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Banff National Park MANAGEMENT PLAN



November, 1988

Banff National Park Management Plan



Environment Canada
Canadian Parks Service
Western Region
November, 1988

Banff National Park Management Plan

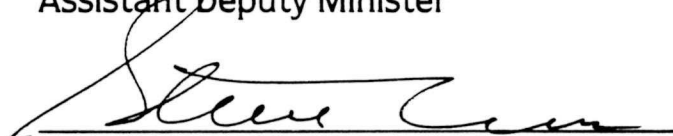
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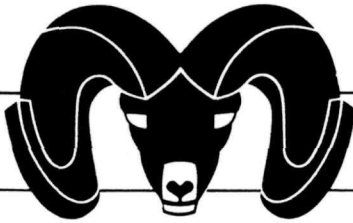
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FOREWORD

The proposals in this park management plan are dependent on the availability of financial resources, demonstrated visitor demand and the findings of detailed environmental assessments.

Several conditions need to be noted regarding the redevelopment and expansion of existing facilities not operated by the Canadian Parks Service and the release of park lands for new development and use. First, in regard to facility redevelopment and expansion, the defined limits include the terms and conditions in current agreements with lessees, licencees or concessionaires. Secondly, where it is determined that new services are required, the public tender process will be utilized to allow all Canadians to compete for the opportunity to provide these services.

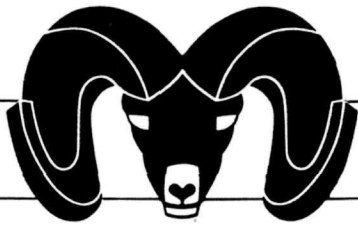


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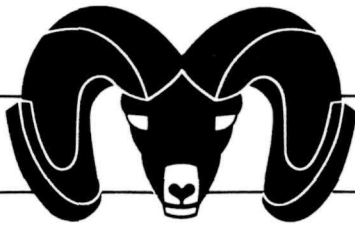
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1.0

INTRODUCTION





INTRODUCTION

The Honourable Tom McMillan, Minister of the Environment, released the planning document "In Trust for Tomorrow: A Management Framework for Four Mountain Parks" in early February of 1986. This document was the culmination of almost four years of planning in cooperation with interested citizens and government agencies (Figure 1). The plan sets the general direction for the management of Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho national parks as well as prescribes the limits within which the more detailed individual park management plans would be developed.

The Banff Background Report, which was circulated for public review in November 1986 and the Banff Core Concept that followed, are other important documents leading to the park management plan. The Banff Core Concept was the subject of public review and discussion in February and March, 1987. This management plan is an elaboration of the direction provided in In Trust for Tomorrow.

The emphasis of In Trust for Tomorrow is the protection of the natural and cultural resources of these four parks. This protection takes precedence, when conflicts occur, over increased use and development and will be achieved through the vigorous application of the Environmental Assessment and Review Process. The recommendations and mitigating measures outlined in the environmental assessment of this park management plan and subsequent environmental assessments will guide the implementation of the plan guidelines.

The Honourable Tom McMillan, stated in his preface to In Trust for Tomorrow that:

"The parks impose grave responsibilities on us all and the decisions taken about them cause ripples that are not always immediately evident. As a former Minister of Tourism, I am aware of the tension between preservation and use, a tension that has been apparent throughout the consultative process. I believe, nonetheless, that common sense and fair-mindedness provide a foundation for resolving such seemingly contradictory interests. I reject the old idea that preservation and use are mutually exclusive and need to be ranked. There can be no use

without preservation: if the parks are not preserved, what will be left of them, in time, to use? Conversely, the parks were created and preserved for people to use and appreciate. Why else would that long-ago government set aside the anxieties of its day to establish a parks system in the first place?" (p. v)

1.1 THE BANFF PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

This management plan contains guidelines for the protection, management, development, operation and use of Banff National Park. These guidelines are consistent with the National Parks Act, Parks Canada Policy (1979), the approved Purpose and Objective statements for Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho (1983) and In Trust for Tomorrow (1986).

An annual review of the park management plan will be undertaken to ensure that obvious needs for revision are identified and that sub-activity planning and plan implementation occurs in accordance with the broad direction of the management plan. A formal, comprehensive review will occur every five years. Opportunities for public review and comment will be provided if major revisions or amendments to the plan are required.

The Banff Park Management Plan consists of nine main sections, which correspond to the topics covered in the document In Trust for Tomorrow. Section 2 (The Park Concept) sets the planning proposals within the context of the characteristics of the park and contains the planning framework which is elaborated on in subsequent sections of this plan. The land use zoning plan, which is found in this section, is an integral part of the Park Concept.

Section 3 contains proposals for the protection and management of Banff's heritage resources. Proposals for visitor understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the park are presented in Section 4. Communication services, which affect both the protection and use aspects of the national parks' mandate, are discussed in Section 5 of this document. Section 6 contains guidelines for the management of support facilities and facility appearance guidelines. Section 7 outlines how the management of the park will be integrated with the surrounding region. The eighth section contains a summary of the environmental and socio-economic implications of the plan guidelines, and the ninth and final section outlines a strategy for implementing the plan guidelines.

1.2 BANFF BACKGROUND REPORT

The Banff Background Report was distributed to individuals and groups who indicated an interest in the development of the Banff

Park Management Plan. This document contains descriptions of existing park facilities, their use and any associated environmental implications. Readers of this park management plan will find the background document useful in gaining a better understanding of existing conditions and circumstances in Banff National Park.

1.3 THE ROLE OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation has been important throughout the Four Mountain Parks Planning Program. Public response has played an important role in determining the direction of this plan. Public comments have been actively solicited and considered at every stage of the program. These specific stages in the consultative process are shown in Figure 1.

A variety of techniques were used to gather public comments. These included mail-out programs, open houses, workshops, public meetings and invitational meetings. In addition, representatives of the Canadian Parks Service attended many meetings sponsored by special interest organizations.

Comments received from the interested public and special interest groups were analyzed and reviewed at each stage of the program. Summaries of these comments were distributed to all program participants at the conclusion of each stage. The comments were considered along with the advice and recommendations provided by other government agencies at the municipal, regional, provincial and federal levels.

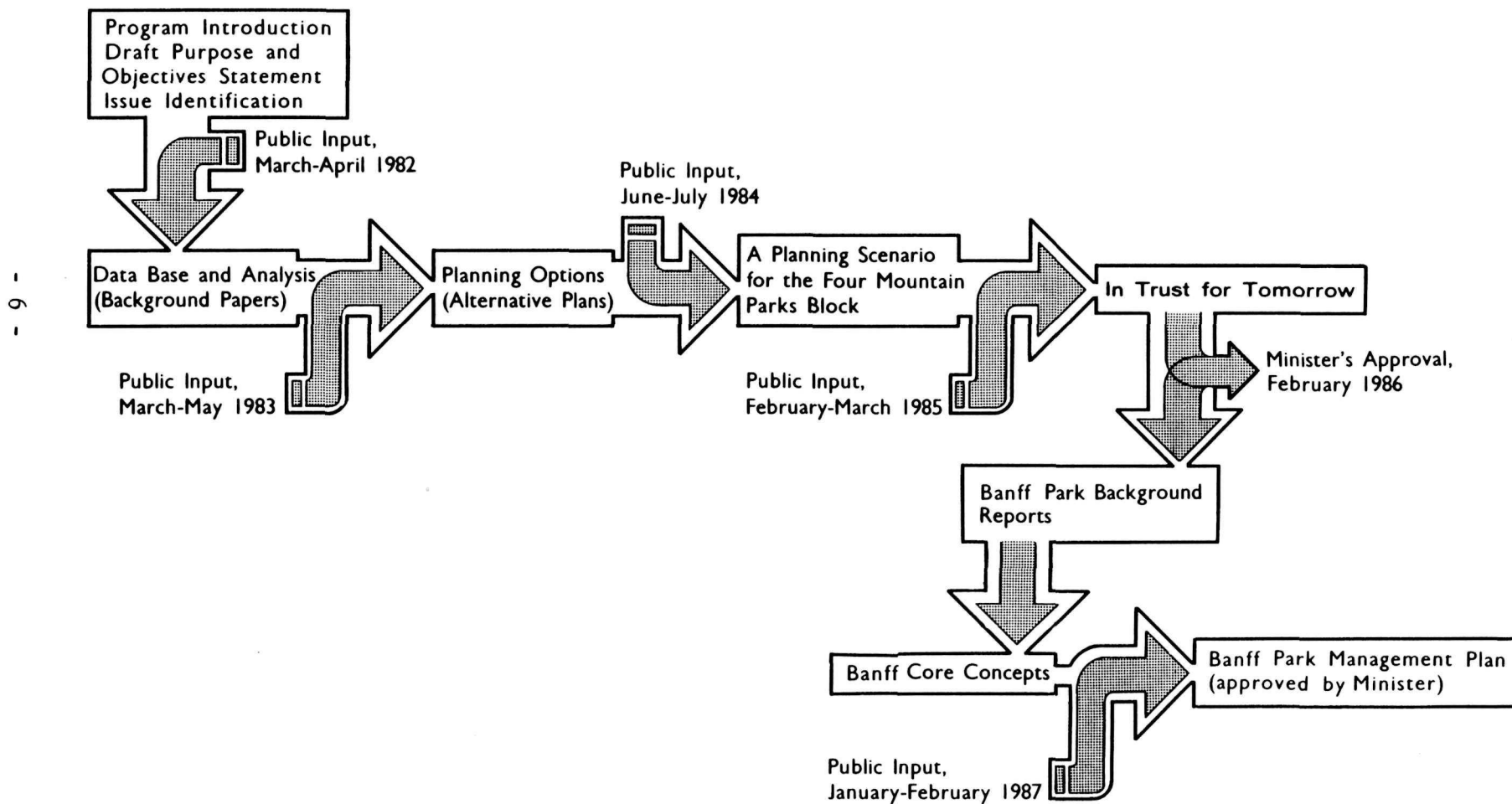
1.4 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES STATEMENT FOR BANFF, JASPER, KOOTENAY AND YOHO NATIONAL PARKS

