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Management Plan
Jasper National Park of Canada

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Draft for Public Review

Draft Jasper National Park of Canada Management Plan 2009

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1. A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR JASPER NATIONAL PARK

1.1 *Mandate*

The *Canada National Parks Act* requires that each of Canada's national parks have a management plan. These plans reflect the policies and legislation of the Government of Canada and are prepared in consultation with Canadians. They are reviewed every five years. This management plan will guide the overall direction of Jasper National Park for the next 10 to 15 years and will serve as a framework for all planning and decisions within the park.

On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations.

Parks Canada's Strategic Outcome (Corporate Plan 2009/10 – 2013/14) is:

Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.

Parks Canada's corporate priorities that influence this management plan include:

- Parks Canada will continue to lead active management projects in national parks to improve key ecological integrity indicators. Investments will be made in a strategic manner to achieve results on the ground.
- A greater percentage of Canadians will report awareness and understanding of the heritage places managed by Parks Canada. As well, more Canadians will be aware of the increasing number of opportunities created for their involvement.
- Targeted Parks Canada initiatives will attract a greater number of visitors to national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas as experiential travel destinations through a Parks Canada focused approach on the creation of visitor experience opportunities.

This management plan builds on the foundations of the 1988 and 2000 plan, and benefits from an ongoing process of strengthening relationships and dialogue with Canadians. The 2000 Jasper National Park of Canada Management Plan has proven important, and effective, at improving the ecological health of Jasper National Park and providing guidance for investments and decisions that support the continued relevance and role of Jasper National Park as a Canadian Rockies icon and important tourism destination. Accountability has been strengthened through the preparation of annual reports to keep Canadians informed and involved in the future of Jasper National Park. Seven public forums have been held to discuss progress to implement the plan since it was approved in 2000. State of the Park Reports

were prepared and discussed with Canadians in 2005 and 2008 and have guided management plan reviews. The 2005 review determined that no amendments were required.

Parks Canada’s approach to management planning has evolved over the years. In 2008, the Parks Canada Agency finalized new national management planning guidelines intended, among other things, to ensure that management plans provide strategic direction, that outlines the results that Parks Canada is working towards, rather than specific measures required to achieve these results, and that their content more effectively integrate the three key elements of Parks Canada’s mandate: protection of heritage resources, visitor experience, and learning opportunities.

This second review of the Jasper National Park of Canada Management Plan (2000), concurrent with plan reviews for Banff, Kootenay, Yoho, Glacier, Revelstoke and Waterton Lakes National Parks, provides an opportunity to substantially rewrite and reorganize the Management Plan so that it is aligned with the new planning guidelines. This is not a new plan; it is a rewritten plan that brings forward important policy direction for the ecological integrity of Jasper National Park and integrates it with new content intended to strengthen direction in a number of areas, from visitor experience to outreach programming and work with Aboriginal communities, and reflect changes in government policy and decisions.

1.2 Management Plan Review Process

The seven mountain national parks – Banff, Yoho, Kootenay, Jasper, Mount Revelstoke, Glacier and Waterton Lakes – share many features and issues in common. Visitors travel among the parks, and stakeholders often have interests in several parks. Consequently, the management plans for the seven parks have been reviewed and amended concurrently, through a common process.

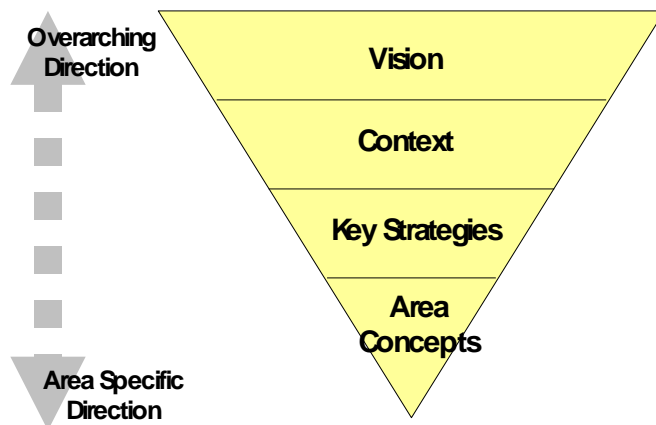


Figure 1. Elements of a management plan.

Each management plan contains a common mountain park vision that reflects a co-ordinated approach to interpreting and implementing Parks Canada’s mandate in the mountain park context. Each management plan begins with a vision for the individual park that highlights what is distinctive about the park, Canadians collective aspirations for the park’s future. The vision will guide future planning and decision-making.

Key strategies provide overarching direction that applies to the whole park. Elements of each key strategy are shared with other mountain parks, however each strategy responds to the context unique to Jasper National Park.

The key strategies for Jasper are:

- Fostering Open Management and Innovation
- Welcome to Mountains of Opportunity
- Celebrating History, Culture and the World Heritage Site
- Bringing the Mountains to People Where They Live
- Managing Growth and Development
- Ensuring Healthy Ecosystems
- Strengthening Aboriginal Relationships

Each management plan also contains Area Concepts, in which detailed direction is provided for specific geographic areas, in recognition of the great variety of conditions. The Area Concepts are presented in an integrated way to ensure that the three elements of the Parks Canada mandate – protection, education and visitor experiences – are addressed in each part of the park. Area Concepts have been prepared for the following areas of Jasper National Park:

- Icefields Parkway
- Three Valley Confluence
- Edith Cavell & Highway 93A
- Maligne Valley
- Lower Athabasca
- Backcountry

1.3 Regulatory and Policy Context

Management authorities and accountabilities for national parks are established under the *Parks Canada Agency Act* and the *Canada National Parks Act*. The Park Management Plan provides strategic direction for a national park and is mandated by Section 11 of the *Canada National Parks Act*. Other important pieces of legislation and regulations established under the *Canada National Parks Act*, are part of the legal framework that defines Parks Canada's accountabilities. For example:

- The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and Parks Canada's Policy on Strategic Environmental Assessment ensure thorough, science-based consideration of potential environmental effects, and appropriate public review, in advance of any development, licensing and policy decisions.
- Parks Canada has specific obligations under the *Species at Risk Act*, and is working with the agency responsible - Environment Canada, and with adjoining provincial agencies in the preparation of a recovery plan for Caribou.
- Specific limits to community and ski area development are registered under Schedule 4 and 5 of the *Canada National Parks Act*.
- Large areas in the mountain parks are legislatively protected by regulation as "Declared Wilderness" areas, in order to preserve their natural character and the unique opportunities associated with that character.

The Parks Canada Agency is accountable for ensuring that national parks will remain unimpaired for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generations. A primary tool in achieving this is the application of strategic direction in the Park Management Plan. Additionally, all operational and business planning decisions, are subject on an ongoing basis to national policies and guidelines that frame Parks Canada's approach to all national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas. Some examples include:

- Redevelopment Guidelines for Outlying Commercial Accommodations and Hostels in the Rocky Mountains National Parks
- Management Bulletin 2.6.10. Recreational Activity and Special Event Assessments
- Cultural Resource Management Policy
- Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies
- Ski Area Management Guidelines

Parks Canada will continue to publicly account for its performance by preparing annual reports and every five years, a State of the Park report that provides a synopsis of the current condition of the park based on key indicators, and assesses performance in advancing the Agency's mandate.

1.4 Collaborative Planning and Management

The management plan for Jasper, and the park's ongoing management, require collaboration with the other jurisdictions who share in the responsibility for managing this Rocky Mountain landscape and serving the people who depend on or value it. Jasper National Park encloses a town (Jasper) that serves as a visitor centre for the majority of Canadians and international visitors who experience the park each year. The park shares boundaries with one other national park (Banff) and several provincial protected areas. Jasper, Banff, Kootenay and Yoho National Parks, and Mt. Robson, Hamber and Assiniboine Provincial Parks in the Province of British Columbia, have been designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a World Heritage Site. Other parts of the park boundary adjoin public land administered by the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia.

1.4.1 The Town of Jasper

The Town of Jasper has a unique governance structure that emerged in response to the community's location within a national park and the desires of the majority of its residents. Administered by the federal government for almost a century, the Town became a specialized municipality as defined under the Province of Alberta's *Municipal Government Act* on July 20, 2001, in accordance with a Governance Agreement between the federal government and the community. The Agreement sets out the specific requirements of both the federal government and the Municipality of Jasper in the delivery of social services, environmental protection, land use planning, culture, recreation and emergency services. The Municipality of Jasper is responsible for providing the majority of services within the townsite and a rural service area surrounding the town, however Parks Canada has retained authorities and responsibilities in three areas: land use planning, development and environmental matters.

Parks Canada prepared a Community Land Use Plan that was recommended to and approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada in 2000. A new joint Community Sustainability Plan is being prepared to reflect the interests of residents and Canadians. The Municipality of Jasper and Parks Canada will work collaboratively to achieve their common goals and objectives, while respecting their separate responsibilities. Land Use Bylaws in the Municipality of Jasper are subordinate to and required, under the Governance Agreement, to be consistent with the Park Management Plan. The relationship of the community of Jasper and the park is described in more detail in the area concept for Three Valley Confluence.

1.4.2 The Southern Mountain National Parks

Together, seven mountain national parks – Banff, Glacier, Jasper, Kootenay, Mount Revelstoke and Yoho - represent the Columbia Mountains and Rocky Mountains Natural Regions. They are the result of the conscious choice of Canadians to preserve a large part of their mountain heritage in a natural condition, so that future generations can continue to be inspired by the kinds of experiences that Canada's mountain environments offer. Visitors, passers-through, residents, and all Canadians benefit from and can contribute to this heritage. Dating back over 10,000 years, traditional use on these lands by Aboriginal people is evidenced by countless archaeological sites and cultural artefacts, the narratives of early travellers, and in the oral traditions of contemporary Aboriginal communities. These parks also contain 15 national historic sites representing major themes in Canadian history. Five of the seven parks

are also part of two World Heritage Sites, reflecting the global community's recognition of their outstanding universal value. Given the shared importance of these parks as core protected areas in Western Canada, it is important that their management strategies be coordinated and complementary.

While much of the direct management of these parks is the responsibility of Parks Canada, it is the advice and support of others that is critical to success. With the aid of groups such as the Jasper Trails Project Working Group and Advisory Group, the Jasper Aboriginal Forum, the Foothills Research Institute, the Icefields Parkway Advisory Group, and Annual Planning Forums, along with many other partnerships and the involvement of thousands in the development of management plans, Parks Canada shares with others the leadership and challenge of perpetuating the mountain heritage to enrich the experience and understanding of generations to come.

All seven mountain national parks now share key management strategies in common. They also share a common vision that aligns with, and frames, each national park's specific vision:

Canada's mountain national parks are renowned living examples of all that is best in the conservation of mountain ecosystems and history, facilitation of authentic nature-based experience, shared initiative, meaningful learning, and mountain culture. Visitors to these places feel welcomed into experiences that exceed their expectations.

The silent peaks, forest mosaics, living waters, wildlife, people, clean air and endless capacity to inspire bring rejuvenation, hope and self-discovery to future generations, just as they have for the many generations that came before.

1.4.3 National Historic Sites

Parks Canada manages four national historic sites within Jasper National Park. Athabasca Pass, Jasper House, the Jasper Park Information Centre, and Yellowhead Pass National Historic Sites of Canada all have current management plans that were approved in 2008. Implementation of these plans will ensure the continued commemorative integrity of these sites, while direction in this management plan will expand the relevance and reach of their programming and enhance their contribution to contemporary visitor experience.

2. IMPORTANCE OF JASPER NATIONAL PARK

Jasper Forest Park of Canada was created by Order in Council on September 14, 1907, to protect the lands and headwaters of the Upper Athabasca through which the proposed Grand Trunk Pacific transcontinental railway would run. Jasper was fifth national park to be created in the Canadian Rockies, and the sixth national park in Canada.

Today, Jasper National Park is the largest and most northerly Canadian national park in the Rocky Mountains, spanning 10,878 square kilometres of broad valleys, rugged mountains, glaciers, forests, alpine meadows and wild rivers along the eastern slopes of the Rockies in western Alberta. There are more than 1200 kilometres of hiking trails (both overnight and day trips), and a number of spectacular mountain drives. Jasper's importance extends well beyond the park boundary. It is part of a World Heritage Site, and is a core protected area in the larger Yellowhead ecosystem.

Large numbers of elk, bighorn sheep, mule deer and other large animals, as well as their predators make Jasper National Park one of the great protected ecosystems remaining in the Rocky Mountains. This wilderness is one of the few remaining places in southern Canada that is home to a full range of carnivores, including grizzly bears, mountain lions, wolves and wolverines. Features that make Jasper unique include:

- The highest mountain in Alberta (Mt. Columbia, 3747 metres);
- The hydrographic apex of North America (the Columbia Icefield) where water flows to three different oceans from one point;
- The longest underground drainage system known in Canada (the Maligne Valley karst);
- The only sand-dune ecosystem anywhere in the Four Mountain Parks (Jasper Lake dunes);
- The northern limit in Alberta of Douglas-fir trees;
- The unique array of alpine vegetation found in the Edith Cavell meadows;
- The last fully protected range in the Rocky Mountains for the threatened woodland caribou (South Jasper herd);
- The most accessible glacier in North America (the Athabasca).
- The largest glacial fed lake in the Canadian Rockies - Maligne Lake is 22 kilometres long and 97 metres deep.

The cultural past is preserved in the landscape, but is less well studied and promoted. The main valley, the Upper Athabasca, has been a travel corridor and meeting place for people for almost 10,000 years; it was a crossroads linking routes to the Peace River, the North Saskatchewan River, and across the Great Divide (Athabasca Pass and Yellowhead Pass). Evidence of Jasper's history is apparent in its many

archeological sites, historic rail corridors, early survey and construction camps, Métis homesteads, rustic warden patrol cabins, heritage buildings, and old trail networks. Cultural influences on the landscape are suggested in grasslands and meadow complexes that were burned by Aboriginal people and later arrivals to improve wildlife forage and horse pasture, and perhaps for medicinal plants.

Jasper National Park is most renowned for its scenery and wildlife, but also recognised for its historic associations, its long role in conservation, glacier research, ecological restoration innovations, its importance to the Canadian tourism industry and iconic status as a global symbol of Canada, and its contributions to the ongoing evolution of both the theory and practise of protected areas management. Delegations from around the world come to Jasper to learn. Youth from across Canada come for first hand learning experiences.

Jasper welcomes close to 2 million visitors each year and contains a town of 4,800 residents. The park is bisected by the Yellowhead Trans Canada Highway, the Canadian National Railway, and the Kinder-Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline. Jasper National Park has a large number of facilities for visitors – and yet has rare and sensitive wildlife living next to people, including top predators such as grizzly bears, wolves and cougars. Managing for the long-term health of the park and strengthening Canadians' connection with their heritage presents both challenges and opportunities, and requires the dedication of people working together. This management plan is a key tool for shaping that future.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Sources of Information

Parks Canada evaluates programs and activities to ensure that they are meeting the objectives outlined in the management plan for resource protection, visitor experience and public awareness and understanding. A major tool for assessing and reporting on the condition of the park and the effectiveness of Parks Canada's management actions is the State of the Park Report (SOPR). Prepared every five years, these reports are based on the results of ongoing monitoring of natural and cultural resources, and social science data gathered from visitors and other Canadians. They play an important role in identifying deficiencies in current park management approaches, emerging issues and information gaps, and determining the scope of management plan reviews.

The most recent SOPR for Jasper National Park, released in 2008, assessed ecological integrity to be in fair condition with a stable trend, based on available research and monitoring data. Cultural resources were also rated in fair condition, with a stable to improving trend.

Fewer data were available to quantify the state of visitor experiences, public awareness and understanding of the park and partner and stakeholder engagement. Park visitor experiences and learning opportunities were rated fair with an improving trend. Since then, several visitor surveys on specialized topics (e.g. camping trends, attitudes towards special events, and backcountry use) have filled in gaps in our knowledge related to visitor experience. This data was supplemented by qualitative

visitor experience assessments and analysis of existing data by a consultant in order to develop key strategies for visitor experience for this plan.

Ongoing dialogue with the public and stakeholders leading up to the revision of the management plan and through other planning processes also shapes plan content. The following section summarizes the findings of the State of the Park Report and other work that laid the foundation for this management plan.

3.2 *Situation Analysis*

RESOURCE PROTECTION

Jasper National Park showcases premier examples of the natural characteristics of the Rocky Mountains natural region in a dynamic landscape. Large-scale geological processes, from mountain-building to glaciation, are evident throughout the park. Natural ecological processes like wildfire, landslides, avalanches and flooding continue to drive park ecosystems.

While overall the ecological integrity of the park is considered fair to good, there are important concerns. Past park management practices, development and a variety of activities, both inside and outside the park, have impacted some park ecosystems.

Grizzly bears are an enduring symbol of the wilderness of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. This wide-ranging species is broadly accepted as an indicator of the health and diversity of mountain ecosystems, and as a measure of sustainable land use practices. Where grizzly bears are thriving, we can feel confident that the life requirements of many other mountain species are being met.

These effects are most acute in the montane ecoregion, which occupies 7% of Jasper National Park. Habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation and the introduction of non-native species have had major impacts on populations of both terrestrial and aquatic species. Outside the park, rapid regional land use changes are impacting shared wildlife populations. Actions to maintain or restore ecological integrity have focused on minimizing or reversing these effects. The ecological matters of greatest concern are the status of woodland caribou and the regional grizzly bear population, highway and rail-caused wildlife mortalities,

vegetation health, impacts of non-native fish and culverts on aquatic systems, and invasive non-native plants.

