BANFF NATIONAL PARK
ANNUAL PLANNING FORUM, OCTOBER 15 & 16, 1999

A new park management plan was approved for Banff National Park in April of 1997. In that plan a commitment was made to an annual public process to examine progress toward implementation of the plan. This document is part of the public process and builds on the background information provided to the 1998 forum. The document summarizes the status of implementation of the plan and highlights the initiatives to be undertaken over the next few years. It is organized according to the chapters in the management plan. Numbers correspond to sections of the plan. Attachments provide more detailed information on the following topics:

(1) Implementation of the Heritage Tourism Strategy
(2) Development Review Process
(3) Options for Middle Spray Trail
(4) The Lake Louise Area
(5) Elk Management Strategy
(6) A Summary of Visitation and Trends

On October 15th and 16th at the Banff Seniors Centre, a round table forum is being held where invited sector representatives will be discussing the implementation of the park management plan. The public are invited to attend.

CHAPTER 3: A PLACE FOR NATURE

3.4 Knowledge Gaps: Parks Canada is working with the Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley (BIBV) to hold a number of workshops with experts in specific subject matter. At each workshop knowledge gaps are identified in the information available on issues pertaining to the ecological integrity of the Bow Valley ecosystem. Workshops have been held on wildlife, vegetation, micro fauna, social and economic factors and are proposed for aquatics, and quality of air, water and soil. These workshops will help focus future research in the valley.

3.4 Social and Economic Goals: Social and economic goals have not been defined. The need for more usable information in this area is recognized and was discussed at a workshop on managing human use held in June, 1999. Information required has been more specifically identified at the BIBV workshop.

3.4 Ecological Indicators: Banff uses ecological indicators at various scales in decision making and management. At a regional level attention is paid to: general human population levels, trends in road use, visitor patterns, amount of development, condition of major wildlife movement corridors, regional conditions for wide-ranging or rare species (e.g. Caribou, wolves, grizzly bear). At a park level the following is considered: human use levels and trends for roadways, trails, campsites, outlying commercial accommodation (OCAs) and other facilities, and visitor patterns; the footprint of facilities; water quality and quantity; daily weather observations for fire and avalanche conditions;

habitat effectiveness for Carnivore Management Units (CMUs); grizzly bear and wolf observations; human, carnivore and ungulate use of wildlife corridors; burn area by watershed and ecoregion; and areas of non-native plant infestations. At a population level: wildlife population and mortality levels (several ungulate and carnivore species); rare species monitoring at specific sites (Banff hotsprings snail, herptiles); breeding bird and Christmas bird counts; creel census for major lakes (Minnewanka); predation and herbivory rates for key species, aspen and willow conditions. At a site level: trail and campsite conditions; behavior patterns for habituated animals (bear, elk); and vegetation response to fire (aspen, buffalo berry, hedyserum).

3.5 Research Updates: This program has been held each spring and a newsletter produced twice a year for residents and the general public

3.5 Ecology Workshops: Ecology workshops organized by park researchers have been held approximately two times per month in the fall and winter. These have been coordinated with the BIBV and are used to brief researchers, staff, environmental groups, educators and affiliated agencies on research projects.

3.5 'Living With Wildlife Program'. This program, a partnership between Parks Canada, Friends of Banff, and the Town of Banff is in its third year. Staff visited door-to-door in Banff, Lake Louise and Field educating residents and distributing literature on wildlife issues. They also worked at wildlife jams on the Bow Valley and Icefields Parkways, and visited campgrounds to educate campers on bear awareness. In 1999 they attended 190 wildlife jams, an increase over the previous two years. Organized talks were held on a regular basis at Baker Creek Bungalows, Castle Mountain Village and Castle Mountain Hostel.

3.5 National Ecological Integrity Panel: In November 1998 the Secretary of State (Parks) established a Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada's National Parks. The Panel's objective is to assess the approach Parks Canada is taking to maintain the ecological integrity of all of Canada's national parks. The panel will provide recommendations to the Minister. A major component of the Panel's work has been regional consultations. The report is expected this winter.

3.8 Banff Springs Snail: Various initiatives have been undertaken to protect the Banff Springs Snail (Physella johnsoni). This snail, found no where else in the world, is found in five hot springs in BNP. In 1997 it was declared "threatened" by COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada). This means that if actions are not taken, the species could become "endangered" and face extinction. A five-year program in pursuit of a better understanding of the biology and ecology of the snail was initiated in 1998. The program includes: snail and water temperature monitoring, snail reproductive biology, water chemistry monitoring, DNA analysis, resource reconnaissance of thermal springs, and increasing public and scientific knowledge about the snail. A resource management plan for the recovery of the Banff Springs snail has been completed. Parks Canada's long-term goal is to re-establish populations of the snail in all historic hot spring locations while maintaining the present self-sustaining populations. The goal is to 'down list' the snail from its current threatened status. Protection efforts have been stepped up in a coordinated effort using scientific research, monitoring and law enforcement. The recently established flow-through aquaria at the Cave and Basin will greatly enhance our understanding of snail reproductive biology.

3.9 Research / Programs on Native Fish Species Management: An ongoing program of fisheries research is directed toward understanding the status of native bull char and cutthroat populations in the mountain national parks. The objectives of this research are to determine the inter-drainage genetic divergence across major drainage systems. Initial findings indicate that the Harrison Lake population has experienced unusual demographic conditions which have produced a lack of genetic variability. The results of this study have implications for issues of biodiversity.

3.9 Aquatics Advisory Group: An Aquatics Ecosystem Advisory Group (AEAG) has been established to assist BNP in addressing aquatic resource management issues. The group has identified issues in three areas: operational issues, regulatory issues and angling, and management of the resource. The group will act as a sounding board for many of the aquatic issues including identification of benchmark lakes.

3.9 Benchmark Lakes: A strategy has been developed to identify benchmark lakes. The objective is to designate representative and unique aquatic ecosystems to serve as aquatic benchmarks for research, environmental monitoring and education. Work will continue on inventories of the distribution of native fish.

3.9 Aquatic Priorities: In addition to the benchmark lake program, the priorities for the next year will be mapping (GIS) of watershed information and undertaking research into the removal of the Forty Mile Creek Dam.

3.9 Amphibians: Monitoring amphibian populations in national parks such as Banff is important. These areas may hold the solution to why amphibian populations are declining worldwide. Amphibians are sensitive to a number of environmental factors because their life cycle involves both water and land, and they breathe through their skin. They can be impacted by smoke, smog, pesticides, pollution, habitat disturbance, and runoff containing road salt. Amphibians are indicators of ecosystem health. Inventorying and monitoring has been undertaken by groups such as the Bow Valley Naturalists, through the TransCanada Highway (TCH) corridor monitoring project and by backcountry staff with distribution maps of each species created. An intensive survey program for Banff, Kootenay and Yoho National Parks began in 1999.

3.9 Alluvial Fans: Research has been conducted on the restoration of alluvial fan processes in the lower Bow Valley. Sixty-five percent of active alluvial fan systems in the Bow Valley have been modified by transportation corridors. Restoration options are being explored.

3.9 Restoration of Aquatic Systems: Parks Canada is completing a CEAA screening for habitat restoration of Cascade Creek and Cascade Gravel Pits. The goals are to: remove introduced brook trout from Cascade Creek, work with TransAlta Utilities to increase water flows in Cascade Creek, reintroduce bull char into Cascade Creek and rehabilitate the Cascade Gravel Pit by conversion into a lake.