The Purpose and Objectives Statement for these parks was approved in 1983 and endorsed by the Minister in 1986. This statement sets the stage for the development of the direction contained in In Trust for Tomorrow and, subsequently, the management plan for Banff National Park.

1.4.1 Purpose of the Four Mountain Parks

National parks were created in Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, and Yoho in order to protect and preserve them for the appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of present and future generations of Canadians and for other visitors; the Rocky Mountains, which form the Canadian portion of the cordillera - that mountainous spine that reaches from Alaska to Peru - contain a representative cross-section of its flora and fauna.

Figure 1: The Planning Process



1.4.2 Objectives for the Parks

Protection and Preservation of Resources

Natural Resources and Processes

- a) To protect and preserve the natural resources and processes occurring within Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, and Yoho.
- b) To provide the highest level of protection or, where appropriate, preservation of resources and processes that are:
 - i) nationally or internationally significant;
 - ii) unique, rare, or endangered;
 - iii) good examples of the natural resources and processes occurring in the Canadian Rocky Mountains; and
 - iv) important in retaining the park's wilderness character.

Cultural Resources

- a) To protect, preserve, recognize, or restore in an appropriate manner the cultural resources of Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, and Yoho national parks.
- b) To give the highest level of attention to those resources that are:
 - i) nationally significant;
 - ii) good examples of human interaction with nature in the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

Appreciation, Understanding, and Enjoyment of the Parks, Their Facilities and Services

- a) To provide year-round opportunities for the appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of the park's natural and cultural resources while maintaining the wilderness character of Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, and Yoho national parks.
- b) To provide facilities and services for day use and extended stays in the parks, recognizing that visitors have varying skills, knowledge, economic means, and interests.
- c) To provide a range of information, orientation and interpretive services and facilities to help visitors better understand, protect, and safely enjoy the parks.

- d) To continue to provide visitors with the essential facilities and services and to meet the operating needs of the parks in the towns of Banff and Jasper, at the visitor service centre at Lake Louise, and in Field.
- e) To provide those services and facilities that meet the community needs of the residents of the towns of Banff and Jasper.

Integrating Regional Considerations

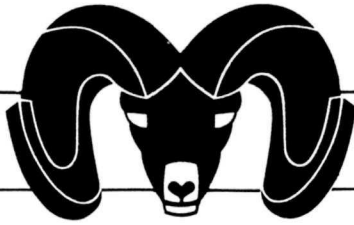
- a) To coordinate the protection and management of the Four Parks with provincial governments and agencies and with those private interests that have control of lands and resources adjacent to the parks.
- b) To coordinate the social and economic activities of the parks, where feasible, with programs in adjacent regions.
- c) To coordinate the parks' role in recreation and tourism in keeping with national programs and programs in adjacent regions, while remaining sensitive to environmental objectives.
- d) To minimize the effect on the parks' natural and cultural resources of transportation and utility developments, and of scientific and educational projects.
- e) To involve people in adjacent regions in planning and plan implementation for the Four Parks.

(Parks Canada, 1983)

2.0

THE PARK CONCEPT





2.0

THE PARK CONCEPT

2.1 EXPLANATION OF THE PARK CONCEPT

The Park Concept is an integral part of all park management plans. It sets the planning proposals that follow within the context of the park's characteristics and describes, in general terms, the proposals for resource protection and management, recreation, access, facility development and regional integration.

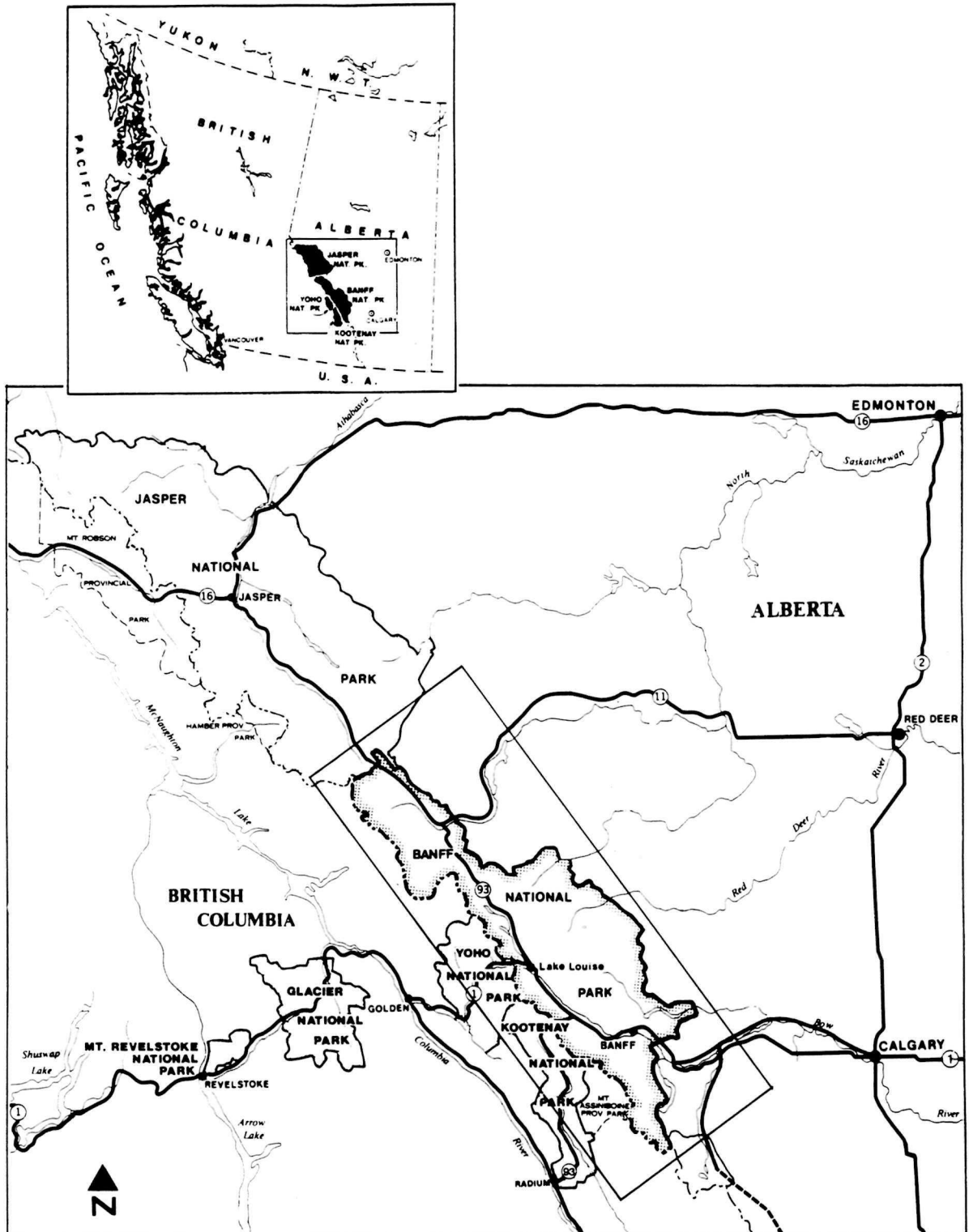
2.2 THE PARK CONCEPT

Banff National Park is the birthplace of Canada's national parks system. Thermal springs at the Cave and Basin and elsewhere on Sulphur Mountain played an important role in the early establishment of a 26 km² park reserve and resort centre in 1885. Banff is now internationally renowned and is one of Canada's best known and frequently visited national parks. Along with Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho, Banff forms the 20,160 km² Rocky Mountain Park Block. Together, these four national parks were declared a World Heritage Site in 1984 in celebration of their internationally-significant resource values. Banff National Park is noted for its rolling Subalpine valleys, glacial blue lakes and rugged glacier-clad peaks.