Development and human activities have also altered ecological processes. Suppression of fire on the landscape over the past century has resulted in a decline in the diversity and resilience of park vegetation, although there has been steady success recently in the use of prescribed fire to restore natural disturbance. Significant steps have been taken over the past five years to protect the community and park facilities from wildfire risk by managing forest fuels and thinning forest structure. Interventions to slow the spread of mountain pine beetle have also been successful.

The southern mountain population of woodland caribou is listed as threatened under Canada's *Species at Risk Act*. The three sub-herds in South Jasper National Park all show a long-term declining trend. Addressing these threats to reverse the current trend is a priority for Jasper National Park.

Elk populations in the vicinity of the community of Jasper are likely artificially high due to reduced predation by wolves and other carnivores. Overgrazing is impacting vegetation in the area, with consequences for other wildlife species and vegetation diversity. Measures to manage wildlife-human conflicts have been successful in reducing incidents, however elk-human conflicts have recently begun to increase again.

Progress has been made to restore wildlife movement corridors - by modifying or moving Parks Canada operational facilities, and engaging trail users in restoration work to adjust trail networks and improve quality of experiences.

The SOPR also reported on, but did not rate, environmental stewardship initiatives. The report recommended the review of long-term gravel extraction requirements. It identified the need for more work in the broad areas of energy conservation (e.g. building renovation and construction), storm water management, restoration of disturbed sites, contaminated site remediation, and empowerment of residents and visitors to influence and adopt environmentally sound practices. A major knowledge gap identified through the SOPR is our understanding of how climate change is likely to impact park ecosystems.

Cultural resources are reported on in the SOPR. Appropriate measures are in place or in development to protect and manage the park's archaeological sites and artifacts, historic objects, historic structures and federal heritage buildings, Métis homesteads, and the Athabasca Canadian Heritage River. The Cultural Resources Management Strategy needs to be revised, and the profile of the human history and cultural resources of the park needs to be raised.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Visitation to Jasper National Park, approaching 2 million people annually, has gradually increased over the past 10 years, with the largest fluctuations coinciding with national and global events that affect tourism market behaviour. For some visitors, the park is the main destination. For others, it is one stop in a longer trip through the mountain parks or Western Canada. Although the park offers visitor services, facilities and programs year round, July, August and September are the peak months for visitation.

Approximately half of Jasper National Park's visitors are international. The other half is Canadian, the majority of whom are from the Northern Alberta region. Independent visitors to Jasper are largely older, traveling without children, and seeking to immerse themselves in Jasper's nature and culture. Commercial groups represent 16% of visitors; among the mountain parks only Yoho National Park receives a higher proportion of group travel.

Visitors to the park are motivated by a variety of factors. Chief among them is the desire to enjoy the scenery, experience nature and view wildlife. Visitor surveys have consistently returned high satisfaction scores for Parks Canada services. Overall visitation increased by approximately 5% in the five year period between April 2002 and March 2007. While visitor numbers dropped partway through 2008 and into early 2009, they rebounded in the summer of 2009. There has been a noticeable shift in

markets, with international visitors replaced by regional visitors. Data from campground permits indicates that the use of park campgrounds is stable or has decreased slightly over the past seven years.

Recent social science work has focused on understanding the social values and travel motivations of park visitors. This will allow Parks Canada to better match existing and new opportunities to the needs and expectations of priority visitor groups.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

Since the 2000 plan was approved, new initiatives and partnerships have extended the reach and relevance of public education programs, with a particular focus on youth engagement. The Palisades program is transforming an historic guest ranch and Parks Canada training facility into a vibrant youth education center with the objective of cultivating stewards of the future for the national parks and national historic sites of Canada. Through the Marmot Basin Learning Centre, there are significant opportunities to reach a broader cross-section of urban Canadians with education and awareness programs.

A wide range of learning opportunities continues to be provided for visitors to the park by Parks Canada and others. Although visitor satisfaction with Parks Canada education programs is high, participation rates are low, which suggests that fresh approaches are needed. Better tools are needed to evaluate the effectiveness and reach of Parks Canada's communication efforts, messages, and educational programs. Further work is needed to understand and monitor how park experiences, learning, and involvement opportunities help to connect visitors and area residents to the park, and to determine how these factors influence support for heritage and participation in park stewardship.

PARTNERING AND ENGAGEMENT

The delivery of resource protection activities, visitor opportunities and educational programming is made possible by the combined efforts of many organizations. The Friends of Jasper, the Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Historical Society and members of the Interpretive Guides Association (IGA) provide a range of interpretive programs, events, services and self-guided opportunities. Partnerships with Grande Yellowhead Regional Division, Marmot Basin Ski Area, the Jasper Adventure Club for Kids and Outward Bound has facilitated youth engagement in understanding, caring for, and eventually, shaping the future of their park. Parks Canada works with partners such as Jasper Tourism and Commerce, the Municipality of Jasper and Travel Alberta to market the park as a destination and deliver park information.

The work of countless volunteers has made the park a richer and healthier place. Bird banders have contributed to the park's monitoring program. Citizen working groups and advisory bodies have addressed diverse challenges including elk management, caribou recovery planning, montane restoration, and defining a better trail network in the Three Valley Confluence. The Foothills Model Forest initiative has been a valuable platform for research and the integration of regional land management, and has evolved into the Foothills Research Institute.

Important steps have been taken to build relationships with Aboriginal people through the Jasper Aboriginal Forum (since 2006) and the Council of Elders of the Descendants of Jasper (since 2004), to support reconnection with the park and to celebrate and share Aboriginal culture and traditions. Aboriginal perspectives are not well represented in the current management plan and decision-making processes. Likewise, more opportunities to learn about and experience Aboriginal culture are needed.

The Community of Jasper was also briefly reported on but not rated in the SOPR. The first State of the Community Report was prepared in November 2006 to assess achievements and challenges to implementing the Jasper Community Land Use Plan; implementation is 90% complete through the combined efforts of Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper. Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper are working together to prepare a new community plan that will set the future direction for the municipality.

4. A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF JASPER NATIONAL PARK

Jasper National Park is an enduring symbol of the best Canada offers to the world – spectacular scenery, a pristine environment, diverse sightseeing and recreational opportunities, welcoming hosts, vibrant Aboriginal and local culture, abundant wildlife, and large wilderness. Its best-known places are icons of the Canadian Rocky Mountains: the Athabasca Glacier, the sheer rock face of Mount Edith Cavell, tranquil Maligne Lake and Spirit Island, and the thundering Athabasca and Sunwapta waterfalls. The Icefields Parkway showcases glaciers that are sentinels of past ice ages, sources of vital headwaters, and poignant indicators of climate change. Warm montane valley bottoms shelter grasslands, wetlands and wildlife. The Athabasca Canadian Heritage River corridor bears evidence of 9,000 years of human experience. Four national historic sites tell vivid stories that help to define what it means to be Canadian.

Jasper is the gentle giant of the mountain national parks, accessible yet unspoiled, a place for discovery and spiritual renewal. New and returning visitors, young and old, enjoy Jasper’s most-loved places. Its wilder and remote regions beckon and satisfy generation after generation of self-reliant travelers and adventurers, in the spirit of David Thompson, John Henry Moberly, Mary Schaeffer, and their Aboriginal guides.

Aboriginal people from both sides of the continental divide have reconnected with the park; their perspectives, culture and traditions inform park management and enrich visitor experience. For all Canadians, Jasper National Park is a place to connect with mountains and headwaters, and is renowned as a place to learn – to experience a living, vital landscape and its people, to grow in knowledge and respect, and to share in decisions and actions that ensure the health of this place for all time.

Jasper National Park is worthy of its designation as a world heritage site. Canadians, guests from around the globe, and local communities understand and appreciate the ecological and cultural importance of this place to the region, the country and the world. The health of the park and surrounding ecosystem is paramount. Close cooperation and stewardship across borders ensures clean water, healthy forests and grasslands, and security for grizzly bears and caribou. All who share an interest in Jasper National Park of Canada embrace responsibility and leadership in showing how people can live in harmony with their environment.

5. KEY STRATEGIES

Key strategies are the guiding concepts or “big ideas” that define the specific approach Parks Canada takes in setting priorities, choosing tactics, and evaluating the success of park management. The following eight key strategies summarize Parks Canada’s overall approach to delivering Parks Canada’s mandate in the unique context of Jasper National Park.

5.1 *Fostering Open Management and Innovation*

Challenges associated with managing protected areas in a changing world are many and complex. Canada’s mountain national parks have long been at the forefront of research, involvement and innovation to re-think and re-design the way in which people interact with landscapes, in the course of achieving our mandate to share these places with the world and ensure that the parks remain unimpaired for future generations. As part of a community of protected areas, Jasper National Park has benefited from experience gained in other places and from the fresh thinking of knowledgeable people who share an interest in these special places. Success in achieving the intended results of the management plan means involving people who care about the park in finding solutions to challenges large and small, by learning and doing, and working together.

Strengthening the culture of cooperation, learning and stewardship in the park is a priority, demonstrated through hands-on initiatives like the Palisades Stewardship Education Centre and Marmot Basin learning centres. Visitor opportunities can be created while resolving management challenges, as evidenced in recent work related to caribou conservation, fire restoration and facility protection, invasive weed management, bird monitoring and trail planning. Through innovative programs, Parks Canada is enhancing participation in park management, strengthening relationships, and reaching non-traditional urban and youth audiences as the way into the future.

This strategy focuses on:

- *Fostering stewardship and learning - by ensuring that park visitors, local residents, regional stakeholders, and broader communities of interest are fully engaged in the adventure and learning opportunities associated with the creation of new park management solutions,*
- *Strengthening public and Aboriginal involvement to enhance the critical analysis, creative thinking, and innovation that are needed to resolve park management challenges through adaptive management, and*
- *Making park management and stewardship successes a part of the Jasper National Park visitor experience and of the story we tell the world, so that they influence thinking and hope.*

5.1.1 Direction

- Approach park management challenges as an opportunity to engage a diverse community of interested Canadians in learning together and sharing information, creatively imagining options, and collaborating to implement solutions that create new stories of conservation successes.
- Use a tool kit of best practices, communications, volunteer opportunities and collaborative planning processes to develop and implement creative management solutions that enhance resource protection, add value to visitor experiences and create learning opportunities.
- Establish a park advisory group to offer advice on management issues, such as caribou recovery and elk hyperabundance, and related visitor opportunities, and to add value and capacity to public involvement in implementation of the management plan.
- Formalize the working relationships and priorities of the Jasper Aboriginal Forum. Encourage the gathering and incorporation of knowledge of how Aboriginal people cared for the land into ecosystem management decision-making, in ways respectful of the cultural traditions and ownership of the knowledge.
- Support and maintain an ongoing dialogue with Canadians through measures such as regular communications and outreach, events and festivals, public participation programs, school visits, and implementation of the annual public Jasper Management Planning Forum.
- Conduct natural and social science research and monitoring to improve understanding of complex issues and advance thinking about park management challenges and opportunities. Encourage and facilitate other research that will increase knowledge in areas of interest or contribute to park management objectives. Recognize the importance of the park as a benchmark area to the broader scientific community.
- Engage interested stakeholders, park visitors and community members in research and monitoring data collection, and the integration and application of scientific findings. Provide more opportunities for Canadians to learn about the science being conducted in the park.
- Participate in regional or national initiatives to coordinate land use planning, pursue common goals for resource protection and visitor experience or improve decision-making in the regional ecosystem.
- Continue to transform the Palisades into a national centre of excellence for stewardship education and training. Use the centre to bring youth from major urban centres, Jasper and regional communities in Alberta and British Columbia, new Canadians and other priority groups for Parks Canada to Jasper National Park to experience and learn in the mountain landscape.

- Explore opportunities with partners to use new technologies to create a virtual centre of learning where educators, researchers, scientists and students can interact, inspire one another and share what they have learned with their home communities.
- Provide a greater range of opportunities for people to demonstrate their commitment to the park by participating in volunteer initiatives (e.g. trail stewards, restoration work, non-native plant control, campground ambassadors, advisory group members, citizen scientists).

5.1.2 Indicators of Success

- Engagement: Canadians feel that they can influence and contribute to the management of Jasper National Park and number of Canadians participating in advisory groups and fora
- Stakeholder relations: measures of involvement and support for the protection and presentation of Jasper National Park
- Education and Outreach: Canadians consider that they learned about the park’s heritage
- Healthy ecosystems – park and regional scales

5.2 Welcome to Mountains of Opportunity

Connecting Canadians to inspiring and authentic park experiences is integral to successful delivery of Parks Canada’s mandate. A renewed focus on experiential tourism based on Jasper’s unique mountain heritage will set the stage for visitors to have the best national park experience possible through the effective collaboration of Parks Canada, the tourism industry, and the broader park community. This effort will be evident in every program and activity, and in every aspect of service delivery.

As the “Gentle Giant” of the mountain parks, Jasper offers grandeur in size and choices. For urban and rural Canadians, it offers contrast, renewal and restoration. For the young, it provides discovery, social networking and adventure. For Aboriginal people, it is a place to reconnect. New Canadians are welcomed here to Canada’s heritage and culture, and introduced to stories that define our country. Wildlife enthusiasts find abundance. Adventure-seekers love Jasper’s diversity in terrain. Wilderness explorers are rewarded with space and timeless landscapes spanning headwaters of three great rivers.

No matter their background or interest, visitors can find in Jasper National Park the ability to create exceptional mountain-based experiences that are meaningful and

Eye of the Beholder... What are ‘signature’ Jasper opportunities? It depends on who you ask. Most visitors would agree on Edith Cavell and Spirit Island; some say enjoying the trails of Pyramid Bench, others speak for the Skyline or North Boundary trails. How about floating the Athabasca Heritage River and its panoramic views? Local seasonal favourites include Ice skating on Mildred Lake and Icewalks in Maligne Canyon. You may find studying the silhouette of Roche Bonhomme (Old Man Mountain) from the comfort of a local restaurant defines your Jasper. There is no right answer – sense of place comes from personal experiences.

rewarding to them – from the iconic scenery of the Canadian Rocky Mountains World Heritage Site, to Jasper’s own signature places and activities, and the small town hospitality of its mountain community.

Park visitors vary greatly in their needs and expectations. For this reason, both Parks Canada and its tourism industry partners rely on ongoing research to understand social trends and visitor needs in order to attract and satisfy the needs of visitors with a wide array of interests and comfort levels. The size of the park and the range of year-round activities, combined with the need to integrate tourism and recreation with ecosystem protection, offer both challenges and opportunities. Jasper’s multiple visitor nodes are platforms for offering and enhancing park experiences. Recreational opportunities common and uncommon – like being transported onto a glacier by Snocoach – take on a unique flavour and meaning in a world-renowned protected mountain landscape.

“**Welcome**” will be a recurring theme at each stage of the trip cycle for visitors. The sense of welcome to a protected mountain landscape will be reflected in the visitor infrastructure, local ambassadors, Parks Canada staff and other service providers. Visitors will be welcomed not only to the mountain ecosystems and history of Jasper National Park, but to Parks Canada’s entire family of protected areas and the diversity of Canada which those protected areas represent and celebrate.

Providing visitors with “**Connections to Mountain Places**” will encourage meaningful and enjoyable visits that contribute to opportunities for visitors to create unique memories and become part of Canada’s ongoing celebration of mountain heritage. In collaboration with external representatives and stakeholders in both the environmental and tourism communities, and subject to an assessment process at the national and local levels, Parks Canada will consider proposals for new recreational, leisure and learning activities that support all aspects of the Parks Canada mandate.

Parks Canada, the tourism industry, the non-profit sector and Aboriginal partners all have important roles to play in connecting visitors with their park – to share in celebrating and honouring the unique setting and stories of Jasper National Park, and collaborating to meet or exceed visitors’ expectations in all aspects of their visit, throughout the trip planning cycle.

Jasper National Park’s visitor experience strategy is based on five types of engagement: the virtual experience, drive through awareness, a view from the edge, a step into the wild, and Rocky Mountain wilderness. Opportunities will be provided for each of the following:

The Virtual Experience – Some people experience places like Spirit Island and Edith Cavell Meadows from their homes, schools or offices, aided by a computer, electronic or print media. Whether they are simply curious or planning a visit to the park, a virtual experience can be the catalyst that drives them to seek a firsthand experience.

Drive-Through Awareness – Travellers who journey through the park without stopping have been too frequently ignored, and represent a tremendous opportunity for connection to place and environmental stewardship. Roughly two thirds of motorists passing through the park gates on this highway do not stop to visit the park. Commercial traffic, private vehicles and rail passengers enjoy the unspoiled scenery as they pass through the park and represent an important potential audience for Parks Canada.

Opportunistic interpretation will promote understanding of and support for this ever-protected panorama.

A View from the Edge – These visitors are seeking a park experience that engages all of their senses. They stop – to go for a stroll, have lunch at a picnic area or read an interpretive panel. They may linger on the edge of the wilderness, but do not go too far from civilization. They will find modern, welcoming, and comfortable facilities located at activity nodes designed for intensive use and close to key attractions. Entertaining, family oriented, flexible learning opportunities will engage these visitors in learning about the natural and cultural heritage of the park. They can participate in park stewardship through programs such as recycling at campgrounds and day use areas. The majority of park visitors are seeking this type of experience and can find it in areas like Three Valley Confluence, Edith Cavell, Maligne and Fiddle Valleys and along the Icefields Parkway.

