

BEHIND THE SCENERY:

Manning Park and the Aesthetics of Automobile Accessibility in 1950s British Columbia

BEN BRADLEY*

THE AUTOMOBILE, OR, more precisely, *automobility* – the constellation of spaces, objects, practices, discourses, and habits that surround the ubiquitous vehicle and the paths along which it travels – has been central to the popular experience and cultural meaning of parks in North America since the 1920s.¹ However, while the spread of “car culture” is often presented as monolithic and homogenizing, it was in fact uneven and variegated, producing distinct regional histories of automobility and distinct regional relations between driving, the environment, and landscape experience. This was particularly true in British Columbia, where the development of a cohesive inter-regional road network occurred two decades later than in most other western provinces and states.² As a result, British Columbia’s provincial parks

* The author acknowledges financial support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and thanks Jan Hadlaw, Jay Young, Jenn Bonnell, Jim Clifford, the other contributors to this theme issue, and the journal’s anonymous reviewers for providing feedback on earlier drafts.

¹ On automobility as a non-linear system, see John Urry, “The System of Automobility,” *Theory, Culture, and Society* 21, 4–5 (2004): 25–40; Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1971), 98–104. On its central role in how North American parks have been experienced by the public and managed by government agencies, see Gabrielle Barnett, “Drive-By Viewing: Visual Consciousness and Forest Preservation in the Automobile Age,” *Technology and Culture* 45, 1 (2004): 30–54; Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007); Craig E. Colten and Lary M. Dilsaver, “The Hidden Landscape of Yosemite National Park,” *Journal of Cultural Geography* 22, 2 (2005): 27–50; David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington’s National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); Christof Mauch and Thomas Zeller, eds., *The World beyond the Windshield: Roads and Landscapes in the United States and Europe* (Athens/Stuttgart: Ohio University Press/Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008); Anne Mitchell Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

² The primitive state of British Columbia’s road network in the first half of the twentieth century is described in Cole Harris, “Moving amidst the Mountains, 1870–1930,” *BC Studies* 58 (1983): 3–39; R.G. Harvey, *The Coast Connection* (Lantzville: Oolichan, 1994), chaps. 3–5; Andy Craig,

only became intertwined with automobility after the Second World War, by which point the motoring public already had well-formed opinions on what constituted an enjoyable scenic drive, and at the very moment the province (and the Interior in particular) was beginning a massive economic upswing driven by infrastructure building and high commodity prices and characterized by truck logging, pulp mill development, and hydroelectric projects.

In the midst of this postwar resource and construction boom, with its discourses of progress, abundance, and egalitarian all-in-it-togetherness, the passenger automobile was a profoundly political vehicle, at once affirming consumerism, liberal individualism, the normativity of the nuclear family, and Western Cold War notions of freedom.³ By extension, everything visible from the province's arterial highways constituted political theatre, through which many British Columbians and visitors from afar learned about the province's history, environments, and communities. The "lessons" motorists learned as they drove along public highways became a matter of concern to boosters, businesses, and province builders, including tourism promoters, boards of trade, municipal governments, provincial politicians, and several agencies of the state. To maintain the illusion that it was possible to have it all – a booming economy predicated on resource extraction as well as appealing, unspoiled surroundings – it was understood that the motoring public should see for itself – "naturally," without any obvious manipulation or structuring of roadside landscapes – that British Columbia's scenic beauty, historically significant sites, wildlife, and natural environments were not becoming scarce or otherwise endangered. However, expert stage management was sometimes needed in order to draw the motoring public's attention towards specific roadside features and away from others, particularly those that suggested unsettling contradictions of the postwar economy.

Beginning in the late 1940s, the Parks Division of the BC Forest Service was a key government agency that mediated between motorists

Trucking: A History of Trucking in British Columbia since 1900 (Surrey: Hancock House, 1977). Canadians' changing perceptions, during the postwar years, of what constituted a modern road are discussed in David W. Monaghan, *Canada's New Main Street: The Trans-Canada Highway as Idea and Reality, 1912-1956* (Ottawa: Canadian Science and Technology Museum, 2002), 48-56.

³ On the automobile as political vehicle, see Edward Dimendberg, "The Will to Motorization: Cinema, Highways, and Modernity," *October* 73 (1995): 91-137; Cotten Seiler, "Statist Means to Individualist Ends: Subjectivity, Automobility, and the Cold War State," *American Studies* 44, 3 (2003): 5-36; Cotton Seiler, "So That We as a Race Might Have Something Authentic to Travel By: African American Automobility and Cold-War Liberalism," *American Quarterly* 58, 4 (2006): 1091-117; Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1986).

and landscapes.⁴ Managing landscape experiences in British Columbia's provincial parks was especially important because these parks had been set aside as exemplary environments and were expected to be unmarred by traces of industrial resource extraction, pollution, or recent human habitation. However, whereas some agencies responsible for parks in North America had well-developed traditions of landscape design and engaged in extended debates about the proper place of roads and automobiles in parks, those in charge of BC's parks tended towards short, practical discussions that led to action on the ground. The Parks Division remained steeped in the pragmatism of the Forest Service until it became a branch of the Department of Recreation and Conservation in 1957, and did not produce any policy papers or formal guidelines for managing the relations between motorists and park landscapes until the late 1960s.⁵ To understand the political and cultural entanglements of parks and motorists in the 1940s and 1950s, this article focuses on the Parks Division's efforts to impose and maintain a naturalistic appearance along the highway corridor through Manning Park by preserving scenic features, developing natural and historical attractions, and hiding or camouflaging eyesores, all according to a "common sense" that prioritized what was visible to motorists passing through – that is, according to an aesthetic of automobile accessibility.

⁴ Historians of British Columbia have paid little attention to the state's role in shaping travellers' actual landscape experiences, tending instead to focus on how travellers' expectations and consumption patterns were influenced by promotional strategies and landscape representations. See, for example, Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004); Dennis J. Duffy, ed., *Evergreen Playground: A Road Trip through British Columbia* (Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 2008); John O'Brian, "Shaping World Culture: Postwar Postcards in British Columbia," *BC Studies* 131 (2001): 93-112; Peter White, *It Pays to Play: British Columbia in Postcards, 1950s-1980s* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1996). One article that shows how federal government agencies helped construct a trackside historical attraction in northern British Columbia is David Darling and Doug Cole's "Totem Pole Restoration on the Skeena, 1925-30," *BC Studies* 47 (1980): 29-48. Sean Kheraj has also demonstrated the importance attached to improving and then maintaining the landscape of Vancouver's Stanley Park. See Sean Kheraj, "Improving Nature: Remaking Stanley Park's Forest, 1888-1931," *BC Studies* 158 (2008): 63-90; and Sean Kheraj, "Restoring Nature: Ecology, Memory, and the Storm History of Vancouver's Stanley Park," *Canadian Historical Review* 88, 4 (2007): 577-612. Michael Kluckner provides a noteworthy illustration of how popular experiences of British Columbia's landscapes have been shaped by automobile travel in *Vanishing British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).

