifiable character which makes them individually distinctive. In his view, a primary function of ‘place’ is to engender a sense of belonging and identity which translates into protective attitudes.

2.3 A Placeless Attitude Or How Someplace Becomes Anyplace

In the past, the extent to which people could modify the environment was limited. Our subordinate role to nature and the constraints of society created an undisputed sense of being rooted to a place and of being dependent on what nature provided for survival. Very early structures were, out of necessity, reflective of the natural materials and forces of that environment (Hough, 1990).²

For example, early structures built 40 or more years ago by Parks Canada and especially by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the U.S. National Parks had many of the design tenents that contributed to good environmental “fit”. Material availability forced their success. Adaptation of native materials, high craft skills, and low technology produced some of North America’s best examples of harmonious architecture.³ We live in a different world today, one of changing technologies, lower craft skills, burgeoning visitation, and global implications of human actions. Yet, the natural resource still provides the fundamental composition in parks. Successfully adapting our needs, technology, and skill to

² This is not to romanticize the past. These limitations were seen as forces to be overcome, not inherent motivations to be at one with nature. However, international trade and the increasing ease of human movement have allowed us the choice to homogenize, in the process losing a true connection with a particular place.

³ This architectural style is often referred to as “parkitecture”. It is such an ingrained part of our image of national parks that it is often copied without understanding the reason it seems appropriate.
integrate our facilities into the environment is not only a worthy challenge but also an imperative.

Park visitation, a very popular type of tourism, has the potential to be a major force in the protection and maintenance of the environment by demonstrating sustainable attitudes and putting people in close touch with natural environments. Like many other developments, when the environmental values on which a place depends become secondary, the rich diversity of the natural landscape can be slowly degraded as somewhere becomes just anywhere.

Time can take its toll on many park sites as each decade brings more development to cope with increasing visitation. In organizations where there is no facility development philosophy with accompanying development guidelines, that growth can easily cause park facilities to become inharmonious with the natural landscape or with what already exists. I believe that the vast majority of work that shapes and changes many places occurs in small but increasingly frequent increments. In B.C. Parks, independent decisions are made to build concrete retaining walls on a beach, enlarge and standardize campsites for easy mobile home access, provide urban style play equipment, or increase road and parking lot capacity with little thought as to how the values of the park system are supported or denigrated by these types of actions. Before long the natural amenities and reasons for setting aside the park as a protected place can become secondary to the easy accommodation of people and their differing and wide ranging desires.

2.4 Interpreting The 'Place' Of B.C. Parks: Communicating Values

The political, economic and cultural fabric of all regions of the British Columbia landscape is growing more sophisticated. Legislative remedies to environmental issues are becoming more difficult to execute. As our society's
values towards resources change and priorities shift, the resource protection field
could evolve at least in part from legislated land preservation to cultural protection
based on appreciation and peer pressure. The interpretive efforts of parks
organizations in commemorating landscape features that most powerfully embody
the qualities of experience possible in a landscape will support this evolution. This
is referred to as a "value based" visitor experience (Ministry of Environment, 1990).

Natural area parks possess an existing native composition, a harmony of
elements when translated into architectural terms. They provide the foundation for
values. Envision an old growth forest, a river, and a naturally cleared, basin-
shaped land form as an exciting composition for siting an amphitheater. Adapting
human needs to these natural forces without overpowering them is the challenge
and, in provincial parks, the mandate.

A visitor experience based on these resource protection values requires that
interpretation be an essential part of the planning and design process. Values are
difficult, if not impossible, to add to a development or operation as a last minute
enhancement. Values can be reinforced in all visitor experiences and are evident
by the way a park is built, maintained, and managed. A worthy goal of a provincial
park service would be to design and construct the most appropriate facility possible
within a particular park setting modeled on environmental values. These facilities
would communicate by example.

Any inhabited landscape is a medium of communication. Its
messages may be explicit or implicit, simple or subtle. They may be
displayed by persons or objects. The analysis of landscape as a
communication medium extends far beyond the conventional
exercises in sign control. The multiple messages of the environment
affect our performance, cognition, development, and emotional and
aesthetic satisfaction (Lynch, 1976, p.30).
Natural area parks have an obvious visual context for preservation. The landscapes in which they are sited (seashore, river, mountain, or desert) provide environmental context, while existing cultural resources may provide another level of perceptual context. The park system also has a conceptual context. The meanings or personal experiences associated with selected environments, along with appearance, play a role in judgments of authenticity and quality. A park's designation as a recreation, historic, or natural site establishes one conceptual context. In addition to these designations, the provincial parks are an idea and a philosophy as well as particular units of land (Ministry of Environment, 1991). Sites are selected and designated as parks because of their resource values or their importance to the province (Ministry of Environment, 1990). Conserving the resources and providing for public use and enjoyment of the parks is part of the mandate set in Provincial Parks legislation (Regulatory Statues of British Columbia 1979, C.309). The siting, design, and maintenance of facilities can support this mandate, fitting the conceptual as well as perceptual context of parks.

2.5 A New Planning and Design Philosophy In Parks

In their book Parks and Protected Areas in Canada, Dearden and Rollins eloquently describe the evolution of a new planning and design philosophy in parks:

As the landscape becomes increasingly dominated by human processes, so the ecological roles of the parks will become more important. They may well be the only sites remaining where natural ecosystems can be studied, providing ecological benchmarks against which to assess change, and where populations retain some semblance of their interrelationships before humans arrived. Thus the future will witness a shift from a parks management philosophy that is almost exclusively internal and oriented towards a recreational mandate to one that recognizes the significance of external influences and the necessity to invest resources in scientific understanding and management of biophysical systems...[Additionally] the concepts and
practices related to visitors will become very important. Greater effort will have to be given to formulating the bounds of the appropriate experience that parks can provide. Interpretation will increasingly focus on processes to educate and provide emotional responses of visitors in support of park values (Dearden and Rollins, 1993, p.9).