A Step into the Wild – These visitors are more likely to venture a bit further from the pavement or into quieter areas of the park, using longer day-use trails like the Valley of the Five Lakes or Wilcox Pass, or Snaring Road. A wide range of recreational activities will allow visitors to experience the natural and cultural heritage of the park up-close. Guided or independent learning opportunities will compliment these experiences and increase awareness of or engagement in resource protection initiatives. Those staying overnight may gravitate to outlying commercial accommodations and campgrounds with fewer services.

Rocky Mountain Wilderness – These visitors seek extended immersion in a wilderness setting. With its large backcountry, Jasper National Park offers excellent opportunities for day, overnight, or multi-day adventures. A range of opportunities are available from relatively gentle outings for novices, to more demanding experiences for those who find rewards in being self-reliant, challenging themselves and getting away from the modern world. Parks Canada will connect them with expert advice and specialized information. Greater interaction with the park’s cultural and ecological values brings with it a higher level of personal responsibility for helping to protect those resources, through no impact practices and volunteerism. They will find these experiences in Jasper’s extensive Backcountry area.

This strategy focuses on:

- *Maintaining high levels of visitor satisfaction by providing new opportunities or redeveloping existing opportunities that broaden the appeal of the park for priority visitor groups.*
- *Connecting visitors seamlessly to experiences that are inspiring, grounded in Jasper National Park’s distinctive natural and cultural characteristics, and aligned with their interests.*
- *Strengthening relationships with partners to develop and deliver world class visitor opportunities.*

5.2.1 Direction

- Enhance capacity to maintain high levels of visitor satisfaction and support product development and promotion. Establish priorities to redevelop existing opportunities and provide new opportunities to better meet visitor needs, and broaden the appeal of the park for under-represented or potential park user groups.
 - Conduct targeted social science research to understand visitor motivations, anticipate needs and respond to interests.
 - Maintain or increase visitation to the park, to ensure that the park remains relevant to a broad cross-section of Canadians.
 - Continue to provide a range of opportunities for people to connect with the park, with a focus on improving opportunities for visitors who want a view from the edge of the pavement.
 - Review and update the park camping offer to increase the connection with the park provided by the camping experience. Increase the range of services, programs and activities available at park campgrounds (e.g. shelter available on-site, connections to other key attractions, short trails, playgrounds, concessions).
 - Consider new proposals for recreational activities, events and commercial services where they clearly support all aspects of the national park mandate. New recreational activities and events will be subject to an assessment process at the national and local level. Assessments will be conducted in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders. Use the following principles to guide the discussion on new activities:
 - Respecting Natural and Cultural Resource Protection Goals;
 - Facilitating Opportunities for Enjoyable and Meaningful Visitor Experiences;
 - Promoting Understanding and Appreciation of Natural Ecosystems and Canada's Culture and History;
 - Valuing and Involving Local Communities; and
 - Respecting the Character of Place.
 - Continue to support established recreational activities that allow visitors to experience the park, while ensuring that those activities sustain the natural and cultural values that support that experience. Periodically, or in areas where there are concerns, monitor activities to ensure that they are contributing to park goals.
 - Continue to implement the *Guidelines for River Use Management in Jasper National Park*, and work with river users and service providers to strengthen the quality of the park offer related to river use.
 - Pilot programs that will attract new Canadians, urban youth, families and less experienced park visitors to the park.
 - Improve the connection of virtual visitors (e.g. through podcasts, real-time remote cameras) to the park.
 - Enhance opportunities for people driving through the park, but not stopping, using new technology and other means.

- Given the size of the park and the range of opportunities available, it can be challenging for visitors to connect with the experience they are looking for. This direction focuses on making visitors aware of the range of opportunities available and directing them to opportunities that they may enjoy, based on their interests, abilities and prior experiences, by:
 - improving the ability of people to find information to plan their trip before they leave home and en-route using new technologies and through partners;
 - developing itineraries that respond to the interests, values and motivations of visitors;
 - improving orientation (i.e. signage) to make it easier for visitors get to where they want to go;
 - using real time information to build anticipation for events, area openings and to explain restrictions or limits in ways that reinforce the Parks Canada brand;
 - using new technology to enhance services (e.g. on-line fee collection, expanded campground reservations);
 - providing more opportunities to connect personally with Parks Canada employees;
 - facilitating the sharing of memories of the park to create new virtual experiences and provoke repeat visits; and
 - providing visitors with both the information and motivations they need to make choices and adopt behaviours that ensure their personal safety and protect park wildlife and ecosystems from damage.

- Work cooperatively with partners like Travel Alberta, Destination Marketing Organizations, Jasper Tourism & Commerce and the Municipality of Jasper to develop a revised Tourism and Marketing Strategy that:
 - shares information about visitors and collaboratively identifying areas where in-depth social science research is needed;
 - promotes tourism best practices that facilitate quality experiences and contribute to protecting the park environment;
 - creates promotions, products and events that direct visitors to nodes designed for intensive use, and in seasons and locations that have available capacity and sufficient ecological resilience; emphasize authenticity and inspiration as key elements;
 - uses time-sensitive and targeted communications to build anticipation and to explain restrictions or limits in ways that reinforce the special nature of parks, offer alternatives, and engage the visitor in shared stewardship of the park;
 - supports the work of the tourism industry to regain long-haul domestic markets and destination visitation, and to promote the Canadian Rocky Mountain parks World Heritage Site to international markets;
 - responds to the increased environmental sophistication of visitors by providing opportunities throughout the park to learn about and actively participate in stewardship of the park and environment;

- as a priority, enhances and communicates the winter and shoulder season offer for visitors, in ways that respect seasonal wildlife sensitivities; and
- promotes value-added park experiences for visitors already coming to the park in the shoulder season (e.g. for tournaments, downhill skiing), to encourage visitors to stay another day and strengthen their connection to the park.
- Strengthen relationships with regional partners, such as gateway communities, to share best practices, anticipate changes in regional tourism and recreation and participate in broader initiatives, such as regional transportation.
- Facilitate the development of a community of hospitality, creating knowledgeable park ambassadors through innovative orientation and accreditation programs supported by Parks Canada, the Municipality of Jasper and others.
- Pursue partnerships that enhance existing programming within the park (e.g. Palisades Stewardship Education Centre, Marmot Basin) or that will result in new programming at Parks Canada or third party venues.
- Invite Aboriginal communities with a historic connection to share their culture and traditions with park visitors. Work with Aboriginal communities to:
 - facilitate the development of new Aboriginal tourism products,
 - identify venues where Aboriginal culture and traditions can be showcased, and
 - build capacity so that there is increased participation in the benefits of the park.

5.2.2 Indicators of Success

- Connection with the park: 85% of visitors consider the park meaningful to them
- Park attendance: At least 1,908,000 people visit the park in 2010/11 and visitation increases on average by 2% per year to 2012/13
- Visitor satisfaction: at least 85% of visitors in all market segments are satisfied with their visit (e.g. services, facilities programs and value for money) and at least 50% are very satisfied
- Learning: at least 60% of visitors feel they learned something about their national parks and Jasper in particular
- Learning: An increased percentage of visitors understand the importance of park stewardship, Parks Canada's roles as park stewards and their role as partners in stewardship.
- Visitor safety: Reduced incidence of injury to visitors and human-wildlife conflict

5.3 Celebrating History, Culture and the World Heritage Site

The stories that help to define these places are products of Aboriginal use, European exploration and fur trade, railway and nation-building, the emergence and continuing evolution of recreation and tourism and the unique communities that have come to people these places. The rich cultural heritage of this national park allows visitors to experience a vivid sense of the past and to personally connect with- and contribute to - this continuing human legacy.

This strategy aims to increase the profile of the rich, still-evolving cultural heritage of the mountain parks. The national historic sites, landscapes and cultural resources within the park will become play a vital role in contemporary visitor experience and connection to place, by integrating history, culture and ecology into the ways in which people experience and understand Canada's mountain national parks.

World Heritage Sites (WHS) are outstanding global examples of the common heritage of all people. Jasper, Banff, Yoho, Kootenay National Parks are part of the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks WHS, together with Mt. Robson, Hamber and Mt. Assiniboine Provincial Parks in British Columbia. The site is inscribed for its exceptional natural beauty and for its significant ongoing geological processes. There is currently a proposal to extend the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks WHS by adding provincial parks in Alberta and British Columbia.

Jasper National Park protects important cultural resources and cultural landscape features of local, regional and national significance – including four national historic sites, numerous archaeological sites, artifacts and historic objects, heritage buildings, a National Historic Railway Station, and the Athabasca Canadian Heritage River.

This strategy focuses on:

- *Relating cultural resources and traditions to our modern life in ways that respect and protect their authenticity and historic character in order to build a broad base of support and understanding for our shared cultural heritage.*
- *Celebrating and increasing awareness of the World Heritage Site.*

5.3.1 Direction

- Prepare and implement a Cultural Resources Management Plan that outlines how Jasper National Park will manage and profile cultural resources located outside of its National Historic Sites.
- Strengthen the involvement of Aboriginal people in documenting and presenting their cultures and relationships to park landscapes.
- Link National Historic Site stories to the broader mountain park landscape and to contemporary visitor experiences – provide a range of innovative and engaging learning opportunities to keep their stories alive and relevant.

- Increase opportunities to connect visitors with history by providing roving interpretation and portable exhibits, focusing where visitors concentrate with programming that links the history of Jasper National Park to contemporary experiences and key attractions.
- Continue to work with local museums and heritage associations and pursue new partnerships to:
 - provide more learning opportunities for visitors related to the history of the park and
 - plan and stage cultural heritage-themed events or festivals.
- In collaboration with partners, increase the profile of the World Heritage Site status of Jasper National Park and the Athabasca Heritage River.
- In partnership with the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, prepare a nomination for the extension of the Canadian Rock Mountain Parks WHS.

5.3.2 Indicators of Success

- Cultural Resource Condition maintained or increased
- Visitors report greater awareness of National Historic Sites and World Heritage Site designation

5.4 Bringing the Mountains to People Where They Live

To promote an ongoing dialogue and lifelong passion for parks and healthy landscapes, Parks Canada brings the ongoing stories of mountain culture, science, recreation and park management to people who may not otherwise have an opportunity to learn about or become involved in our national parks and national historic sites. This strategy is designed to build on the iconic status and inspiring nature of Jasper National Park and to extend its reach through the popular media, modern technology and outreach programming, to bring current, lively and engaging content into the homes, schools and communities of Canadians across the country. Learning about the park may also lead to a visit to the park, or inspire further involvement through volunteer programs or participation in collaborative planning.

Almost 80% of Canadians live in urban centres and more than one-fifth were not born in Canada. The mountain parks will reach out to these audiences through innovative communications programming. Outreach initiatives at schools, in regional communities and larger urban centres, extension events for special groups, enhanced content on Parks Canada and partner websites, publications, mass media contacts and community events will bring the mountain parks into people's homes and communities. The high public profile and reputation of the mountain national parks creates both an opportunity and an obligation to link Canadians' experience in these parks to an expanded awareness of and engagement with the entire family of national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas.

This strategy focuses on:

- *Introducing Canadians, wherever they may live, work or gather, to Canada’s remarkable mountain heritage.*
- *Fostering connections with other wild places, culture and history, through understanding and appreciation for Jasper National Park.*

5.4.1 Direction

- Reach priority audiences, including youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians with programming that links them to park settings and stories; people and their experiences; and the dynamic environments of Jasper National Park and the mountain national parks.
- Reach priority local and regional audiences in Alberta and British Columbia with information about ecosystem issues, challenges and successes related to resource protection and visitor experience.
- Through the Palisades Stewardship Education Program or through other programs, bring outreach education programming into regional communities and larger urban centres with a focus on Alberta and British Columbia on a regular basis.
- Pursue partnerships that support outreach education with other parks and protected areas, research institutions, heritage-based agencies, the non-profit sector, educational institutions and festival organizers.
- Collaborate with provincial education authorities to tie mountain national park themes and opportunities into school curricula at all levels.
- Explore ways to use new technology to enhance education outreach and public engagement.
 - Regularly refresh and renew content for an enhanced web presence that provides more meaningful and engaging learning, sharing and experiential opportunities for Canadians and others.
 - Explore means to bring park settings and facility-based programming into schools, homes and other venues so that Canadians can experience the excitement of being “virtually there”.
 - Inform and involve a broader cross-section of Canadians in planning and decision-making processes and obtain feedback on park issues and challenges
- Reach a broader audience with information about the park through community events (e.g. Jasper rodeo, sports tournaments).

5.4.2 Indicators of Success

- **Appreciation:** At least 60% of Canadians appreciate the significance of heritage places administered by Parks Canada.
- **Understanding:** At least 80% of Canadians support the protection and presentation of Jasper National Park.
- **Outreach education:** An increased percentage of Canadians consider that they learned about the park's heritage.

5.5 *Managing Growth and Development*

Creation of Jasper Forest Park in 1907 stimulated interest in tourism even before the railway arrived. While early trails were rough, knowledgeable guides were available to shepherd willing adventurers like Mary Schaffer. Access improved dramatically for Canadians with construction of the Grand Trunk and Canadian Northern Railways and initiation of passenger rail service in 1912. The railway node of Fitzhugh soon expanded into guest services for visitors, and early park authorities began projects to build facilities, trails and roads to accommodate tourists' aspirations to visit and explore the new park. Over time, policies and legislation were developed to reflect the changing needs of society while setting out a clear mandate for the national parks, framing important requirements to ensure the ecological integrity of the park for all time.

Jasper's natural attributes are the basis for its historic and continuing popularity as a tourism destination. Safeguarding those attributes has over the years required an increasing level of care and attention to understanding natural systems, and improving how we manage transportation infrastructure, facilities and attractions to support a growing visitor base and a community of 4,500 residents. Most park development, and the highway, rail and pipeline transportation corridors are located in valley bottoms – which are also the most productive wildlife habitat. Limits to development ensure that the physical footprint of development is defined and that its less tangible effects are considered in decision-making.

The community of Jasper, outlying lodges, hostels and bungalow camps, campgrounds and day use areas, such as Marmot Basin ski area and the Columbia Icefields Centre, are important staging areas from which visitors explore the park. They will be managed in a way that enables their continuing role in facilitating quality visitor experiences and contributing to economic sustainability, while ensuring limits to growth are maintained and environmental impacts are minimized or reduced. Innovation, learning and stewardship are also called for in improving park practices to reduce waste and consumption to enhance water, energy, and air quality management. Increasing numbers of Canadians and international visitors are making discriminating choices and selecting "green" destinations and service

providers. This strategy ensures that Jasper National Park will continue to attract visitors with the promise of a healthy park environment.

This strategy focuses on:

- *Reaffirming the importance of maintaining established limits to development in Jasper National Park while encouraging creative approaches that enhance visitor experiences and minimize environmental effects.*
- *Demonstrating leadership in the development of innovative stewardship practices.*

5.5.1 Direction

- Maintain the role of the community of Jasper as a visitor service centre, and working with the Municipality of Jasper, ensure that it maintains its sense of place as a small mountain community scaled to the mountain park setting:
 - the community of Jasper boundary will not expand;
 - the commercial zone as described in Schedule 4 of the *Canada National Parks Act* will not expand. Consideration may be given to restructuring the commercial land boundary to ensure more efficient use of some developable residential lands. If such a proposal were developed, the area of commercial land in the realigned parcel must not exceed the area prior to the realignment and would be subject to an amendment of the *Canada National Parks Act*;
 - commercial development will only be permitted within the commercially zoned areas (C1, C2, C4 and S Block) and is limited to an increase of 5,310 square metres (57,156 square feet); and
 - the annual commercial growth rate will be 1,5 % of the 2001 commercial floor space inventory of 108,931 square meters (1,172,524 square feet) and will not exceed 1,700 square meters (18,299 square feet) per year. Final commercial floor space in the community will not exceed 118,222 square metres.
- For Commercial Accommodations outside the Town of Jasper, development will be subject to the 2007 Redevelopment Guidelines for Outlying Commercial Accommodations (OCAs) in the Rocky Mountain National Parks. No new land will be released for overnight commercial accommodation outside of the community.
- For Marmot Basin Ski Area, apply the Marmot Basin Site Guidelines for Development and Use and the Ski Area Management Guidelines. Consider development proposals that are consistent with the negotiated growth limits and the parameters identified in the Site Guidelines.
- Outside park communities, OCAs and ski areas:
 - Development limits for other commercial facilities are incorporated into leasehold agreements.