⁵ The BC Parks Division's aversion to discussing the appropriate place of the automobile in provincial parks during the 1950s contrasts sharply with the policy debates going on in the American National Parks Service, as outlined in Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*; Carr, *Wilderness by Design*; and Linda Flint McClelland, *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916 to 1942* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1993). See also the broader philosophical debates described in Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002).

Flanking the Hope-Princeton Highway in the southern Cascade Mountains 200 kilometres east of Vancouver, Manning was the first major provincial park in British Columbia that was easily accessible to large numbers of visitors. Opened in November 1949, the Hope-Princeton provided a second road link between the Coast and the Interior, and allowed BC residents and visitors to reach (and traverse) Manning Park far more easily than any of the province's other large parks, which before 1950 were isolated and inaccessible to casual travellers. Strathcona could only be reached by a long, roundabout trip that involved driving over rough logging roads; Mount Robson and Garibaldi were only accessible by rail; and Tweedsmuir, Wells Gray, and short-lived Liard River were effectively cut off from all but the most adventurous of outdoor recreationalists. Only the 2.4 million-acre (970,000 hectare) Hamber Park, located in the Selkirk Mountains north of Golden, was traversed by an arterial road, but the provincial government did so little to develop, publicize, or even mark Hamber that most people who drove through it on the unpopular Big Bend Highway were unaware of its existence.⁶

The rapid expansion and improvement of British Columbia's highways during the postwar years, coupled with increased working- and middle-class incomes, more leisure time, and greater rates of personal car ownership, brought dramatic changes to the provincial parks, both physically and in terms of their place in the public consciousness. New highways spurred the development of new parks, and their number grew from forty-six to more than 150 between 1940 and 1960, with most of the increase accounted for by small, roadside day-use areas. The expansion of the highway network encouraged consistent standards of development and management across all regions, and drove the "renovation" of several large, formerly inaccessible parks that had received scant attention from the government. As BC's first large, highway-accessible provincial park, Manning became a kind of showcase, where the Parks Division had the opportunity (and obligation) to demonstrate the aesthetic, recreational, and economic value of provincial parks to political and business elites as well as to the motoring public.

⁶ A barometer of how inaccessible British Columbia's large provincial parks were prior to the late 1940s is the paucity of information about them in histories of nearby communities. For example, see how little Mount Robson, Wells Gray, and Hamber parks are discussed in local histories of the Yellowhead Pass, North Thompson River Valley, and Golden district. The relationship between the much maligned Big Bend Highway and the eventual failure of Hamber Provincial Park is outlined in Ben Bradley, "A Questionable Basis for Establishing a Major Park: Politics, Roads, and the Failure of a National Park in British Columbia's Big Bend Country," in *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011*, ed. Claire E. Campbell (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 79-102.

MAKING ATTRACTIONS AND DISTRACTIONS

E.C. Manning Provincial Park was established in 1941 after a decade of lobbying by trail-riding enthusiasts and boards of trade from the southwest Interior of British Columbia. Its 170,000 acres (69,000 hectares) were granted Class A designation, the province's highest level of protection, but after sending two reconnaissance parties to Manning during the early 1940s, the Parks Division did little on the ground until 1949, when the impending completion of the Hope-Princeton Highway focused attention on the hitherto neglected park.⁷

When it opened, the Hope-Princeton was far and away the most advanced mountain highway in British Columbia, and newspapers and magazines hailed it as a "superhighway," a vital all-season artery of trade and tourism, and a harbinger of prosperity and progress.⁸ Motorists appreciated the faster travel times that the new highway allowed between the Coast and southern Interior, but there was little spontaneous enthusiasm for it as a scenic route because it had not been designed to draw out the most striking or attractive aspects of its surroundings. In 1950, Victoria grocer Leonard Coton, a keen observer of British Columbia's roadside landscapes who typically described the province's real and potential attractions in painstaking detail, had only this to say about the Hope-Princeton:

This highway, in all deference to those who built it and those who have used up gallons of ink writing about it since its opening, is far too highly rated. As a scenic highway it has little or nothing as compared with some of the other roads I have traveled on this trip, except perhaps for the occasional view across a canyon more or less obscured by roadside trees ... Perhaps in years to come, those trees will be cut or blown down, and then this may be a scenic attraction [but] for now

⁷ One of the first proposals for a provincial park in the high country between Hope and Princeton came from former chief forester Martin Allerdale Grainger, whose letters describing his riding trips through the area were posthumously published as *Riding the Skyline* (Vancouver: Horsdal and Schubert, 1994). The Parks Division's first inspections of Manning Park are summarized in C.P. Lyons and D.M. Trew, "Reconnaissance and Preliminary Recreation Plan, Ernest C. Manning Park," Victoria, BC Forest Service, 1943, BC Ministry of Forests Library (hereafter BCMFL); E.G. Oldham and D.L. Macmurchie, "Preliminary Development Plan, Manning Park," (Victoria: BC Forest Service, 1945), BCMFL.

⁸ In their coverage leading up to its opening ceremony, Vancouver dailies regularly described the Hope-Princeton as a "superhighway." For example, see "New Road All Weather: Giant Rotary Plows Will Eat Up Snow," *Vancouver Province*, 2 November 1949.

it is only a road which has shortened the distance from Vancouver to Princeton by over a hundred miles.⁹

Parks Division records show that its staff also regarded the new highway corridor as neither intrinsically scenic nor particularly interesting, and saw this as a problem due to the prominence of both the road and the park. Consequently, the Parks Division set out to improve the experience of driving through Manning Park by developing a series of scenic, historical, and natural attractions along the highway corridor.

The Parks Division identified several landscape features as potential roadside attractions, but most of them were in the uppermost Sumallo and Skagit river valleys, beyond the park's original western boundary.¹⁰ Among these were the views available where the road traversed the towering Skagit Bluffs, about forty-five kilometres east of Hope. During construction of the highway, the Parks Division persuaded the Department of Public Works to build a roadside pullout along the western edge of the bluffs to allow motorists to leave the flow of traffic, exit their vehicles, and peer down into the gorge of the Skagit. The view was impressive, and quickly proved popular, but the tall crash barriers set up along the edge of the precipice made the gorge invisible to motorists who did not stop at the pullout.

The Parks Division also identified a remnant of the gold rush-era Dewdney Trail as a potential historical attraction. In 1860, the Royal Engineers surveyed a wagon road between Fort Hope and the gold diggings at Rock Creek. Edgar Dewdney was hired to blaze a trail between Hope and the site of present-day Princeton, but when the Rock Creek rush fizzled out plans to improve the trail into a wagon road were cancelled. Prospectors, ranchers, and trappers continued using Dewdney's trail through the Cascades and, although much of it was obscured by rockslides and forest fires, several sections remained intact in the late 1940s. One of these was a gracefully curving stretch located

⁹ Leonard A. Coton diary, "My Latest and Probably Last Trip," 49, British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), Leonard A. Coton Papers, MS-2723.