3.9 Cascade Creek: More than 40% of the flowing waters in the Bow River watershed in BNP are regulated by dams. An objective of the park management plan is to restore more natural flow

regimes were possible. Research on Cascade Creek has been undertaken as a multi-year, multi-partner initiative (TransAlta Utilities, Parks Canada, University of Calgary, and the Fisheries and Recreation Enhancement Working Group). Research has provided estimates of optimal flow regimes needed to provide adequate habitat for bull char and cutthroat trout at various life stages given the existing stream bed.

3.9 Restoration of More Natural Water Flows in the Spray System: A research program is underway to investigate the potential to improve fish habitat so that indigenous fish populations can be restored and maintained in the Spray River downstream of Canyon Dam and Goat Creek, and determine the feasibility of various restoration strategies including TransAlta's capabilities to alter stream flow.

3.9 Moraine Lake Restoration of Native Fish Populations: Bull char, cutthroat trout and mountain whitefish were native fish species in Moraine Lake. None of these have survived to the present. At least seven exotic, or non-native species were stocked in Moraine Lake between 1915 and 1979. As a probable result of competition and hybridization the native populations were extirpated. The greatest concern is for bull char as there are few lakes with viable bull char populations in the park. The feasibility of reintroducing bull char to Moraine Lake through ecological restoration is being examined. Recent research has focused on the feasibility of removing exotic fish, as the first step in restoration, and then reintroducing a self-sustaining bull char population. Current work involves habitat assessment, assessing the feasibility of various removal options, test netting, and completing a study design that will undergo environmental assessment.

3.9 Bighorn Lake Restoration: Bighorn Lake is the site of the first experimental removal of non-native fish species from BNP. The study is being carried out by the University of Alberta with Parks Canada. The removal of introduced brook trout, using gillnets, was started in 1997 and will continue to 2000. It is expected that the removal of bull trout will result in the recovery of the lake to close to its pristine condition.

3.9 Threats to Biodiversity in Alpine and Subalpine Lakes: A group from the University of Alberta is investigating a number of natural and human factors that affect the biological communities of alpine lakes and streams. These include: 1) the effects of climate change on small alpine lakes and ponds; 2) the effects of stocking; 3) the effects of stocking of various species of predatory fishes; 4) the biology of bull trout and brook char and 5) the collection of adipose fins from trout for genetic analysis.

3.9 August 4th Mudslide: On August 4th, 1999, the TransCanada Highway and Bow Valley Parkway were closed to vehicle travel just west of the Town of Banff due to mudslides. The draft Emergency Preparedness Plan was put into effect to coordinate a variety of agencies and inform the public. The approach worked well. At the 'post-incident critique', areas for improvement were identified and included strengthening communications with staff so that consistent and timely information could be provided to the public.

3.9 Harlequin Ducks: Harlequin ducks can be an indicator species for pristine environments. In Alberta the harlequin duck has been added to the "A" list indicating that this species merits extra

attention, as it may be in trouble. A five year research program was initiated in 1995 to examine the impacts of human activities and habitat modifications on harlequin ducks in BNP. The study of the Bow River area includes the area between Castle Junction and Lake Louise which has the highest densities of breeding harlequin ducks observed in North America. Research has obtained baseline information on demographic characteristics, distribution and the potential of the Bow Valley area to support this type of population in the long-term.

3.10 Prescribed Burns: BNP undertakes prescribed burns to maintain fire adapted vegetation and wildlife habitats while ensuring public and facility safety. A prescribed burn took place in the Panther watershed in the spring of 1999 burning 1805 hectares (ha). In the western part of the park 14 ha were burned. Up to 4 burns may be ignited this fall:

(1) Spray Valley - In the Middle Spray Valley about 20 km south of the Town of Banff, a prescribed burn was started on September 16th, 1999. A fireguard has been created in the spruce and pine forest. This will provide a nearly continuous 1 km wide fireguard across the Spray Valley. With this firegaurd in place, it will be possible to safely conduct prescribed burns between the fireguard and the Spray Reservoir in future years.

(2) Cascade Valley - various shrub meadows (up to 500 ha) in the headwaters of the Cascade watershed 25 km north of the Town of Banff

(3) Panther Valley - a 5 ha shrub meadow 40 km north of the Town of Banff

(4) Red Deer Valley - a 100 ha fire guard (shrub meadows and adjacent trees) 60 km north of the Town of Banff

(5) Spray Valley - a 100 ha fire guard (grass meadows and adjacent trees) 22 km south of the Town of Banff

These burns are important for many large mammals, particularly elk, moose, sheep, deer, wolves and grizzly bears. They are scheduled for periods when grasses and deciduous leaves are cured, the potential for hot dry weather is minimal and visitation is lower. Actual burn days will be announced through local newspapers and radio stations.

3.10 Exotic vegetation: An annual control program for exotic vegetation species was undertaken and monitoring proceeds.

3.11 East Slopes Grizzly Bear Project (ESGBP): The first five years of data collection for the ESGBP have been completed and analysis is underway. Two more years of data collection have been approved by study participants which include Parks Canada, the University of Calgary, the Province of Alberta, the private sector and conservation groups. This should provide information on population trend estimates and structure. In January a Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) workshop on grizzly bears was conducted with the Species Survival Commission of the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) to identify cumulative effects and necessary changes in land use policy.

3.11 Rocky Mtn. Grizzly Bear Planning Committee: Parks Canada participates on this committee along with representatives of the Provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, State of Montana, United States Fish and Wildlife Branch and the U.S. National Park Service. The group focusses on the management of grizzly bears in the Intermountain Region from the Wilmore Wilderness area north of Jasper National Park to Montana in the south. The group makes

recommendations to the various agencies and has been involved in: identification and mitigation of blockages to grizzly bear movement, mapping of habitat, training in bear management, coordination of grizzly bear management plans, and sharing of research.

3.11 Habituated Bears: Bears in the park are still becoming habituated to humans which sometimes leads to a decision to destroy the bear. In April a male black bear was injured on the CPR. Two black bears had to be destroyed in August. Two black bears were killed on the TCH, east of Castle Junction. Seven black bears have died inside the highway fence since 1995, bringing into question the overall effectiveness of the fence as a barrier to bears. Parks Canada has proposed a pilot trial to test design modifications in the highway fence to prevent black bears from scaling the fence and being exposed to vehicle collisions. Currently, the proposal is being reviewed under an environmental assessment.

3.11 Use of Karelian Bear Dogs: The 'Partners in Life' program from Utah was brought to the park from mid-August to mid-September. Bear dogs have proven effective in the USA in teaching bears to avoid people, thus providing an alternative to relocation or destruction. The program concentrated on roadside habituated bears, especially those along the Bow Valley Parkway, and other unique situations.

3.11 Impact of Roads: A study is underway to examine the effects of roads on black bears, grizzlies, and wolves. The study is looking at how human activity along roads influences the daily activities of large carnivores. In addition, road crossing patterns of a variety of species are being assessed along the proposed TCH Phase 3B (Castle to Lake Louise).

3.11 Elk in Banff Townsite: The Elk Advisory Committee hosted an open house to discuss the issues associated with elk in the Town of Banff and explore management options. Some elk were unsuccessfully relocated within the park, and to Kootenay National Park on an experimental basis . Management strategies were selected through the Elk Advisory Committee. An environmental assessment is being completed on a mix of options. The assessment will be posted for public review. Wardens have continued a 'zero tolerance' policy towards aggressive elk.

3.11 Wolves: To protect wolf denning areas for the Lower Bow Valley Pack, temporary area closures were in place in the Hillsdale and Castle Group camp areas for April to June. Wolves are sensitive to human activities near den sites and have abandoned dens on several occasions due to human disturbance. No pups were produced this year from either the Lower Bow or Cascade packs. One wolf death occurred on the railway. A wolf was burned during the Panther area prescribed burn. It took wolves about 30 years to recolonize the Bow Valley after being exterminated in the 1950s. The successful recruitment of pups is important for the future existence of wolves in the park. The Bow Valley wolf pack has declined to 2 adult wolves. The Cascade pack has 12 or 13 adults. In total 4 to 5 wolf packs, totalling 35 to 40 wolves, make use of the park at various times of the year.