- Manage future commercial and non-commercial development or redevelopment to achieve a principle of no net increase in the amount of disturbed landscape, by actively restoring previously disturbed areas prior to, or in concert with, any new development.
- New proposals for facilities directly required for outdoor recreational activities may be considered based on the following principles:
 - Clear alignment with the natural and cultural protection goals of the park
 - Mitigation of any potential site-specific, park-scale or regional impacts including potential conflicts between user groups; where feasible, use existing disturbed sites
 - Facilitation of enjoyable and meaningful visitor experiences that strengthen connection to place
 - Promotion of learning and appreciation
- Park day-use and frontcountry (road accessible) campground facilities may be redeveloped to respond to changing visitor needs, ecological objectives, and operational efficiencies. Maintain the overall capacity of existing campgrounds, allowing adjustments within existing footprints or re-allocation of capacity between campgrounds.
- Consider limits to commercial activities in:
 - ecologically sensitive areas such as wetland and riparian areas and important habitat for species at risk,
 - remote wilderness settings, and
 - where crowding or potential user conflict issues require careful management.
- Restore previously disturbed landscapes to an appropriate functioning native ecosystem.
- Develop a long-term aggregate management strategy to support highway construction and maintenance requirements and ensure ecological restoration of related disturbances. The strategy will:
 - Explore opportunities to acquire material from outside the park where feasible;
 - Prohibit development of gravel sources in rare habitats, locations of high cultural value, or places of aesthetic importance for visitor experience;
 - Ensure active restoration of existing and new gravel sources on an ongoing basis throughout the life cycle of the source(s).
 - Ensure full rehabilitation costs and non-native plant management requirements are included in all highway construction and recapitalization budgets.
- Permit changes to the existing system of utilities and communications services when those changes will improve efficiency and safety, yield environmental benefits, and avoid adverse ecological and aesthetic effects that could diminish the visitor experience.

- Consider options for alternative energy infrastructure in Zone 2 (Declared Wilderness Area) where renewable energy sources can replace existing use of non-renewable energy; ensure new facilities preserve the wilderness environment and the experience of visitors .
- Apply environmental stewardship principles, architectural and sign guidelines to all development proposals.
- Encourage the development of alternative energy sources and the redevelopment of existing power generating facilities to improve efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in ways that minimize effects on local ecological or cultural values and the visitor experience.
- Adopt and update best management practices that reduce the environmental and aesthetic impacts of park and third party operational activities (e.g. utility corridors, vegetation management, snow removal, road salt management, forest fuel reduction around facilities).
- Strengthen the role of the development review process in encouraging sound environmental technologies related to green building standards or guidelines, energy and water conservation, waste management, and recycling. Improve environmental programs in campgrounds and day use areas.
- Share and celebrate environmental and cultural stewardship initiatives with visitors and the broader Canadian public. Profile environmental stewardship innovations to strengthen Jasper National Park's position in the sustainable tourism marketplace.

5.5.2 Indicators of Success

- The limits to development and growth are maintained for communities, OCAs and Marmot Basin.
- New development supports protection goals and enhances connection to place for visitors.
- New development outside the townsite is balanced by reclamation of the same or greater amount of previously disturbed land in the park, on a five-year running average basis.
- Positive influence on measures related to the *Terrestrial Ecosystems* indicator (eg. Aerial extent of human footprint).

5.6 Ensuring Healthy Ecosystems

Vibrant scenery, abundant wildlife, and healthy ecosystems are at the heart of visitors' ongoing attraction to Jasper National Park, and are the foundation and prerequisite for a sustainable tourism industry. Similarly, ensuring Canadians have meaningful and inspiring opportunities to connect with and learn about the park is integral to its future by maintaining relevance and public support.

Visitors to Jasper National Park find a wide range of natural systems – from relatively pristine glacial headwaters and alpine meadows to montane lakes, streams and grasslands. Grizzly bears and other predators occupy most of their historic range in the park. Caribou are threatened and a key concern,

but are a common sight to visitors to the Tonquin Valley. The Athabasca and Miette River valley bottoms are places where high ecological value and high use overlap, and are affected by transportation corridors, man-made disturbances, fire suppression and invasion by non-native plants.

Ecosystem and social science provide not just insights and advice, but rich opportunities for individual experience and collective learning. The knowledge of long time area residents and Aboriginal people plays an important role in planning, decision-making, and stewardship. In the last 10 years, management efforts have focused on restoring disturbed ecosystems and the role of fire, understanding interactions among predators, prey, and people - toward better sharing of valley habitats and supporting caribou recovery, contributing to healthy regional landscapes by working with regional neighbours, and providing visitors with opportunities to learn about and contribute to park resource management efforts.

Successful implementation of this strategy requires will enable Canadians to continue enjoying and learning about healthy, intact ecosystems and wild places and will protect in perpetuity the common natural heritage.

This strategy focuses on:

- *continued efforts to protect and, where necessary, restore ecosystems, building on the successes of recent years.*
- *enabling Canadians to continue enjoying and learning about healthy, intact ecosystems and wild places.*

5.6.1 Direction

- Ensure that ecosystem management activities provide opportunities to raise awareness and understanding through communication and hands on learning.
 - Provide engaging programming that raises awareness and understanding of park ecosystems in places where visitors congregate. Provide opportunities for visitors and residents to participate in the implementation of ecosystem management activities.
 - Investigate opportunities to manage popular wildlife viewing areas to improve viewing opportunities, while decreasing the potential for habituation, disturbance and human-wildlife conflict.
 - Promote events that profile sensitive wildlife and species at risk, with opportunities to engage with scientists and subject experts.
- Ensure that Jasper National Park has the full complement of native species and communities that are characteristic of the Rocky Mountain Natural Region:
 - Reduce the likelihood of introduction of non-native species, and take steps to eliminate or control non-native species and diseases that are invasive and likely to have lasting negative effects on native plant or fish populations, wildlife habitat or aquatic community diversity.

- Work cooperatively with responsible federal and provincial agencies in planning and implementing recovery measures for species at risk.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to implement proactive conservation measures that will keep species from being added to Canada's list of threatened and endangered mountain species. Prepare and implement recovery plans for species at risk.
- Develop and implement a conservation strategy for woodland caribou on national parks land with the participation of interested Canadians. Continue to implement interim conservation measures until the strategy is finalized.
- Where feasible, re-introduce extirpated biota. Investigate the feasibility of re-introducing bison into the park.
- Restore priority terrestrial habitats, with a focus on montane grasslands, aspen stands and riparian vegetation.
- Manage ecological processes so that they can play their traditional role in shaping park ecosystems. Where limited by public safety concerns, employ management techniques that emulate these processes as closely as possible.
 - Restore predator-prey dynamics in the montane ecoregion of the park. Pay particular attention to the effects of predation on caribou populations.
 - Use fire to maintain and restore natural vegetation characteristics in park ecosystems, using natural ranges of variability as a guide.
 - Monitor forest insects and diseases; develop appropriate responses to population fluctuations of native forest insects and diseases. Consider the interests of adjacent land managers when designing strategies.
 - Improve our understanding of the impacts of climate change on park ecosystems and management strategies that are needed to adapt to climate change. Use visitor experience and education opportunities at the Icefields Centre and other locations to communicate messages about a changing climate to the public.
- Manage for patterns of abundance, distribution and behaviour of native wildlife species that are within the range of natural variability.
 - With public participation, identify ways to restore appropriate elk distribution and abundance and reduce elk/human conflicts in the community area.
 - Work cooperatively with regional land managers, non-governmental organizations and industry to ensure that populations of grizzly bear, caribou and other wide-ranging species within the regional ecosystem are viable and non-declining.
 - Monitor sensitive species to identify threats to their survival and improve our knowledge of their population dynamics and habitat requirements.
 - Manage large areas of the park as wildlands, where minimal facilities and low levels of human use ensure that the life requirements of wide-ranging species are met.

- Reduce human-caused mortality of priority species (e.g. woodland caribou, grizzly bears, and carnivores). Address sources of both direct and indirect mortality.
 - In cooperation with CNR, address grain spills on the railway.
 - Investigate techniques to reduce highway mortality.
- Reduce wildlife habituation and increase public safety through broad public awareness programs and more intensive measures where required (e.g. trail rerouting, area use restrictions, fencing, vegetation management).
- Facilitate the movement of wildlife between key habitats, particularly in the montane ecoregion. Ensure that activities and facilities do not impact key wildlife movement corridors; examine ways to make improvements.
- Restore aquatic connectivity where it has been impacted by transportation corridors or water impoundment and where it will benefit native fish populations.
- Improve the quality and quantity of habitat for priority species, through techniques such as prescribed burning and trail adjustments.

5.6.2 Indicators of Success

- Native biodiversity - grizzly bear habitat security and mortality targets
- Climate and atmosphere
- Aquatic ecosystems
- Terrestrial ecosystems – including measures related to elk-human conflict
- Regional landscapes

5.7 Strengthening Aboriginal Relationships

Parks Canada is committed to building strong and mutually beneficial working relationships with Aboriginal people. In recent years, Parks Canada has been working actively with Aboriginal communities with historic ties to Jasper National park on matters of shared interest, which include showcasing Aboriginal culture, reconnecting to the park for cultural purposes, and understanding and incorporating Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives into park management. The perspectives, cultural ties, and stories of Aboriginal people are an important part of the historic fabric and the future of Jasper National Park.

Through the work of the Aboriginal Forum, Parks Canada and Aboriginal communities with historic ties to the park have identified six main areas of common interest:

- Participating in decision-making
- Traditional knowledge
- Access to and reconnection with the park
- Cultural programming
- Resource conservation activities
- Economic and employment opportunities

A number of Aboriginal groups lost traditional connections with the park area when Jasper National Park was established in 1907 as a forest reserve. Today, over twenty different Aboriginal communities from Alberta and British Columbia - First Nations, Non-Treaty, and Métis peoples - are participating in the Jasper Aboriginal Forum or the Elders Council of Descendants of Jasper. Both venues support an interest-based healing and reconnection process. Six main areas of interest have been identified through the work of the Aboriginal Forum. Enabling direction appears in different sections throughout this Plan, and is summarized here.

The intent of this strategy is to encourage and strengthen interest-based participation by Aboriginal people in the management and benefits of Jasper National park, fostering reconciliation and reconnection.

5.7.1 Directions

- Facilitate the gathering and recording of traditional knowledge about park ecosystems, relationships with park landscapes, and cultural resources, in ways that respect the traditions and ownership of the information.
- Incorporate traditional knowledge that is offered into planning and decision-making processes with the guidance of Aboriginal people.
- Identify and facilitate opportunities for Aboriginal people to present their culture, history and perspectives to park visitors, and to participate in the economic activity of the park.
- Develop and implement measures to support Aboriginal access to the park for spiritual and ceremonial purposes.
- Work with interested groups to identify a place or several places in the park to be used for ceremonies and cultural learning (e.g. youth camps).

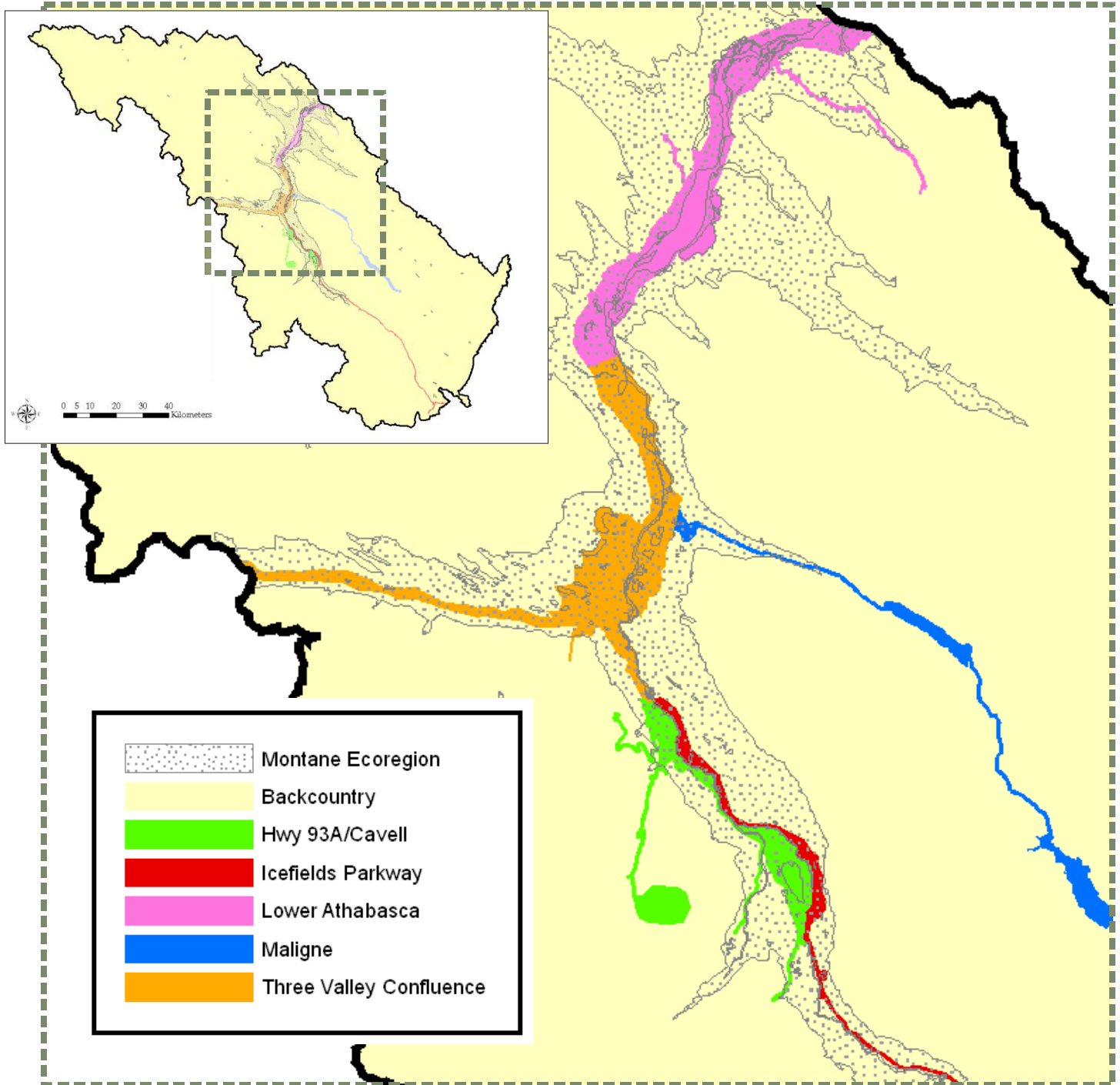
- Foster cultural awareness among Parks Canada and its partners.
- Build capacity for effective involvement in planning and management of the park.

5.7.2 Indicators of Success

- Engagement: Aboriginal people feel that they can influence and contribute to the management of Jasper National Park
- Increased number of programs that showcase Aboriginal culture.
- Parks visitors have increased awareness and knowledge of First Nation and Metis communities with historic ties to Jasper National Park.
- Economic benefits to Aboriginal people are accruing through the provision of services and goods and employment.

6 AREA CONCEPTS

Area concepts describe six different areas within Jasper National Park. Each area has a distinct identity defined by its landscape, ecological characteristics and the experiences of people – past and present. Key actions have been identified for each area that will take us from the current situation to a better future.



6.1 Mount Edith Cavell and Highway 93A

6.1.1 Future Best

Prominent among peaks in the upper Athabasca Valley, snow-capped Mount Edith Cavell is a beacon to travellers. Standing at the junction of road and wilderness - one of few places in the Canadian Rockies where visitors step from a parking lot directly into a glacial basin.

This place is home to picas, Clarke's nutcracker, and wide-ranging bears. The pristine environment offers visitors un-paralleled opportunities to experience glaciers, moraines and plant colonization; learning opportunities make visitors aware of how their actions contribute to the high conservation values of the area. Woodland caribou find the space and security they need in this area and adjacent valleys.

The Cavell area is popular throughout peak season. The easy *Path of the Glacier* trail takes thousands of visitors each year to enjoy spectacular views of the hanging Angel Glacier, to witness its thundering avalanches and to encounter stranded icebergs at the lake's edge. Those seeking deeper exploration take the more demanding *Cavell Meadows* trail, ascending dense subalpine forest to gain the famous meadows and their colourful explosion of alpine wildflowers every summer. Parking lot and road congestion has been alleviated. Edith Cavell is also a place for climbers, and an auspicious staging area for world-class backcountry excursions to the Tonquin Valley.

Highway 93A is the gateway to the Edith Cavell area and Marmot Basin Ski Area, and to several popular trailheads. The scenic route to Athabasca Falls, a quieter alternative to the Icefields Parkway, is particularly enjoyable for cyclists. Wabasso Campground serves both discriminating and first-time campers who relish its innovative amenities and quiet setting alongside the Athabasca River. Visitors connect with stories of early travellers who followed the Athabasca and Whirlpool Rivers to cross the Great Divide to the Pacific over the gruelling Athabasca Pass. In the winter, Highway 93A offers memorable cross-country skiing experiences.

6.1.2 Current Situation

Mount Edith Cavell

Strengths

- Easy access, proximity to the community, and spectacular views make Mount Edith Cavell one of the most popular day use areas in the park.
- The access road, open seasonally from mid-June to mid-October, has tight winding turns that invite slow travel and enjoyment.
- The Mount Edith Cavell Hostel provides overnight visitor accommodation that compliments the area's nature and character.

- The Edith Cavell Meadows are designated an *Environmentally Sensitive Site*, in recognition of the unique array of unusual and rare plants not found elsewhere in the Four Mountain Park Block.
- The area provides important caribou habitat. Several measures have been implemented to reduce the potential for disturbance and facilitated predator access to caribou.
- The Astoria trailhead for the Tonquin Valley is located near the north end of Cavell Lake - a less visited, picturesque water body that is a short hike from the trailhead.
- In winter, the road is used by skiers for day excursions or to access the hostel or Tonquin Valley, with timing restrictions as required to support caribou recovery.
- Marmot Basin offers exceptional downhill skiing and learning opportunities within the limits and guidelines outlined in the Site Guidelines for Marmot Basin (2008).