Banff National Park will continue to be managed to provide the widest range of appropriate visitor activities available in the four mountain parks. The plan focusses on environmentally and architecturally sensitive redevelopment of existing facilities to best meet the changing expectations of park visitors. Alienation of additional undisturbed lands for visitor support developments is strictly limited. New emphasis will be placed upon achievable goals for the preservation, rehabilitation and interpretation of the park's natural and cultural resource values. This plan will help to ensure that the present range and balance of opportunities will still be available in Banff National Park at its Bicentennial.

The east gate of Banff National Park is located about 120 km west of Calgary along the Trans-Canada Highway. This 6,641 km² park shares its most northerly boundary with Jasper and portions of its western boundary with Yoho and Kootenay national parks (Figure 2). Most of the adjacent lands to the east are administered by the Alberta Forest Service. The adjacent lands to the west, not included in other national parks, are British Columbia Crown Lands that are administered largely by the British Columbia Forest Service.

Figure 2: Banff National Park Regional Setting



There are both positive and negative aspects to Banff's role as Canada's oldest and one of the world's best-known national parks. Millions of visitors enjoy the park annually, but this use pressure has led, over the past 103 years, to a cumulative level of development that is unusual in a national park setting. At the same time, the park contains vast tracts of wilderness, seen by a very small percentage of visitors. The park's long tradition as a protected area means that it has a devoted constituency of visitors who enjoy the facilities available but are conscious of the need for judicious stewardship.

A. Natural and Cultural Resources

Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, Yoho and Waterton Lakes national parks contain protected examples of the Rocky Mountain natural region.* The Western, Main and Front ranges of the eastern system of the Canadian Cordillera are found in these parks. Significant differences in physiography, climate, water resources, vegetation and wildlife are found in the ranges. Consequently, the five parks do not contain a duplication of the same heritage resource themes. Banff National Park is representative of the Main and Front ranges. The Clearwater-Ram watershed in Banff National Park has been identified as a Natural Area of Canadian Significance because it contains outstanding representations of the natural features that comprise the region.**

The park's important or representative natural history themes are outlined below.

* Canada is divided into 39 terrestrial regions for the purposes of park systems planning. These regions have been identified on the basis of physical and ecological factors. One of the goals for the Canadian national park system is to have each region represented. Today there are 34 national parks in Canada which represent 21 of the 39 terrestrial natural regions.

** Under the systems planning approach, each region is studied separately to identify Natural Areas of Canadian Significance (NACS). In selecting NACS, the following criteria are used:

- a) the area must be representative or typical of the diverse geological, physiological and biological characteristics of the natural region; and
- b) the area must have experienced minimum modification by humans or, if significant modification has occurred, must have potential for restoration to a natural site.

- 1) The geological and physiographic features which are representative of the Main and Front Ranges.

The two mountain ranges present in Banff National Park differ considerably in structure. The Main Ranges are higher than the mountains in the Front Ranges. They are formed of uplifted and gently-tilted rock strata. Mount Forbes (3628 m above mean sea level) and Mount Assiniboine (3618 m) are the two highest mountains in the park. The Front Ranges were formed later than the Main Ranges and consist of severely folded rock, bounded by numerous faults. Gentle west-facing slopes and steep east-facing scarps are typical of the Front Range mountains. Mount Rundle is a superb example of a Front Range mountain.

- 2) The geomorphological features associated with fluvial and glacial processes of erosion and deposition.

Ancestral river systems flowed between these mountain ranges and in places breached them, forming narrow transverse valleys. These narrow and V-shaped valleys were modified by extensive glacial scouring and deposition which occurred intermittently between one million and 14,000 years ago. Excellent examples of both landform agents are represented in the park. Noteworthy examples of active river erosion are present at Mistaya and Johnston canyons. High mountain glaciers and expansive icefields occur along the length of the Continental Divide.

The park also contains many karst features (erosion by solution of limestone, forming sinkholes and cavern systems), and most notably the Castleguard caves. This cave system, which runs for many kilometres under Mount Castleguard, is of international significance.

- 3) The hydrological apex of Western Canada and the important headwater areas of the North Saskatchewan, Red Deer and Bow rivers.

The park also contains many significant examples of hydrological features associated with mountain building and glaciation, including waterfalls, lakes, tarns, fast-flowing rivers and a number of hot and cold natural springs. The Sulphur Mountain thermal springs played a significant role in the establishment of Banff National Park.

- 4) Major vegetation zones representative of the Main and Front Ranges, as well as variations associated with climatic and micro-climatic conditions.

The major life zones or ecoregions are Alpine tundra (above treeline), Subalpine forests (characterized by Englemann spruce and subalpine fir) and Montane forests (characterized by white spruce, mixed forests, grasslands and Douglas

fir). As a result of forest fires, extensive stands of lodgepole pine are now present in the Montane and Subalpine zones. Many of these stands are now mature. Other resource components, such as wildlife habitat, vary along with these ecoregions.

There are significant differences in vegetation which occur from west to east across the park. These changes are largely a response to an eastward diminution of precipitation. As well, the range limits of some species, due to latitude, are present in the park. Subalpine larch occur near their northern limit at Lake Louise. The expansive and widely-acclaimed Sunshine meadows are important, in part, because they contain arctic species at their southern limits and some alpine species at their northern limits.

- 5) Wildlife populations that are representative of the eastern portion of the natural region.

Species such as grizzly bear, mountain goat, bighorn sheep, mountain caribou, Rocky Mountain elk, cougar and wolves are dependent on habitats available in the large and relatively undisturbed tracts of land within the park.

- 6) The large natural areas in the Park where ecological systems may exist with minimal human interference.

The mandate of Canadian national parks applies not only to natural resources, but also to archaeological and historic resources. The history of lands incorporated in the park encompasses prehistoric use, exploration, trans-mountain fur trade links, trans-continental transportation routes, resource extraction, early tourism and recreation, and national park development and management.

Prior to the arrival of the first Europeans, the major valleys in Banff National Park were travelled by Kootenai and Plains Indians. Prehistoric occupation of the area was by an apparently stable and mountain-valley adapted people who seasonally used the diverse flora and fauna of the valleys and adjacent uplands.

In the period 1780 to 1820, infrequent expeditions led by fur traders were made into the park area, including David Thompson's crossing of the Howse Pass and trip down the North Saskatchewan River in 1807. Extensive scientific explorations of the area were made of the major river valleys between 1858 and 1860 by Dr. James Hector of the Palliser Expedition.

After the Palliser Expedition, little activity by Europeans occurred until 1881 when Major Rogers began his search for a suitable route for the Canadian Pacific Railway. The construction of the mainline through the Bow River valley a few years later changed the character of the area forever. In an attempt to encourage passenger use along the rail line, a variety of tourist facilities were constructed and widely promoted throughout what was to eventually become Banff National Park. Mining for coal, silver and copper, and logging were other land use activities that followed the railway.

Banff became Canada's first national park in 1885, with the designation of Rocky Mountain Park, centred on the Sulphur Mountain Hotsprings.