The appropriate experience may eventually become based on the ability of the experience to provide visitors with insight into ecological processes, moving away from use that does not build identity and connection to place.

"Many of our provincial parks have developed as cookie cutter patterns of grass and trees, models imposed by a tradition of standard landscapes for standard people" (Dalziel, 1992). Retaining the individual "spirit of place" involves a conscious decision to do so. At the same time, the need to invest in the protection of nature has never been so urgent. In the past environmental consciousness simply meant "don't destroy the site". That is a valid starting point. However, simply having a neutral effect is not enough because our environmental problems have become exponential. We need to mend natural systems and do so in a way that is visible. What better place to start than in our parks?

The connections between a specific identity for each park and the sustainability of the land are fundamental. A valid design philosophy, therefore, could be tied to ecological values and principles and to the essential bond of people to nature. A new design philosophy could even see parks as models for developing sustainable use strategies outside parks.

Technical solutions of specific sustainability problems are obviously necessary. The vast literature on water use reduction, waste issues, energy production and use, climate, and wildlife protection are all applicable to any development, including development in provincial parks. They are attempts to find a specific form to address sustainability in a given context. In other words, they ask
how we can create particular forms that allow nature, which includes us, to continue. The question is really two-fold: What technology best respects the natural systems and how do we make those systems obvious to people?

It is not enough only to seek technical solutions to the problems of pollution, waste and resource depletion. Cycles and environmental relationships must become perceptible for the individual. To this extent ecological restructuring is, above all, a task of structuring....we speak of the need for a new generation of "human-ecology-technology". The aim is to make environmental and social relationships of technology apparent again to the user...to overcome the anonymity and reduced awareness of environmental resources. The role of humans as responsible partners shaping their relationship with nature must again become clearer. This is an important pre-condition for changing peoples' awareness of the environment, and for changing their behavior and life-styles (Hahn, 1992 in Paterson, 1992, p.3).

What more natural place could there be to do this than in a park that has been set aside to "connect" people with nature?

As mentioned, a fundamental problem today is that the average person no longer realizes he or she is a part of nature (Berman, 1981). Planners have the potential of reconnecting that citizen with nature by immersing him or her in an experience. By promoting projects such as wetland filtration systems, habitat restoration, rainwater collection cisterns, porous hard surface uses, and alternative utility systems, our impacts become visible while also creating useful, technologically sound developments.

This is a call for policy development for B.C. park facilities that address the environment in a way that makes apparent an investment in nature. For example, such policies might address but certainly are not limited to topics such as:
• Native materials for building
• Minimum sizing of park roads and parking
• Solid waste management schemes
• Identifying appropriate park activities
• Habitat restoration

• Visual integration of facilities into the park environment
• Construction processes and site management
• Locating facilities to decrease impact
• Enforcing carrying capacities and acceptable limits of change
• Utilities as impact demonstration projects

2.6 Summary

The goal of preserving the "spirit of place" is to translate sustainability into institutional responses that foster ownership in the ideas, use, and maintenance of the environment. It is to help people feel a sense of belonging and attachment to a place. If respect and protective attitudes grow out of a sense of connection to place, we all are able to perceive and experience a personal role in the management of resources. Park developments can foster a connection to the natural environment via interpretation and via the example set by the developers of that place. It is my personal opinion that these values should be very evident in British Columbia's Provincial Park System facility development practices.

The following chapter looks at the process by which the B.C. Parks organization might examine its own values and formulate facility development policy that actually puts these values into operation on a particular park site.
3.0 GENERATING FACILITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY THAT REFLECTS VALUES
3.1 Value Explicit Policy

The previous chapters made a case for provincial parks as places for communicating society's changing values towards natural resource use and protection. The goal of retaining a "sense of place" is to encourage ownership in the ideas, use, and maintenance of a protected environment, fostering a sense of belonging and attachment to a unique place. When policy includes these concerns, siting, design, and maintenance of park facilities can communicate an attitude which values park environments over the individual desires of people. Retaining the spirit of a park while accommodating visitors necessitates balancing the need to develop facilities for people with the competing need to protect the environment. Policy makers, administrators, planners, designers, and site management staff are encouraged to consider these tradeoffs as problems of unexamined or conflicting value judgments warranting policy definition.

This chapter discusses the influence of unexamined values on planning and design within the context of the B.C. Provincial Parks facility development process. The overview of this process acknowledges that it involves value judgments which make decisions difficult. Within B.C. Parks, the matter is further complicated by a seemingly contradictory mandate: to protect significant and representative natural and cultural resources and to present a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities (B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, 1994, p.15).

Discussing and defining values and codifying them within policy can clarify the relationship between a mandate to "protect and present" and the end product which is park facilities accommodating human use.
What is needed are facility development policies which further interpret values set in the mandate but which, in the end, leave room for individual creativity and judgment at the park level. This chapter works through a hypothetical value defining exercise, a value tree, from which a facility development policy could be generated.

3.2 Values in the Decision Making Process

Values are the abstract beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that influence judgments, goal setting, needs identification, and discrimination among competing demands (Zube, 1980). The very idea of land preserved as a park is a reflection of our values. The kind of landscapes we preserve, how we facilitate and control their use, and in whom we entrust their protection are expressions of those values.