Challenges

- Chronic maintenance challenges on the Edith Cavell Road need to be addressed. The day-use parking lot and adjacent access road are frequently congested by mid-day during peak season. Road and parking lot improvements are planned for fall 2009 and spring 2010.
- Years of random hiking through the meadows, particularly in the wet spring season, have impacted vegetation. Steps were taken in 2002-2004 through a cooperative project with the Friends of Jasper National Park to harden trails and improve interpretative signage. Seasonal trail openings give time for snowmelt on the trail to improve visitor experience and protect sensitive soils and vegetation.
- Interpretation and public safety signs along the *Path of the Glacier* trail are dated.

Highway 93A

Strengths

- Highway 93A provides a slower-paced option for automobile and bicycle touring in summer, access to Edith Cavell and Marmot Basin, two campgrounds, several day use areas, a number of backcountry trail heads (e.g. Moab Lake, Whirlpool Valley, Fryatt Valley) and a rock-climbing area. In winter, Highway 93A provides consistent cross-country skiing opportunities.
- The Moab Lake road provides access: to the Athabasca Pass National Historic Site trail (a horse and hiker trail, the first 11 km are also open to bicycling), to a walking opportunity to Moab Lake itself, and for whitewater boating on the Whirlpool River.

Challenges

- Highway 93A has been a lower priority for maintenance over the past ten years – the road and many of its associated facilities are in poor to fair condition.

- Infrastructure in the Wabasso campground needs updating to better meet the needs of modern campers.
- There are opportunities to improve interpretation of the area.

6.1.3 Key Actions

Improve opportunities for a wide range of visitors to enjoy the area.

- Improve trails and day use facilities to meet the needs of a broad cross-section of visitors seeking a “view from the edge”, including families, commercial groups, seniors, new Canadians and visitors engaging in mild recreation (e.g. short hikes).
- Re-evaluate parking and traffic issues at Edith Cavell once the road and parking lot have been improved. Explore more innovative long-term solutions to reduce congestion if required.
- Include Edith Cavell and other popular nodes in transportation planning for the Jasper townsite area and campgrounds.
- Use communication to set visitor expectations ahead of time (e.g. use imagery that includes people in the scenery in awareness/promotion material about the area). Encourage independent visitors to arrive at non-peak hours and times of the year.
- Maintain Highway 93A to accommodate slower-paced sightseeing. Explore ways to improve visitor opportunities that support this type of experience.
- Ensure that Marmot Basin Road, Geraldine, Moab Lake roads are maintained to a standard that complements the visitor opportunities they support and level of use they receive.
- Examine ways to improve the winter offer along Highway 93A.

Continue to sustain the area’s high conservation values and increase visitor awareness and understanding of the importance of the area’s unique ecosystems and human history.

- Continue to implement visitor management measures, like trail improvements, hardened viewing areas and communications, to protect rare plant communities and woodland caribou.
- Enhance learning opportunities and strengthen interpretation of the area’s important features and linkages (e.g. ecological and geological diversity, species at risk, and the indications of a changing climate).
- Profile Athabasca Pass National Historic Site at a high visitor use location along Highway 93A.
- Work with Marmot Basin to maintain the area’s high conservation values through implementation of the Site Guidelines and long range planning, and profile stories of area wildlife, ecology, research and human history at ski area facilities.

6.1.4 Indicators of Success

- Reduced levels of congestion in the Edith Cavell parking lot and access road.
- A higher percentage of visitors are “very satisfied” with their experience at Edith Cavell.
- Stable or increasing population for the Tonquin caribou herd.
- Improved road, Day Use Area and campground condition along Highway 93A.
- Improved awareness and understanding of unique characteristics of area.

6.2 Three Valley Confluence

6.2.1 Future Best

The Three Valley Confluence is a natural meeting place, where rivers join. Since 1907, this area has been the primary staging area for visitors to explore and enjoy Jasper National Park. Today’s visitors and residents feel a kindred spirit with past travellers, who stopped and rested, drawing strength and inspiration from the setting. It is home to a community that celebrates and showcases its unique Canadian mountain heritage.

The breadth of the Athabasca Valley, accessible lakes and rivers, gentle benches and the open forests and grasslands of the montane define this place. Familiar outlines of Pyramid Mountain, Roche Bonhomme, Signal Mountain, and The Whistlers frame the horizons in four directions. The sparkling Miette River ends its journey from the continental divide opposite Old Fort Point. Joining the silty Athabasca further downstream, the clear blue waters of the Maligne River reflect its karst origins.

Together, the three valleys are the platform from which the majority of visitors view, experience and understand the park. In this hub where they join, partners collaborate to enrich visitors’ experiences and to illuminate the stories of people and nature that convey the essence of Jasper National Park. Aboriginal people reconnect their communities with the park, and share their stories and traditions with visitors. All who spend time here share in stewardship to ensure the land retains its wildness.

The three valleys provide vital conduits for wildlife movement linking large areas of Jasper National Park and places beyond. The mixed forest and grassland patches that provide food and shelter for wildlife are renewed by natural fire cycles. The promise of seeing elk, deer and mountain sheep are highlights for visitors, and the tracks of grizzly bears and wolves may be encountered on trails and quiet places anywhere throughout the Three Valley Confluence.

Most visitors and local residents form their most enduring personal attachments to Jasper National Park here. This is a place to gather, and for those seeking it, a place where solitude may easily be found. From multiple access points, including a world class trail network, day-use areas, roads, and campgrounds, nature is always at hand.

6.2.2 The Community of Jasper

6.2.2.1 Current Situation

Strengths

- Situated at the heart of Three Valley Confluence, the community of Jasper is home to a roughly 4,700 residents. What began as a divisional point for the Canadian National Railway, has evolved over time into a tourism-based community and administrative centre for Parks Canada.
- The Jasper Community Sustainability Plan (2010) will be the first community plan to be completed jointly by the Municipality of Jasper and Parks Canada and will guide development of the community for the next 30 years.
- The plan is based on five principles of sustainability: environmental integrity, economic sustainability, social equity, cultural vitality and participative governance. It replaces a 2001 community plan that focused primarily on ecological integrity, the protection of built heritage resources, managing commercial growth, providing an adequate supply of residential housing and maintaining the community's character.
- The vision articulated in the sustainability plan is for Jasper to be a small, friendly and sustainable community set in the natural splendour of Jasper National Park.

Challenges

- Because it is located within a national park, management of the community takes on a complexity not commonly found elsewhere.

6.2.2.2 Key Actions

Development, operation and management of the community will be consistent with the Jasper Community Sustainability Plan. Some key actions from the plan are highlighted in this section. Unless otherwise noted, the actions are to be implemented collaboratively by Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper.

- **Environmental Integrity:**
 - Consider the principles of no net negative environmental impact and responsible environmental stewardship in their decision-making processes.
 - Continue to work with local partners to identify and manage contaminated sites within the community.
 - Enhance current stormwater management practices through monitoring and public awareness programs.

- Develop a comprehensive Green Building Policy for public and private buildings.
- Examine the feasibility of a “green” transit system to serve both visitor and resident needs within the town.
- **Economic Sustainability:**
 - Foster the creation of a Jasper Tourism Industry Council with the goal of providing a forum for strategic thinking and improved coordination.
 - Work with partners to expand and diversify the tourism market throughout the year.
 - Preserve the small mountain community quality of visitor experience through the application of development requirements and motif guidelines maintaining traditional architectural scale and character.
 - Develop and implement a strategy to encourage all local businesses to adopt industry-recognized environmental management systems and/or environmental certifications. The Municipality will continue to recognize the environmental stewardship achievements of local businesses through the Environmental Stewardship Awards Program.
- **Social Equity:**
 - Continue to enforce eligible residency requirements.
 - Parks Canada will transfer Parcels GA, GB, GC and FV to the Jasper Community Housing Corporation for construction of perpetually affordable housing.
- **Cultural Vitality:**
 - Explore and/or implement a suite of measures to promote heritage building conservation, such as the establishment of a Cultural Heritage Advisory Board, tax incentives, awards and plaque programs.
 - Continue to support and implement the *Heritage Tourism Strategy (1999)*.
 - Work with Aboriginal groups with historic ties to Jasper on a number of initiatives of mutual interest.
- **Participative Governance:**
 - Review the Agreement for the Establishment of Local Government in the Town of Jasper and, subject to regulatory amendment, devolve portions of land use planning responsibilities to the Municipality.
 - Provide opportunities for youth and community residents to influence decision-making.

6.2.3 Outside the Community of Jasper

6.2.3.1 Current Situation

- The area surrounding the community of Jasper is a primary platform through which visitors interact with and experience the park and its wildlife - approximately 80% of visitors to the park visit the greater Jasper townsite area.
- Lake Edith Cottage area, established in the 1930's as an artist's colony and now managed as a seasonal resort, contains 50 leaseholds.
- A grass airstrip, located east of the community adjacent to the Yellowhead Highway, has been in use for decades. For reasons of aviation safety, in 2008 the Government of Canada reversed an earlier decision to close the Jasper airstrip. The Jasper airstrip will be re-listed in the *National Parks Air Access Regulations*.
- Two major transportation corridors, the Yellowhead Highway and Canadian National Railway, provide easy access to the area. They also create ecological challenges – posing obstacles to wildlife movement, fragmenting terrestrial and aquatic habitats and are sources of wildlife mortality and habituation.
- Wildlife movement through the east side of the Athabasca valley was improved in 2001 with the creation of a wildlife movement corridor through the golf course. The size of the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge leasehold was reduced through negotiation in 2006.

Strengths

- This area includes key attractions and offers the greatest range of facilities, programs, services and activities in the park.
- All of the park's full service campgrounds are located in this area. Other outlying overnight accommodations include bungalow camps, lodges and a hostel.
- Popular day use areas outside the townsite include Pyramid Lake and bench trails, Lakes Annette and Edith and Old Fort Point.
- The trail network supports high quality hiking, mountain biking and horse use opportunities close to the townsite. The Jasper Trails Project demonstrated that, through a community driven consultative program, both ecological values and recreational opportunities could be enhanced simultaneously. The project engaged trail users in reconfiguring the Three Valley Confluence day use trail network to improve visitor experiences and better meet the needs of wildlife and sensitive ecosystems. The result of this process is the community-supported Three Valley Confluence Trail Network Plan, approved in March 2009.
- A host of accessible lakes, rivers and wetlands support a diversity of water-based activities.

- This is the main area where visitors obtain information to plan their stay once they are in the park, either at the Parks Canada visitor centre or from hospitality industry or Parks Canada employees at various locations.
- This is also the primary area where visitors can learn about the park's natural and cultural heritage, through programs offered by Parks Canada or non-profit organizations, guided activities offered by tourism operators, festivals and special events, and self-guided opportunities, such as interpretive trails and exhibits.
- There are two National Historic Sites in the area: Yellowhead Pass and the Parks Canada Information Centre. The area also features the highest concentration of archaeological sites and built heritage in the park.
- Given its location in the montane, the most ecologically productive ecoregion in the park, and at the intersection of three main valleys, the area is important for a variety of wildlife.

Challenges

- Congestion is an issue at some locations during peak season. There are opportunities to redevelop existing facilities to better meet the needs of visitors seeking sightseeing, strolling, picnicking and soft recreation opportunities.
- The Parks Canada visitor centre was not designed for the number of visitors it receives during peak season. Providing accurate and current visitor information is the responsibility of a large number of organizations and individuals.
- Three Valley Confluence is the most developed area of the park. Outlying facilities, transportation and utility corridors and associated human activity (from facility maintenance to recreational pursuits) impact park ecosystems in a number of different ways, including: habitat loss and fragmentation, wildlife displacement, habituation and wildlife-human conflict and the introduction of invasive non-native plant species.
- Elk using the townsite area have higher calf recruitment than those in areas distant from the townsite. This suggests that the elk are successfully using the community of Jasper as a refuge from predators or are benefiting from improved browse. Human-elk conflicts declined following the removal of elk from the townsite a decade ago, but have recently increased. Elk calving and rutting seasons are times when the potential for conflict is particularly acute. High numbers of elk are also impacting soil and vegetation communities.
- The majority of black bear mortalities in the park occur in the Three Valley Confluence, primarily due to rail and road collision.
- The montane ecoregion also harbours grassland communities that are relatively rare in the mountain parks.

- The absence of fire for more than a century, a natural force of renewal and disturbance, has altered the structure and composition of forests and grasslands, contributing to the loss of landscape biodiversity and wildlife habitat, resulting in forests that are more susceptible to forest insect and disease and increasing the threat of high severity, difficult-to-control wildfires, with implications for public safety, property risk and the health of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
- Forest thinning in and around the community and prescribed burning are restoring vegetation communities to a more natural state and reducing the risk of uncontrolled wildfires losses.
- Non-native plants pose a significant threat in this area of the park– 117 species have been confirmed.
- Initiatives to address disturbed sites, contaminated sites, solid waste disposal and wastewater treatment have been implemented since the previous plan was approved and have resulted in improvements, however, more work is required to improve water and soil quality.
- Large disturbed areas with little or no native vegetation are most common in this area of the park. A program to actively restore these sites to improve wildlife habitat and minimize visual impacts was established in 2002.
- Solid waste from facilities throughout the park has traditionally been disposed of at the Waste Transfer Station. Contamination of the landfill needs to be addressed.
- The majority of the park’s contaminated sites are located in the Three Valley Confluence.
- Wastewater from the municipality and many outlying facilities is treated at the municipal wastewater treatment plant. Effluent from the treatment plant, upgraded in 2003, is discharged into the Athabasca river. Stormwater from the community also runs into the river.

6.2.3.2 Key Actions

Enhance the connection of a wide range of visitors to the park through their experience in the Three Valley Confluence.

- Redevelop the Lake Edith and Annette area to improve traffic circulation, address parking congestion during peak periods and update day use facilities. Explore potential improvements at other popular areas, such as Old Fort Point and Pyramid Lake.
- Improve the role of the area as a major hub for provision of visitor information.
 - Work with partners to ensure that current and accurate visitor information is available at all major attractions.
 - Investigate ways and work with partners to improve Parks Canada visitor reception and information within the Jasper townsite.

- Make Three Valley Confluence the primary hub for hosting new events and festivals that meet Parks Canada's objectives to promote awareness of the cultural and natural heritage of the park and connect visitors with the park through learning, enjoyment and participation.
- Collaborate with Aboriginal groups to showcase Aboriginal culture and traditions to the large number of visitors to the area.

Restore the montane ecosystem with a focus on sharing the area with wildlife, improving vegetation health and demonstrating environmental stewardship.

- Manage the elk population in Three Valley Confluence to re-establish more natural predator-prey dynamics in the vicinity of the community, restore impacted vegetation communities and reduce human-elk conflicts.
- Implement the approved Three Valley Confluence Trail Plan:
 - The public will continue to contribute to the long-term sustainability of the trail network through trail stewardship programming and experiential learning opportunities that include trail monitoring, rehabilitation, construction, education and communication.
 - Mountain bikes will be permitted on designated trails. Consider designating trails for commercial horse use. Trail designations are used to reduce user conflicts and support ecological objectives.
- Continue to implement the FireSmart/ForestWise program. Implement prescribed burns as detailed in the *Jasper National Park Fire Management Plan*.
- Implement treatment programs to: prevent the spread of invasive non-native plants into more pristine park areas, control or eliminate the most aggressive species, re-establish healthy native plant communities less susceptible to invasion and prevent further introductions of alien species.
- Ensure that grassland sites are managed in ways that do not degrade them.
- Work with the Municipality of Jasper and other local partners to develop a low impact transit service that links key attractions and walkable routes within Jasper and the surrounding area (e.g. parking lots, campgrounds and day use areas).
- Continue to restore priority disturbed areas.
- Close the landfill at the Waste Transfer Station and take steps to remediate the contaminated site. Take steps to assess and remediate other contaminated sites.
- Continue to treat wastewater from the townsite and outlying facilities to a level that exceeds provincial standards.
- Improve the management of stormwater from the community of Jasper.

Manage development and activities to enhance visitor experiences and maintain ecological integrity.

- The Jasper Airstrip will be relisted with the Canada maintained for emergency and diversionary landings as well as private, recreational aviation. Commercial and/or charter aircraft will continue to be prohibited. The airstrip will be managed as a grass strip with minimal maintenance and facilities.
- Manage the Lake Edith Cottage area as a seasonal resort subdivision.
- Encourage the replacement of Whistlers Hostel by a hostel within the Jasper townsite.

5.2.4 Indicators of Success

- A higher number of visitors feel their connection to the park has improved as a result of participation in a special event or festival.
- Visitors stay for longer in the area.
- Increased number of visitors participating in volunteer initiatives.
- A decreasing trend for wildlife-human conflicts.
- Trail users understand and practise trail etiquette and the number and use of informal trails declines.
- Wastewater effluent standards are met.
- The condition of vegetation improves (e.g. reduced extent of non native weeds, grasslands retention and health, aspen regeneration).
- Visual and ecological impacts are reduced as the footprint of abandoned disturbed areas shrinks and these sites are restored to native plant communities/effective wildlife habitat.
- Community performance indicators (under development).