3.11 Feasibility of Bison Reintroduction: A workshop is planned this winter with specialists and provincial agencies to explore the feasibility of bison reintroduction in the park.

3.11 Wildlife Crossing Structures (WCS) : A study is underway to determine the effectiveness

of wildlife overpasses and underpasses on the TransCanada Highway for a variety of species. Twenty-five WCS, 12 on Phases 1 and 2 of the TransCanada Highway and 13 on Phase 3A were monitored and cumulative data summarized for the period November 1996 to September 1999. Phase 1 and 2 WCS have been visited by wildlife more than 19,000 times. The recently constructed Phase 3A WCS received more than 3000 visits by wildlife in 22 months. Elk used the WCS the most, followed by deer and coyotes. Through passage rates were high for all species. In general, the new overpass structures on Phase 3A were used at least 3 times as often as the next nearest underpass structure. Grizzly bears, wolves, cougars, and black bears have each used every type of structure (overpass, open span, metal culvert, box-culvert, creek-bridge), but further analysis is required to determine if WCS are used by carnivores as often as should be expected.

3.12 Cascade Wildlife Corridor: Improvement in the corridor continues. Wolf and cougar activity through and within the corridor has increased significantly with the removal of facilities. The new wildlife crossing structure over the Two Jack Canal was used by wolves in its first winter. A new training facility for Army Cadets has been developed in the Province of Alberta at the former Ghost Ranger Station which replaces the Banff site. An environmental assessment for the removal of the facilities has been prepared for dismantling the camp. The removal will begin in November and be completed next spring.

3.12 Summer Use of the Mount Norquay Area: Summer use of the general Mount Norquay area continues to be of concern due to potentaial impacts on wildlife movement. Initial data gathering was done this summer to determine the amount of vehicle use of the road. Some direction regarding summer use will be provided by the ski area guidelines.

3.13 Fairholme Environmentally Sensitive Site (ESS): Various measures (signage, use of media, removal of a campsite) have been taken to request that people not enter the area. Use in the area has been monitored and has dropped significantly.

3.14 Vermilion Lakes: A workshop was held with aquatic specialists, CP Rail and Parks Canada staff to identify appropriate actions to stabilize the railway track. The higher water levels on the north side of the railway track relative to the south side had resulted in seasonal movement of the rails as a result of freeze-thaw action. Options were discussed to improve the drainage between the two sides of the track and the ecological implications were examined. An environmental screening addressed the CPR track stabilization and aquatic restoration component of Five Mile Creek. This spring, water was diverted into appropriate channels and a program established to monitor water levels. Additional work may be required to address the issues. A second environmental screening to address the Vermilion wetlands restoration will be prepared this fall.

CHAPTER 4: A PLACE OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

4.4 Cultural Resource Management: A Cultural Resource Management Plan has been completed for the park which outlines the long term direction. A priority item, the preparation of a Conservation and Maintenance Plan for the Cave and Basin National Historic Site has been

completed. This, along with a comprehensive GIS inventory of the site, provides an excellent resource base to guide site operations and conservation efforts. Commemorative Integrity Statements have been prepared for the Cave and Basin, the Banff Park Museum and the Sulphur Mountain Cosmic Ray Station.

4.4 Heritage Presentation Messages: Messages associated with the national historic sites and other cultural resources have been improved through the development of new on-site media, publication and through park FM radio broadcasts and heritage tourism initiatives. Cooperative agreements with the Whyte Foundation, the Banff Centre and other agencies have increased public awareness and opportunities to experience cultural heritage activities.

4.4 Built Heritage: The Town of Banff and Parks Canada have undertaken a number of initiatives to enhance the protection and presentation of heritage resources. A comprehensive update and photographic inventory of heritage structures was funded by Parks Canada , the Town of Banff and the Province of Alberta. A number of other initiatives are in progress. A License of Occupation has been granted to the Town to allow the Heritage Corporation to enhance the preservation and presentation of the original Transformer Building near the Banff Cemetery.

4.4 Aboriginal Tourism: A new interpretive program cosponsored by Parks Canada and the Siksika Nation gives visitors to the Cascade Gardens an opportunity to enter a traditional tepee, talk to native interpreters and watch demonstrations on the traditions and customs of the Siksika.

4.4 Heritage Buildings Strategy in the Town of Banff: There are three components to the strategy. For the more significant historic structures, Parks Canada will consider land a exchange if it would lead to protection. Parks Canada, the Town and the Province of Alberta continue to make arrangements for the application of the provincial Historic Resources Act to the Town of Banff. It is also possible for a leaseholder to add a caveat to their lease to ensure future owners protect the heritage structure.

4.4 'Welcome to Banff ' Video: This video has been developed to introduce Banff's local heritage to visitors. It is being distributed to bus tour companies for showing on their buses.

4.4 Siksika Specific Claim: The Siksika have made a specific claim with respect to land in the Castle Junction area. The working group discussing this issue met last in fall of 1998. The Government of Canada is waiting for a response from the Siksika on a number of matters. Through the negotiations, the Siksika Nation and Banff National Park have developed a good working relationship. The Siksika Nation Interpretive display in the Cascade Gardens at the Administration Building is an example of cooperation between the Siksika and Parks Canada to present Siksika culture to park visitors.

CHAPTER 5: A PLACE FOR PEOPLE

5.2 Heritage Tourism Strategy: Developed in 1997 and in its second year of implementation,

the Banff / Bow Valley Heritage Tourism Strategy is designed to celebrate and preserve the park's ecological and cultural integrity. This past year projects included: a video for training business owners, staff and residents; presentations to local, national and international audiences; increased visitor participation in the Banff Heritage passport program; support of the successful regional Swiss Guides Centennial; and expansion of the strategy to other national parks and park communities. Priorities for next year include: hosting the Society of American Travel Writers Convention late in October; the Mountain Heritage Weekend and Heritage Awards Diner (see Attachment 1 for more information).

5.2 Mountain Parks Heritage Interpretation Association: An association has been founded and standards established for professional interpreters. Courses can be taken leading to a Professional Interpreter Certification. Approximately 20 professional interpreters have been certified.

5.4 Canada Place: The Administration Building for Banff has been chosen as the first 'Canada Place' to be located in a national park. The exhibit which will open early in 2000 will provide an opportunity to experience Canada's heritage - past and present, and will provide a new interactive exhibit on Canadian heroes, history and hi-tech innovations. Canada Place will be in the original 'post office' wing of the building.

5.4 Environmental Education Centre: See Chapter 7.

5.4 Interpretation: The number of personal interpretive events was increased using walks, film nights and theatre programs. 23,000 visitors participated in interpretive programs. A staff trainer was hired on behalf of the Heritage Tourism Council, to promote and deliver 'Banff's Best' Heritage Orientation Program. In Banff 1500 staff were trained, bringing the total to 3500. This year a greater ecosystem focus was incorporated into the program. The 'Banff Best' program is being adapted to the Lake Louise situation. Approximately 250 staff were trained in Lake Louise. This program will be refined through the fall of 1999. A new family interpretive program was provided at Tunnel Mountain Campground three times a week. A World Heritage Site publication for bus tour groups is being developed for all the parks that make up the Site.

5.4 Friends of Banff Junior Naturalist Program: In collaboration with Parks Canada and the Town of Banff, the Friends offer Junior Naturalist programs for elementary school children. The goal is to nurture healthy attitudes and lifestyle choices leading to appreciation for, and stewardship of, natural and cultural heritage of the park and community.

