

# **AVIATION PLAN**

**June 2003**

for:

**Tantalus  
Provincial Park**

**Environmental Stewardship  
Lower Mainland Region**

The management plan for Brackendale Eagles -- Baynes Island -- and Tantalus Provincial Parks (BEBIT) directs the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to prepare an aviation plan and guidelines for Tantalus Provincial Park. The BEBIT management plan provides the following information on aviation use within Tantalus Park:

“Aircraft access will be managed through the development of an aviation management plan. This plan will be developed by BC Parks and a stakeholder group and will include the following directions:

- Air access is a valid activity within Tantalus Park and there is a need to control its potential impacts on other users.
- Floatplane access will continue at Lake Lovely Water but changes will be considered on shore landing sites and use patterns to control impacts.
- Helicopter access will continue at Lake Lovely Water (Alpine Club Cabin only), selected sites within the Lovely Water basin, and selected sites within the Nature Recreation Zone.
- The Wilderness Recreation Zone will be closed to public and commercial aviation use.
- The level of commercial aviation use to occur within the park will be discussed and considered.
- No additional commercial aviation permits will be issued until the aviation management plan is complete.”

In 2002 and early 2003, Ministry staff and stakeholders prepared the plan and guidelines found here. The directions found within this document will be used to manage commercial aviation access into the park, commercial park use permits for aviation companies, and to guide the activities of private aircraft operators. Park management flights will follow these guidelines unless there is a specific management reason to work outside of the guidelines (e.g. wildlife inventory, trail construction).

Safety will remain the responsibility of the pilots and aviation companies. This aviation management plan does not compromise safety. In emergency situations, pilots are able to make decisions outside of the plan guidelines as is necessary for the safety of aircraft, clients and other park visitors.

### **1.0 General Guidelines for Aircraft Access**

In general, aircraft access will be managed within Tantalus Provincial Park to provide access for mountaineers, hikers and other park visitors to specified drop off or pickup points, a float plane day use experience to Lake Lovely Water, and a glacier viewing and day use experience at the Serratus Glacier area. Aircraft landings will not be permitted within the Wilderness Recreation Zone except on an emergency or parks management basis.

## **2.0 Helicopter Activities and Access Points**

Helicopters can be used to provide access to ten separate access points. These are shown on the attached map.

Lake Lovely Water Basin sites – The primary landing site within the Lovely Water Basin will be near the Alpine Club cabin. Secondary sites can be used at the sand spit on the lake or at the Russian Army camp location if the pilot is not able to land at the Alpine Club cabin due to weather or safety concerns. The Russian Army camp location can also be used to pick up outgoing passengers from the Jim Haberl Hut who are unable to be picked up at the Haberl Hut due to weather or safety concerns.

In order to assist in limiting the numbers of visitors within an environmentally sensitive area, all users being dropped off at one of the Lovely Water sites must stay overnight prior to being flown out.

The landing site at the Lovely Water Alpine Club Cabin will be moved down slope and to the east of the existing site approximately 300 meters to provide better visual and noise screening for the cabin and campground.

Other Tantalus sites – Seven landing sites can be accessed outside of the Lovely Water Basin. With the exception of the Serratus Glacier site, these sites are to be used as drop off or pickup points only. Due to lack of trail facilities, potential environmental damage and the severity of the terrain, none of these sites are to be used for helihiking operations. At this time, there are no restrictions on same-day drop offs and pick ups. BC Parks will monitor use and impacts and, if necessary, constraints may be increased to control visitor impacts.

The Serratus Glacier site can be used for more extensive activities including glacier viewing, natural feature interpretation, and other appropriate day use activities. Food and guided services may be provided as part of this opportunity but they will be oriented to activities which are appropriate to the park and the natural setting. Activities which are incompatible with this natural setting (e.g. extensive equipment setups) or which are more appropriate outside of the park (e.g. golf) will not be permitted.

Flight Routes – Between June 25 and the end of the Labor Day weekend, helicopters which are under park use permit will be required to avoid flight routes which pass directly through the Lovely Water Basin. In particular this includes descending flights from the Serratus-Alpha col and flights to or from the Jim Haberl Hut. For descending flights, an alternate flight route will be followed by remaining high across the back of the basin and then exiting via the lake systems near Mt. Thyses. Two exceptions to the avoidance of Lovely Water basin flight routes would be:

- adverse weather conditions closing off other routes; or,
- a client who is suffering from particularly significant hearing or ear discomfort and who cannot withstand the longer and steeper descent via Mt Thyses.

Additional Landing Sites – At this time, only one additional landing site will be considered. This site is located to the east and north of the east ridge of Mount Alpha. The decision by BC Parks on adding this site will be made after the 2003 field season and in consultation with mountaineering and commercial aviation stakeholders.

