



ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

*"Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action"*

Kevin VanTighem, Superintendent  
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November 1, 2010

Re: Recreational Opportunities in National Parks

Dear Kevin:

As you and others with Parks Canada know, AWA has for 45 years and continues today to be opposed to growth and expansion of mechanized, commercialized and inappropriate recreational opportunities in our National Parks that are not mindful of the primary purpose our National Parks. *According to the 2001 Canada National Parks Act, "maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity, through the protection of natural resources and natural processes, shall be the first priority of the Minister when considering all aspects of the management of parks."*

AWA would like to emphasize the voices of others working directly on conservation related issues in our National Parks - the Bow Valley Naturalists and the Wild Canada Conservation Alliance in particular - as we adamantly oppose any recreational developments such as via ferrata as inappropriate and in contravention of promises made in years past.

We believe Canadians have invested their trust in Parks Canada staff to manage our precious National Parks as *"sanctuary(ies) in which nature is allowed to evolve in its own way, as it has done since the dawn of time"* ([http://www.pc.gc.ca/proqs/np-pn/pr-sp/index\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/proqs/np-pn/pr-sp/index_e.asp) November 1, 2010). A major part of that is to ensure that we will not have such commercialized and inappropriate activities in our National Parks.

As well, opposition by AWA and others in the 1990's to increased winter expansion of operations at Mt. Norquay led to a compromise promise that there would be no summer activity. Arthur Haenni, President and General Manager of Banff Lifts Ltd wrote June 27, 1996 *"The first thing that must be pointed out is that the long range plan was not a decision imposed upon Mt. Norquay by Parks Canada. After a great deal of discussion and negotiation, we realized that we had to make some concessions in our overall operations if we were to be able to convince Parks Canada of our need to expand the winter ski operations. Parks Canada was very worried about overall impacts on the area. The only way we could*

*advance our ski operation was to promise a reduction of impact on environmentally sensitive areas.... This could only be done by sacrificing our summer operations. The assertion that giving up summer use was simply a business decision we made independent of Parks Canada demands is misleading. We had to give something in order to get the additional terrain we needed for our expanded winter operation. Summer use was all we had to trade. You may also remember that environmental opposition to our expanded winter operation was neutralized by this trade off. ”*

We are concerned with Parks Canada mandate to increase new recreational options in National Parks, and hope that good common sense will prevail in deliberations about such an inappropriate development within the park. This type of opportunity can surely be taken to full potential in areas outside of our designated National Parks system.

Sincerely yours,  
ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION



Christyann Olson  
Executive Director

cc:  
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