¹⁰ This apparent overstepping of the Parks Division's jurisdiction was not as unusual as it might seem, for the Crown land reserve that had been put in place along the highway right-of-way during construction was kept in place after November 1949. This led to interdepartmental rumours that the Parks Division might end up managing recreational developments and roadside aesthetics along the entire Hope-Princeton Highway. See, for example, D.M. Trew, undated report [fall 1949], "Manning Park Boundaries and Hope-Princeton Highway," BCA, GR-1991, Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division, reel 1801.



Scenic Hope-Princeton Highway at 24 Mile Point

Postcard showing pullouts and edge of precipice at Skagit Bluffs, post-1951.

immediately adjacent to the new highway twenty-seven kilometres beyond Hope.¹¹

No other section of the Dewdney Trail was so prominently visible from the Hope-Princeton. A longer section further east was found to be especially well preserved, but it was far above the valley floor and difficult for motorists to discern. The highway in that area was a series of sharp curves bordered on one side by the Sumallo River and on the other by steep, rocky hillsides, and Parks Division staff concluded that “a dangerous traffic situation” might occur if roadside signs were put up to indicate this gold rush-era relic to passing motorists.¹² As a result, efforts were focused on the plainly visible, easily accessible section of the trail to the west. As at the Skagit Bluffs, a pullout was built. Later, when a telephone line was being strung between Hope and the Similkameen flats, where the government was building the Pinewoods concession complex (today’s Manning Park Lodge), the telephone company was

¹¹ Construction of the Dewdney Trail and early travel over it are described by Susan Allison in Margaret Ormsby, ed., *A Pioneer Gentlewoman in British Columbia: The Recollections of Susan Allison* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1976), chap. 1; Brian Titley, *The Frontier World of Edgar Dewdney* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), chap. 1.

¹² Lyons to Stuart Lefeaux, Secretary, Metropolitan Parks Planning Committee (Vancouver), 15 July 1952, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1801. See also Superintendent Bob Boyd to Chief Forester, 24 May 1952, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803.

instructed to run the line high on the hillside, away from the view of motorists who stopped to look at the historic trail.¹³

The Parks Division identified three other potential attractions outside Manning's original western boundary that merited preservation for (and from) passing motorists. The first was the grove of wild Pacific or California rhododendrons located on the flats thirty-seven kilometres east of Hope. This grove marked the species' northernmost range, and in 1946 had inspired the director of the provincial museum to call for strict rules forbidding the removal of certain species of flora in British Columbia's southern Cascade Mountains.¹⁴ Parks Division staff agreed that Rhododendron Flats was one of the most unusual and interesting natural attractions along the Hope-Princeton Highway corridor, deserving the attention of passing motorists and protection from over-enthusiastic admirers, and studied ways to have it set aside as a recreational reserve.¹⁵

A very different kind of grove was located two kilometres west of Rhododendron Flats. Between the highway and the meandering course of the Sumallo River was a stand of enormous, ancient Western red cedars and Douglas firs, kept damp by the heavy precipitation on the windward side of the Cascades. This was the tallest stand of timber near the new highway, and seemed particularly spectacular because of the immature growth to the west and the smaller, sparser pine forests to the east, as the highway climbed towards Allison Pass and the Interior rain shadow. Even though Sumallo Grove was originally located outside Manning Park, the Parks Division predicted the tall timber would "undoubtedly be associated with its attractions."¹⁶

The third potential attraction identified by the Parks Division was located on the steep bluffs across the Sumallo River from the grove of tall timber. Prime mountain goat habitat extended southwards from these bluffs, and a healthy population of around thirty goats had been observed on the bluffs throughout the 1940s. In the fall of 1949, however, provincial museum staff spotted the remains of a year-old kid at the

¹³ On the troubling place of overhead utility lines in postwar landscapes, see Eugene Levy, "The Aesthetics of Power: High Voltage Transmission Systems and the American Landscape," *Technology and Culture* 38, 3 (1997): 575-607.

¹⁴ Clifford Carl, Director, Provincial Museum, to C.P. Lyons, 5 January 1946, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1800.

¹⁵ The Parks Division's enthusiasm to make the rhododendron grove a roadside attraction was aided by the fact that the ranger in charge of its earliest reconnaissance of the Manning Park area was the botanical enthusiast Chester Lyons, author of the future bestseller *Trees, Shrubs, and Flowers to Know in British Columbia* (Toronto: Dent, 1952).

¹⁶ Lyons and Trew, "Reconnaissance," 4.

base of a cliff, “killed accidentally or possibly shot and unrecovered.” Prospector Bill Robinson, who had a cabin downriver, reported hearing gunshots on numerous occasions, suggesting that sniping from the roadside was a frequent occurrence.¹⁷ Hunting was forbidden inside Manning Park, and signs along the highway notified motorists of this, but no such protection extended to the highly visible mountain goats on the Sumallo bluffs. Staff of the provincial museum concluded:

The area is now so easily accessible that it will be most surprising if increased hunting pressure does not drive or eliminate goats from the immediate environs of the highway. Sportsmen who desire to add this animal to their trophies should not expect to take it from a public thoroughfare. However, when such a trophy presents itself, rare is the hunter who will pass up the opportunity. For this reason some well-publicized restrictions should be imposed in order to maintain goats on “Robinson’s Ridge,” *where they may be enjoyed by everyone passing along the road* [emphasis added].¹⁸

The clutch of potential roadside attractions west of Manning Park could help compensate for a major eyesore at the point where the highway entered the park. The high-elevation pine forests on the western approach to Allison Pass are arid and susceptible to forest fires.¹⁹ Fires had struck the area in 1869, in the late 1910s, and during the tinder-dry summer of 1946, when a huge fire burned on the steep mountainsides that bordered the highway right-of-way. Observing the 1946 fire from an airplane, the Kamloops District forester had predicted the burnt-over area would be a “most conspicuous feature, in full view of any person driving through the park.”²⁰

Parks Division staff concluded that the “big burn” presented “such a frightful, desolate sight” that it needed some kind of explanation. They

¹⁷ G. Clifford Carl, C.J. Guiguet, and George A. Hardy, *A Natural History Survey of the Manning Park Area, British Columbia* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1952), 79.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 80. Roadside signs informing motorists that hunting was forbidden in Manning Park are described in F.R. Butler, Commissioner, Office of the Game Commission, to Chief Forester, 22 September 1950, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803. Police records from the 1940s suggest it was common for motorists to carry loaded rifles in their cars, despite its being illegal to shoot from a vehicle or road right-of-way. See, for example, Daybooks of Constable Tom Scales, BC Provincial Police, Yale Division, BCA, GR-1388, BC Provincial Police Veterans Association Papers, MS-2793, box 6, fol. 1.

¹⁹ In 1869, Susan and John Allison had travelled through the uppermost Skagit River Valley when the forest all around was on fire and the air heavy with smoke. See Ormsby, *Pioneer Gentlewoman*, 28–33, 82.