B. Visitor Understanding, Appreciation and Enjoyment

Over eight million people enter Banff National Park each year, from the east and west along the Trans-Canada Highway, from Jasper along the Icefields Parkway, and from Kootenay on the Kootenay Parkway (Highway 93). Over one-half of these people drive through the park, and the remainder (about 3.3 million) stop to use and enjoy it for periods of a few hours to many days. The number of visitors to the park has been increasing since 1984.

Banff is a year-round park, although the heaviest periods of use are in the summer and winter months. In recent years, use has increased during the early autumn and late spring shoulder seasons.

Most of the use and facilities in the park are centred at Banff townsite, the Lake Louise Visitor Centre, and along the Trans-Canada Highway and Icefields Parkway. Popular activities in the park are sightseeing, camping, hiking, fishing, boating, cross-country skiing and downhill skiing. A range of backcountry opportunities are available to park users, from the popular Egypt Lake and Lake Louise areas to the little-visited and remote areas in the northeastern portions of the park.

Planning Areas

The park, for the purposes of planning, is divided into three frontcountry or road-accessible regions - Banff townsite, Bow Valley-Lake Louise and the Icefields Parkway - and one backcountry region (Figure 3).

The Banff Townsite region is used year-round, although heaviest use is in the summer and winter months. Most use is concentrated in the townsite boundaries. The Minnewanka loop road receives considerable use during the summer months by day visitors. Popular activities in the region are sightseeing, camping, hiking, fishing, boating, swimming, downhill and cross-country skiing.

The town of Banff, with a permanent population of 5,700, provides goods and services which are necessary for the public use, enjoyment and appreciation of the park. As well, it provides comfortable community living for persons with a need to reside in the park.

The townsite region contains the majority of facility development in the park. The region is also located in the Montane ecoregion, which contains a variety of significant resource values. An inevitable tension exists in this area between resource preservation, and the demand for visitor use and facilities.

The Bow Valley-Lake Louise region is an area in transition, with a major twinning project on the Trans-Canada Highway between Sunshine Junction and Lake Louise. This region is used year-round although heaviest use occurs in the summer and during the winter at the Sunshine and Lake Louise ski areas. Popular activities are sightseeing, camping, hiking, fishing, canoeing, and downhill and cross-country skiing.

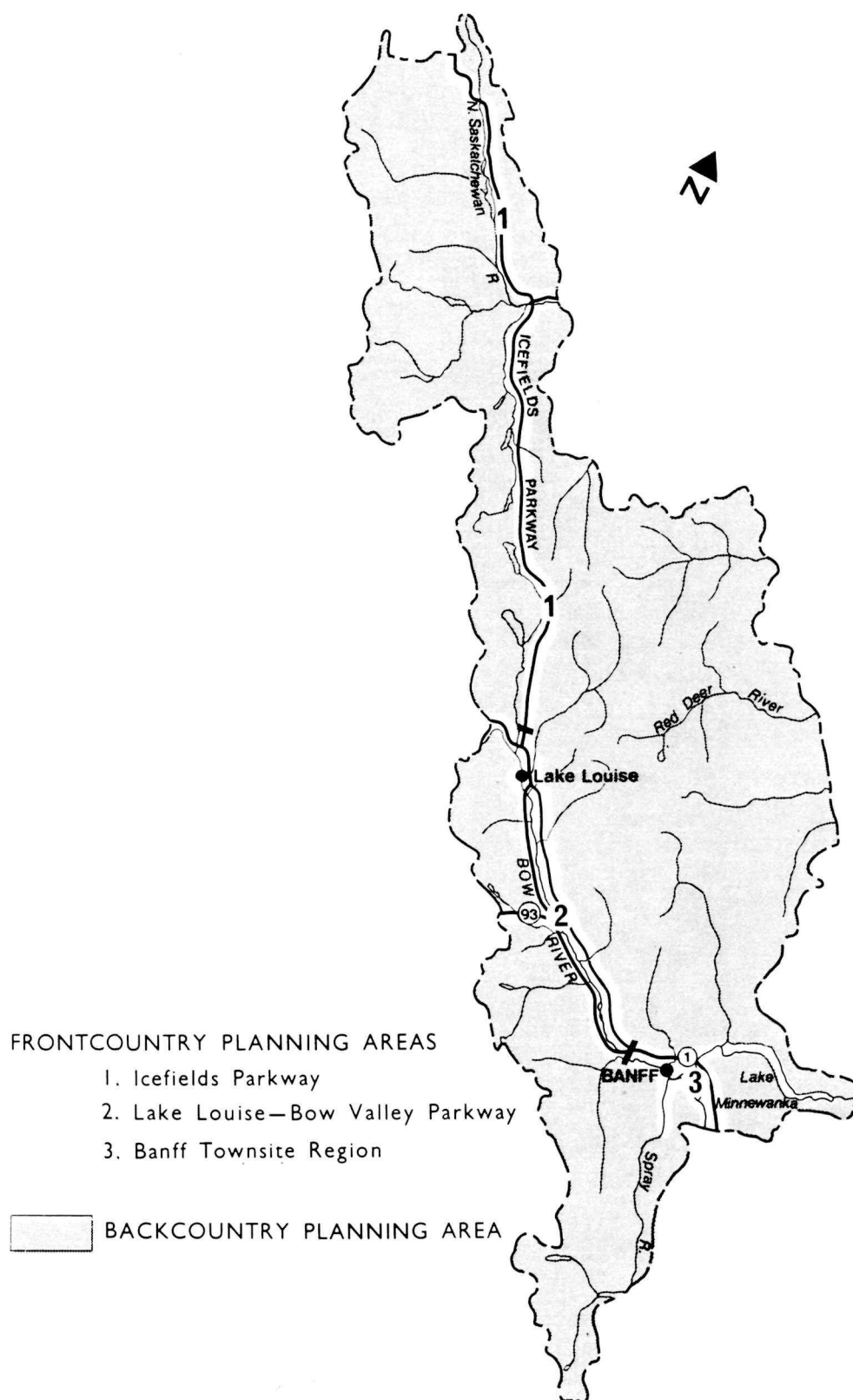
Beginning with the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway through the Bow Valley, use has been focussed in the scenic areas of Lake Louise and Moraine Lake. The pattern continues today, and the area has become internationally renowned as a tourist destination. Each year over a million people visit these two lakes. Implementation of the Lake Louise Development Plan is on-going, and the quality and range of services in that visitor centre are being upgraded. Another attraction in the region is Johnston Canyon on the Bow Valley Parkway.

The patterns of use that will occur, once construction is completed at Lake Louise, and along the Trans-Canada Highway and Bow Valley Parkway, are not precisely known.

The scenery along the 288 km Icefields Parkway is internationally acclaimed - attracting over one million visitors each year. The vast majority of the visitor use occurs in the summer months. Attractions on the 122 km Banff section of the parkway are Bow Summit and Parker Ridge. The major attraction, however, is the Columbia Icefield which is in Jasper National Park. Popular recreational activities in the corridor include sightseeing, camping, picnicking, hiking and bicycling. It is estimated that about 50 cyclists per day use the parkway during July and August, making it the most popular bicycle route in the Four Mountain Parks.

There is relatively little overnight accommodation provided along the parkway, even during the summer. Most parkway visitors stay in the town of Jasper, Lake Louise or the town of Banff and make day-long excursions to visit the area. As a result, the use of the Columbia Icefield area peaks between mid-day and the early afternoon.

Figure 3: Planning Areas, Banff National Park



The Banff backcountry region comprises over 93% of the park. Approximately 11,500 visitors stay overnight in the park's backcountry each year, while a vastly greater number enter the backcountry on day trips. Overnight backcountry use has declined an average of 4.6% per year since 1982.

Backcountry use in the park is unevenly distributed. The majority of visitors travel to a few areas on a limited number of weekends. Hiking and trail riding are the most popular summer backcountry activities. Ski touring has increased in popularity as a winter activity, although the majority occurs on a day basis.

There are approximately 1,300 km of designated trails in the park. The park currently provides a range of accommodation facilities, consisting of three trail shelters, seven alpine huts, four commercial lodges (only two are operated as lodges at present) and cabins, and a number of rotational and semi-permanent group camps which are associated with horse use. In about one-half of the park, random camping is permitted. Backcountry visitors are required to use designated backcountry campgrounds (of which there are over 45) in the remaining areas.

Visitors to all areas of the park are provided with a wide range of information and interpretation services. Interpretive programs are provided about features and sites of special significance. Information about park facilities and activities is available at centres in the town of Banff and the Lake Louise Visitor Centre.

