



Glacier National Park  
CONSERVANCY



Parks Canada  
Parcs Canada



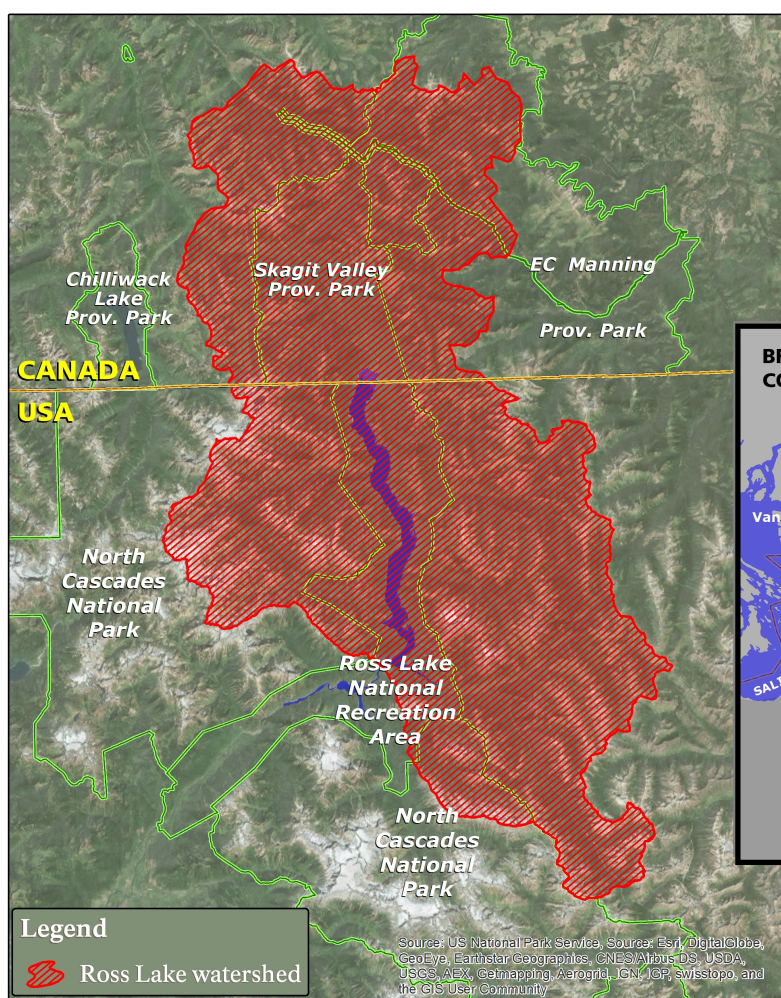
WCPA  
WORLD COMMISSION  
ON PROTECTED AREAS



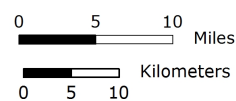
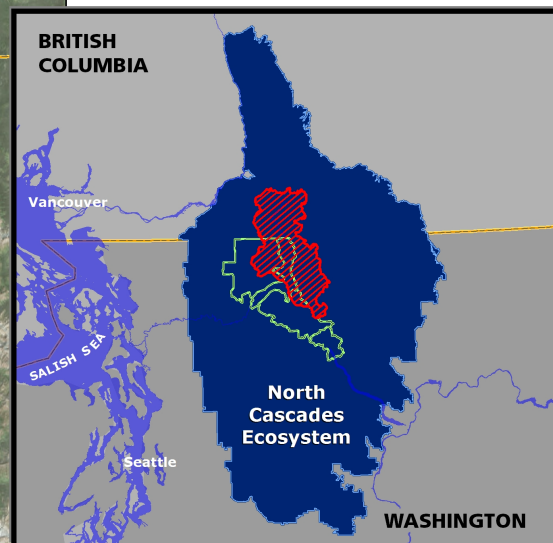
## North Cascades Ecosystem - Upper Skagit River Watershed

Karen Taylor-Goodrich  
karen\_taylor-goodrich@nps.gov  
360-854-7205

U.S. – Washington State. Canada – British Columbia (B.C.).  
Size: 251,900 hectares/2,520 sq km



### *Upper Skagit River Watershed* **NORTH CASCADES ECOSYSTEM** Washington and British Columbia



Participants in coordinating the ongoing transboundary cooperation:

National Government:

- National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

Local Government:

- B.C. Parks, Ministry of the Environment, Province of British Columbia; City of Seattle, Washington State, U.S.

Protected area administration:

- U.S. National Park Service, B.C. Parks

Intergovernmental organizations:

- Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission

**Objectives:** Multi-party cooperation and coordination to promote transboundary natural and cultural resource conservation and education initiatives.