6.3 Icefields Parkway**6.3.1 Future Best**

Canadians and visitors from around the world who come to the Icefields Parkway in Banff and Jasper national parks find themselves immersed in a dramatic landscape of ice-draped ridges, jagged peaks, turbulent headwater streams, sweeping vistas of forest-carpeted valleys and alpine meadows bright with wildflowers.

Great rivers arise here at the very backbone of the North American continent, born of melting snow and ancient glaciers, and flowing to three oceans.

Timeless pathways along the Bow, Mistaya and North Saskatchewan Rivers guide travelers on a breathtaking journey from valley bottom to two of the highest passes that can be reached by paved road in Canada. In this place, people find some of the wildest and most beautiful landscapes in the world, protected for all time.

The Icefields Parkway is known internationally as an icon of Canada's national park system and of the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site.

6.3.2 Current Situation

- A public participation process that involved Parks Canada, a dedicated group of stakeholders and First Nations representation helped envision the future best of the parkway and the content of this strategy. A detailed strategy was developed with objectives, which is the basis for an action plan. The management plan summarizes key points from this document.
- The Icefields Parkway is one of the best known features of Banff and Jasper National Parks. Visitors who may not be comfortable with wilderness adventure can travel through the heart of the mountains and along the backbone of the continent, viewing alpine meadows, glaciers and icefields and turquoise lakes.
- The Parkway is managed for a leisurely recreational drive, without the heavy commercial traffic of the Trans Canada Highway; it is unfenced, winding and undulating and only two lanes wide with paved shoulders. It is also a connector between Lake Louise and Jasper and other destinations.
- Many viewpoints, short trails and rustic campgrounds encourage slow-paced enjoyment.
- The Icefields Centre and Athabasca Glacier is the most visited node along the parkway and a major attraction of Jasper National Park – one of the few places in North America where visitors can access a glacier close to a road.
- The Parkway provides access to wilder parts of the park for day and overnight hikers and skiers.
- The area is home to a number of sensitive species, including caribou, grizzly bears and mountain goats, and popular for roadside viewing. Caribou mortality caused by vehicle collision is a particular concern – primarily in the Sunwapta Station to Beauty Flats area. Sheep are commonly encountered on Tangle Hill. Near Mt. Kerkeslin, an important mineral lick beside the road is visited seasonally by goats, and can become congested with vehicles and observers.

6.3.3 Key Actions

This section represents a summary of the detailed strategy and action plan developed as part of the public participation process for the Icefields Parkway. Banff and Jasper National Parks will share in implementation of the full strategy and action plan.

- Management of the Parkway will facilitate three type of experiences. Planning for these experiences will focus on the quality of visitor opportunities:

“View from the edge”

- Enhance these opportunities through review and renewal of relevant facilities and infrastructure (e.g. picnic areas or viewpoints)
- Improve wildlife and scenery viewing opportunities and safety at Tangle Falls and the Goat Lick.
- Address the needs and safety of visitors, improve operational efficiencies and reduce environmental impacts by consolidating, clustering redesigning or revitalizing facilities
- Increase the presence of Parks Canada staff at popular sites
- Increase basic awareness and appreciation for the mountain parks and historic sites through interpretive programs/exhibits appropriate to a view from the edge experience

“Step into the wild”

- Provide introductory level self-guided learning and exploration opportunities
- Create and implement a camping strategy that improves visitor opportunities, considers the needs of a wide range of campers, and facilitates a multi-day camping experience along the entire length of the parkway
- Maintain the rustic ambiance and design elements that characterize the Parkway
- Work with Aboriginal groups to determine the potential for a site or sites for ceremonial use along the Parkway

“Rocky Mountain wilderness”

- Work with outlying commercial accommodations and hostels on opportunities for learning that are consistent with the area’s themes (see below)
- Ensure basic summer and winter maintenance, highway signs and trailhead infrastructure contribute to the start of these experiences
- Provide opportunities for a continuous visitor experience that engage interest from pre-trip planning to post-trip memories
 - Create a distinct sense of welcome, anticipation, arrival and departure and the three Parkway entrance
 - Create and consistently use a common look and feel for Parkway facilities and information
 - Link visitor opportunities to the following key themes:
 - Backbone of the Canadian Rockies
 - The Wild Side: Habitats and Wildlife of the Canadian Rockies
 - Glaciers and Flowing Waters

- People and the Land
 - Protected Landscapes
- Work closely with stakeholders to design and implement key actions and monitor success
 - Develop and share best practices for orientation and training programs, education, stewardship, marketing and other activities in collaboration with stakeholders, commercial operators and partners.
 - Identify opportunities to implement strategies with individual organizations (e.g. Interpretive Guides Association)
- Adopt and celebrate stewardship practices and designs that maintain or restore the natural environment.
 - Expand the use of meaningful and effective practices such as alternative energy and rigorous wastewater treatment.
 - Base communication on key ecological objectives (eg: forest health, wildlife connectivity and corridors).
 - Reduce environmental impact when building or modifying infrastructure (e.g. improve highway culverts for fish passage).
 - Reduce risk of caribou mortality cause by vehicle collisions – which have primarily occurred in the Sunwapta Station - Beauty Flats area.
 - Retain the quality of the Parkway as a scenic drive and an important link between Banff and Jasper.
- Provide a highway standard that recognizes the heritage drive experience within the limitations of the existing right-of-way
 - Review the needs of cyclists and develop options to enhance opportunities
 - Create realistic expectation about summer and winter road conditions and emergency communications
 - Give priority to highway design standards that encourage a leisurely drive with frequent stops
- Work with Brewster Transportation and Tours to update strategies for the Icefields Centre area to enhance visitor experiences at the Athabasca Glacier and other locations, improve environmental practices, and update area interpretation.

6.3.4 Indicators of Success

- Visitor numbers increase and include a wide range of Canadians
- An increase in the number of cyclists
- At least 90% of visitors are satisfied and 50% very satisfied with their visit
- New interpretive stories are provided, in a variety of formats, and include information about aboriginal history and about the National Historic Sites
- Online material is provided for those who cannot visit in person
- Wildlife mortality is reduced

6.4 Maligne Valley

6.4.1 Future Best

The Maligne Valley's continuing popularity is a testament to the excellent opportunities it offers to see wildlife and enjoy unspoiled wilderness scenery and pristine waters. Maligne Lake and Spirit Island are enduring and inspiring symbols recognised all over the world as the best of Canada. The valley attracts a wide range of visitors, from families to new Canadians, from independent travelers to organized groups, from photographers to anglers.

All visitors understand the importance of the Maligne Valley as home and refuge for sensitive species including grizzly bears, caribou, and harlequin ducks, and a place of unique geological features that contributed to the park's designation as a World Heritage Site in 1984. These include Medicine Lake, Maligne Canyon, and one of the largest karst systems in North America. Gentle explorers are attracted to three main activity nodes: the gateway to the Valley at Maligne Canyon, Medicine Lake, and Maligne Lake. For wilderness-seekers, the area is a gateway to breathtaking hiking in alpine areas like the Opal Hills and Bald Hills, and overnight boat trips down the Maligne Lake. Many visitors say winter is the best time to experience Maligne Canyon, for a far more intimate experience. Winter is a magical and quieter time in the valley, and activities are carefully integrated to support caribou recovery initiatives. All visitors to the Maligne valley take home vivid memories of a place well cared for, that invites exploration and rediscovery in the spirit of Simon Beaver, Mary Schaffer, Fred Brewster and Curly Phillips.

6.4.2 Current Situation

Strengths

- Maligne Canyon is the gateway to the valley and popular summer and winter. Recent upgrades of Parks Canada's trails and foot bridges have improved visitor appeal and safety. The majority of

visitors access the canyon from the parking lot at First Bridge. Smaller, less-developed parking areas at Fifth and Sixth Bridges also provide access to the canyon.

- Maligne Lake is an internationally recognised icon of the Canadian Rockies, popular with both commercial and independent visitors. The developed node at the Lake offers a hub of day-use facilities and services, including short hikes, boat tours, food services, canoe and kayak rentals, easy, moderate, and challenging trails, picnic sites, angling and a boat launch.
- The valley offers multiple access points for day hikes and overnight trips, including unparalleled access to the alpine. The Skyline trail and Maligne Lake boat accessible campgrounds are the most popular overnight backcountry destinations in park. Introductory wilderness experiences are available along the Jacques Lake trail.
- The Maligne Canyon Hostel provides overnight visitor accommodation in keeping with the area's nature and character.
- The valley is popular for winter recreation – ice walks in Maligne Canyon, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ski touring, and winter camping. To support caribou recovery initiatives, ski track-setting is not offered at Maligne Lake.
- Maligne Lake is the main destination for lake angling in the park. Medicine Lake offers a unique fly-fishing opportunity on a lake where there are no boats.
- The Valley is home to important and sensitive wildlife species including grizzly bears, caribou, and harlequin ducks.
- The Maligne Lake outlet is an Environmentally Sensitive Site, in recognition of its importance to harlequin ducks.
- The Medicine Lake delta is an important area for wildlife and offers excellent opportunities to view bears, sheep, caribou, harlequin ducks and eagles.

Challenges

- Interpretive media, trailheads, picnic areas, and other infrastructure in the valley need to be modernized.
- Roadside wildlife jams are common as visitors encounter sheep, moose or black bears.
- Climate and remote location provide challenges to managing wastewater and energy. Excellent opportunities exist to demonstrate leadership in environmental management and showcase best practices and initiative.

6.4.3 Key Actions

Improve opportunities for a wide range of visitors to enjoy the area.

- Focus infrastructure renewal at three visitor nodes: Maligne Canyon, Medicine Lake and Maligne Lake. Ensure that each node provides opportunities for a view into the wilderness from the edge of the pavement, and access to more in-depth wilderness experiences.
- Develop an integrated approach to communication and interpretation at key visitor areas in the valley.
 - Focus learning opportunities on the unique characteristics of the valley: geology/karst system, human history, and sensitive species (e.g. caribou, harlequin ducks, grizzly bears).
 - Develop a storyline for interpretive media to create continuity as visitors travel up the valley;

Continue to sustain the area's high conservation values.

- Work with partners to enhance opportunities for visitors to connect with the area while maintaining or improving space and security for wildlife:
 - Maintain or improve areas where motorists can safely pull off the road to view wildlife.
 - Explore ways to enhance winter recreation opportunities and achieve actions to support caribou recovery, in consultation with stakeholders.
 - Explore ways to improve grizzly bear habitat security in the Upper Maligne Valley.
 - Ensure that the Medicine Lake delta is managed to protect wildlife values.
- Implement the Jasper National Park Guidelines for River Use Management. Consider alternative proposals for use of the mid-Maligne River (currently closed to in-stream use) that are scientifically defensible based on the well-documented aspects of harlequin duck ecology that led to the original precautionary closure, and enjoy broad-based public support. In the interim, continue to implement the closure to protect Harlequin ducks before and during the breeding season (i.e. close the mid-Maligne River to all in-stream use, close the Maligne Lake outlet to all use during May and June).
- Prohibit new overnight commercial visitor accommodation in the Maligne Valley.
- Permit staff housing for Maligne Lake Tours at the existing maintenance compound and limited staff accommodation in the day-lodge.
- Explore energy conservation and green energy supply alternatives that support the area's ecological and cultural values.

6.4.4 Indicators of Success

- Visitors to the area report increased satisfaction
- Visitors are aware of the area's special geological features and sensitive species
- Caribou population is stable / increasing
- Improved habitat security for grizzly bears

6.5 Lower Athabasca

6.5.1 Future Best

The Grand Entry Hall...

From the earliest times, the familiar landmarks of Jasper Lake and Roche Miette have welcomed travellers entering or leaving the mountains along the Athabasca River. Enchanting vistas in all directions have changed little since 19th century artists and observers recorded their impressions at Jasper House during the heyday of the fur trade. The valley here is open and inviting, dotted with hillside meadows and sparkling wetlands. The sand dune complex of Jasper Lake is one of a kind in the mountain national parks. Visitors entering the east gate into this setting feel a strong sense of arrival to a special place, and are gratified to find their pre-trip expectations well met.

Paralleling the river, the gentle curves and long straight stretches of Highway 16 evoke its development along the original Grand Trunk rail grade, showcasing the grand views enjoyed by early train passengers. Stopping at key nodes is encouraged, where stories are brought to life of Aboriginal people, adventurers and families interacting with this landscape. Seen from the highway's edge, bighorn sheep frequent the same locations they have used since the passing of the ice age. Bull elk with huge antlers graze roadside meadows in the fall, and wolf tracks throughout the valley confirm this is a healthy and wild place.

Modern transportation corridors and visitor infrastructure are gentle on the land: roadside pull-offs and parking areas are well defined, wildlife mortalities are minimized, and active restoration of highway, rail and pipeline corridors has healed scars and reconnected streams and wetlands and environmentally based management practices minimize future ecological impacts. Valley forests and meadows are maintained through a combination of managed wildfire and prescribed fires.

The Pocahontas day use area is a place for travelers to stop and orient themselves to the park, and to enjoy the comfort and hospitality of bungalow cabins. A side trip to the Fiddle Valley rewards casual sight-seekers, campers, cabin guests and ambitious hikers alike - with the further enticement of a soak in the warmest hot springs in the Canadian Rockies, a leading example of water conservation and aquatic stewardship.

On the quieter side of the valley, a rustic gravel road takes visitors on a tour from the Snaring River to the Moberly Homestead. This route retraces some of the ancient pathways linking the Athabasca valley with other great rivers. It is a place of importance to Aboriginal people with ties to Jasper House and the Métis homesteads, and is an important area for cultural reconnection.

For all visitors, the Lower Athabasca Valley is a place of welcome and of gentle exploration.

6.5.2 Highway 16 Corridor

6.5.2.1 Current Situation

Strengths

- Grand views of rocky peaks, grassy slopes and shallow lakes greet motorists as they pass into the park. The contrast with the scenery east of the park gate confirms that they are in the park; as do frequent wildlife sightings as they head west.
- The remnants of Jasper House, designated a National Historic Site for its role in the fur trade, are located on the north shore of the Athabasca River. The site is zoned Special Preservation for its unique cultural features. A new interpretive trail will allow visitors to view the site from the south bank of the Athabasca River following a short hike. Jasper House was an important meeting place for many Aboriginal groups.
- The Athabasca River is a key feature of this area; it supports a variety of non-commercial water-based recreational opportunities.
- Wetlands of the Athabasca floodplain near Pocahontas (the Pocahontas ponds) are zoned an Environmentally Sensitive Site in recognition of the importance this network of small ponds and stream channels has for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

Challenges

- Park welcome and orientation, traffic flow, and day use nodes need updating and improving. Waiting times at the gate for visitors and through traffic are chronic concerns. Traffic congestion is common at areas such as Disaster Point, where roadside wildlife entices motorists to stop.
- Pull-offs along Highway 16 are frequently unmarked, unpaved or informal, and create uncertainty about whether it is appropriate to stop and what there is to do.
- Wildlife mortality along the highway and railway is an issue; reduced speed zones have improved the situation.
- Engineered features are prominent on both sides of the valley and have caused substantial long-term disruption to aquatic connectivity.

- Scars of past pipeline, railway, highway and utility construction are apparent throughout this area. Restoration is in progress at some locations and required in others; facility maintenance is an ongoing source of soil and vegetation disturbance. Infestations of non-native plants are frequent and persistent, with new species and invasions being recorded annually.
- The Pocahontas Mine Superintendent’s house is a deteriorating cultural resource with potential to be utilized. The mine site area and interpretive trail is underutilized.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that use of Jasper Lake is increasing, although no formal facilities exist. The Jasper Lake sand dunes are a sensitive area. The vegetation growing on the dunes and the dunes themselves are easily damaged by foot traffic.

6.5.2.2 Key Actions

- Strengthen the sense of arrival to the park at the East Gate. Redevelop the gate to improve traffic flow for park visitors and through-travellers and reduce or eliminate entry-waiting times by improving the collection of user fees off-site through partnerships and technology.
- Explore potential locations and partnerships for welcoming and orientation functions at the east end of the park (e.g. Pocahontas area, east of the park gate).
- Improve roadside pull-offs. Cluster opportunities where possible to reduce maintenance costs. Retain and enhance important stopping and learning opportunities.
- Develop a strategy to facilitate visitor access to and learning about the area, while protecting sensitive natural features, minimizing impacts on wildlife and improving public safety.
- Update area presentation to integrate the stories of Aboriginal people, early explorers, railroad development, the mining era, and natural special features like the Pocahontas Ponds and the Miette Hot Springs.
- Ensure that major highway improvement projects incorporate techniques to reduce wildlife mortality and improve aquatic connectivity.
- In partnership with others, continue to actively restore priority sites, as closely as possible, to native plant communities. Continue to implement strategies for the prevention, control or elimination of invasive non-native plant species, in concert with other stakeholders.

6.5.3 Fiddle Valley

6.5.3.1 Current Situation

Strengths

- The Fiddle Valley offers a campground favoured by regional visitors, and a scenic side-trip up a valley that showcases the geology of the front ranges.

- There are two commercial visitor accommodations in the valley.
- Miette Hot Springs, a seasonal summer operation, is a unique attraction and the main destination for the majority of visitors to the valley. Steady improvements have been made to the operations (i.e. water supply and wastewater treatment) and visitor offer at the Hot Springs.