MANAGEMENT PLANNING PRINCIPLES

- 1) The protection of natural and cultural resources will receive a priority in Banff National Park. Priority will be placed on protecting and even restoring important segments of the much abused Montane ecoregion in the Bow River Valley. At the same time, opportunities for visitor understanding, appreciation and enjoyment will continue to be provided. Existing facilities will be permitted to expand only if no serious environmental consequences result. Man-made disturbances along the park's road system will be rehabilitated.
- 2) Future demand for park opportunities will be dealt with proactively and within defined limits. A framework is outlined in this document to accommodate some increases in use pressures and to expand the range of park opportunities in response to demand. Levels of use and the resulting development of park lands to accommodate use are already

considerable. The Canadian Parks Service will not, therefore, promote the general use of the park. The Parks Service will engage in market-orientated planning and marketing programs in circumstances of declining use and under-utilized facilities. No extraordinary attempts will be made to stimulate use of facilities which are presently well used or to promote new types of use. Instead, greater effort will be made to inform the constituency of park users of the opportunities that have been provided.

- 3) In recognition of the already extensive facility and infrastructure system in the park, the expansion and upgrading of existing facilities in disturbed areas will be favoured. This will serve to reduce incremental impairment of park lands by maintaining the current patterns of use and development. Facilities will be concentrated in existing nodes rather than dispersed throughout the park.
- 4) The quality of appropriate visitor experiences will be improved by upgrading park facilities and services. These initiatives will be undertaken with recognition of the diversity of interests, ages, skills and capabilities of park visitors. Much can be done through better use of existing facilities and services.
- 5) The future redevelopment of any facility will occur with the highest regard for design elements that are compatible with the surrounding environment. In addition, the rehabilitation of man-disturbed areas will be a priority. This will improve the aesthetic quality of the park, mitigate a variety of environmental impacts and help to serve as an exemplary case of responsible land stewardship in a World Heritage Site.
- 6) The Canadian Parks Service will continue to provide a range of "core services", such as campgrounds and heritage interpretation. The private sector will be encouraged, however, to provide a variety of required facilities and services in the park. This is particularly essential in large parks such as Banff and Jasper. The Canadian Parks Service will work closely with the private sector in the planning and development of these facilities and services. Although the private sector assumes most of the capital risks in these ventures, it is to the advantage of the Canadian Parks Service and its millions of visitors to ensure they are successful.
- 7) It is recognized that Banff National Park is a popular tourism destination. The Canadian Parks Service is primarily in the business of providing park opportunities which are closely associated with the heritage resource values it preserves rather than the provision of resort experiences. Initiatives of the tourism industry will be supported to the extent that the fundamental mandates of national parks are not compromised.

- 8) A major emphasis will be placed on improving all aspects of communication (information and interpretation) services. Visitors will be made aware of what opportunities are and are not provided in the park. In this way, visitor expectations will be consistent with what the park can offer. Existing services and facilities, in many cases, can accommodate more use, but visitors are not aware of the available opportunities. Information can also be used to reduce the impact of visitors on the park's resources by fostering an appropriate ethic to their use. The park's public safety program will rely heavily on communication services.
- 9) More cooperative and consultative programs will be established with government agencies, the tourism service industry and special interests concerned with lands surrounding Banff National Park. This initiative will work towards the realization of mutually acceptable and beneficial goals and objectives for the provision of visitor facilities and services. Particular attention will be directed to integrating planning, development and management actions in the Bow River valley.
- 10) The Canadian Parks Service will manage Banff, Kootenay, Yoho and Jasper national parks in a consistent manner. An emphasis will be placed on ensuring consistency in those management areas which directly benefit visitors. These areas include backcountry restrictions and regulations, as well as the provision of information about specific recreational opportunities in these parks.
- 11) Public safety will be taken into account in the planning, design and evaluation of visitor programs. The Parks Service will place a high priority on providing comprehensive accident prevention programs. The Parks Service will also maintain the park's current public safety programs, such as avalanche control and mountain rescue services. The public safety program in Banff will continue to play a leading role in the region. Visitors will be expected, however, to cope with adverse conditions one might reasonably expect to encounter; and consider the extent of their self-rescue capability in planning and conducting these activities.

In addition to these general principles, the following principles apply to specific regions in the park:

Due to the well-developed nature and extensive use made of the Banff Townsite region, the major future emphasis for areas outside the town will be placed on heritage resource protection. Development outside the townsite boundaries will be restricted and, wherever possible, mitigation of

existing disturbances will occur. The time has arrived in the townsite region, when limits to future growth and development must be established. The park opportunities which are provided outside the townsite boundaries are adequate, but a far better job needs to be done to make visitors aware of them. In this way, visitors will be encouraged to experience not only the opportunities in the town's shopping malls and restaurants, but also the natural opportunities in the surrounding area. Additional facilities and services required either by park visitors or residents of the town will be located outside the park or within the town boundaries.

The Lake Louise-Bow Valley region is an area in transition. Park opportunities will be redirected from the Trans-Canada Highway to the Bow Valley Parkway. Man-made disturbances along both corridors, as well as the Kootenay Parkway, will be rehabilitated. An emphasis will be placed on improving and expanding roadside and recreational opportunities along these parkways.

The world renowned attractions and concentration of facilities at Lake Louise and Moraine Lake makes the area one of the major tourist destinations in Western Canada. The on-going program of improvements to facilities and services in the Lake Louise Visitor Centre will ensure this continues. Nonetheless, the "low-growth option" which is being applied to Lake Louise means that a level of unfulfilled demand for both facilities and services will occur. This eventual circumstance is acknowledged and accepted. Another park town will not be created.

The Icefields Parkway region will continue to be managed as an internationally acclaimed sightseeing route. The natural and aesthetic quality of the road corridor will be enhanced by rehabilitating man-made disturbances, such as abandoned road alignments and borrow pits, and by minimizing visual intrusions caused by facilities. The existing roadside disturbances are not compatible with the parkway's reputation. Visitors travelling along the parkway will be provided with year-round opportunities to use, enjoy and learn about the spectacular natural landscape. Particular emphasis will be directed to upgrading the quality and range of opportunities associated with existing roadside facilities. Information services will be upgraded to a level commensurate with the parkway's high profile.

Approximately 93% of the park will be managed to provide backcountry opportunities and to protect natural conditions. In the backcountry areas of the park, a full range of opportunities will continue to be provided. There is limited opportunity to modify or alter existing patterns of use. They are well established and supported by necessary facilities and services. Instead, a greater

emphasis will be placed on ensuring that various areas of the park continue to provide identified opportunities and that a gradual erosion of traditional wilderness (or wildland) opportunities does not occur. The experiences of backcountry visitors will be improved by generally upgrading existing facilities and by reducing conflicts between user groups. Information about the available range of opportunities will be upgraded so that visitors can undertake backcountry trips which suit their expectations, inclinations and experience levels.

2.3 LAND USE ZONING PLAN

National Park Zoning System

Land use zoning is employed in the management of national parks to establish the extent of protection and use of specific park lands. A five part zoning system is used. It is applied on the basis of established goals, objectives, resource analyses and potential uses of a park. The land use zoning plan for Banff National Park expresses the application of Parks Canada Policy (1979), In Trust for Tomorrow (1986) and park management knowledge to the specific context of the park.

Zone I - Special Preservation

Zone I includes areas or features which deserve special preservation because they contain or support unique, rare or endangered features, or the best examples of natural features. Access and use will be strictly controlled or may be prohibited altogether. No motorized access or man-made facilities will be permitted.

Zone II - Wilderness

Extensive areas which are good representatives of each of the natural history themes of the park and which will be maintained in a wilderness state are considered Zone II areas. Only certain activities requiring limited primitive visitor facilities appropriate to a wilderness experience will be allowed. Limits will be placed on numbers of users. No motorized access will be permitted. Management actions will ensure that visitors are dispersed.

It is the intention of the Minister of the Environment to recommend to the Governor - in - Council the designation of legislated wilderness areas on the basis of the park land use zoning plan. All identified Zone II lands and appropriate Zone I lands within them would be recommended for Order - in - Council designation as wilderness areas. This will have the effect of defining these areas by government regulation and preventing any level of development beyond that required for providing essential services and ensuring the protection of park resources.