5.4 Reference Guide for Tour Operators: Through the Transportation and Utilities Advisory Group a guidebook for tour operators is being developed. This document, which will be ready for summer 2000, will provide accurate and appropriate information and ensure that tour operators understand and practice proper protocol for visiting the park.

5.5 Outlying Commercial Accommodation Panel (OCAs): Steps were taken to manage commercial development in outlying areas. In June of 1998, a development moratorium was placed on all commercial accommodation facilities outside the communities. In October 1998, the Secretary of State (Parks) established a panel to review commercial accommodation development in

outlying areas. The panel's report addressing OCAs and hostels has been submitted to the Minister.

5.6 Carnivore Management: The concept of managing by carnivore management units and working to improve habitat effectiveness in certain units was refined during the development of the park management plans for Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho. These improvements which incorporate the concept of security areas will be applied in Banff National Park as well. Parks Canada will continue to refine the model as new information becomes available.

5.6 Human Use Management: In June, Parks Canada, and the Banff Centre for Mountain Culture held a workshop on human use management. Participants included the Towns of Banff and Canmore, the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, ski areas, tourism bureau, hotel and motel association and operators, environmental groups, the Bow Valley Mountain Bike Alliance, outdoor recreation user groups and specialists in heritage tourism, transportation, recreation, social and ecological sciences. The workshop was used to begin to define the issues and opportunities for managing human use. The workshop is a first step in coming to grips with human use management and to set the agenda for future steps. Step 2 will bring together the available knowledge, experience and expertise in North America. Step 3 will be an international conference held at the Banff Centre for Mountain Culture on issues concerning mountain communities worldwide. Managing human use in BNP is a topic for discussion at the 1999 planning forum.

5.6 Bryant Creek Trail Closure to Bicycles: Since 1998, biking has not been permitted on the Bryant Creek Trail between Allenby Pass and the Spray/Bryant Creek (Trail Centre) junction to reduce disturbance to wildlife and improve habitat effectiveness. Use of the trail has declined by more than 50% compared with 1997 use data from before the closure.

5.6 Bicycle Pilot Program: A pilot program between Parks Canada and the Bow Valley Mountain Bike Alliance has been initiated. The educational program is aimed at mountain bike users in the Bow Valley and will focus on bicyclists on trails and at events such as 'One Hot Summer" (staff orientation) on the proper use of mountain bikes on designated trails. A set of principles on the appropriate use of bikes in BNP has been developed. The program will be evaluated after this preliminary season, both from a volunteer capability and educational standpoint.

5.6 Middle Spray Trail: For the past 7 years a low quota has been applied to the middle portion of the Spray trail. This was applied for bear management purposes and subsequently to support the East Slopes Grizzly Bear Project. Options for how human use should be managed in the future are being reviewed (see Attachment 3).

5.6 TransCanada Trail: The Alberta TrailNet, the promoters of the TransCanada Trail (TCT), have indicated that they would like to see the route for the TCT go through BNP. Discussions have been held between the TrailNet, Parks Canada and the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. No decision has been made regarding the route through Banff or in the adjacent areas in Alberta and British Columbia. Parks Canada has indicated that a preferred route through the national parks would come from British Columbia up the Albert River over the Spray Pass to trail Centre and then into Alberta Provincial lands at Spray Lakes. The trail would then follow provincial lands and access the Town of Banff via Goat Creek. It has been suggested to Alberta TrailNet that they explore the

feasibility of a hiking and bike trail east of the Town of Banff in the TransCanada Highway corridor. A second option under consideration is to come from the west up Simpson River into Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park in British Columbia and then into BNP over Simpson Pass and down Healy Creek. All options require further discussion with the parties involved. Consistent with the direction in the park management plan, Parks Canada is willing to support the concept of the TransCanada Trail as long as it does not involve the development of new trails, and that it is recognized that limits will be required on the types and numbers of users.

5.8 Ski Area Guidelines: In October 1998, the Secretary of State asked the OCA Panel to facilitate public review of draft ski area guidelines. Round table sessions were held in Banff and Jasper in December with representatives from the tourism industry, local and regional users, environmental groups and ski area operators. Following submission of a report, the Secretary of State announced Parks Canada's position on a number of issues in April 1999. An Advisory Committee was established to advise on outstanding issues. An open house was held in June to obtain public input on a framework that will direct the planning of ski areas in national parks. The framework will consist of three elements: guidelines that will set out policy elements and the long range planning process; regulations that will direct ski area management; and a Best Practices manual.

5.9 Banff Springs Golf Course Area: The dog-sled operation has been relocated from the golf course to a location which is more appropriate from an ecological perspective. Also see item 6.1.

CHAPTER 6: TRANSPORTATION

6.1 Wildlife Crossing Structures (WCS): See Section 3.11.

6.1 Wildlife Mortality on Transportation Routes: The Transportation and Utilities Advisory Group (TUAG) is hosting a workshop on wildlife mortality associated with transportation routes, in November or December of 1999. The focus will be on examining the implications of wildlife mortality and the trends, sharing information on the effectiveness of the crossing structures, and developing long and short term suggestions for reducing wildlife mortality.

6.1 Banff Springs Golf Course Loop Road: From December to May the road was closed to private vehicles to encourage predators to return to this important montane wildlife wintering area. For the remainder of the year the road is closed for the night at 11 p.m. to encourage predators to use the area.

6.1 Bow Valley Parkway (BVP): The night voluntary travel restrictions continue on the BVP from Johnston Canyon east to the Trans Canada Highway junction from March to June. Research indicates that wildlife are most sensitive to human presence in this prime valley-bottom habitat in the spring, when higher altitudes remain snowbound, and from dusk to dawn, when they are most active. Preliminary analysis of the traffic counts indicate that there is still a considerable amount of vehicle use during the period of voluntary closure. The vast majority of use occurs one hour after the closure has started in the evening and an hour before the road reopens in the morning. This abuse of the

closure increases in June. Parks Canada will continue with the awareness and education program and will have more staff presence at the entrance to the closure area in 2000. This closure is one of a number of measures being taken to improve habitat and movement corridors for wildlife. The ecological benefit of each individual action will be difficult to identify however long-term research will indicate the overall effects.

6.1 Highway 1A: The road between Lake Louise and Yoho National Park has been closed to motorized vehicles.

6.1 Lake Louise Transportation Study: A study is being conducted to identify options to reduce congestion, improve visitor experience and obtain environmental improvements. See attachment 4.

6.1 Transportation Study: Parks Canada has proposed to the Bow Corridor Ecosystem Advisory Group (BCEAG) that a study of transportation issues in the Bow Valley be conducted jointly by various agencies including Parks Canada, the Province of Alberta, Town of Banff, Town of Canmore and Municipal District of Bighorn. This study would result in: an improved understanding of the current traffic volume and mix and how this might change in the future; an identification of problem areas; an understanding of ecological implications of the current and future situation; and an identification of short and long term solutions to problems. Interest has been expressed by the various agencies.

6.1 Canadian Pacific Railway: Despite efforts by CP Rail, wildlife mortality along the railway remains a problem. CP Rail has improved the inspection of grain cars for leakage, and the reporting process for spills. Train crews operating in the mountain parks have been given and will continue to receive awareness training to improve the accuracy of wildlife incident reporting. An awareness and communication program has been developed for shippers to improve grain loading practices. The practice of staging grain cars at sidings within the mountain parks is being minimized. CPR has purchased a grain vacuum truck located in Banff. It has been used to clear the tracks of grain in the spring and responds to spills. There is some experimentation being done with whistles, bells and lights to alert wildlife to oncoming trains, and experimental techniques for snow removal are being used to provide animals with an avenue of escape from oncoming trains.