Our values appear to be an expressed preference, assuming conscious informed decision. However, frequently they are not well defined and can easily become the unspoken culprit in generating controversy over park facility planning and design. For example, some people feel that British Columbia's provincial parks should accommodate all kind of recreational pursuits complete with very safe, comfortable, and easily accessible support facilities. Others argue that development in parks should be rustic and severely limited, never sacrificing the spirit of the natural place for the comfort of people. It is easy to imagine how such polarized views would make facility development decisions difficult. This was
evident in a recent article concerning the expansion of ski facilities in Cypress Provincial Park (See "Passions rise in Cypress Park," Vancouver Sun, July 8, 1995).

In reality, choices made are often driven by what seem to be urgent needs. These needs are frequently a mixture of safety concerns and real or perceived pressure from some users, both of which are complicated by economic constraints. In small park systems, planners probably share similar values and have a like-minded understanding of the image and meaning of parks within the system; mistakes are easily rectified, and the small numbers of visitors keep errors from seeming too serious. As the system and user populations grow, the need to protect the park environment conflicts with the differing demands of the many users and numerous decision makers. In these cases, park organizations can benefit from having their organizational values well defined.

"Organizations, like individuals, have values which could better be put into practice by carefully considering these preferences and making decisions thoughtfully" (Keeney, 1988,p.140). The alternatives generated and the resulting decisions might be more appropriate if based on expressed values rather than on a range of individually generated alternatives which do not support the organization's mandate.

The case study example in Chapter 4 illustrates a typical scenario faced by B.C. Parks district employees. The situation underscores the need to discuss user services in terms of values, with a goal of cultivating attitudes toward facility development and maintenance that ensure consideration of “sense of place” when analyzing competing alternatives. Debating the value issues and generating discussion about other pressures or "facts" could lead to decisions better grounded in an organizational philosophy about appropriate site treatment.
3.3 The B.C. Parks Facility Development Process

Traditionally, large park systems have used standardized facility blueprints with designs repeated throughout the system. While they provided a clear identity for the system, they impeded efforts to respond to particular site character. Although some often repeated site furniture such as trash receptacles and regulatory signage are still standardized, the US National Park Service, Parks Canada, and some smaller systems have begun to see widespread standardization as an inappropriate response to site specific qualities.¹ Within B.C. Parks the process of deciding between alternative site treatments is theoretically simplified since alternatives not adhering to the "protection" part of the organization's mandate should not be considered. That is not, however, reality.

Under the current planning process within B.C. Parks, planners take information from resource specialists and from the public and produce a park master plan. The intent of a master plan is to provide management philosophy and direction for particular parks, linking the provincial mandate to management decisions in each park (B.C. Ministry of Lands, Parks, and Housing, 1986, p.2). However, the degree of detailed design commitment is superficial. Usually included in the plan is a general statement of development intent with suggestions for what needs to be done, but it does not contain specifics on how to accomplish this. For example, the master plan for a new provincial park states that the "park requires sensitive and careful planning to adequately protect the park's natural and cultural resources"; it goes on to direct that a parking lot, trails, washroom facilities, and a visitor entry station be "carefully sited" (B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, 1991b). The master plan does not consider how to do this, nor does it

¹Appendix 1 surveys other systems with respect to their efforts towards instituting "sense of place".
explore how these facilities will influence a visitor's experience. It does not outline strategies for mitigating these development actions at a detailed level but simply implies that an unnamed someone should attend to them. Once the master plan for an area is complete the planner has little or nothing to do with facility implementation. Missing is the crucial element of delegating responsibility to staff or a professional consultant for ensuring that what visitors see and experience "fits" the environment and delivers the message the master plan intended.

3.4 A Planning Framework: Improving the Planning Process

A planning framework which includes detailed design work would begin by discussing and deciding what values balance the two parts of the mandate, translating those values into specific development policies. The broad policy information could then be integrated into the master planning process for those parks having such plans. The design details would become a section of the master plan. For small parks which do not have formal master plans, staff could refer back to the system wide policy for direction.

\[2\]

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2. This is not to suggest that providing a value explicit planning framework can make every decision maker a design professional. What it will do, however, is give decision makers the ability to better understand what a design professional could do for them and when they will be needed.
Figure 3.2: From Mandate to Operations. A key issue facing management in provincial parks is translating the system mandate into operational practice. Developing facilities policy and including facility design details within the master planning process are two organizational tools that can be used in bridging this gap. With these in place, staff can make more appropriate decisions within their areas of responsibility while maintaining some local autonomy.

3.5 A Facilities Policy Based on Values

The development of policy requires interpreting and defining values. In decision making cases where unexamined or conflicting values are an issue, gathering stakeholders in an exercise to discuss objectives and examine competing
interests can be positive. Generating and defining objectives in the form of a "value tree" helps identify a *range of values* the policy must accommodate. Policy makers could incorporate the detailed objectives into policy statements that give clear direction to planners and park level operations staff to develop facilities that "present" places while "protecting" the environment from recreational use. The following chart outlines common values these stakeholders may voice:

**SOME POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR IDENTIFIED VALUES WITH RESPECT TO PARK FACILITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC</th>
<th>The Minimalists: People who like to rough it</th>
<th>The Comforts of Home Crowd</th>
<th>Tourism/ Recreation Business People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>protecting the unique natural resource through minimal building and development</td>
<td>providing facilities that accommodate a homey atmosphere (RV parking, showers, electricity, entertainment)</td>
<td>providing sites for organized sport (downhill ski facilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>preserving the &quot;spirit of place&quot; through harmonious architecture</td>
<td>providing vendors and concessions in parks for service delivery</td>
<td>insuring winter maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>knowing future generations will have opportunities for experiencing relatively undisturbed parks</td>
<td></td>
<td>providing economic and facilities base for the provincial tourism industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>preserving cultural heritage by building a legacy of park facilities that reflect place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAFF</th>
<th>Safety Officer</th>
<th>Maintenance Crew</th>
<th>Visitor Services Staff</th>
<th>District Managers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>knowing visitors and employees are completely informed about hazards</td>
<td>maintaining durable and difficult to vandalize facilities</td>
<td>offering interpretive opportunities promoting visitor contact with nature</td>
<td>maintaining cost effective operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>maintaining a standard of care sufficient to protect from lawsuits</td>
<td>developing low maintenance facilities</td>
<td>satisfying basic visitor information demands</td>
<td>keeping visitors happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>minimizing risk to all people</td>
<td>developing easy to repair facilities</td>
<td>serving as agency ambassadors to the public</td>
<td>adhering to functionality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Some Potential Stakeholders and Their Identified Values with Respect to Park Facilities. Note that people do not always hold views that fit neatly into identified categories.
In the end, policy makers must take the views of stakeholders and find options that balance the dual mandate of B.C. Parks. The dual mandate implies that facilities are located in parks to accommodate people but they must also work to protect the environment as much as possible. These two purposes are the fundamental objectives for park facilities and become the first level in the value defining exercise that follows.

The following value tree is one method of breaking down the B.C. Parks legal mandate (their fundamental objectives) into more detailed objectives that better define the role of facilities in parks. Once the detailed objectives are generated they can be defined in operational terms that will give specific criteria for considering tradeoffs in facility development.

The columns of the following value tree are derived as follows:

**Fundamental Objectives:** from the dual mandate of B.C. Parks.

**Subobjectives:** a breakdown of the fundamental objectives into broad terms. These are hypothetical and are the author's opinion.

**Detailed Objectives:** an attempt to further define subobjectives in specific terms. These are hypothetical and are the author's opinion.

**Measures / Criteria:** a useful way of judging whether or not a facility plan is addressing the objectives. These are hypothetical and are the author's opinion.
**TABLE 3.2: “VALUE TREE” EXAMPLE.** Note: This exercise is hypothetical and may develop differently if carried out by true stakeholders. The fundamental objectives are taken from the B.C. Parks mandate, the other objectives and measures are the author’s opinion.
3.6 Recommended Policy Based on Hypothetical Values Defining Exercise

Policy sets the framework and provides direction for management decisions. Policy direction may be general or specific: It may prescribe the process by which decisions are made, how actions are to be accomplished, or what results are to be achieved. Inherent in these directives are the philosophy and values of the park system. In facilities planning it is most helpful to write very directive policy that actually describes the results to be achieved.3

What follows is a suggested facilities development policy for B.C. Parks. The section illustrates a broad philosophy addressing experiential quality and a site planning / design process that values the "spirit of place". The policies address the detailed objectives generated within the previous value defining exercise in Table 3.2. It is hypothetical and is not intended to be complete; public and staff input would be necessary to develop a complete policy based on identified values. The suggested policies come from my own judgment of what should be valued in these protected places. If BC Parks was to go through a value defining exercise in an effort to fix policy that addressed facilities in parks, the agency may decide that their organizational values pointed towards something different.

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3 Although B.C. Parks does not have a Facilities Development Policy the agency does have a Facilities Design Manual last revised in 1986 (Ministry of Environment, 1986). This document does not have the force of policy and is rarely used (Bishop, 1992). The manual's main focus is on engineering with only one paragraph allotted to building aesthetics:

*In most instances Park buildings are to blend harmoniously into their surroundings, unless they are in a service yard, or the site designer desires to emphasize the appearance of the building to fit a concept* (Ministry of Environment, 1986, p.2).
SUGGESTED GENERAL POLICY (generated from details in table 3.2):

The B.C. Provincial Park Service will provide appropriate facilities necessary for resource protection and required for visitor enjoyment of parks.

Plans for facilities provided by B.C. Parks and any private concessionaires will:

1. Be harmonious with park resources
2. Retain natural materials and features wherever possible
3. Locate facilities so as not to compete with natural attractions
4. Identify appropriate visitor activities
5. Address safety issues in line with system wide risk management policy
6. Address public desires for specific use
7. Consult an interdisciplinary team in the planning and design process
8. Compare the costs of alternative projects
9. Ensure that facilities function as needed
10. Disturb the smallest possible area during construction
11. Establish acceptable limits of change and carrying capacities
12. Develop facilities that are compatible with natural processes
13. Consider and phase in sustainable technologies
14. Institute restoration projects as a required part of development

SUGGESTED FACILITY PLANNING AND DESIGN

Planning and design of park facilities will be accomplished within the master planning process by interdisciplinary teams constituted to meet the environmental, programmatic, and technical requirements of the project. The teams should include, but are not limited to:

1. A Project Manager
2. A Landscape Architect
3. An Engineer
4. A Planner
5. A Biologist or Natural Resource Specialist
6. A Program Specialist
7. Field Representatives

Public input will be sought at the earliest stage of planning and design for new parks. In the retrofitting of older parks to meet changing demands or to
address environmental problems, the public will be consulted and allowed comment wherever feasible.

Facilities necessary for visitor use and park management will be identified in park master plans, which will contain inventories of park features, a detailed description of the park's environmental constraints, its predicted carrying capacity with corresponding acceptable limits of change, and a statement relating facilities to these parameters. Strategies for addressing over capacity use or change beyond established limits of acceptability will be stated.