Zone III - Natural Environment

Zone III areas are maintained as natural environments which can sustain, with a minimum of impairment, a selected range of low-density outdoor activities with a minimum of related facilities. Non-motorized access will be preferred. Access by public transit will be permitted. Controlled access by private vehicles will only be permitted where it has traditionally been allowed in the past.

Zone IV - Outdoor Recreation

Limited areas that can accommodate a broad range of education, outdoor opportunities and related facilities in ways that respect the natural landscape and that are safe and convenient will be considered Zone IV areas. Motorized access will be permitted and may be separated from non-motorized access.

Zone V - Park Services

Zone V includes towns and visitor centres in certain existing national parks which contain a concentration of visitor services and support facilities. Motorized access will be permitted.

Banff National Park Zoning

The zoning plan that follows in Figure 4 and foldout map is a conceptual application of the land use zoning system. In the future, a more precise zoning map will be prepared to assist in the designation of Wilderness Areas through Order - in - Council.

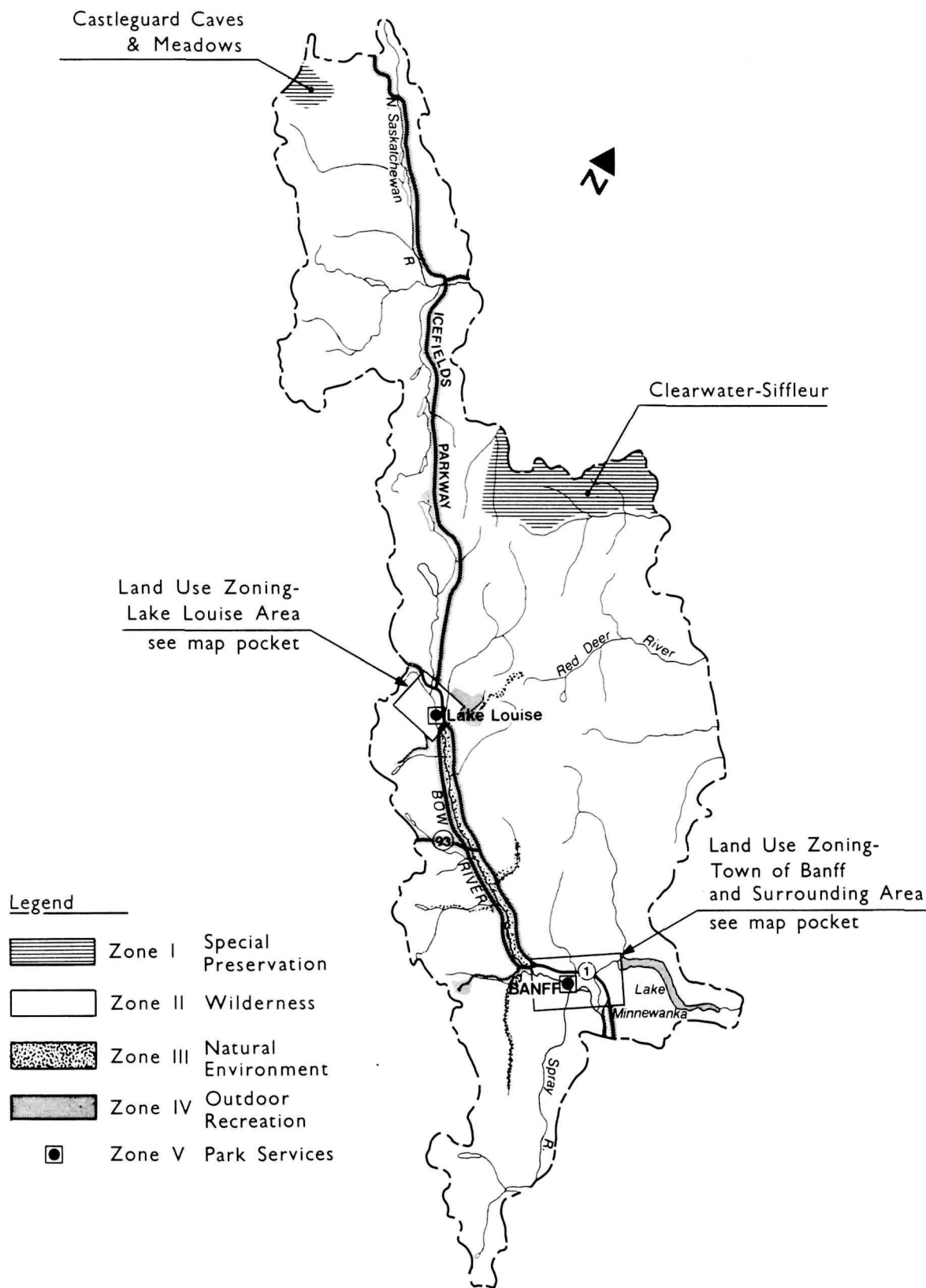
ZONE I - SPECIAL PRESERVATION (approximately 4% of park area)

Four Zone I areas have been identified in the park and are described below. Management guidelines will be developed to control visitor use and manage resources in these areas. Section 3.0 of this plan directs further research and the development of comprehensive, ecologically based management strategies to ensure the protection of park resources. Additional Zone I areas could be identified as a result of these studies. However, any major change to zoning will require a formal amendment to the plan, involving public participation.

1. The Clearwater-Siffleur Area

The Clearwater-Siffleur area contains the range of the southernmost Woodland caribou herd in Alberta and a number of physiographic and biotic resources rare in Banff National Park. These resources include hoodoos, permafrost areas, rare plant and animal species, prehistoric cultural sites, elk and bighorn sheep range, wolf and grizzly bear habitat.

Figure 4: Land-Use Zoning, Banff National Park
 (see map pocket for detailed zoning)



Woodland caribou are the rarest ungulate in the park, and are identified nationally as a rare species (COSEWIC, 1985). Woodland caribou are also a protected species in Alberta. The Siffleur herd numbers 10 to 15 individuals and is the southernmost herd in Alberta. It is unlikely that they have contact with other caribou populations and are in a precarious circumstance with regard to the limited genetic diversity of the herd and their susceptibility to disease. The Zone I designation of this area ensures that its resources will receive the highest level of protection.

2. Castleguard Cave System and Meadows

The Castleguard Cave System is an internationally significant karst system in terms of physical development, diversity of features, and rare and unique fauna. Castleguard Cave is developed in the upper part of the flat-lying Cathedral Formation. It is the longest cave in Canada at 16.2 km and, at 350 m, is the second deepest known cave in Canada. The principle passage extends beneath the Columbia Icefield where it is blocked by glacial ice 335 m below the surface of the glacier. Geomagnetically reversed speleotherms (stalagmites, stalactites and calcite flowstones) suggest that the main passages were drained at least 750,000 years BP and possibly 1,250,000 years BP.

The cave contains 18 km of mapped passages, but might well contain over twice that length. The cave could be one of the longest systems in the world. The Castleguard area is the finest karst region yet described in North America and among the finest examples of alpine karst anywhere in the world (Ford, 1973).

At an estimated depth of 100 to 250 m below Castleguard Cave is Castleguard II, an inaccessible cave which drains the central portion of the Columbia Icefield to the Big Springs on the Castleguard River. About 6.4 km north of the Castleguard Cave entrance, approximately 100 sinkholes connect to Castleguard III, a cave system which also supplies water to the Big Springs.

The entire Castleguard cave system contains a notable variety of features. Surficial features near the entrance include many diverse small karren (minor solutional forms). The cave contains the best examples of stalactites and stalagmites in Canada, precipitates of gypsum, hydromagnesite and other rare cave minerals, and varved clays. Four nests of rare cubic pearls (calcite pisolites) occur in Castleguard Cave.

Four invertebrate animals are known to occur in the cave. An isopod (Salmasellus steganothrix) and an amphipod (Stygobromus canadensis) may have survived several glaciations in the cave.

The Castleguard area not only contains significant surficial karst features but also provides an outstanding example of pristine Alpine vegetation. The cave system and surficial features will receive protection under the Zone I designation.

3. Cave and Basin Marsh

The development of the Cave and Basin Springs on Sulphur Mountain lead to the establishment of the Canadian national park system. The Cave and Basin complex has been designated a National Historic Site in recognition of its significance.