Challenges

- Day use areas and viewpoints need to be modernized.
- The long-term direction for visitor experience at the Miette Hot Springs needs to be better defined; the wastewater treatment plant needs to be replaced.
- Wildlife habituation at Miette Hot Springs day use area is a chronic concern (eg. big horn sheep, ground squirrels, etc.)

6.5.3.2 Key Actions

- Improve awareness of the opportunities available in Fiddle Valley; provide more information about the area in pre-trip planning material and as part of improved orientation in the east end of the park.
- Modernize viewpoints, self-guided trails and day use areas to improve the opportunities for visitors staying close to the road.
- Prepare a site strategy for Miette Hot Springs to coordinate visitor use and development of the hot springs area. As part of the strategy, examine ways to improve the sense of arrival at the Hot Springs and explore the feasibility of increasing the length of the Miette Hot Springs operating season.
- Replace the wastewater treatment plant at the Hot Springs with a new plant;
- Explore partnering opportunities with commercial operators and concessionaires in the valley (e.g. packages, joint ventures).
- Reduce wildlife habituation at Miette Hotsprings

6.5.4 Snaring-Snake Indian Corridor

6.5.4.1 Current Situation

Strengths

- The north side of the valley, the Snaring–Snake Indian corridor is more remote and “wild”, despite its road, railroad and pipeline. Human use is low to moderate, and maintaining ecological values is a high priority. Wildlife are not habituated, and although elk are more abundant now than in historic times, monitoring indicates a healthy level of predation.

- The Moberly Homestead is an important site. A self-guided trail takes visitors to two buildings and a family gravesite. Panels recount the history of the Métis families who lived in the area during the turn of the century.

Challenges

- Traffic volumes through to the Snake Indian River are low, due in part to the rough road, stream ford, and cliff-side exposure at two bedrock outcrops.

6.5.4.2 Key Actions

- Raise the profile of the Moberly homestead and present the stories of the Métis families that homesteaded in the area at the Ewan Moberly site and off-site – in cooperation with family descendents and in ways respectful of their interests.
- Encourage guided group access to enhance story telling, with particular emphasis on training and delivery of interpretation by Aboriginal guides.
- Develop a print or electronic eco/cultural tour for travellers to experience the area. Use off-site media to transmit the stories of the place to non-users.
- Explore options for the visitor experience past the Snaring Station:
 - Consider creating a new trail experience for hikers, horses and bicycles, discontinuing motorised visitor traffic beyond the existing gate at Snaring Station. Examine the potential for one or several trailside campsites.
 - Or, retain the rustic nature of the Snaring-Snake Indian road beyond the Moberly site for motorists and other travellers to enjoy the varied scenery. Provide new learning opportunities.

6.5.5 Indicators of Success

- Visitors travelling through the East Gate recognize they are entering a mountain national park and UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Visitors to Fiddle Valley spend more time exploring the valley.
- Visitors continue to be very satisfied with their experience at Miette Hot Springs.
- Visual and ecological impacts are reduced as the footprint of abandoned disturbed areas shrinks and these sites are restored to native plant communities/effective wildlife habitat.
- The impact of invasive non-native plant species is reduced through effective integrated pest management strategies.
- Improved aquatic connectivity.
- Wildlife mortality along Highway 16 is reduced.

6.6 Backcountry

6.6.1 Future Best

Wild, beautiful, untouched: the backcountry visitor's physical efforts are rewarded with stunning vistas and the knowledge that they are in an area of the park that is less travelled and more dynamic. Whether travelling on foot, by bicycle or horse, backcountry visitors can imagine what it was like to be an Aboriginal person, fur trader, outfitter, tourist or district warden in days gone by. Even before they set foot on the trail, they have had a positive experience – planning their trip using engaging and current materials provided by Parks Canada and, for those embarking on an overnight trip, obtaining reservations with ease.

Healthy herds of woodland caribou occupy their historic ranges and continue their age-old patterns of life; grizzly bears have an abundance of secure, high quality habitat. Outside of the most popular backcountry trails, wildland areas continue to receive low visitation. Wolverine, wolves, bighorn sheep, elk and moose, move easily across the landscape, both within the park and outside its borders. Natural processes, such as fire, flooding and avalanches, operate unhindered.

Independent visitors experience a sense of freedom, contrast and challenge. They are self-reliant - prepared to experience the elements and practice wilderness travel skills. Some are seeking and find premier opportunities to engage in activities that require a specialized set of skills or equipment, such as mountaineering. Along with other experienced backcountry travellers, they enjoy the area in small numbers. They are aware of their impacts on wildlife, vegetation and other resources and “leave nothing but footprints”.

Commercial operators and non-profit groups support these adventures by providing guided opportunities and roofed accommodations in appropriate locations. All backcountry facilities and services respect the character of the place through rustic architecture and state of the art low-impact environmental stewardship practices.

Popular day-use trails give larger numbers of visitors a taste of the big, wild country beyond. Visitors to the more accessible parts of the national park have their imaginations stirred by the proximity of the wilder places. The written word and images convey a sense of these places through a variety of media to Canadians across the country.

6.6.2 Current Situation

Strengths

- There are more than 1,200 kilometres of trails, 100 backcountry campsites and countless possibilities for wilderness experiences in the park.
- Jasper National Park is unique among the mountain parks for the number of long distance, multi day and wildland trail opportunities and the number of drainages with no maintained trails. Much of the backcountry is remote, with trails of varying standards, and well suited to overnight

backcountry trips on foot, horse, and skis or snowshoes. Cycling is permitted on trails designated for bike use.

- Several protected provincial areas abut this area, particularly on the west and north (e.g. Mount Robson Provincial Park, Wilmore Wilderness Area).
- Day trails such as Wilcox Pass, Opal Hills, Geraldine Lakes and Sulphur Skyline introduce visitors to the area.
- Premier mountaineering and glacier travel opportunities can be found along the Continental Divide and at the Columbia Icefields.
- The majority of visitors to the backcountry are self-reliant and do not depend on mechanized equipment, group tours or commercial guides. Guided group travel (e.g. horse outfitters and many hiking/interpretive guides) introduces less experienced travellers or those with specialized interests (e.g. history buffs, climbers) to the wilderness and its stories.
- There are many colourful stories waiting to be told, from traditional use of the lands by aboriginal people, early European visitors to the area and district wardens.
- Overnight trips can be characterized based on the level of service provided to visitors in an area, its popularity (i.e. visitation levels) and its remoteness from major park roads and trailheads.
 - **Iconic and Introductory: Skyline, Maligne Lake, Tonquin Valley, Brazeau, Jacques Lake, Saturday Night Loop**
 - This category includes the most popular backcountry destinations in the park for overnight trips. Places like the Skyline, Tonquin Valley and Brazeau Trail System offer visitors spectacular alpine scenery, a range of facilities and infrastructure and options for relatively short overnight outings (two to three nights). The two backcountry campgrounds on Maligne Lake are the second most frequented backcountry campgrounds in the park and offer a unique experience – they are only accessible by boat.
 - Although they do not enjoy the international reputation of the other trails in this category, Jacques Lake and Saturday Night Lake Loop are important trails because of the opportunities they provide to novice backcountry visitors to investigate Parks Canada’s backcountry offer and practice their skills in areas that are not too distant from civilization.
 - Visitors to Iconic and Introductory areas find trails that receive regular maintenance, signs at every trail junction, basic campgrounds with picnic tables, defined tent pads, bear poles and outhouses. Detailed trip planning and orientation information is available on-line, through the Parks Canada Visitor Centre and at trailhead kiosks. Backcountry lodges in the Tonquin Valley and on the Skyline present visitors with options for a catered

experience. For self-catering visitors, there is an Alpine Club of Canada hut in the Tonquin Valley. A non-profit cabin operates in the winter along the Skyline Trail.

- **Adventure: North Boundary, South Boundary, Maligne Pass, Athabasca Pass, Fryatt Valley, Fortress Lake and Fiddle River**
 - These trips require a greater commitment, in terms of time, fitness and preparation. Trips typically last from several days (e.g. Fryatt Valley, Fortress Lake) to a week or longer (e.g. North and South Boundary). Some areas, such as the Fiddle River, South Boundary and Athabasca Pass trails receive very low numbers of overnight visitors. Athabasca Pass is a National Historic Site.
 - In these areas, visitors find trails that receive less frequent maintenance, but visitors can expect signs to facilitate way-finding, bridges across most rivers, and designated campgrounds with bear poles and outhouses. Parks Canada provides information on these trips on-line, through the visitor centre and at trailhead kiosks.
 - Three Alpine Club of Canada huts provide overnight visitor accommodation for visitors looking for alpine-oriented experiences. Although there are no formal trails to the Mount Alberta and Colin huts, they provide roofed shelter that facilitates specialized recreational pursuits.
- **Wildland:**
 - Wildland trips require a high degree of self-reliance. Prior backcountry experience is recommended. The majority of wildland areas do not have any facilities or infrastructure to support backcountry exploration. Where there are trails, they receive very low levels of maintenance. Likewise, infrastructure and maintenance of designated campgrounds is limited (e.g. no bear poles). Random camping is permitted. Parks Canada offers information on wildland opportunities through the Parks Canada Visitor Centre.

Challenges

- The extensive network of trails and supporting facilities requires Parks Canada to establish priorities for maintenance and recapitalization.
- Natural hazards make public safety a key consideration. Public safety is a shared responsibility. Backcountry visitors are responsible for their own decisions and safety; Parks Canada provides information that assists them in identifying risks and responds to public safety emergencies.
- On the east boundary of the area, a growing network of roads created by the mining, forestry and oil and gas sectors is supporting increased motorised recreational use and hunting pressure. There are several access points from provincial lands that lead into backcountry areas that are otherwise several days travel from the park side. In other boundary areas, new tourism and resource-related developments may erode wilderness values.

- At some backcountry nodes, sense of arrival to the park and welcoming/orientation signage is weak – such as the North Boundary trailheads at Rock Lake (Alberta) and Berg Lake (British Columbia).
- Large areas of the backcountry provide habitat for sensitive species and are critical for ensuring that the life requirements of wide-ranging wildlife are met. Important habitat for woodland caribou is located throughout the area. Measures, such as restrictions on dogs, have been implemented in specific locations in support of caribou conservation efforts, however the long-term trend is continued decline.
- The majority of grizzly bear habitat in the park is secure, however there are some areas where improvement is required. Local area closures to avoid bear-human conflict occur seasonally in some areas (e.g. Opal Hills).
- An absence of fire from the landscape over the last century has led to changes in the structure and distribution of vegetation communities and consequently, wildlife habitat.
- Measures are being implemented in the Tonquin Valley to reduce horse-hiker conflicts and improve ecological integrity.

6.6.3 Key Actions

Evaluate and update the backcountry offer to provide a range of opportunities that respond to changing visitor needs and are sensitive to the wilderness character of this area.

- Use social science research to better understand visitor needs and expectations and monitor backcountry visitation trends.
- Develop a master trail plan for the park to establish priorities and achieve sustainability.
- Focus investments in Iconic and Introductory areas (e.g. Skyline Trail, Tonquin, Brazeau Loop, Maligne Lake).
- Review the level of service in Adventure areas. Consider reclassifying trails that receive little use to Wildland.
- Improve trailhead orientation signage and sense of arrival.
- Explore opportunities to improve the backcountry offer for novice backcountry visitors, families and other priority groups. Explore options for fixed roof amenities (e.g. cook shelter) or temporary structures (e.g. moving camps) operated by Parks Canada or a third party. Concentrate new opportunities in Iconic and Introductory areas.
- Review management of licenses issued for commercially guided activities (e.g. horse use, hiking, mountaineering, angling).

- Work with partners to promote some of Jasper National Park’s signature backcountry hikes as one of a suite of wilderness experiences in the mountain parks – highlight opportunities that are available in Jasper that are not available elsewhere.
- Maintain the wilderness character of the backcountry by:
 - Maintaining the overnight capacity of commercial backcountry facilities at current levels:
 - No net increase in the commercial backcountry lodge capacity for overnight visitors in the Tonquin Valley (50 people).
 - Maintain the overnight capacity of the Shovel Pass Backcountry Lodge at 19 people.
 - Prohibit new huts or shelters above treeline. Minor expansion of existing alpine huts may be allowed where it improves ecological integrity, the visitor experience and learning opportunities. Maintain the overnight capacity of the Wates-Gibson hut at 30 people. Explore, with partners, the feasibility of a hut to hut experience.
 - Continue to prohibit the use of helicopters and over-snow vehicles to transport visitors and guest duffle to backcountry huts and lodges. Allow helicopters and over-snow vehicles to service and maintain these facilities.

Continue to sustain the area’s high conservation values and recognize their role within the regional ecosystem.

- Work with adjacent land managers to achieve common management objectives. Participate in planning processes concerning new access or developments adjacent to the park boundary, to maintain park visitor wilderness experience and maintain or improve wildlife habitat and regional connectivity for wildlife. Monitor regional land use development and its effects on species that range outside the park.
- Explore ways to enhance recreation opportunities, particularly in winter, and achieve actions to support caribou recovery, in consultation with stakeholders.
 - Maintain grizzly bear habitat security; explore ways to improve grizzly bear habitat security in the Upper Maligne Valley, Lower Athabasca, Portal-Astoria, Middle Athabasca, North Brazeau, Poboktan and Upper Sunwapta Landscape Management Units.
 - Prohibit development of designated trails in Moat Pass, Tonquin Pass, Vista Pass, and Meadow Creek, in recognition of their role as critical movement corridors for grizzly bears.
 - Minimize the displacement of bears from prime food sources by humans and improve public safety through techniques such as seasonal closures and trail/facility reconfigurations.

- Update horse management tools for multi-day horse trips in order to protect soil and vegetation resources and improve visitor experience. Apply seasonal limitations where required to prevent trail damage.
- Restrict horses from sensitive areas to protect sensitive vegetation and prevent conflicts with other trail users. Horses will not be allowed on park trails at: Wilcox Pass, Fryatt Valley, Geraldine Lakes, Jonas Pass, the Skyline Trail from Big Shovel Pass to Maligne Lake, the lower part of the Watchtower Trail, Eremite Valley, and the Sulphur Skyline Trail.
- Designate mountain bikes to designated trails to reduce disturbance to sensitive wildlife and prevent conflicts with other trail users. In backcountry, mountain bikes will be permitted on designated trails (eg. the Overlander Trail, Fortress Lake Trail, Summit Lakes Trail, Jacques Lake, Geraldine Lookout, Fryatt Trail, Celestine Road-Snake Indian Falls, Palisades Lookout, Pyramid Fire Road, Whirlpool Fire Road and Signal Mountain Fire Road).
- Continue to work with commercial operators in the Tonquin Valley to reduce the impacts of horse use on the area's vegetation, trails and visitor experience.
- Implement the *Jasper National Park Fire Management Plan*. Use prescribed burning and randomly ignited fires to restore or maintain fire regimes.
- Establish guidelines for cave access and develop a permit system to manage caves where important resource or public safety concerns exist.

Increase awareness and understanding of the importance of the area's unique ecosystems and human history.

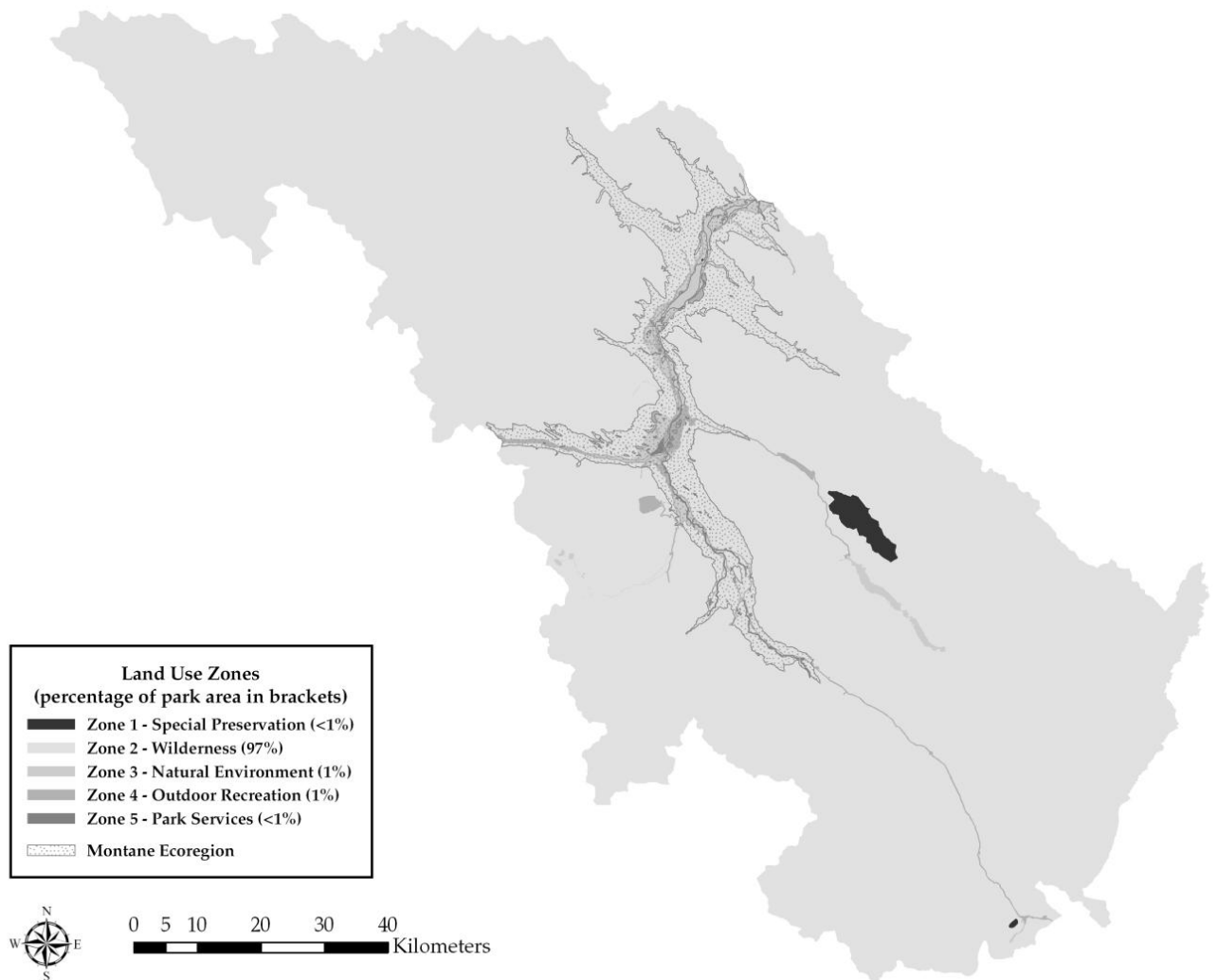
- Develop communications products that inform visitors of practices they can adopt to minimize the impacts of their presence in the backcountry on sensitive species, such as woodland caribou and grizzly.
- Communicate the area's special features and human history to virtual visitors through the web-site or other new media.
- Work with guides and other commercial operators to improve delivery of information about the special features and human history of the area to their clients.