²⁰ A.E. Parlow to F.S. McKinnon, 24 August 1946, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1800. See also Ches Lyons, “Tough Going,” in BC Parks Branch, *Manning Park Memories* (Victoria: BC Parks Branch, 1991), 42.

also believed that its shocking appearance could be used to promote fire safety in the woods. In the spring of 1950 park rangers Chester Lyons and Mickey Trew set up a large sign on the western edge of the burnt-over area that read: ONE CAMPER MADE THIS 5700 ACRES LOOK LIKE HELL! DON'T YOU BE CARELESS. The Department of Public Works objected strongly to this sign, Lyons later recalled, not only because it had been erected without permission inside the highway right-of-way but also because "hell was a pretty strong word to display to public gaze in those days." As a result, the sign was redesigned and re-erected later that summer as the Manning Park Gallows. Beneath an oversize cigarette swinging by a noose was a sign that read: THE GUY WHO DROPPED IT SHOULD ALSO BE HANGED. PREVENT FOREST FIRES.²¹

Ironically, given that the Manning Park Gallows was meant to explain and reduce the impact of an enormous eyesore, the sign quickly became an attraction in and of itself, an eye-catching colossus that got its message across by borrowing from the whimsical styling of the commercial strip. "This was a car stopper for sure!" Lyons remembered: "It was photographed and displayed in magazines near and far. I don't think there has ever been a forest fire sign with more impact than that one." Park superintendent Bob Boyd reported "the clicking of cameras" at the gallows all through the summer, and the Forest Service's public relations officer received so many favourable comments about the sign that he recommended it be re-erected in the spring of 1951, with or without permission from the Department of Public Works.²²

Having the entrance to a showcase provincial park marred by evidence of an enormous forest fire raised troubling questions about the Parks

²¹ Lyons, "Tough Going," 42. The sign on the gallows was later changed from THE GUY WHO DROPPED IT to the gender-neutral THE ONE WHO DROPPED IT. It appears unlikely that a discarded cigarette caused the 1946 fire. In 1950, Assistant Superintendent Davey Davidson, writing a description of the Hope-Princeton corridor for a travelogue on Manning Park, noted of the big burn: "careless campers left their lunch fire burning." Ches Lyons, who had helped fight the 1946 fire, reviewed Davidson's statement and did not recommend changes to the section on the big burn, which suggests Davidson's explanation was correct. See D.L. Davidson for R.H. Boyd to Chief Forester, attn: C.P. Lyons, 12 April 1950, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803; Lyons to Boyd, 24 April 1950, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803.

²² Boyd to Parks Division re F.P. [Forest Protection] Road Signs, 17 October 1950, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803; David K. Monk for Eric Druce, Public Relations Division, Forest Service, to E.G. Oldham, 30 October 1950, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803. Because the Department of Public Works never gave permission to erect the Manning Park Gallows inside the highway right-of-way, Parks Division staff played dumb as to its origins. "We have not been informed who or what Department was responsible for this type of sign, 'perhaps it does not matter,'" Superintendent Bob Boyd slyly wrote to Parks Division headquarters in the fall of 1950, when advising that he was removing the sign for the winter "in order that the gospel of Forest Protection may continue next summer." See Boyd to Parks Division re F.P. Signs, 17 October 1950, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803.



Sign erected at the western edge of the Big Burn, spring 1950. Note the use of snags for signposts and the unpaved road surface. *Source:* University of Victoria Archives, Chester P. Lyons Fonds, AR409, 4.12.5.



The Manning Park Gallows, with recently paved highway surface. *Source:* University of Victoria Archives, Chester P. Lyons Fonds, AR409, 4.12.3.3.

Division and Forest Service as stewards of British Columbia's forests. Parks Division staff recognized that they could solve two problems at once by moving Manning's western boundary towards Hope: the big burn would no longer mar the western entrance to the park, and the potential roadside attractions it had identified outside the park would be brought under its jurisdiction. Late in 1949, ranger Mickey Trew proposed that a mile-wide parkway be established along the Hope-Princeton corridor for ten miles (16 km) beyond Manning's western boundary. This, he argued, would give motorists "at least an impression of 'park' before coming to the desolation of the burned area."²³ Trew's proposal quickly gained support among Parks Division staff as parkways were a familiar and popular feature in North American parks.²⁴ By 1950, it was also clear that a parkway was the only affordable way to minimize the impact of the big burn: the Forest Service's chief of reforestation had determined the cost of clearing thousands of charred snags and replanting the slopes with seedlings was far beyond the Parks Division's budget.²⁵ Establishing a parkway in the Skagit and Sumallo river valleys and developing a series of attractions within it would form a kind of aesthetic buffer zone, bringing travellers headed to the Interior past a series of interesting, accessible, and clearly identified roadside attractions before they reached the big burn at Allison Pass.²⁶

The 4,500-acre (1,800 hectare) parkway was grafted onto Manning Park in June 1950. NO HUNTING signs were quickly placed along the highway near the goat crags, and several amateur botanists caught picking wild flowers were charged under the provincial Dogwood and Rhododendron Protection Act, with park staff ensuring that news of these prosecutions was publicized far and wide in order to notify motorists that plundering Manning Park's newest roadside attractions would not be tolerated.²⁷ By that winter, parks staff were busy identifying sites in

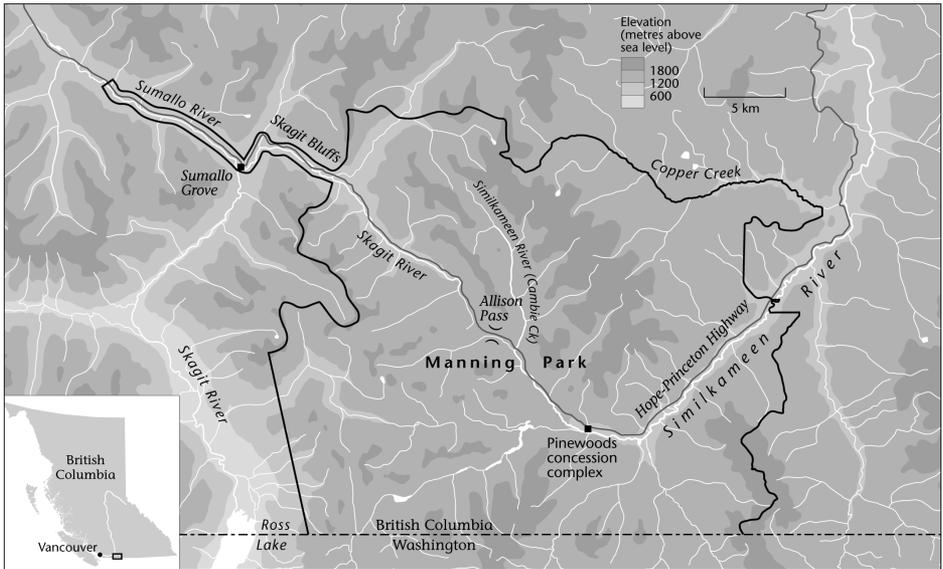
²³ D.M. Trew, undated report [fall 1949], "Manning Park Boundaries and Hope-Princeton Highway," BCA, GR-1991, reel 180r.