The warm waters of the Cave and Basin marsh contains invertebrates endemic to this area of the park. Currently three species of introduced tropical fish, the Mosquito fish, Sailfin Molly and Jewelfish, also occur in the drainage. The marsh also provides unique habitat for reptiles and amphibians. The Cave and Basin area provides the most important habitat for snakes in Banff. Suitable hibernacula are formed in association with the hot springs. The most productive avifauna habitat in the Lower Bow Valley occurs in association with the Cave and Basin and Vermilion Lakes wetlands. The Cave and Basin Marsh has been designated as a Zone I area to recognize its significance and to preserve its unique fauna and flora.

4. Christensen Archaeological Site

This deeply stratified site, located along the Bow Valley Parkway contains archaeological evidence dating from 8,000 years before present to historic times. There are at least nine separate periods of occupation evident at the site. Protection of not only the artifacts at the site but the entire area will occur.

ZONE II - WILDERNESS (approximately 93% of park area)

The majority of the park will be managed as Zone II - Wilderness. Much of this land consists of steep mountain slopes, glaciers and lakes. Zone II areas cannot support high levels of visitor use and facility development; limits, therefore, may be placed on the number of users in these wilderness areas and no motorized access will be permitted. Areas more suitable for facility development and visitor use are designated as Zone III, IV or V.

Banff, along with Jasper, will continue to provide the majority of wilderness areas in the Four Mountain Parks. Warden patrol cabins, to be used solely for operational purposes, will remain in this zone. Other man-made facilities will be restricted to trails and designated backcountry campgrounds, alpine huts and trail shelters. All backcountry roads in this zone will be closed and either allowed to revegetate naturally or will be rehabilitated to a suitable trail standard. Portions of the

park will be managed with no man-made facilities or improvements. These include the Alexandra, Mistaya, Clearwater, Bonnet and Dormer areas. The absence of a continuous buffer between the highway corridor and the Wilderness zone is a recognition of the importance given to preserving lands along the highway in a natural condition.

Certain basic activities and facilities may be permitted in Banff's wilderness areas where they are essential for the purposes of park administration, resource protection, public safety and the provision of basic visitor facilities. Examples of these activities and facilities are provided below.

A. Fire Control

Banff's fire management program involves rapid initial attack, achieved through the use of fixed wing and rotary aircraft and the quick deployment of ground crews. Future fire management activities would have similar equipment and access requirements. Based on the critical nature of these operational requirements, the lack of viable alternatives and the resource values and park facilities at risk, the activities associated with fire fighting are acceptable for the duration of the park management plan.

B. Avalanche Control

In the interest of public safety in areas of high visitor use, such as highways, the monitoring and control of avalanches will remain an administrative priority. Such activities, involving the use of helicopters and oversnow vehicles as well as explosives and/or large calibre guns, are necessary and acceptable in Zone II areas.

C. Backcountry Patrols and Facility Maintenance

The controlled use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in backcountry areas for reasons of public safety and resource protection or facility construction and maintenance, although non-conforming in Zone I, II, and III areas, are considered to be acceptable.

D. Basic Visitor Facilities

A number of visitor facilities are considered acceptable in some Zone II - Wilderness areas as they increase public safety, support resource protection objectives and do not compromise wilderness values. These basic facilities are trails, backcountry campgrounds, alpine huts and trail shelters. Further details on the provision of visitor facilities in Banff's wilderness areas are provided in section 4.1.

ZONE III - NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (approximately 1% of park area)

This zone is applied to limited areas where visitor use concentrations require the development of facilities which exceed the acceptable standards in Zone II areas. No motorized access will be permitted in these areas. Inserts showing the Zone III areas in the Banff townsite and Lake Louise regions are found on the zoning map located in the map pocket at the back of this plan. Rigorous protection of these areas is required because of their environmental and aesthetic importance. The Bow River and its associated shorelands between the Trans-Canada Highway and the Canadian Pacific Railway mainline are identified as Zone III. Access routes and lands associated with backcountry commercial lodges also receive a Zone III designation.

ZONE IV - OUTDOOR RECREATION (approximately 1% of park area)

The Zone IV corridor includes the rights-of-way along park roads open to public vehicular access. This includes frontcountry campgrounds, picnic sites, viewpoints, major trailhead parking areas, and other roadside developments. Zone IV development nodes occur at Lake Minnewanka, the Mount Norquay ski area, the Sunshine ski area, Moraine Lake and the Lake Louise ski area.

ZONE V - PARK SERVICES (less than 1% of park area)

The town of Banff and the Lake Louise Visitor Centre are the Zone V areas. The Banff Townsite Plan will guide land use within the boundaries of that community.

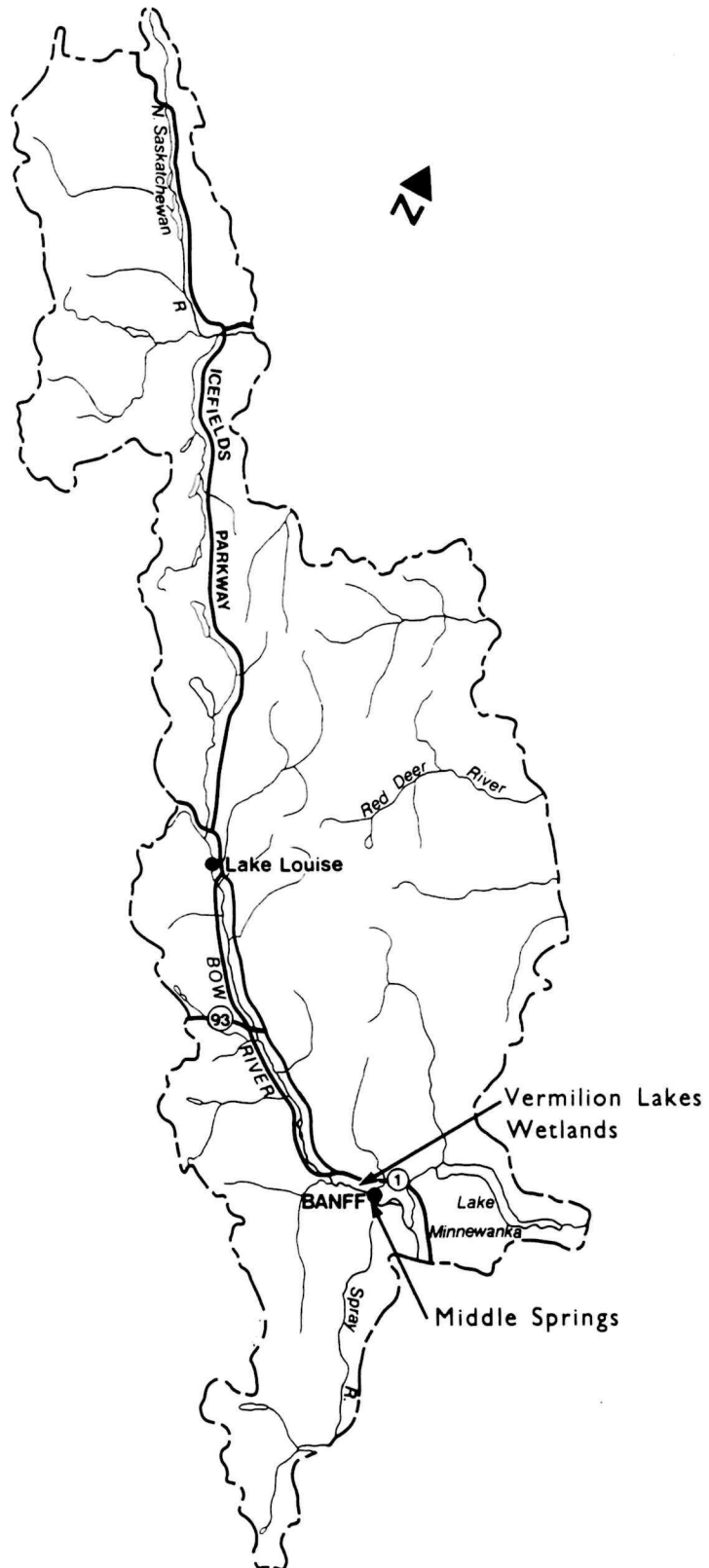
2.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE SITES

The Environmentally Sensitive Site (ESS) designation is applied to areas within the park containing significant and sensitive heritage resource features which require special protection (Figure 5). Unlike Zone I designated areas, an ESS can accommodate higher levels of controlled visitor activity without jeopardizing heritage resource values. Area specific guidelines for each ESS will be developed to identify the appropriate levels and types of visitor use possible. The guidelines will reflect the high priority placed on the protection of these sensitive areas.