### **3.0 Floatplane Activities and Access Points**

The only area appropriate for float plane landings within Tantalus Park is Lake Lovely Water. Float planes can provide access for overnight users and for day trips. Consideration was given to moving float plane landings away from the traditional sand spit area. However, this was not acceptable due to the physical and scenic limitations of alternate sites.

Commercial float planes will be able to come to land at the west end of the lake and at the sand spit on the southern shore. Commercial companies under this plan can improve the quality of the western landing site subject to an agreement with BC Parks on the design and on maintenance responsibilities.

Float plane use will continue at the sand spit with the following understanding:

- If no one is at the sand spit then float planes can land.
- If there is activity on the sand spit, then float plane pilots will make a judgment call.
  - If the site is small due to high water or crowded with other users and therefore unsafe to land a plane, then the pilot will proceed to the west end.
  - If the site has low use, and the pilot feels that a safe landing can take place then the plane can land at the sand spit.

Float plane landings at the sand spit is a difficult issue to resolve – the key element is that all users must respect each other's needs and be prepared to share the site.

At this time, float planes provide overnight and day use services to the Lovely Water Basin primarily for visitors who land, view the area for a brief period of time, and then leave on the same flight. Any passenger who does not leave on the same float plane flight as they arrived on must stay overnight prior to being picked up by another flight.

The following practices will be followed by commercial float plane pilots to minimize impacts on other users:

- Pilots should reduce power as soon as possible on landing;
- Pilots will go to the very back (western) end of the lake to begin takeoff;
- Pilots should enter and exit the lake area in a straight in, straight out alignment.

As well, guidelines for canoeing and boating on the lake will be developed and posted at the Lovely Water Cabin. These guidelines will provide direction on canoeing safely on the lake and possible interactions with float planes.

#### **4.0 Fixed Wing Overflight Guidelines**

BC Parks does not have jurisdiction on the air space and cannot directly manage fixed wing over flight guidelines. BC Parks will work cooperatively with companies offering fixed wing tours of the park area to minimize impacts on recreational experiences and on wildlife values. In particular, companies will be encouraged to maintain an elevation of 4500 ft or greater ASL within the Lovely Water Basin.

#### **5.0 Levels of Commercial Aviation Use**

At this time, most stakeholders felt existing levels and types of commercial aviation use in 2002 to be appropriate. Some stakeholders felt that floatplane use on Lake Lovely Water should be restricted to lower levels of use.

At this time, no specific levels of commercial aviation use will be set. BC Parks will monitor use numbers, impacts, and changes in use or impacts. If impacts change or increase BC Parks, in consultation with stakeholders, will determine appropriate levels of use or changes in restrictions on use levels. These changes may include limits on number of flights, limits on number of permits, and exclusive permits for companies providing aviation access.

Park use permits issued for helicopter access for the nine pick-up and drop-off points will only be issued to companies who control and directly operate their own aircraft. At this time there will be no limits placed on the number of permits issued.

Park use permits issued for helicopter access to the Serratus Glacier site will be issued to both helicopter companies and companies who do not control their own aircraft. The focus of the Serratus opportunity is not primarily aircraft access but the interpretive and glacial viewing opportunities. As such, this opportunity can be served by a wide variety of potential applicants. Permit holders who do not control or directly operate their own aircraft can use any commercially licensed aircraft provider. At this time there will be no limits placed on the number of permits issued. However, this opportunity will be closely monitored for impacts to the environment and the visitor experience. It may be necessary for BC Parks to consider an exclusive permit if use or impacts increase.

Park use permits for float plane access to Lake Lovely Water will only be issued to companies who control and directly operate their own aircraft. At this time there will be no limits placed on the number of permits issued. However, it is recognized that any significant increase in use within the Lovely Water basin has significant negative impacts on other users. This opportunity will be closely monitored for changes to the impacts to the environment and the visitor experience. If significant changes are occurring, then BC Parks will implement appropriate restrictions. Restrictions may include limits on number of flights, limits on number of permit holders, or an exclusive commercial permit.

## **6.0 Private Aircraft Use**

Private aircraft access to Tantalus Park will be allowed to continue. The stakeholders have generally agreed that private aircraft use is not an issue at this time. In general, BC Parks will, within their jurisdiction, manage private aircraft to meet the spirit and intent of the aviation management plan. Private aircraft activity will be monitored for impacts and, as necessary, corrective measures will be implemented.

## **7.0 Aircraft Use during Commercial Filming**

Any aircraft access necessary during a commercial filming activity will be managed to meet the spirit and intent of the aviation management plan. It is recognized that some exceptions to the plan may be necessary (e.g. different helicopter landing sites) but these exceptions will be managed to meet the overall objectives of the aviation management plan.

## **8.0 Changes in Technology**

Changes in aviation technology may enable reduction of impacts in the future. BC Parks will work with stakeholders and through the commercial park use permits issued for aviation access to incorporate appropriate technology changes in managing aviation access in Tantalus Park.