6.6.4 Indicators of Success

- Improvement of ecological condition and visitor satisfaction for hikers and horse users in the Tonquin Valley
- Number of human-bear conflicts in backcountry
- Backcountry visitor satisfaction

7. Zoning and Wilderness Area Declaration

Land use in Jasper National Park is defined by two sets of criteria: park zoning and Wilderness Area Declaration. Both are tools used to ensure resources are protected and offer a range of visitor opportunities.



7.1 National Park Zoning System

The zoning system classifies areas according to their need for protection. The suitability of areas for visitor activities is also a consideration in zoning decisions. The system's five categories are described in *Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies*.

Zone I - Special Preservation (less than 1% of the park)

Zone 1 lands deserve special preservation because they contain or support unique, threatened or endangered natural or cultural features, or are among the best examples of the features that represent

a natural region. Preservation is the key consideration. Motorized access and circulation is not permitted. This plan identifies four Zone I areas that were also included in the 1988 and 2000 park management plans.

Ancient Forest

The oldest living specimens of Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) in the Canadian Rockies, and possibly North America, have been identified at a subalpine site approximately one kilometre west of the Columbia Icefield Centre. The site is near the upper limit of tree growth and is flanked by moraine and the outwash of the Sunwapta River. The trees range in age from approximately 703 to 763 years. These trees are an excellent example of climax succession. The park will not encourage access to the area and will interpret resources off-site.

Surprise Valley (Maligne karst system)

The Surprise Valley is part of the Maligne karst system. The valley, located above the Maligne River, is drained entirely underground through limestone of the Upper Devonian Palliser Formation. It is associated with one of the largest underground river systems in North America. The valley contains deep sinkholes in glacier drift, sink lakes, and some of the finest examples of rillenkarren in North America. The Surprise Valley is designated as a Zone I area because of these significant surface karst features. No new access will be provided to the area. The remainder of the Maligne karst system can accommodate higher levels of controlled visitor activity and will be managed under Zones II, III, and IV.

Devona Cave Archaeological Site

The Devona Cave contains pictographs and other significant material that are important to understanding prehistoric activity and trade in this area. The area is not identified on the zoning map due to its sensitivity and access to the cave will be strictly controlled.

Jasper House

Jasper House has been designated as a national historic site because of the significant role it played in the fur trade. Jasper House is rich in architectural features, artefacts, and faunal remains. Archaeological remains are intact and are very important in understanding the history of the site. Management guidelines for the Jasper House and Devona Cave sites will be developed through the park's cultural resource management program.

Zone II - Wilderness (97% of the park)

Zone II contains extensive areas that are good representations of a natural region and are conserved in a wilderness state. The perpetuation of ecosystems with minimal human interference is the key consideration. Zone II areas offer opportunities for visitors to experience, first hand, the park's ecosystems and require few, if any, rudimentary services and facilities. In much of Zone II, visitors have the opportunity to experience remoteness and solitude. Motorized access is not permitted. Much of this land consists of steep mountain slopes, glaciers and lakes. Zone II areas cannot support high levels

of visitor use. Facilities are restricted to trails, backcountry campgrounds, alpine huts, trail shelters and warden patrol cabins. Sections of the park will continue to have no facilities.

Zone III - Natural Environment (1% of the park)

In Zone III areas, visitors experience the park's natural and cultural heritage through outdoor recreational activities that require minimal services and facilities of a rustic nature. Zone III applies to areas where visitor use requires facilities that exceed the acceptable standards for Zone II. No motorized access is permitted, except for snowmobiles used to set tracks and service backcountry facilities and off-season servicing by helicopters. Access routes and land associated with backcountry commercial lodges are in Zone III.

Zone IV - Outdoor Recreation (less than 1% of the park)

Zone IV accommodates a broad range of opportunities for understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the park's heritage. Direct access by motorized vehicles is permitted. In Jasper National Park of Canada, Zone IV includes frontcountry facilities and the rights-of-way along park roads and supporting... such as gravel pits. Zone IV nodes occur at Pocahontas, Miette Hotsprings, Snaring Campground and overflow, the Pyramid Bench, Athabasca Falls, Sunwapta Falls, Maligne Canyon, the Maligne Lake day-use area, Jasper Park Lodge, the Columbia Icefield Area and Marmot Basin ski area.

Zone V - Park Services (Community of Jasper—less than 1% of the park)

The community of Jasper is the only Zone V area in the park. The Jasper Community Sustainability Plan will guide land use decisions in this area.

7.2 Declared Wilderness Areas

Large tracts of protected wilderness are becoming a scarce and valuable resource. From an ecological perspective, their importance lies in their ability to support natural processes and to serve as benchmarks. They are critical for animal species with large home ranges and for migrating wildlife.

The *National Parks Act* provides for the designation, by regulation, of wilderness areas of the park. A high level of ecological integrity is synonymous with wilderness. The intent of the wilderness declaration is to provide the public with a high degree of assurance that development and use inconsistent with wilderness character will not occur. Only activities for which the *Act* gives the Minister the power to authorize will be permitted (e.g. activities for purposes of park administration, the provision of basic user facilities) in declared wilderness areas.

In general, declared wilderness area boundaries are meant to be consistent with Zone II boundaries. In addition, Zone I areas may also be included in declared wilderness areas. Administrative Map Plans were prepared in 2000 depicting the boundaries of the Declared Wilderness Areas for Jasper National Park. These boundaries were generally consistent with, but did not always correspond exactly to, the existing Zone II areas of the park. The boundaries for Zone II identified in the 2000 management plan have been adjusted in several locations, to more closely match the Declared Wilderness Area

boundaries. Two of Jasper's Zone I sites, the Ancient Forest and Surprise Valley, are located within Declared Wilderness.

From time to time, it may be desirable to amend Declared Wilderness Area boundaries to make possible new facilities or infrastructure that benefit the park environment and visitor experience. An amendment to the Declared Wilderness boundaries may be introduced to provide for:

- Lease and licenses of occupation adjustments boundaries for Marmot Basin ski area
- Future gravel extraction adjacent to Highways 16 and 93
- On an exceptional basis, limited future development of new facilities, renewable energy and communications towers.

7.3 Environmentally Sensitive Sites

This designation applies to areas with significant and sensitive features that require special protection, but do not fit the zoning designations described above.

Edith Cavell Meadows

The upper subalpine and alpine meadows near Mount Edith Cavell contain many significant plant species. With one exception, all these species are located elsewhere in the park. However, the existence of such an array of unusual plants indicates environmental circumstances not found elsewhere in the four mountain parks. The meadows are also an important caribou calving and rutting area.

Pocahontas Ponds

The wetlands of the Athabasca floodplain near Pocahontas are known locally as the Pocahontas Ponds. This area of small ponds and active and dead stream channels is very important to wildlife. The area provides critical winter range for elk and moose and is also important to small mammals. Carnivores are attracted by these prey species. Numerous bird species occur in high densities, many of which are not found elsewhere in the parks. Raptors such as osprey and bald eagle nest here. The area also provides habitat for the river otter, a species that is rare in the park.

Any major construction in the area (e.g., roads) will change sedimentation and erosional patterns. Care must be taken that future development and use do not have a negative impact on the area's special resources.

Maligne Lake Outlet

The Maligne Lake outlet is an important area for harlequin ducks particularly during the pre-nesting period. Harlequin ducks require special management due to their sensitivity to human-caused disturbance, narrow ecological requirements and low reproductive potential. The outlet is part of the

mid-Maligne River, a movement corridor between Maligne and Medicine lakes for harlequin duck broods.

7.4 The Montane Ecoregion

Covering only about seven per cent of the park, the montane ecoregion is critical for wildlife. Warmer, drier winters and a relatively light snowpack offer some relief from harsh winter conditions at higher elevations.

These lower elevation areas on the lower slopes and bottoms of large valleys are important wildlife corridors especially during the fall, winter and spring. This area is, however, also popular with visitors and most of the park's development is centred in the montane—the community of Jasper, the Yellowhead Trans-Canada Highway, the CN railway and most OCAs and park facilities.

Because of the historical extent of development, it is not possible to put the montane ecoregion within a single zone for protection or visitor experience purposes. The montane area is shown on the zoning map (Map 2) to draw attention to the limited amount of montane land that remains undeveloped, and to ensure decisions take into account the limited nature of this important ecoregion.

Parks Canada will continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining the integrity and critical ecological role of the montane. Future work will focus on encouraging and supporting visitor opportunities in the montane in a manner that minimizes impacts on ecosystem components, in particular sensitive wildlife.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

Parks Canada reports on the condition of heritage protection, visitor experience and public appreciation and understanding of Jasper National park through the State of the Park Report (SOPR). The process for state of the park reporting is relatively new and evolving. Monitoring programs are being developed for each key area of the mandate. The monitoring program for ecological integrity is more advanced than other monitoring programs. Monitoring programs for cultural resources, visitor experience and public appreciation are under development and will be guided by the establishment of national performance expectations and protocols.

For each key area of the mandate, indicators are identified that provide a broad representation of key factors influencing the park. Each indicator is an index supported by several measures. Some of these measures are monitored across the mountain parks, using common protocols; others are monitored only in Jasper National Park. Some of the measures are still under development and may not appear in the next SOPR, due in 2013. The indicators and measures that are likely to form the basis for the 2013 SOPR are contained in Annex 1.

Measures are rated by comparing the actual state of the measure with its desired state, or target. For some measures, targets are based on existing research or the previous management plan. In other cases, targets have been established by agencies other than Parks Canada or through work with stakeholders. In some cases, adequate information is not yet available to set a specific target.

Parks Canada also conducts monitoring to measure the success of management actions by determining if planned actions achieve the intended results. This type of monitoring is termed management effectiveness monitoring. The specific measures to be tracked during the initial 5 years of this management plan include:

To be completed

9. Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment

To be completed when draft plan finalized.

10. Summary of Priority Actions

Under development.

Related Key Strategy / Area Concept	First 5 Years Actions
Key Strategy	
Fostering Open Management and Innovation	
Welcome to Mountains of Opportunity	
Celebrating History, Culture and the World Heritage Site	
Bringing the Mountains to People Where They Live	
Managing Growth and Development	
Ensuring Healthy Ecosystems	
Strengthening Aboriginal Relationships	
Area Concept	
Edith Cavell & Highway 93A	
Icefields Parkway	
Three Valley Confluence	
Maligne Valley	
Lower Athabasca	
Backcountry	

Annex 1. Performance Measures

Under development.

Indicators	Measures	Components	Targets	Reference Section
Program Activity 2: Heritage Resource Protection				
Native Biodiversity	Avian Species Richness	songbird diversity and abundance		
	Avian Productivity and Survival	MAPS, productivity, survival		
	Grizzly Bear - female/cub index	population trend		
	Grizzly Bear - Mortality	grizzly bear mortality		
	Grizzly Bear - Secure Habitat	% of park with secure habitat		
	Wildlife Mortality	mortality on through highways		
	Elk Population Monitoring	aerial surveys		
	Elk Recruitment	spring and fall roadside elk surveys		
	Caribou Population Monitoring	fall, spring, survival survey (6 hr/yr)		
	Winter Tracking - Corridor Condition	relative abundance in 3 corridors		
Wolf pack distribution & abundance	Index of wolf abundance &			
Terrestrial Ecosystems	Aerial Extent of Human Footprint	aerial park % w/ building, roads, trails		
	Non-Native Plant Roadside Inventory	species rich; distribution		
	Non-Native Plants in Sensitive Sites	invasion of sensitive sites		
	Forest Insect Disease - WBP	whitebark pine blister rust surveys		
	Forest Insect & Disease - MPB	mountain pine beetle and other insects		
	Vegetation structure/composition	Habitat structure at bird count stations		
	Aerial Disturbance by fire	percent area burned by ecoregion		
	Aspen condition	recruitment rate by aspen stand		

Indicators	Measures	Components	Targets	Reference Section
	Human-wildlife conflict	wildlife-human conflict in park		
Aquatic Ecosystems	Water Quality - Athabasca River	suite of water chemistry measures		
	Aquatic Connectivity	condition of stream crossings		
	Benthic Invert. Diveristy -CABIN	presence of set of benthic invert.		
	Fish Index of Biotic Integrity	River/stream fish sampling		
	Amphibian Occupancy	Proportion of sites occupied		
Regional Landscapes	Regional Access Density	kilometers of roads per km ²		
	Landscape Composition	landcover type from remote sensing		
	Landscape Fragmentation	fragmentation metric		
Weather	Precipitation	trends in precipitation over time		
	Air Temperature	trends in temperature over time		
	Glaciers	mass balance for Athabasca Glacier		
	Snowpack	trends in snowpack depths over time		
Cultural Resource Condition	Landscapes and Landscape Features			
	Archaeological Sites			
	Buildings and Structures			
	Objects			
Selected Management Practices	Inventory			
	Evaluation			
	CRM Strategy			
	Monitoring Program			

Program Activity or Sub-Activity	Expected Results	Performance Expectations	Reference Section
Program Activity 3: Public Appreciation and Understanding			
Public Appreciation and Understanding	Canadians appreciate the significance of heritage places administered by Parks Canada and support their protection and their presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 60% of Canadians appreciate the significance of heritage places administered by Parks Canada. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of Canadians support the protection and presentation of places administered by Parks Canada by 2014. 	
Public Outreach Education and External Communications	Canadians learn about the heritage of Parks Canada's administered places and understand that these places are protected and presented on their behalf.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the % of Canadians that consider that they learned about the heritage of Parks Canada's administered places by March 2014. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the % of Canadians that understand that nationally significant places that are administered by Parks Canada are protected and presented on their behalf by March 2014. 	
Stakeholder and Partner Engagement	Stakeholders and partners are engaged in the protection and presentation of Parks Canada's administered places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the % of stakeholders and partners that support the protection and presentation of Parks Canada's administered places by March 2014. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the % of stakeholders and partners that feel that they have opportunities to influence and contribute to Parks Canada's activities by March 2014. 	
Program Activity 4: Visitor Experience			
Visitor Experience	Visitors at surveyed locations feel a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average, 85% of visitors at surveyed locations that consider the place is meaningful to them 	

Program Activity or Sub-Activity	Expected Results	Performance Expectations	Reference Section
	sense of personal connection to the places visited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average, 90% of visitors at surveyed locations are satisfied, and on average, 50% at surveyed locations are very satisfied, with their visit 	
Market Research and Promotion	Canadians visit Parks Canada administered places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 1,908,000 people visit the park in 2010/11 and visitation increases on average by 2% per year to 2012/13 	
National Parks Interpretation	Visitors at surveyed locations learned from experience and active participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average, 60% of visitors at surveyed locations consider that they learned something about the natural heritage of the place 	
National Parks Service Offer	Visitors at surveyed locations enjoyed their visit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average, 90% of visitors at surveyed locations enjoyed their visit. 	
Public Safety	Public safety is ensured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced incidence of injury to visitors and human-wildlife conflict 	
National Historic Sites Interpretation	Visitors at surveyed locations learned from experience and active participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average, 85% of visitors at surveyed locations consider that they learned something about the cultural heritage of the place. 	
	The understanding of the significance of national historic sites is improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of the communication element of commemorative integrity rated as poor is improved within 5 years of the original assessment. 	

Program Activity or Sub-Activity	Expected Results	Performance Expectations	Reference Section
National Historic Sites Visitor Service Offer	Visitors at surveyed locations enjoyed their visit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average, 90% of visitors at surveyed locations enjoyed their visit. 	
Program Activity 5: Townsite and Throughway Infrastructure			
Community of Jasper	Townsite targets for growth and sewage effluent quality are met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislated limits to growth are met. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targets for sewage effluent quality are met. 	
Through Highway Management	Condition of through highways is maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The condition of 60% of through highways is maintained. 	