Designs for all park facilities will be harmonious with and integrated into the park environment and will be subject to high standards of design and functionality. **Costs.** All costs, including initial construction costs, ongoing maintenance costs, and operating costs, will be considered in the planning, design, and construction of new facilities. Alternative solutions will be compared within the project identification stage of development.

**Location.** Facilities will be placed where they do not impede upon the major park resource. This will generally be away from main park features.

**Integration of Facilities into the Park Environment.** Facilities will be integrated into the park landscape and environs so as to cause minimum impact. Development will not compete with or dominate park features. A cohesive design theme will reflect the purpose and character of each park, respecting the unique features of that environment. Standard designs and components may be used in park furniture and fixtures such as trash cans, most signage, benches, picnic tables, and fire grills. Other structures must be appropriate to the specific site and conditions as part of the design process.
Full integration of facilities into the park environment will involve:

- Innovative concepts for grouping facilities and activities, both in design of new development and in redesign of existing complexes, building on the architectural and landscape elements already present. New structures will harmonize with the area and its cultural resources in proportion, color, and texture.
- Thorough resource and user analysis.
- Sensitivity to cultural, regional, aesthetic, and environmental factors in the selection of site, materials, and forms.
- Knowledge of values and other cultural concerns of parks associated ethnic groups.

SUGGESTED CONSTRUCTION POLICY

Construction Sites. Construction sites will be limited to the smallest feasible area. Ground disturbance will be carefully controlled to preclude undue damage to vegetation or soil and to reduce air, water, and noise pollution.

Revegetation and Landscaping. Native plant material must be used on all sites. Irrigation to maintain exotic plantings such as lawns will be discouraged. Whenever possible, soils and plants affected by construction will be salvaged for use in site restoration.

SUGGESTED UTILITIES POLICY

Utilities will have the least possible resource impact. Low technology, energy efficient, sustainable alternatives will be considered in newly developed areas and will replace highly consumptive systems as they need replacing.
Utility Lines. Utility lines and structures will be located and designed to minimize their impact on park resources and values. Wherever possible and visually acceptable, all utilities will share a common corridor and be combined with transportation corridors. Opportunities will be sought to use the presence of utility structures as a means of interpreting visitor impact on park landscapes.

Solid Waste Management. Environmentally sound solutions to solid waste management will be sought. B.C. Parks will endeavor to use biodegradable and recycled materials. Composting toilets will be used in place of conventional outhouses on all new sites whenever feasible. Opportunities will be sought to use the presence of solid waste management systems as a means of interpreting visitor impact on park landscapes.

SUGGESTED ACCESS AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS POLICY

Park Roads. Park roads will reflect the highest principles of park design, enhance the visitor experience, and be sensitive to environmental factors. Park roads should not be constructed to provide fast and convenient transportation; they are intended to enhance the quality of a visit while being safe. Traffic calming devices will be used where possible.

The use of alternative transportation systems will be considered as alternatives to increasing road capacity. Some existing roads are cultural and recreational resources, and their values will be preserved as such. The effect of automobiles on significant natural resources, processes, or cultural resources will be minimized. Herbicides will not be used as a means of suppressing vegetation growth on roadsides.
Roads will be intimately and harmoniously related to the landscape through which they pass. Specific road designs must adapt to each park's unique character and resource limitations.

**Parking Areas.** Parking areas will be located so as not to intrude, by sight or sound, on significant features. Parking areas will be limited to the smallest size appropriate and be designed to harmoniously accommodate vehicles and pedestrians. Where large parking areas are needed, their negative visual impacts will be reduced with plantings and other design techniques such as orientation or configuration. Stabilized overflow areas will be used to accommodate peak visitation. Permanent parking areas will not be sized for peak use.

**SUGGESTED VISITOR AND MANAGEMENT FACILITIES POLICY**

**Buildings.** Buildings such as visitor centres and staff offices will be constructed in locations that minimize visual intrusions and harm to major park features. Buildings must be designed to be as much a part of the natural setting as possible.

**Campgrounds.** Campgrounds will be designed to accommodate the different experiences expected for recreational vehicle camping and tent camping considering terrain, soils, vegetation, climate, visual and auditory privacy. Campers who travel in large mobile homes will be encouraged to use private accommodation outside of natural area parks. Campgrounds intended to accommodate large recreation vehicles or buses will be located only where existing roads can safely accommodate such vehicles and increased traffic load. All campgrounds will offer some tent only sites. These sites will provide a suitable surface for pitching a tent. Vegetation around campsites will be retained whenever possible.
4.0 PARK SITE EXAMPLE
4.1 Introduction

In my opinion, the absence of facility development policy makes the process of decision making for the "end of the line person" very blurry. The following case describes a typical circumstance for a park manager in a small park with no master plan. In choosing among the potential examples I have rejected the more obvious possibilities such as the large visitors centre found in Mount Robson Provincial Park. It has been my experience that the majority of work that shapes and changes each park occurs in small increments. Independent decisions are made to replace a bridge with a culvert, enlarge a parking lot, install manufactured playground equipment, or enlarge camp sites without process or principles to guide or direct (Blue, 1992, p.16). The following example is a realistic and common model of what staff most often face. It suggests how facility policy might have helped achieve a different result. In the discussion of alternatives, the suggested policies refer to those set out in the previous chapter.¹

4.2 Criteria for Evaluation

We all try to balance the solutions to problems we face, forming choices into unspoken tradeoff equations. Should I spend more money to get a better looking house? Should I buy a smaller house, trading the size off in order to live closer to my work? The answers are clues to our values and the criteria we set for making our decisions. In the absence of other alternatives or processes, staff people in the BC Parks organization appear to intuitively consider performance and costs, occasionally including appearance in the tradeoff equation. This is where an organizational review of values would be helpful. The following criteria were

¹ Note that those policies came from my own judgment of what should be valued in these protected places. If BC Parks was to go through a value defining exercise in an effort to fix policy that addressed facilities in parks, the agency may decide that their organizational values pointed towards something different.
identified in Table 3.2 as measures of detailed policy objectives. The measures, which are applicable to this case, will be used for evaluation purposes at the end of the example.