²⁴ On scenic parkways in North American parks, see Carr, *Wilderness by Design*; Mauch and Zeller, *World beyond the Windshield*; Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway*.

²⁵ H.G. McWilliams, undated report [fall 1949], "The Possibilities of Reforesting the Burn," BCA, GR-1991, reel 180r. McWilliams believed approximately 300 feet on either side of the road should be cleared and reforested for safety purposes, lest snags be blown down onto the highway. He also recommended that an area twice that size be cleared and replanted for aesthetic reasons.

²⁶ The aesthetic, experiential, and managerial advantages of the parkway scheme are summarized in C.P. Lyons, "Recommendations for the Proposed Parkway Adjoining Western Boundary of Manning Park," [fall 1950], BCA, GR-1991, reel 180r. See also "The Planning of Manning Park," Victoria, BC Forest Service, 1950, BCMFL.

²⁷ C.J. Wagner, telegram to Chief Forester, 22 July 1952, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803. Although these rhododendrons had been protected by statute since 1947, when British Columbia's Dogwood



Map showing Manning Park's boundaries following the parkway extension of June 1950, seen at top right. Map by Eric Leinberger.

the parkway that required a “clean-up” in order to be consistent with the naturalistic aesthetic desired along the highway corridor.²⁸ They concluded that an old trapper’s cabin at Cayuse Flats “should be destroyed” as its owner had died and his trapline tenure was expected to lapse. The abandoned road construction camp at Snass Creek was also deemed an eyesore. Wherever possible, the Parks Division wanted to remove evidence of recent habitation and industrial activity from the view of motorists traversing the park.²⁹

Protection Act was amended to also make it illegal to pick or damage wild rhododendrons, it was only after the parkway extension was added to Manning Park that the Parks Division could begin enforcing the statute. See Province of British Columbia, “Dogwood Protection Act Amendment Act,” *Statutes* (Victoria: Queen’s Printer, 1947), 65.

²⁸ D.B. Turner, Director of Conservation, Department of Lands and Forests, to George P. Melrose, Deputy Minister of Lands, 26 October 1950, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1801; D.B. Turner, minutes of “Meeting held in Mr. Melrose’s office—November 10, 1950,” BCA, GR-1991, reel 1801. George Melrose, it should be noted, had been an important advocate for the provincial parks and, while serving as assistant chief forester, had been instrumental in getting Manning Park established.

²⁹ C.P. Lyons, undated report [fall 1950], “Parkway Problems,” BCA, GR-1991, reel 1801. On governments’ efforts to remove local people and traces of their presence from parks, see Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway*, chap. 3; Karl Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Ted Binnema and Melanie Niemi, “Let the Line be Drawn Now: Wilderness, Conservation, and the Exclusion of Aboriginal People from Banff National Park,”

ANIMAL ATTRACTIONS

The Parks Division also tried to ensure the presence of several mammal species that many visitors expected to see in large mountainous parks. The beaver ponds at the eastern end of the Similkameen flats provide a good example of the importance the Parks Division attached to cultivating roadside animal attractions in Manning Park.³⁰ These ponds, known as the Windy Joe beaver ponds, were first flagged as a potential park attraction in 1946 by the director of the provincial museum, who recommended that highway construction not be allowed to disrupt the resident beaver colony because it might prove popular with future park visitors. In 1951, the chief of the Parks Division expressed interest in having “beaver planted in the immediate vicinity of our developments [on the Similkameen flats]”, and that year’s annual report of the Forest Service stated that there would be “an effort to make beaver and deer more abundant and easily seen” in Manning Park. In the summer of 1954, park planner Ray Lowrey was sent to investigate whether the Windy Joe beaver ponds could be made into a new park attraction.³¹

After studying the site and the beavers’ behaviour, Lowrey concluded the ponds could be made “a unique roadside attraction” that would enhance Manning’s tourist appeal.³² However, careful development was called for. The highway ran along a terrace above the surface of the ponds, and, although the beavers appeared untroubled by passing traffic, they quickly submerged and retired to the safety of their lodges whenever they observed an automobile stop on the verge of the road. Lowrey determined that a small roadside parking lot could be cleared while retaining a screen of brush and timber between it and the ponds. This would allow motorists to park and exit their vehicles away from the beavers’ wary gaze before walking through the trees to a viewpoint overlooking the ponds.

Environmental History 11, 4 (2006): 724–50; Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935–1970* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 56–63.

³⁰ On large mammals as North American park attractions, see Alice Wondrak Biel, *Do (Not) Feed the Bears: The Fitful History of Wildlife and Tourists in Yellowstone* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006); J. Keri Cronin, *Manufacturing National Park Nature: Photography, Ecology, and the Wilderness Industry of Jasper* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), chap. 4.

³¹ Carl to Lyons, 5 January 1946, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1800; Oldham to F.R. Butler, Commissioner, BC Game Commission, 23 April 1951, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1805; British Columbia, Department of Lands and Forests, Forest Service, *Report of the Forest Service* (Victoria: Queen’s Printer, 1951), 63.

³² R. Lowrey, “Development of Beaver Pond Viewpoint, Manning Park,” Victoria, BC Forest Service, Parks and Recreation Division, 1955, BCMFL.

Lowrey also believed the proposed viewpoint area should be tidied. “Numerous dead trees killed by [road construction] should be removed from the fringe of timber between the parking lot and viewpoint and the ponds,” he reported: “Visibility, appearance, and safety will all be improved by the destruction of these snags.” Interpretive signs with “interesting facts about beavers” would also be required. Aware of the beaver’s wariness of humans, Lowrey even suggested that a stuffed beaver could be mounted in a glass case as part of the interpretative apparatus, thereby ensuring that all motorists who visited the viewpoint would see at least one. Finally, Lowrey considered how the ponds should be maintained as a permanent park attraction. The beaver dams were quite old, and the water in the ponds so still and nutrient-laden that plant growth would eventually make it impossible for beavers to live there anymore. In effect, the ponds were slowly becoming reedy meadows. This was a natural process, and there were several abandoned beaver meadows along the Similkameen flats, but Lowrey argued: “this beaver pond next to the highway warrants special efforts to ensure a continued production of beaver.” Possible solutions included putting sandbags on top of the dams in order to raise the level of the ponds and introducing a continuous water supply by blasting a channel that would allow water from the Similkameen River to enter the ponds. To dissuade beavers from relocating to new habitat, Lowrey recommended cutting and burning the existing pond-side vegetation and replacing it with plantings of alder, willow, aspen, and cottonwood, which are beavers’ preferred food. In 1957, the Parks Division built a roadside viewpoint based on Lowrey’s recommendations, minus the stuffed beaver under glass.³³

The sedentary habits of beavers distinguished the Windy Joe beaver pond from other instances where animals and their habitats were manipulated to produce attractions for motorists. Most large mammals found in the southern Cascades ranged far and wide, making them unreliable natural attractions. In the early 1950s, the Parks Division studied the use of salt licks as a way of drawing mule deer to the western Similkameen flats, which was the centre of development in the park, where many motorists pulled off the highway to picnic, buy gas, or dine at the new Pinewoods concession complex.³⁴ Seeing deer in this part of the valley was common but by no means assured. Following the