CHAPTER 7: A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY

7.2 Environmental Education Centre: On June 26, 1998 the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced that Parks Canada would secure a site in the 200 Block of Banff Avenue which would become an Environmental Education Centre and a focal point for Parks Canada. The lease at 214 Banff Avenue has been purchased with the current lessee remaining as a tenant for a specified period of time. Discussions have been initiated with Esso regarding the 212 Banff Avenue location.

7.2 Town of Banff Community Plan: The Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw was approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada in December 1998. It incorporated the Ministerial direction announced in June 1998. The plan adheres to the principle of no net negative environmental impact, limits to annual growth and a cap on residential and commercial development.

7.2 Eco-efficient Community Project: The Town of Banff in partnership with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Parks Canada will be a pilot project for eco-efficient community systems designed to reduce greenhouse gases through energy conservation. Initial meetings are being held with experts and interested groups.

7.2 Eligible Residency: Parks Canada is increasing its efforts to enforce compliance with the 'eligible resident' requirement. Realty transactions are being audited including mortgages and lease transfers which all require a Statutory Declaration attesting to the 'eligibility' of the resident.

7.2 Planning for Lands Adjacent to the Town of Banff: A planning program will be conducted for the lands around the town of Banff. This will include Sulphur Mountain area, Vermilion Lakes, the golf course area, and Tunnel Mountain. It will address issues in land use in the Montane and surrounding areas. Ecological and recreational issues will be addressed. Linkages between this area and the Town of Banff as well as Mount Norquay, Johnson Lake area and the Spray Valley will also be addressed. A discussion will be held at the forum to identify the issues of concern in this area.

7.2 and 7.3 Framework for Park Communities: It is intended that a legislative framework for park communities be established to enable the setting of legal boundaries for each park community, the establishment of permanent caps on commercial development and the statutory requirement to use a no net negative environmental impact principle on all future community plans.

7.3 Lake Louise Community Plan: The plan has been forwarded to the Minister for approval following extensive consultation. It reflects the principles the Minister announced for communities in June 1998, and the actions identified in the 1997 park management plan. See attachment 4.

7.3 Lake Louise Area Planning: An integrated set of planning activities has been initiated for the Lake Louise area, including the community of Lake Louise, the ski hill, public transportation, and the Skoki and Moraine Lake areas. These are outlined in attachment 4, and will be the subject of discussion at the Planning Forum.

CHAPTER 8: A PLACE FOR OPEN MANAGEMENT

8.2 Report Publicly on Implementation of the Management Plan: In 1999 the second annual planning forum will be held in October. Changes have been made in the format to accommodate comments received the previous year. In 2000 it is intended that discussions of plan implementation will be taken to urban centres such as Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. These discussions regarding Banff National Park will be combined with discussions of the plans for other mountain national parks such as Yoho, Kootenay, Jasper and Waterton Lakes.

8.3 Development Review Process: The process and functioning of the Advisory Development Board (ADB) has been modified since the 1998 planning forum to address the concerns raised. See Attachment 2.

8.4 Appropriate Use - An appropriate use framework has been prepared and discussions on how best to implement with the Town of Banff continue. A number of legal considerations need to be resolved.

8.4 Lake Louise Appropriate Use. The Lake Louise Community Plan defines principles and specific examples of appropriate basic and essential services. A draft appropriate use questionnaire has been prepared based on the Town of Banff model.

8.5 Regional Coordination: Parks Canada is involved with a number of agencies and organizations at the regional level to coordinate land use and services. These include:

(1) Bow Corridor Ecosystem Advisory Group (BCEAG): This group is chaired by the Province of Alberta and includes participants from Parks Canada, the Town of Banff, the Town of Canmore, and the Municipal District of Bighorn (MD 8). In the past year work has continued on a coordinated mapping and data base system. Guidelines for managing human use in the identified wildlife corridors have been developed. A coordinated approach to fire management has been developed.

(2) The Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley (BIBV): A variety of agencies and interests were involved in establishing this group in 1997. The overall intent is to provide a central source of information on the Bow Valley, so that knowledge of the ecosystem and the links with social and economic issues can improve. It is a non-political, non-profit organization. It provides a registry for researchers and volunteers. The main effort this year has been workshops with experts in particular specialties to identify the strengths of the existing information on the Bow Valley and where there are information gaps.

(3) Central Rockies Ecosystem Interagency Liaison Group (CREILG): This group established in 1991 straddles the continental divide between Alberta and British Columbia and includes representatives from government agencies including Parks Canada and the two provinces. CREILG was formed to look at sustainable management of fish, wildlife, forest, mineral and energy resources as well as coordination of the human use and enjoyment of those lands. The priority for this year is looking at human access in a coordinated manner. Access to backcountry areas from adjacent lands will be addressed.

(4) The British Columbia Interagency Management Committee. Land use issues between the province and Parks Canada have been discussed. Workshops have been set up with provincial agencies for this fall to discuss forest health, fire management, access and wildlife management.

(5) Parks Canada is a member of the Alberta Economic Development Authority's new provincial tourism committee.

(6) Alberta Whirling Disease Task Force - The Park Aquatic Specialist is a participant.

(7) Parks Canada, Trout Unlimited Canada, TransAlta Utilities, Golder Associates, American Fisheries Society - North Pacific Chapter, Pisces, Environmental Consulting, and Sharps Audio Visual are co-sponsors for an international conference on the Ecology and Management of Northwest Salmonids: Bull Trout II, to be held in Canmore in November 1999.

(8) Rocky Mountain Grizzly Bear Planning Committee see section 3.11.

(9) East Slopes Grizzly Bear Project (ESGBP) - see section 3.11

8.5 Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) Initiative: In May, 1998, Parks Canada and the National Parks Service of the Department of the Interior of the United States signed a memorandum of understanding to cooperate in the management, research, protection, conservation and presentation of national parks and national historic sites, particularly heritage areas close to or contiguous with the Canada - U.S. border. The Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y) is one of twelve priority areas for collaboration.

CHAPTER 9: A PLACE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

9.2 Environmental Management: Four areas have been concentrated on for environmental management: fuel storage systems, pest management, hazardous materials, and contaminated sites. These will continue to be the priority for the next year. 60% of tenants in the park have indicated they will or have performed upgrades to their fuel storage systems to conform with standards. In an effort to reduce the use of chemicals, Parks Canada has been working with the Hotel and Motel Association to modify practices in the reduction, use and storage of pesticides. There have been some improvements in the storage of hazardous materials and transportation of chlorine gas. A new system for contaminated sites sampling has been developed which will result in more consistent sampling.

9.2 Energy Consumption: Parks Canada has taken various steps to reduce energy consumption. The lighting at the Cave and Basin, Information Centre and Banff Park Museum has been retrofitted resulting in an annual reduction of 90,000 Kwh which equates to a reduction of 60 Tonnes of CO2 emission.

9.2 Environmental Assessment Process: Various training programs were provided for proponents, consultants and staff to improve the quality of assessments especially cumulative effects assessment. Workshops and meetings were held with various stakeholders to discuss CEAA issues and expectations. A CEAA audit was done resulting in an Action Plan and recommendations for continued improvement in the application of CEAA. The web sites for CEAA now cover all of Banff National Park.