**MEASURES / CRITERIA** (from the value defining exercise, Table 3.2)

- Scale, color, and form blends with natural elements;
- Amount of local materials used; major earthworks avoided;
- Facilities located away from main attraction;
- Activities limited to those which relate to natural surroundings and can support use within acceptable limits of change;
- Number of human safety policies implemented;
- Park description identifies allowed uses;
- Interdisciplinary teams consulted;
- Cost of alternative solutions compared in project justification statement;
- Number of problems presented caused by nonfunctioning design;
- Amount of area disturbed;
- Predicted number assigned to carrying capacities - acceptable limits of change recorded;
- Number of alterations to natural processes;
- Range of alternative technologies considered;
- Number of projects to restore vegetation and habitat.
4.3 The Park Site Problem and Alternative Solution

This section is organized as follows:
1. General Site Description;
2. BC Parks Staff Project Description (See Appendix 2: Project Justification Statement);
3. BC Parks Staff Project Justification (See Appendix 2);
4. B.C. Parks Staff Project Cost Estimate (See Appendix 2);
5. Suggested Alternative Solution Based on Facility Development Values and Policy;
6. Discussion of Alternative Solution;
7. Estimated Monetary Cost of Suggested Alternative Solution;
8. Comparison on Basis of Criteria Identified in Previous Value Tree Exercise (Table 3.2).

1. General Site Description: The lake pictured in figure 4.1 forms the central attraction in a provincial park located in the north central part of British Columbia. The summers are short, hot, and dry and the winters are long and cold, hence native vegetation does not recover easily from disturbance. The natural soils tend to be very sandy encouraging erosion in disturbed areas. The pictured beach is used by 50 to 150 visitors per day for approximately two months each year. For the rest of the year the number of visitors is dramatically less. The beach is the major amenity in this park which includes a campground and a minor trail system located in another section. The site also has a picnicking area and a parking lot suitable for a maximum of 100 cars. The problems presented by B.C. Parks staff concerned erosion of the beach and treed picnic area as well as problems with the parking area.
Figure 4.1: Lakeside beach with erosion problems

Figure 4.2: Retaining wall solution soon to be repeated on pictured beach as a means of halting erosion problems
2. B.C. Parks Staff Project Description:

RESTORATION AND REPAIR OF BEACH AND PICNIC TERRACE FACILITY
1. Halt erosion of beach and picnic area using prefabricated concrete barriers and filling behind them with soil.
2. Pave and enlarge parking lot area. (See Appendix 2)

3. B.C. Parks Staff Justification Description:

Foreshore and upland vegetation becoming undermined resulting in loss of trees; tree root and stump exposure are a safety concern. Project will decrease future maintenance costs.

Parking area needs enlarging and paving to eliminate dust. Will decrease future maintenance costs. (See Appendix 2)

4. B.C. Parks Staff Generated Project Cost Estimate:

Retaining Wall
Staff supervision time: 3 days $ 420.00
Concrete barriers: $20,000.00
Backfill and installation of barriers $10,000.00
Total Cost: $30,420.00

Parking Lot Enlargement and Paving:
Staff supervision time: 3 days $ 420.00
Grading and scraping $ 2,500.00
Parking lot paving: $10,000.00
Total Cost $12,920.00

TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE: $ 43,340.00
5. Suggested Alternative Solution Based on Facility Development Policy:

Suggested Relevant policies (refer to section 3.6):

- Integration of facilities into park environment
- Location
- Construction sites
- Revegetation and landscaping
- Restoration projects
- Parking areas

6. Discussion of Suggested Alternative Solution:

- A vegetation rehabilitation project would have presented an opportunity for vegetation and soils interpretation. Modeling ecologically sensitive behaviour would inform visitors about native plant material and about site specific and global erosion problems. Native plant material could have been used to direct users along confined appropriate routes.

- The parking area is heavily used for only two months of every year, yet it has a very large visual and experiential impact on the park environment. It is also probable that the clearing of the large space contributes to the erosion problems experienced elsewhere on the site. The paving project which staff proposed would increase the rate of water runoff, adding further to erosion problems elsewhere. A different and suggested solution would have been to build smaller overflow parking lots tucked into existing clearings. The dust problem would be less problematic with smaller cleared spaces, the probable contribution to the erosion problem would be less, and the first experience of the site would be of the natural landscape rather than of a paved "supermarket" type lot.
### 7. Estimated Costs for Suggested Alternative Solution:

**EROSION CONTROLLED BY VEGETATION REHABILITATION PROJECT:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning and design: staff person 1 week</td>
<td>$700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff supervision time: 3 weeks</td>
<td>$2,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(alternative use of contracted landscape architect)</td>
<td>$4,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Material</td>
<td>$8,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Labour: installation, 6 weeks watering and maintenance</td>
<td>$2,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Interpretive signage</td>
<td>$1,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary signage, temporary fencing</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Cost**

$14,900.00

Alternative Total Cost (contracting out design and project supervision): ($16,100.00)

**BUILDING OF 3 SMALLER UNPAVED LOTS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff supervision time: 1 week</td>
<td>$700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading and scraping</td>
<td>$3,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replanting/ decreasing size of existing lot</td>
<td>$3,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Cost**