³³ D.J. Spalding, “Wildlife Investigations in Manning Park, Summer 1956,” Victoria, BC Forest Service, Parks and Recreation Division, October 1956, BCMFL.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

commercial success of Walt Disney's *Bambi* in 1947, making deer more visible to motorists travelling along the Hope-Princeton corridor seemed a good way to increase the park's appeal to families with young children while demonstrating that the human presence had not disrupted wildlife populations in the Cascade mountains.³⁵ Yorke Edwards, the Parks Division's first biologist, argued that, in order to provide the public with "the most enjoyment possible," more had to be learned about the distribution of deer in Manning Park and how their wanderings could be influenced by the use of chemical attractants. "Studies such as this," he explained, "will make deer more available to the public."³⁶

The tests were conducted on a pine flat near park headquarters and found that sodium bicarbonate and sodium acid phosphate were the most effective deer attractants. The chief of the Parks Division instructed park staff to place salt licks "where there is public access" in the park, which meant around campgrounds, picnic sites, and Pinewoods – all of which were near the highway corridor on the valley floor, and all of which the deer were otherwise likely to avoid due to automobile traffic and other human activity. He also instructed that signs be erected to indicate the presence of deer in areas where visitors could reasonably be assured of seeing the animals.³⁷

The Parks Division conducted a second taste test in Manning Park that summer in the hope of making a different kind of large mammal less visible to park visitors. Black bears loitering along the roadside and visiting parts of Manning Park that were frequented by humans had been a problem since the completion of the highway. To determine whether cat and dog repellants were effective on these bears, six tin pails half-full of Rogers Golden Syrup were hung from trees near the park garbage dump, located in an old gravel pit. Within an hour bears had torn the pails down and licked them clean. Another half dozen pails of syrup were then put out after being treated with a variety of commercial cat and dog repellants. These were also torn down and licked clean within a short time. The experiment was repeated twice more with the same results, convincing park staff that domestic pet repellants would not

³⁵ *Bambi's* significance for wildlife and park policy during the late 1940s and early 1950s is discussed in Matt Cartmill, *A View to a Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), chap. 9; Ralph Lutts, "The Trouble with Bambi: Walt Disney's Bambi and the American Vision of Nature," *Forest and Conservation History* 36, 4 (1992): 160-71.

³⁶ Yorke Edwards, undated, handwritten, initialled comments attached to Spalding, "Wildlife Investigations."

³⁷ H.G. McWilliams, undated, handwritten, initialled comments attached to Spalding, "Wildlife Investigations."

dissuade bears from coming to areas of Manning Park where human visitors tended to congregate.³⁸

The dump was a grey area in the Parks Division's efforts to manage the relationship between bears and humans in Manning Park. Park staff were comfortable allowing visitors to drive to the dump to watch bears scavenging through the copious amounts of garbage deposited there, provided they remained in their cars and kept their windows rolled up. A letter from Superintendent Bob Boyd to the chief forester suggests the dump was treated as an informal park attraction during the early 1950s. "On the writer's recent trip to one of our large National Parks, they were reluctant to allow me to visit their garbage disposal area," Boyd complained: "We, in Manning Park, invite our tourists to look at the animals frequenting the [dump] area."³⁹ This practice no doubt contributed to bears' becoming comfortable around cars and humans in the park, and when they began visiting roadside picnic sites, campgrounds, and other developed areas the Parks Division took steps to combat what was deemed "the bear problem." The frequency of garbage pickup was increased in areas where visitors regularly left scraps of food, and park staff stopped treating the dump as an attraction: the large sign that marked its entrance was replaced with a small, discretely placed sign, with another partway along the access road warning sightseeing motorists habituated to visiting the dump to stay inside their cars when bears were around.⁴⁰

None of these steps dissuaded bears that had learned to associate areas frequented by humans with a reliable food supply. Summers during the early 1950s saw numerous instances of overturned garbage cans, slashed tents, and broken car windows, and several visitors suffered minor bear-related injuries. The casualty rate for bears was significantly higher. For example, in 1956, one yearling had to be shot, another that had been entering the garbage room at the park administration building was frightened away only after the door handle was wired to deliver a strong electrical shock, and two attempts were made to lasso and relocate a

³⁸ Spalding, "Wildlife Investigations."

³⁹ Boyd to Chief Forester, 8 December 1953, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803. See also Lloyd Brooks, Planning Section to Ray Lowrey, 20 July 1953, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803.

⁴⁰ Lloyd Brooks to Lowrey, 20 July 1953, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803. During the early 1950s the Parks Division received many complaints about overflowing trashcans in provincial parks in the southern Interior. See, for example, n.a., "Public Reaction Survey, 1954," Victoria, Publicity Section, Parks and Recreation Division, BC Forest Service, 1955, BCMFL. Regarding the concealment of park utilities like garbage dumps, incinerators, power generators, and waterworks, see Colten and Dilsaver, "Hidden Landscape."



Bears scavenging in the Manning Park dump, early 1950s. University of Victoria Archives, Chester P. Lyons Fonds, AR409, 4.12.4.

young bear that had been spotted begging for food beside the highway.⁴¹ Unfortunately, the Parks Division did not study animal migration patterns in the park or track mortality rates along the Hope-Princeton corridor during the early 1950s, so it is impossible to calculate the impact of highway traffic on deer, bears, and other wildlife populations. Regarding the seemingly intractable problem of bears' frightening visitors in Manning Park's campgrounds and picnic sites, the chief of the Parks Division could only suggest that one day a nature interpretation centre – another roadside attraction – might be established at the Pinewoods concession complex, “with a summer attendant who should instigate a programme to educate the public not to feed the bears.”⁴²

COPING WITH EYESORES

Suppressing eyesores was an important complement to protecting scenery and developing attractions in the Parks Division's effort to impose and maintain a clean, naturalistic aesthetic along the Hope-Princeton corridor through Manning Park during the 1950s. Most of the sites/sights deemed eyesores by the Parks Division involved

⁴¹ Spalding, “Wildlife Investigations.”

⁴² H.G. McWilliams, undated, handwritten, initialled comments attached to Spalding, “Wildlife Investigations.”

industrial structures and activities that were visible to motorists who were travelling along the highway. Unlike the Big Burn, the presence of dilapidated construction sites and active mining and logging operations inside a provincial park could not be pithily explained away by an eye-catching sign.