9.3 Tertiary Sewage Treatment: Over the past year new management plans for Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho have been developed. Through that process revised leadership targets for wastewater treatment plants were developed. These are more specific than those in the 1997 Banff National Park management plan with respect to how and where measurements will be taken for monitoring purposes. The new targets and monitoring approach will be incorporated into the Banff park plan when it is next amended. The Town of Banff is planning a workshop on the targets and will then undertake a 'Value Engineering' exercise to incorporate practicable technology. The Lake Louise Community Plan identifies the need to add a third clarifier at the Lake Louise Wastewater Treatment Plant and upgrade the lift stations as a condition for commercial accommodation expansion. This will bring the plant up to the targets.

9.3 Phosphate Removal: A study is underway on the Bow, Athabasca and Kicking Horse Rivers to determine the levels of phosphorous and the need for phosphorous removal. Phosphorous contributes to the development of algal biomass downstream. The information collected in this study will aid in the development of education programs to reduce phosphorous levels at source.

ATTACHMENTS

Background

ATTACHMENT 1: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY

Developed in 1997 and in its second year of implementation, the Banff/Bow Valley Heritage Tourism Strategy is designed to celebrate and preserve the park's ecological and cultural integrity. By encouraging a common vision, direction and set of objectives for the local tourism industry and by fostering a sense of shared responsibility for park protection among tourism industry partners, visitors and residents, this strategy will guide a sustainable future for the natural and cultural values of the park.

The heritage tourism program is a joint effort of Parks Canada, the Town of Banff, the Town of Canmore, the Banff/Lake Louise Tourism Bureau, the Banff/Lake Louise Hotel/Motel Association, the Banff Centre, the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies and the Mountain Park Heritage Interpretation Association.

1998/1999 Accomplishments

- incorporating a greater ecosystem focus in Banff's Best Heritage Orientation Program
- promoting and delivering the orientation program to 1500 employees this past summer, bringing the total number to date to 3500 trained staff
- adapting Banff's orientation program to the Lake Louise situation and presenting it to 238 staff of Lake Louise businesses
- creating a heritage tourism video for training business owners, staff and residents
- presenting the strategy to a variety of local, national and international audiences
- supporting fifty events associated with the successful regional Swiss Guides Centennial Celebration, in cooperation with thirty-one other partners

· establishing the heritage tourism initiative as a major theme of the upcoming Society of American Travel Writers Convention

· delivering the first course towards accreditation in private and public sector interpretation

· doubling visitor participation in the Banff Heritage Passport program

· securing membership on Alberta Economic Development Authority's new provincial tourism committee

· devoting a significant section of the Lake Louise Community Plan to heritage tourism and making delivery of heritage programs a condition for commercial expansion

- adding representatives from the Lake Louise business community and Outlying Commercial Accommodations to the Heritage Tourism Council

· incorporating heritage tourism themes into Parks Canada's Alberta/eastern BC Vacation Planner, the Mountain Park Visitor Guide and other promotional materials representing the Banff and Lake Louise area

- emphasizing messages and images relating to park values, and the nature, history and culture of this World Heritage destination during travel trade familiarization tours and trade shows, such as Kanata, the National Tour Association Convention, Spotlight Canada UK, and Rendez-vous Canada

· expanding the heritage tourism concept beyond Banff, resulting in strategies for Jasper and Waterton Lakes, and initial discussions in Revelstoke/Glacier/Yoho and Kootenay

Priorities for 1999/2000

Society of American Travel Writers Annual Convention
- 350 travel writers from around North America in town from October 23 -28, 1999

Mountain Heritage Weekend & Heritage Awards Dinner
- tentatively scheduled for April 29-30, 2000
- awards recognizing individuals, businesses, and institutions in several categories

Accreditation
- considerable progress in efforts to move towards accreditation in private and public sector interpretation

Evaluation
- establishing benchmarks in awareness, knowledge, understanding and behaviour, against which heritage actions and activities can be monitored and measured

Short Version of Heritage Tourism Video
- for public viewing on tour buses, in hotel rooms, and as a retail item

ATTACHMENT 2: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

The Development Review Process, adopted by Parks Canada in July 1997, provides a clear and consistent framework for reviewing development proposals in Banff, Yoho, and Kootenay National Parks. The two part permit process, acts as an interface between national park plans and policies and the aims of operators proposing plans for developing or redeveloping their property.
The first part, Development Permit Review, consists of two components, one substantive and the other technical. On the substantive side, the appropriateness of a proposed development is reviewed in accordance with national park management plans, policies, regulations, guidelines, directives, applicable park community and area plans, and cultural resource management plans. On the technical side, architectural design and siting, social and environmental effects, infrastructure support and other related factors are assessed. In addition to a development permit, a Building Permit may also be required. This second part of the Development Review Process ensures that new buildings and the reconstruction of older buildings will not endanger the health, safety, or general welfare of the public. The task is to enforce the national or provincial building code that sets basic standards for construction.

Since the adoption of the process, Parks Canada has worked towards improving the transparency of development decisions and further evolving the formal steps of the process. Specifically, steps have been taken to address the three main concerns identified during the 1998 Banff National Park Annual Planning Forum: clarify the role of the ADB, establish clear criteria for determining which proposals are referred to the ADB, and establish a public development appeal mechanism.

Advisory Development Board

To help clarify the role of the ADB, a two-day workshop was held in January 1999, which resulted in a refined Terms of Reference that clearly describes the primary and secondary roles of the ADB. The primary role is to act in an advisory capacity to the Superintendent in the review of development permit applications and other matters which may be assigned by the Superintendent , for appropriateness and acceptability within a broad management, planning and development context.

The ADB also functions as a vehicle for the public to directly participate in the development review process through advertised public ADB meetings, scheduled for the last Thursday of the month. The role of the Board is becoming more definite with experience, and will continue to be clarified as the Development Review Process evolves.

Clear Criteria

During the initial months of the Development Review Process, all development permit applications were referred to the ADB, regardless of the scale or intensity of development. For a variety of

reasons, the ADB and the public considered this excessive. To help alleviate redundancy in the process, the Development Officer assumed the responsibility of reviewing development permit applications considered 'minor in nature'.

Subsequent to the 1998 Banff National Park Annual Planning Forum, additional clarification of the criteria was requested. Today, development proposals are screened into three classes based on the scale and complexity of the proposal and it's likely effects on the environment.

Development Appeal Mechanism

Parks Canada has established the Mountain Park Review Board (MPRB) to review matters of process and procedure arising from the ADB's recommendations and associated decisions by the Superintendents. The MPRB proceedings are conducted much like those of a Municipal Development Appeal Board.

ATTACHMENT 3: OPTIONS FOR THE MIDDLE SPRAY TRAIL

The management of the Spray Trail from Goat Creek to the park boundary near the Spray Reservoir will be a topic for discussion at the 1999 planning forum.

Background

The Middle Spray area of BNP, from Goat Creek to the Mount Fortune boundary near the Spray Reservoir, has been seasonally closed to private use for the past seven years. Originally closed because of wolf denning activity, the closure expanded to provide a control area for the East Slopes Grizzly Bear Project (ESGBP). To develop a habitat effectiveness model, an area that received little (less than 50 disturbances per month) human use was required to serve as a measure against areas that received higher use. The ESGBP required the closure from April 1st to November 15th. The last five years the area has been closed for this period and open for winter use. The ESGBP recently has been extended for an additional two years.

The trail is a fire road decommissioned in the 1980s. The potential for hiking, horse and bicycle use is high. Historically up to 100 cyclists per day had been seen traveling through the Middle Spray prior to 1992. Overnight use of the campground by backpackers in 1992 was between 40 and 85 nights for each of the three summer months. Horse use, both commercial and private was not significant.

Although the area has been closed to both backpackers and mountain bikers, an approved guided horse tour traveled through the valley once per month in July, August and September with up to 10 clients per trip. They spent two nights in the closed area. Warden use is limited to about two overnight trips per month. Fisheries research accounts for an additional four to five days per month, as does the ESGBP monitoring. Prescribed burn preparations in May and September/October in

some years accounts for 10 people for up to two weeks per month. Total use for the closed area has been estimated at 30 'disturbances' per month, and higher in May, September and October.