**Values and importance:** The Upper Skagit River is located within the greater North Cascades Ecosystem. This area comprises one of the most intact wildlands in the contiguous U.S. This transboundary ecosystem, located in Washington State and British Columbia, represents a richly diversified landscape of rugged mountains, rivers, forests, fisheries, and a wide variety of plant and animal life.

The U.S. portion of the Upper Skagit River is under public management as North Cascades National Park and Ross Lake National Recreation Area. North of the international border much of the area is designated as Manning and Skagit River Provincial Parks.

First Nation and Native American peoples lived well on the region's abundant resources and developed an intricate and sophisticated culture that left minimal impact to the land. European settlement in the area resulted in the development of resource extractive industries and growing populations in local communities and the nearby metropolitan areas of Vancouver, B.C. and Seattle, Washington. These developments ultimately led to an increased demand in electricity and the development of hydropower projects on the Upper Skagit River. The City of Seattle (Seattle City Light) developed, and continues to manage, the Skagit River Hydroelectric Project in the 1920's to provide electricity to the city of Seattle and surrounding communities. The Project includes three distinct dams accompanied by reservoirs of various sizes, the largest being Ross Lake, on the Skagit River. The Project is located within Ross Lake National Recreation Area in the North Cascades National Park Service Complex and operates under license from the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

**Aspects of transboundary cooperation:** Natural resource conservation, ecosystem-based management, watershed management; scientific research, native peoples traditional uses protection, tourism.

Which **stage in the process** of being established is your transboundary conservation initiative?

International Treaty and local project plans and agreements.

**Date Established:** 1984

**Official Protected Area Designation:** U.S. National Park, U.S. National Recreation Area; B.C. Provincial Park

**The Catalyst:** The Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC) was established by a 1984 Treaty between Canada and the U.S. It is based on an agreement between the City of Seattle and the Province of British Columbia to settle the controversy over the High Ross Dam proposal in the Upper Skagit River Watershed of Washington State and British Columbia.

**History:** Legal challenge against City of Seattle's proposal to raise Ross Lake Dam based on strong public and provincial government protests about impacts of flooding to natural resources and public access in the Upper Skagit River Watershed.

**Barriers, challenges, obstacles, or constraints:** The 1984 Treaty established SEEC to promote transboundary collaboration with partner organizations in the Upper Skagit River Watershed. SEEC has been effective in pursuing and maintaining relationships with agencies and organizations that enable all parties to accomplish collaborative projects and initiatives that promote environmental education and research, public recreation, and collaborative land and ecosystem management.

### **The Governance and Management Structures**

- **Cooperative relationship:** International Treaty between national governments: U.S. and Canada.
- **Legal basis for cooperation:** International Treaty
- **Governance structure:** The sixteen-member SEEC is charged with administering an Endowment Fund provided by the City of Seattle. The Commission consists of an eight-person Canadian delegation appointed by the Premier of British Columbia and an eight-person U.S. delegation appointed by the Mayor of Seattle. All are appointed to four year terms on a staggered basis, and each delegation elects a Chair.

The North Cascades National Park Service Complex, which includes North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, is administered by the National park service, a U.S. federal land management agency under the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The Skagit Valley and E.C. Manning Provincial parks are administered by B.C. Parks, a provincial land management agency under the B.C. Ministry of Environment.

- **Cooperative management arrangement:** Multi-party collaboration and coordination of transboundary conservation projects in the Upper Skagit River

Watershed. SEEC provides project funding to the land management agencies and select educational institutions for a variety of natural and cultural research, monitoring, and resource management programs, as well as tribal gatherings and a joint public education program involving rangers from the U.S. National Park Service and B.C. Parks.

**Results:** Increased cooperative project programming and resource sharing between the agencies and other partners. This long-term initiative continues to be effective by not only having a formal Treaty, but by having a strong commitment by all parties to collaborate in the protection and management of the Upper Skagit River and North Cascades Ecosystem for current and future generations.

**Lessons Learned:** Participation and accountability by agencies and all partners is essential. This includes helping the funding partner develop strategic plans and initiatives targeted toward key natural and cultural resource management and educational challenges and opportunities, and follow up reporting and sharing of project findings and accomplishments annually. The land management agencies have successfully collaborated with SEEC to establish a Technical Team that provides scientific review and counsel to the Commission on research and resource management related project proposals.

#### **For More Information**

Name	Title	Organization	Email	Phone
Karen Taylor-Goodrich	Superintendent	U.S. National Park Service	Karen_taylor-goodrich@nps.gov	360-854-7205
Chris Tunnoch	Manager Strategic Initiatives	B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations	Chris.Tunnoch@gov.bc.ca	604-924-2224