Erasing traces of the Hope-Princeton Highway's construction was a key aim for Parks Division staff. They particularly resented the quarries and gravel pits that were visible along the highway right-of-way and, after several years of lobbying, managed to convince the Department of Public Works to help screen these from view by strategic plantings of native trees and shrubs.⁴³ The old construction camps in and around the park were similarly problematic. Not only did they remind travellers of Depression-era relief work but they were also tangible evidence that the highway had only recently been completed and was not a natural part of the park, magically transporting visitors through pristine environments. After highway paving was completed in the summer of 1951, the Parks Division asked the Department of Public Works to remove or demolish the buildings at its former construction camps, including the one at Copper Creek, which was located beyond Manning's eastern boundary. Park staff argued that these abandoned structures posed a fire hazard, might draw transients, and "detract[ed] from the otherwise very scenic highway."⁴⁴ Eventually, park staff were given permission to burn the buildings and clean up the former road construction camps inside the park. Because these sites had good access to the highway and steady water supplies, several were turned into roadside campgrounds – thus, campground development did double duty for the Parks Division, providing outdoor visitor accommodations while covering up traces of recent construction activity.⁴⁵

Eyesores associated with resource extraction industries were trickier to manage. Although Manning was a Class A park, pre-existing resource rights had not been extinguished when it was established, and, as a result, numerous traplines, mineral claims, and timber licences existed inside the park. Similarly, the western parkway extension of 1950 was

⁴³ Boyd to Oldham, 4 April 1956, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803; Oldham to Mr. Bowering, Chief Engineer, Department of Highways, 16 April 1956, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803; Oldham to Bowering, 10 May 1956, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803.

⁴⁴ Oldham to Chief Engineer, Department of Public Works, 23 August 1951, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803.

⁴⁵ Three of the seven sites that the Parks Division had identified in 1947 as suitable for campground development were former or active road construction camps. See C.P. Lyons, undated memo [summer 1947], Public Works Department's Assistance in Constructing Access to Campsites along the Hope-Princeton Highway, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1800.

superimposed over several active mineral claims that had been located outside the park's original boundaries, including the Hillside claims that served as the base camp for the Canam Mining Corporation's prospecting operations in the surrounding area. By 1949, the company had built a bunkhouse, workshop, and several other buildings there as well as a jeep road connecting it with several promising copper claims in the Skagit Mountains to the south.⁴⁶ None of these actions drew the Parks Division's attention, although the jeep road crossed an isolated backcountry section of Manning Park without permission. When Canam bulldozed a new access road between its Hillside camp and the Hope-Princeton Highway in July 1950, however, it trespassed (albeit perhaps unwittingly) upon Manning's recently added parkway extension.

Canam's act of trespass was particularly problematic because its new road was plainly visible to motorists on the highway. Moreover, westbound motorists could discern the Hillside base camp through the intervening timber. The Parks Division suggested the situation could be resolved and a parks-use permit granted for the unauthorized access road if the mining company agreed to relocate its lower section and move the Hillside camp "a short distance to the west, where it would be hidden from view."⁴⁷ The mine manager replied that he wanted to clear up any objections to Canam's operations in and around Manning Park but needed to avoid "unnecessary expenditure of stockholders' money."⁴⁸ Though it would be costly, he agreed to relocate the offending access road. Moving the entire base camp was out of the question; instead, the mine manager offered to camouflage the camp from the view of motorists. The buildings would be painted to blend in with the surrounding forest, grass seed would be put down in areas not regularly used by vehicles, and trees or a hedge would be planted between the camp and highway. The proposed cover-up convinced the Parks Division to issue the company a parks-use permit for its access road, with the proviso that it seek approval for any future changes that might draw attention to its operations in the park.⁴⁹

Eyesores associated with logging were another major concern. Like many provincial parks, Manning contained numerous berths for which the provincial government had issued timber licences. Most of these

⁴⁶ C.P. Lyons, undated report [summer 1950], "History of the Hillside and Lone Pine Mineral Claims," BCA, GR-1991, reel 1801.

⁴⁷ Lyons to G. Allan MacPherson, Canam Mining Corporation, 31 July 1950, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1801.

⁴⁸ MacPherson to Lyons, 8 August 1950, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1801.

⁴⁹ E.G. Oldham to Superintendent of Lands, 23 August 1950, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1801.

licences had been issued decades before the park was created, but the timber they covered had never been of much commercial value due to the area's inaccessibility. Over time these renewable timber licences were bought, sold, and swapped back and forth between logging companies and timber brokers, but no timber was actually cut. However, with the rise of truck logging and the impending completion of the road link between Hope and Princeton in the late 1940s, long-isolated timber berths in the Cascade Mountains – including those inside Manning Park – became more accessible and consequently more valuable.⁵⁰

Anyone holding a valid timber licence inside Manning Park had the right to cut the trees on the designated berth. However, building an access road for hauling the timber out required a parks-use permit issued by the Parks Division. Because Manning was so far from the nearest sawmills in Hope and Princeton, logging companies and timber brokers with holdings in the park regularly approached the Parks Division or other offices of the Forest Service to see whether timber licences that covered berths inside the park might be exchanged for permission to cut timber on another parcel of Crown land.

In the summer of 1952, sawmill owner Hugh Leir approached the Forest Service to see whether it was interested in arranging such an exchange. He had acquired timber licences that allowed him to log several berths along Cambie Creek, near the centre of Manning Park, including one that bordered the Hope-Princeton right-of-way.⁵¹ Leir offered to trade his right to log inside the park for timber located closer to his mills in Princeton and Penticton, and the Forest Service's Kamloops District office was willing to approve such an exchange, but only for the licence that gave Leir the right to log the berth adjacent to the highway. Apparently, preventing him from logging parts of the park that would be hidden from motorists' views by the contours of the terrain was not considered worthwhile.⁵²

Leir was not satisfied with this offer. He considered his licences on Cambie Creek, because they were prominently located inside a publicly

⁵⁰ The rise of mechanized truck logging operations was one of the most economically and environmentally significant developments in postwar British Columbia, but it has so far received only limited scholarly attention. Useful insights into the topic can be found in Ken Drushka, *Tie Hackers to Timber Harvesters: The History of Logging in British Columbia's Interior* (Madeira Park: Harbour, 1998); Gordon Hak, *Capital and Labour in the British Columbia Forest Industry, 1934-74* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); Richard A. Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rainforest: Production, Science, and Regulation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998).

⁵¹ Charles Hayes, *Hugh Leir: The Remarkable Enigma* (Okanagan Falls, BC: Rima, 1999), 163.