Grizzly Bear Security Areas

The presence of humans in a given area can reduce a grizzly bear's ability to access habitat. For example, construction of roads or buildings can remove or compromise habitat. High numbers of people can cause bears to avoid an area. One method Parks Canada uses to examine the impact of human use on sensitive wildlife is to apply *habitat effectiveness models*. These models help determine an area's ability to support species such as grizzly bear.

To measure grizzly bear habitat effectiveness in Banff, the park has been divided into 27 carnivore management units (CMUs). These are identified in the park management plan, page 44. Each CMU is approximately the size of the home range of a female grizzly bear and is classified according to its ability to serve as useful habitat. Habitat effectiveness is a comparison between the *potential* of an area to support grizzly bears and the value of the area as bear habitat, after accounting for human disturbance.

Targets have been established for each CMU on the potential for improved habitat effectiveness and visitor experience considerations. Studies show that if habitat effectiveness is reduced by as little as 20 percent, the grizzly bear will no longer use the area as part of its permanent home range. The goal for BNP is to manage human activities in a way that ensures grizzly bear habitat effectiveness is at 80% in all but a few of the parks CMUs.

A further tool used to manage landscapes for grizzly bears is security area analysis. This tool recognizes that the most important factor in grizzly bear survival is minimizing contact with people. These areas allow adult female grizzly bears to feed with a low probability of disturbance from people. They are delineated based on size, habitat quality, elevation and level of human activity. In order to ensure the long-term persistence of grizzly hears, researchers recommend that approximately 68% of the suitable habitat in the CMU should be secured. Bears with access to secure habitat tend to stay wary of humans, are less likely to become habituated or food-conditioned, and less likely to die from unnecessary causes than non-wary bears.

The ESGBP team has recommended that to ensure the Middle Spray is secure for grizzly bears, human disturbances must be under a certain number of events per month. The middle spray is currently rated as High for pristine quality habitat, one of five such areas in BNP outside the townsite areas. The habitat effectiveness model is based on an estimate that 80 disturbance events/month is the maximum for an area to be considered secure.

An event is described as a group of people traveling closely together through an area. It can be a pack train of horses, a group of bicyclists or a single hiker. One passage per day is considered an event; an overnight trip would be considered two events.

Options

Three scenarios have been considered for the future management of the Middle Spray.

1. Manage the Middle Spray specifically for research purposes therefore closing the area to the public.

2. Manage the Middle Spray as an area that will allow for the creation of a 'security area' while simultaneously allowing limited park and public access to the Middle Spray. This would involve limiting the number of disturbance events per month to 50, erring on the side of protection.

3. Re-open the Middle Spray with no restrictions on numbers.

The following is a summary evaluation of each option. With the implementation of any option, long-term monitoring would occur, and adjustments would be considered.

Options 1: An application to extend the ESGBP in the Middle Spray for an additional two years has been received. The researchers would like to continue monitoring grizzly bear activities in the area in a relatively undisturbed state. If a two year extension were granted, use of the area would remain unchanged from the current situation. Following the extension, there would be a public discussion of the future management of the area.

Option 2: Through the implementation of an access system to the Middle Spray, the area could be open for public recreation and allow the ESGBP to use the area to continue its research. This would mean a set number of disturbance events occurring each month which would be allocated to various public user types and to the park for research and operational purposes. This would maintain the habitat effectiveness targets established for the area.

Option 3: Uncontrolled access to the Middle Spray would limit the ability to meet the habitat effectiveness targets identified in the BNP management plan. Current use of the Goat Creek trail and Spray Lakes area trail indicate that significant (greater than 1000 disturbances per month) travel through adjacent areas. The current habitat effectiveness rating for the Middle Spray is 92.1%. If use was uncontrolled the habitat effectiveness would be reduced.

Recommendation

Option 2 is recommended. A range of backcountry opportunities would be provided. The park would manage its own activities and provide opportunities for the public that would allow the ecosystem to support viable populations of carnivores.

A definite number of events would be permitted each month for use of the Middle Spray. These permits would be allocated for public use and Parks Canada. During particular periods of time, it may be necessary that the park have a greater portion of the permits while prescribed burn preparations and other research occurs. In subsequent months a greater allocation may be available to the public. The area would be open in winter with no restrictions on numbers.

A key element of this strategy is the allocation of permits to the three user types: hikers, horse users, and mountain bikers. Each group would have an opportunity to travel through the Middle Spray. The permit system may have minimum and maximum group size requirements, as well as scheduling requirements, with a goal of equal opportunity for each user type.

ATTACHMENT 4: THE LAKE LOUISE AREA

In response to the Management Plan an integrated set of activities has been initiated for the Lake Louise area. The following is a status report of these.

1. Lake Louise Community Plan

The Community Plan has been completed and forwarded for approval. It reflects the principles the Minister announced for communities in June '98. The plan outlines:
- a reduction of the Hamlet boundary by 49 ha
- the rehabilitation of more than 40 ha of disturbed landscape inside and outside the Hamlet
- the importance of developing human use strategies for day use areas in the immediate vicinity
- the protection of important built heritage
- an increase of overnight guests in commercial accommodation to 2846 from the current 2398
- a reduction in the ceiling of overnight guests to 2900 from the 3500 set in the management plan
- the phasing of commercial growth over a minimum of 10 years
- rigid conditions for commercial expansion
- a strategy for the resolution of housing issues
- an appropriate use framework that defines basic and essential services

The plan has been prepared through public and stakeholder consultations including input on three possible growth scenarios. The Lake Louise Advisory Board (LLAB) has played an important role in shaping the content in the plan.

Implementation Guidelines are currently being finalized. These will provide detailed parameters and actions for implementing the direction in the community plan. For example they will include specific principles and parameters for architecture, landscape improvements, signage, lighting and specific actions and conditions/restrictions changes for individual sites in the community. Since the policy aspects of these have already received public consultation through the Community Plan, the Implementation Guidelines will be completed through discussions with the LLAB.

2. Summer Use - Skiing Louise

Parks Canada has completed its review of summer use at the ski hill. The review was based on recommendations received from a number of consultant reports, input from researchers and Parks Canada's own review of the issues. The ski hill area is identified as an important area for grizzly bears. There is an unusually high concentration of female bears using the area on a regular basis. Historical records indicate the area has always been important to grizzlies. The health of grizzly bear

populations in the mountain parks is under strain due to increased human activity, loss of secure habitat and barriers to movement. The ski hill area is an important habitat for the Lake Louise bear population and the Lake Louise sub population is important to the viability of the East Slopes regional population. Three options have been considered: discontinue summer use, limit use to the base lodge, and significantly modify summer use. Discontinuance of summer use may be necessary and remains under consideration.

3. 1A Highway Between Lake Louise and Yoho National Park

Consistent with the park Management Plan, the road was closed to vehicle traffic this past spring.

4. Public Transportation Study

The transportation study is intended to identify options to reduce congestion, improve visitor experience and seek environmental improvements in Lake Louise. An external advisory committee has helped guide the study. A final report is expected early this fall. Once the report is finalized it will be shared with stakeholders and the public for comment. Parks Canada hopes to be able to begin implementing some initiatives to address the most serious situations for the summer of 2000. An environmental assessment of the preferred options will be completed before any decisions are made.