$7,200.00

**TOTAL PROJECT COST ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION**

$22,100.00

Alternative Total Cost (contracting out design / project supervision): ($23,300.00)
### 8. Comparison Based on Applicable Criteria (From Table 3.2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPLICABLE MEASURES / CRITERIA</th>
<th>STAFF PROPOSAL</th>
<th>ALTERNATE SUGGESTED PROPOSAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale, color, and form blends with natural elements</td>
<td>Concrete highway barriers proposed for beach not aesthetically desirable; scale, color and form do not blend with natural elements; completely obliterates nature of beach; paving and enlarging parking lot further damages site character</td>
<td>Works with natural amenities and character; takes advantage of interpretive opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of local materials used; major earthworks avoided</td>
<td>Natural vegetation not protected by solution; major filling proposed</td>
<td>Natural vegetation further protected; no earthworks proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary teams consulted</td>
<td>Park maintenance staff consulted</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary team proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of problems caused by nonfunctioning design</td>
<td>Perfectly performs function of keeping sand from eroding on beach; does not improve erosion problem in treed area; paving parking lot solves dust and space problem very well</td>
<td>Works well to control pedestrian movement and prevent further damage; smaller parking lots provide space and solve dust problem well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of area disturbed</td>
<td>Likely to increase disturbed areas</td>
<td>Attempts to decrease size of disturbance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of alterations to natural processes</td>
<td>Further alters natural water system</td>
<td>Attempts to minimize disturbance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of alternate technologies considered</td>
<td>No alternatives considered</td>
<td>Only natural alternatives considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects to restore vegetation and habitat</td>
<td>Increases damage</td>
<td>Begins to restore natural processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monetary cost of alternative treatment</strong></td>
<td>$43,340.00</td>
<td>$22,100.00 or ($23,300.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The proposed alternative would actually be cheaper in dollar terms than the staff proposal.

TABLE 4.1: Comparison of Staff Proposal and Alternative Suggested Proposal based on Criteria from Value Defining Exercise (Table 3.2.)
In the end, the whole process of looking, questioning, trying to gain an understanding makes a person a more intimate, respectful part of any environment and therefore more likely to be caring of it. That is the basis for good planning and beneficial action.

Alan B. Jacobs, *Looking at Cities*
5.1 Conclusions

A substantial literature has evolved over the past twenty years in the area of visitor management in natural area parks. Most writers provide frameworks for planning visitor services and facilities (See Rollins, 1991; Hendee et al, 1978). To date, I have found limited research about visitor services which specifically speaks to the issue of design and planning in parks in a way that values a true "sense of place". However, the topic of planning for a "sense of place" is very well discussed in a wide body of urban design literature. The basic philosophy is the same.

Planners, designers, developers, and operators in parks have a unique opportunity and a responsibility to protect the sanctity of a place and its spirit. What better place to model sustainable land use values than through the truly magnificent sites we have preserved as provincial parks?

This study began with a documentation project designed to record facility development practices throughout the British Columbia Provincial Park System (Blue, 1992). It became apparent as I worked through the original project that the B.C. Parks employees who had the responsibility of implementing the provincial parks mandate were very dedicated to their jobs. However, they lacked a unified sense of just where “the line” was between accommodating people and protecting the landscape. This line describes the dichotomy between the two parts of the conflicting mandate for provincial parks in British Columbia, and could be determined more clearly if value explicit facility development policy was provided. This value explicit facility development policy could evolve from a discussion / value defining exercise similar to the one described in Chapter 3. This exercise would see stakeholders looking specifically at the dual mandate for provincial parks and endeavoring to further define exactly what the mandate means for the development
of facilities. Through the generation of objectives, sub-objectives and measures the values of the organization would become more explicit. It would then be possible to generate facility development policy to guide decision making at the park level.

It is my personal opinion that BC Parks is basically a system where the recreational pursuits of people, an anthropocentric view, are often more important than the natural resource. BC Parks' conflicting mandate, to protect as well as to present, may need to change with the changing world view. I believe that the only way to achieve both aspects of this mandate is to develop policy that institutionalizes a respect for "sense of place".

As the political, economic and cultural fabric of all regions of the British Columbia landscape grows more sophisticated, legislative remedies to environmental issues will become more difficult to execute. If our society's values towards resources change, and priorities shift, the resource protection field could evolve from legislated land preservation to cultural protection based on appreciation and peer pressure. The interpretive efforts of B.C. Parks in commemorating landscape features that most powerfully embody the qualities of experience that are possible in a particular regional landscape will support this evolution (Ministry of Environment Lands and Parks, 1990). A worthy goal for the provincial park service is to design and construct the most appropriate facilities possible within a particular park setting modeling values that speak of our relationship and impact on natural areas and by extension to the world.

5.2 An Area For Further Research

How learning and development are facilitated by a person's experience of a particular setting is surely a fundamental issue, but there is little beyond speculation here. I say this while recognizing that, among educators, there seems to be a very
broad acceptance of the importance of setting to the facilitation of learning. As one example, schools have been studied to see how they facilitate or discourage school learning (Lynch, 1972), but this does not really penetrate very far into how specific places are occasions for growth. An understanding of how people change and grow as a result of their interaction with their environment, which might lead to the building of true learning places, is a research topic yet to be addressed. This kind of research would be valuable to all kinds of professionals who manipulate environments to provide experiences for people.