⁵² Boyd to H. Leir, Manager, Penticton Sawmills Ltd., 30 June 1952, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803; Leir to Oldham, 2 August 1952, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803. A chronology of the Leir licences is found in McKinnon to John Hewitt, Jr., 28 July 1955, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1801.

accessible park, to be worth more than just the value of the timber they allowed him to cut, and he apparently hoped to use them as a political bargaining chip towards acquiring a tree farm licence near Penticton.⁵³ Leir protested the Forest Service's decision to his MLA – Kelowna hardware salesman W.A.C. Bennett, the recently elected premier of British Columbia – but to no avail. In late 1953, Leir's crews moved in and logged the easily accessible berth bordering the highway, despite the fact that Forest Service staff were still cruising for a suitable tract of timber to offer in exchange. Then, rather than apply for a parks-use permit to build an access road to the adjacent berths, Leir walked away from Manning Park, selling his remaining licences on Cambie Creek to a timber broker. When this broker approached the Parks Division several years later about swapping the remaining "Leir licences" for timber elsewhere in the region, he was curtly informed that "the aesthetic values we [had] tried to protect ha[d] been lost and there [was] no further point to an exchange." To hide the evidence of logging beside the highway, the Parks Division developed a campground on the cut-over area.⁵⁴

The dispute over Hugh Leir's timber licences was the first in what would prove to be a fusillade of similar situations in the coming years. However, the Parks Division drew an important lesson from the Cambie Creek incident: it could not rely on other branches of the Forest Service to act in the interests of preserving a clean, naturalistic aesthetic along the main travel corridor through Manning Park. The Parks Division subsequently strove to keep all negotiations involving timber exchanges in Manning (and other provincial parks) "in-house," thereby allowing it to pursue its highway-centric aesthetic priorities without interference from other, more production-oriented, offices of the Forest Service. This remained standard practice until 1957, when the Parks Division was severed from the Forest Service and became the Parks Branch of the newly formed Department of Recreation and Conservation. After losing its traditional access to reserves of Crown timber, the Parks Branch began to offer timber located in Manning's backcountry to companies that had the right to log areas visible from the Hope-Princeton Highway – anything to prevent motorists from seeing logging operations or cut-over areas as they drove through the park.

⁵³ On the scramble to acquire Tree Farm Licences in the early 1950s, see Drushka, *Tie Hackers*, chaps. 8-9; Hak, *Capital and Labour*, chap. 2.

⁵⁴ McKinnon to Hewitt, 28 July 1955, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803.

The Parks Division's efforts to develop attractions and to fend off eyesores along the highway corridor through Manning Park during the 1950s illustrate the active role that agencies of the state played in managing the relationship between automobility, the environment, and landscape experience. However, the aesthetics of automobile accessibility also informed other developments and management strategies in the park. For example, all of Manning's campgrounds and campsites were designed on the assumption that their users would be motorists. Side roads were constructed to open up scenic and recreational attractions like the Lightning Lakes, Blackwall Mountain lookout, and Gibson Pass ski hill. Roadside signage was a particularly contentious issue, with motorists and tourism promoters demanding more signs along the highway corridor, not only to provide information about road conditions and park facilities, but also to describe natural and historic features that were visible from the road. By late 1956, even some park staff were complaining about the lack of markers that could help make Manning's scenery and attractions more meaningful to passing motorists; however, due to the association of roadside signage with commercial activity and visual blight, Parks Division headquarters was reluctant to accede to these requests.⁵⁵ The dilemma was only resolved after staff in Victoria developed a standardized, rustic-looking "sign system" that was deemed applicable to all provincial parks.⁵⁶ By the late 1950s, Manning was firmly integrated into the motoring public's travel patterns as a wayside stop on the drive between the Coast and the southern Interior. Studies conducted in 1956 and 1957 revealed that 86 percent of day visitors – those motorists who actually stopped inside the park boundaries – did so for

⁵⁵ Examples of tourism promoters who complained about the absence of signs along the Hope-Princeton Highway corridor include the following: Stuart Lefleaux, Secretary, Metropolitan Park Planning Committee [Vancouver] to E.G. Oldham, Parks Division, 15 May 1952, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803; Hope and District Board of Trade to Oldham, 12 June 1952, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803. A coordinated series of complaints from within the Parks Branch about the lack of roadside signage is found in L. Brooks, memo re public use of Manning Park to H.G. McWilliams, Forester, Parks and Recreation Division, 17 December 1956, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803; Yorke Edwards to McWilliams, 17 December 1956, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803; R.H. Ahrens to McWilliams, 20 December 1956, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803; G.D. Taylor to McWilliams, 24 January 1957, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803.

⁵⁶ Edwards to McWilliams, 17 December 1956, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803; R. Lowrey, "Some BC Provincial Park Development Standards," Victoria, Parks Branch, [n.d.], BCMFL. The 1950s saw a resurgence of criticism of signage's effects on North American roadside landscapes. See Catherine Gudis, *Buyways: Billboards, Automobiles, and the American Landscape* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

less than one hour, with very few probing beyond the immediate vicinity of the Hope-Princeton corridor.⁵⁷

Manning was not the only provincial park where the Parks Division faced challenges associated with the aesthetics of automobile accessibility. In fact, managing these kinds of challenges came to rank among its most important and time-consuming tasks in many new or recently opened-up parks. But as one of the province's showcase parks, Manning provides an especially good illustration of the high priority that the Parks Division gave to shaping motorists' experiences of roadside landscapes in the years before outdoor recreation, wilderness ideals, and ecological concerns were incorporated into park management priorities. Manning was also something of a proving ground, simply by virtue of being British Columbia's first park that was easily accessible to large numbers of casual travellers. Many Parks Division staff who rose to senior positions cut their teeth there, and many of the behind-the-scenery techniques of landscape management developed there during the 1950s were applied to other units in the fast-growing provincial park system.

In retrospect, some of the Parks Division's efforts to shape motorists' experiences of park landscapes during the postwar years may seem ironic or even comic. However, they made good sense during a period of rapid change, when the expansion and improvement of the provincial highway network facilitated pleasure travel and sightseeing as well as resource extraction operations like truck logging. They also had long-lasting effects: half a century later, many of the roadside attractions developed in Manning during the 1950s are still visited by people driving through the park. This is because each success in imposing a clean, naturalistic aesthetic along the Hope-Princeton corridor fed into an ongoing process of landscape maintenance in order to meet motorists' expectations. As sections of the highway were widened and realigned in later years, the signs, pullouts, parking lots, and camouflaging devices associated with roadside attractions and eyesores had to be relocated, expanded, or redesigned. Controversies flared up over new structures and activities that were deemed incommensurate with the highway corridor's established aesthetic, including modern-looking telephone booths, shiny aluminum-skinned trailers for housing park staff, and the spraying of chemical herbicides to control brush along the verges of the highway.

⁵⁷ G.D. Taylor, "Some Notes on Recreational Travel through Manning Park on Highway 3, Summer 1956," Victoria, Parks and Recreation Division, BC Forest Service, 1956, BCMFL; G.D. Taylor, "Public Reaction Survey, 1956," Victoria, Publicity Section, Parks and Recreation Division, BC Forest Service, 1957, BCMFL; Taylor to McWilliams, 24 January 1957, BCA, GR-1991, reel 1803.

In recent years, thousands of trees killed by the mountain pine beetle have been cleared along the highway right-of-way as a fireguard against ejected cigarette butts and overheating engines – a major roadside eyesore inflicted on the park in the hope of preventing a forest inferno that could dwarf the big burn of 1946. With the passage of time, and the passage of countless motorists along the highway corridor through the park, the motoring public's shared experience of Manning's landscapes acquired more and more cultural and political significance, compelling the agency responsible for British Columbia's provincial parks to continue meeting, to the best of its abilities, the very expectations it did so much to create.