5. Moraine Lake Human Use Strategy

The Moraine Lake area, as a Canadian icon within the national park system, receives high levels of human use and consequently exemplifies many of the human use issues that exist throughout the Mountain Parks (i.e. conflicts between ecological and social objectives, insufficient infrastructure to accommodate existing and forecasted human use demand, and the need for an integrated approach to planning and management). The Moraine Lake area is also the home of a habituated grizzly bear that has been involved in a number of serious bear/human conflicts. These conflicts have resulted in repeated area closures.

To address these issues, a pilot human use management planning process has been initiated for the Moraine Lake area . The management challenge is to continue to provide high human access and a quality visitor experience while ensuring that the area contributes to a healthy local and regional ecosystem.

The purpose of the human use strategy is to:
- improve habitat effectiveness, reduce fragmentation and disturbance and increase security and connectivity for carnivores and other key wildlife species
- improve the quality of the front and backcountry visitor experience
- improve communication, education and interpretation

While the planning program is geared to the long term, specific short term solutions are being pursued on an experimental basis to help avoid if possible the repeated lengthy closures to the Larch/Paradise/Eiffel Valley areas that have occurred over the last several years

Emphasis for this past summer has been to:
- experiment with a restricted access option (hiking in minimum groups of six and horse riding in minimum groups of two) in some areas of the backcountry. This option is being employed when a full closure for bear activity is not warranted but there is cause for public safety concerns
- improve signage and communication
- improve the effectiveness of the parking lot
- assess backcountry trails for potential rerouting
- understand visitor activities, experiences, understanding/acceptance of human use management actions and transportation alternatives through visitor surveys, and trail use and compliance monitoring

The results of the experiments implemented this year will be formally evaluated in the fall.

An external advisory committee has been established to provide input into the development of both short term and long term solutions. A concept for the long term will be developed this winter. There will be opportunities for formal public input when the concept for the long term has been drafted. The concept developed for Moraine Lake will be integrated with other planning initiatives for the Lake Louise area (i.e. transportation study etc.) and supports broader park approaches.

6. **Skoki Area Human Use Strategy**

Over the next year Parks Canada will prepare an integrated human use strategy for the Skoki area. The strategy will consider ecological, cultural, social and economic factors. It will be linked to the decision on summer use at the ski hill and the overall management approach for the Lake Louise area . Background work has begun. Public consultation will be an important aspect in developing the strategy.

ATTACHMENT 5: ELK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Background

The Elk Management Strategy has two goals. The first is to restore natural ecological processes in lands adjacent to the Town of Banff. The emphasis is on restoring predator-prey relationships, preventing wildlife from becoming habituated, establishing and maintaining secure movement corridors for wary animals and reducing mortality of wildlife, especially wary carnivores. As changing environmental conditions in the Bow Valley of Banff National Park require management actions to restore ecological processes, a key objective of this goal is to reduce the number of elk wintering in the Townsite area to approximately 100 elk by 2003 from the over 400 elk currently in the area. The second goal is to reduce elk/human conflicts by 75% by 2001. There are currently over 100 aggressive displays and approximately 7 contact charges annually in the Townsite area.

Actions

In November, 1998 a public open house encouraged discussion of proposals for an Elk Management Implementation Strategy. The open house was well attended and a Summary of Public Comments was made available through the local libraries and public information outlets.

The Elk Advisory Committee reviewed the feedback from the public and endorsed a multi-pronged approach to managing elk in the Townsite area on December 11, 1998. This strategy required further research to enable a scientific evaluation of options. Research to evaluate wolf behaviour around rail fences and elk return rates from the Silver City (Castle Junction) area of Banff National Park and Settlers Road area of Kootenay National Park was undertaken during the winter and the results were included in an evaluation of options and presented to the Elk Advisory Committee in May, 1999. A sub-committee was also formed to evaluate the issue of elk attractants in the Town of Banff.

Next Steps

Based on direction provided by the Committee, an Environmental Screening of the options and the implementation strategy has been drafted and will be presented to the Elk Advisory Committee on October 1, 1999.

An adaptive approach is being recommended to reduce the number of elk by up to 150 each year for the next two years. This approach is necessary to account for the many unknown factors in managing habituated elk which have a high incidence of infection with liver fluke. The strategy will also propose an adaptive approach to preventing the re-habituation of elk.

After the Elk Advisory Committee reviews the Environmental Screening report it will be finalized and posted for public review and comment through the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act process. Implementation is anticipated to begin in November, 1999.

Winter, 1999 and Spring, 2000

The first group of up to 150 elk will be removed from the Recreation Grounds. As this group is often associated with aggressive behaviour, it is anticipated that public safety should improve immediately. Keeping elk from recolonizing this area during the spring, summer and fall months will require a coordinated effort.

ATTACHMENT 6: A SUMMARY OF VISITATION TRENDS

Parks Canada conducted an assessment of the situation relative to the marketing and visitation of national parks and historic sites in Alberta and Eastern British Columbia (*Parks Canada Alberta and Eastern British Columbia Region Strategic Marketing Plan, 1999*). The following are key points from that assessment.

- visitation: over the past 5 years there has been fluctuating visitation. In 1998/99 total visitation to the region was down at National Parks from a high in 1995/96. In Banff the high for visitation is 1994-95 with close to 4,900,000 visitors. In 1998-99 visitation was close to 4,300,000.

- international trends in travel are positive for Canada in the foreseeable future. U.S. economic growth will remain between 2% and 2.3% and the low Canadian dollar will increase interest in Canada as a 'value for money' destination. Real purchasing power of Euro currencies relative to Canada is expected to remain strong. Despite the Asian crisis of 1998, the Asian economies will remain very large tourism generators for Canada and for the western national parks.

- key factors influencing domestic travel include: the weak purchasing power of the Canadian dollar in terms of international currency has the effect of reducing outbound travel and increasing travel within Canada. Increased short haul, long haul and 'getaway' trips are expected as well as increased business/leisure 'crossover' trips by Canadians. Canadian real disposable income increased in the last year or more. This should increase travel interest by Canadians. Regionally, Alberta will continue to lead the West with a highly educated, well-traveled, and high disposable-income population. Trip frequency to regional attractions may increase.

- Market trends include the following: Trends toward increasing Foreign Independent Travel (FIT) and a movement away from large group tour products to smaller group experiences. Nature and outdoor activities in comfortable resort settings remains an interest of the Asian markets. Demographic trends in America and Canada strongly point to soft adventure, 'Nature and Comfort', experiential leisure travel, learning experiences and general increase in travel from the large 'baby boom' segment from these countries. Long haul touring markets are evolving toward 'Fly and Drive', comprising fly/coach, fly/RV, and fly/rent sub-segments. Each group is significant and interested in the opportunities offered by national parks and sites.

- Product trends show a growing interest in the following: educational experiences, small group experiences/packaging, fly/drive vacations, special interest tourism, unique experiences, adventure tourism, nature tourism, heritage tourism, aboriginal tourism.

- Marketing trends which are relevant to Parks Canada include: Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) marketing in domestic markets will encourage Canadians to 'rediscover' Canada. Alberta Tourism marketing will continue to feature the Rocky Mountains to international markets while offering experiences and opportunities for small groups to see much more than mountains. British Columbia will concentrate efforts on encouraging interregional travel within the province by supporting regional marketing organizations.

- Competitive trends include: The marketing competition spends a good deal more in marketing than Canada does in most of our target markets. Communities outside parks, such as Canmore, compete for overnight revenue while putting additional user loads on the

parks system.

- Technology Trends include: The use of the Internet allows smaller players to market to the world as larger players do. The competitive environment is large and the need to differentiate the experience provided by the national parks is therefore greater. The Internet also represents an opportunity to communicate core Parks Canada messages in advance of the trip to support demand management goals and objectives. Call Centre technologies are also becoming an expected convenience and could be used as a demand management tool.