Throughout this paper I have advocated the development of facilities in provincial parks that are carefully constructed to model respect for the special places in which they sit. This is a personal value judgment. These types of value judgments are a necessary part of any organizational structure. In B.C. Parks, it is my best judgment that the organization would benefit from a value defining exercise, the results of which would clarify for its staff and for the public exactly what facilities are appropriate and what actions that affect natural landscapes are desirable in provincial parks.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


<table>
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<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Description of Effort Towards Protecting Sense Of Place</th>
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<tr>
<td>Parks Canada</td>
<td>Parks Canada hires landscape architects on retainer services so district managers can use them to make design decisions. Every park has a specific 'motif' that recognizes an area's unique features in terms of culture, environment, and special landscapes. Those features are responded to in the design process. All facilities are designed specifically for a region to 'fit' the special environment in which they are located.</td>
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<td>GVRD</td>
<td>Staff planners (who are also landscape architects) usually do the preliminary master planning work and the detailed design work. Subsequently, some design work is contracted out if it is complicated. Each site is responded to individually but sometimes costs get in the way of doing the best job possible. Site development and final design specifications are given to GVRD's construction section to implement. Lots of site inspections are done to insure adherence to the detailed design specifications.</td>
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<tr>
<td>California State Parks</td>
<td>California has a 'spirit of place' program that sets guidelines for conducting park inventories in an effort to identify special features of parks and respond in site planning and design. Landscape architects are part of the planning staff who do detailed design work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. National Parks</td>
<td>The US Park Service has its design work centralized in Denver. Each park is considered an individual unit with respect to design and very well developed planning and design development processes are in place to guide development. In addition, sustainable design has become very important in park development. The research arm of the Denver Service Center has recently published a document Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design (United States Department of Agriculture, 1993) which addresses sense of place in parks as an important corollary to sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC Ministry of Highways</td>
<td>The Ministry of Highways has recently published A Manual for Aesthetic Design Practice. The document deals with aesthetic issues in highway building and is meant as a guide for planners, engineers, and site managers. The document was initiated due to complaints the department had been receiving concerning their treatment of the landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistler Municipality</td>
<td>Whistler has very stringent design guidelines for the whole municipality. They view the issue of sense of place as part of their mandate as a tourism resort which depends on a spectacular mountain landscape. The strict design and development guidelines are intended to help retain a connection to place.</td>
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APPENDIX 1: Description Of Effort Towards Protecting Sense Of Place In Other Agencies
R. R. & E PROJECT JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

RANKING: __________

Project Description:

RESTORATION AND REPAIR OF BEACH AND PICNIC TERRACE FACILITY

1. Halt erosion of beach and picnic area using prefabricated concrete barriers and filling in behind them with soil.
2. Pave and enlarge parking lot area.

Justification: (Priorize the reasons)

Foreshore and upland vegetation becoming undermined resulting in loss of trees; tree root and stump exposure are a safety concern. Project will decrease future maintenance costs.

Parking area needs enlarging and paving to eliminate dust. Will decrease future maintenance costs.

Cost Estimate: (Provide details) $43,340.00

- Concrete barriers $20,000
- Backfill and installation $10,000
- Grading and scraping $2,500
- Staff time $840

Design Requirements:

None

Estimated Impact on Ongoing Maintenance and Operating Costs (describe increase or decreased costs)

Will decrease maintenance costs.

Estimated Impact on Revenue (will additional revenue be generated due to increased use or higher fees)

N/A

Source: B.C. Ministry of Environment Lands and Parks, 1992b
DEFINITIONS

**Conservation**: The process of protecting the natural environment while allowing natural processes to continue.

**Design**: A small scale, specific, and often subjective and detailed activity that results in physical changes in the environment.

**Environmental Fit**: A harmonious relationship with nature, visually and philosophically.

**Experience**: Observation or participation in event; anything lived through. The activity, the setting (including facilities), and the effect on the visitor creates experience. Designing for experience begins by identifying the impression you want to provide and the events you want a person to encounter. Good detailed design supports a planned experience.

**Image**: A mental conception held in common by members of a group and symbolic of a basic attitude and orientation. It is the representation of an idea or a belief.

**Landscape Architecture**: The art and science of designing, planning, and managing the external environment.

**Landscape Character**: Describes the individual visual quality of an area which comes principally from vegetation type, terrain and landform.

**Limit of Acceptable Change**: A threshold of change set as a policy for an area and used as a management standard.

**Master Plans**: A document that is a written statement of management intent. It suggests how all the pieces of a park management strategy should fit together. It does not normally include design specifics.

**Multidisciplinary Team**: A group of consultants bringing different expertise to a project.

**Park Architecture**: A traditional approach for park structures that refers directly to natural elements in scale, colour, and form. Commonly composed of natural materials that weather, has an ambiance of craftsmanship, and is sited in response to the subtleties of the park landscape.

APPENDIX 3
**Planning:** A large scale, general, objective and abstract activity resulting in guidelines, administrative policies, and statements of general intent.

**Rehabilitation:** The adjustment of a park landscape and environment to suit new goals.

**Sense of Place; Spirit of Place:** A sense of place is directly related to "environmental fit". Development that recognizes the essence of a site including landforms, materials, colour, texture, and scale as well as the events and patterns which happen there. A term that refers to the character of a place and the extent to which development is true to this character. Chain stores seldom exhibit a sense of place; undisturbed natural environments always do.

**Sustainable Design:** Restores or conserves a park's natural processes. Sustainable construction methods and material may include sustainably harvested lumber, permeable paving, constructed wetlands for stormwater and gray water, reducing roads, and designing for less use of resources.

**Values:** The importance placed on particular attitudes or actions. Values often play a large role in distinguishing between different groups and cultures.