1. The Vermilion Lakes Wetlands

The popular Vermilion Lakes Wetlands area contains a wide diversity of vegetation types and a disproportionately high number of rare or significant plant species. These communities provide important habitat for a variety of birds and mammals.

Figure 5: Environmentally Sensitive Sites



The wetlands are biologically productive and diverse. The high water table and wet conditions make the area susceptible to impact and mitigation difficult.

The area contains a large number of special features, lakes, ponds, springs, rare resident and migrant birds, moose winter range, an elk calving area and ungulate mineral licks. The alluvial landforms fronting the north and east shores of the Vermilion Lakes and adjacent wetlands are also extremely rich in significant prehistoric resources containing a record extending from at least 10,700 years B.P.

There is a long record of water level manipulation and other human disturbance in this wetland area. Despite this history, no further disturbance or water level manipulation will be permitted in recognition of its environmental importance and fragility.

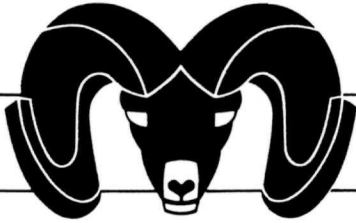
2. The Middle Springs

The upper and lower Middle Springs remain the only hot springs on Sulphur Mountain left relatively undisturbed. The warm mineral waters create unique habitat for rare plants and invertebrates. The Parks Service will move to acquire the Middle Springs property and revert it to a natural state.

3.0

**THE PROTECTION
AND MANAGEMENT
OF HERITAGE
RESOURCES**





3.0

THE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE RESOURCES

The Four Mountain Parks Block has been designated as a World Heritage Site in recognition of its exceptional scenic beauty and internationally significant resources. These parks comprise one of the largest and best known protected areas in the world and are dedicated to the protection of natural and cultural resources and processes, representative of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Although the parks were not established along strict ecological boundaries, their resources will be managed as an ecological unit. This requires close co-operation among the Four Mountain Parks and with provincial agencies and private interests managing adjacent lands.

In Trust For Tomorrow, A Management Framework for Four Mountain Parks, outlines a common approach for the protection and management of heritage resources in the four parks. It provides direction that resource protection will take precedence over visitor use and facility development, where conflicts occur, and that visitor use will be managed to safeguard natural and cultural resources, as well as the aesthetics of the park. This section of the management plan shows how the general direction for resource protection and management established in In Trust for Tomorrow will be applied in Banff National Park.

The Canadian Parks Service is responsible for heritage resource management within national parks. The Banff Warden Service takes the lead role in the protection and management of park resources and is involved in a number of resource management activities, ranging from bear management to forest fire suppression. Communication services and visitor education play an important role in the management of heritage resources. They form an integral component of the park's resource management strategy. Communication services are used to encourage an understanding and support for management practices and to promote public safety, and minimize environmental impacts.

Natural resources are managed through the Natural Resource Management Process. This process provides a structured approach to the collection and analysis of natural resource data. Researchers are also encouraged to avail themselves of park facilities to carry out appropriate studies. In this way a mutually beneficial knowledge exchange can occur.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure resource protection takes precedence over visitor use and facility development where conflicts occur; and that visitor use is managed to safeguard natural and cultural resources as well as the aesthetics of the park.
2. To manage the park on an ecological basis; cooperating and coordinating resource management and research with the other mountain national parks, and with provincial agencies managing adjacent lands.
3. To manage resources in a manner consistent with the park's World Heritage Site designation by protecting:
 - outstanding examples of significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution, and man's interaction with his natural environment;
 - formations, features or areas of exceptional natural beauty; and
 - natural habitats where threatened species of animals or plants of outstanding universal value still survive.
4. To protect geological, physiographic, hydrological, vegetative and wildlife resources representative of the Eastern Main and Front ranges, of the Rocky Mountains.
5. To protect and manage the North Saskatchewan River as a Canadian Heritage river.
6. To provide the greatest possible protection to unique, sensitive, rare or endangered plant and animal species.
7. To manage fire in a comprehensive manner recognizing its importance in maintaining the diversity and stability of the park ecosystem.
8. To minimize or prevent air and water pollution in the park.
9. To protect significant cultural resources and ensure the policies of the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office are followed in the management of the park.

3.1 GEOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

Banff National Park contains a number of special geological and physiographic resources. Special features include the Castleguard Cave System which is one of the finest examples of alpine karst in the world. It contains not only outstanding cave features but also rare invertebrate animals. Two sites in Banff, one near Massive and the other near Redearth Creek, contain Triassic fish fossils which are rare and of scientific value. The park also contains noteworthy physiographic features such as natural bridges, canyons, loess deposits, glacial landscapes and hoodoos.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. SPECIAL PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES IN THE PARK, SUCH AS NATURAL BRIDGES, LOESS DEPOSITS, CANYONS, GLACIAL LANDSCAPES AND HOODOOS WILL BE EVALUATED TO DETERMINE WHICH ARE OF SIGNIFICANCE AT THE PARK, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS.
- B. INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT FEATURES AND LANDFORMS, SUCH AS THE CASTLEGUARD CAVE SYSTEM AND IMPORTANT FOSSIL SITES, WILL BE GIVEN SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATION.
- C. ALTERNATE GRAVEL SOURCES TO MEET PARK REQUIREMENTS WILL BE SOUGHT OUTSIDE THE PARK, IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE TERRAIN DISTURBANCES.

Discussion:

Although a number of significant geological and physiographic features have been identified, (Achuff, White, and Pengelly, 1986) a systematic study is required to develop management strategies for their protection. The resulting information will also be invaluable in the development of management strategies and interpretive programs which explain the resources protected in the park. Site specific management strategies for visitor use will be based on resource sensitivity and the degree of protection required.

Gravel extraction results in impacts to vegetation, geological resources and the visual integrity of roadsides. The continued use of park resources for gravel extraction purposes is undesirable. Where feasible, gravel sources from outside the park will be used.

3.2 RESTORATION OF PREVIOUSLY DISTURBED SITES

Man-disturbed sites such as gravel pits, old backcountry roads and work camps exist throughout the park. These sites are environmental and aesthetic impacts. Most man-disturbed sites requiring active rehabilitation are associated with the major visitor travel corridors; the Icefields, Bow Valley and Kootenay parkways and the Trans-Canada Highway.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. FUTURE DISTURBANCES TO NATURAL LANDS WILL BE MINIMIZED. ANY ACTIVITY THAT DISTURBS A LANDFORM MAY NOT BE APPROVED UNTIL ALL NECESSARY REHABILITATION PLANS HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE.
- B. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A REHABILITATION PLAN WHICH WILL IDENTIFY AND SET PRIORITIES FOR AREAS REQUIRING ACTIVE REHABILITATION.

Discussion:

Rehabilitation efforts have been carried out sporadically and with little success. A systematic approach will be used to identify and prioritize areas requiring rehabilitation. In setting priorities, consideration will be given to the visible degree of impairment, the extent of damage to the natural habitat, the degree of disruption to a watershed, and the potential for continuing terrain damage. Rehabilitation will be accomplished actively, by scarifying, planting and seeding, or passively by allowing natural regeneration to occur.

Rehabilitation of disturbed sites, in particular borrow pits and side-hill cuts will have positive effects on:

- visitor experiences by improving aesthetic values;
- soil resources and the natural landscape by reducing erosion and mass movement; and
- wildlife by providing improved habitat, particularly for ungulates.

3.3 HYDROLOGICAL / AQUATIC RESOURCES

The park contains a number of significant hydrological resources. The scenic quality of the park's lakes, rivers, waterfalls and glaciers attracts visitors from around the world. The Sulphur Mountain Hot Springs which lead to the establishment of the park continues to be a major visitor attraction.

The park protects the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan and Bow rivers, which provide the major source of water for the great plains region of Alberta and Saskatchewan. In addition, the section of the North Saskatchewan River in Banff has been identified as a Canadian Heritage River because of its historic, natural and recreational values. The Parks Service will ensure that the natural flow patterns of these rivers are protected and that manipulation of the stream bed is minimized.

The Canadian Parks Service works closely with other departmental agencies, including the Environmental Protection Service and the Inland Waters Directorate, to develop water quality standards and minimize pollution.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL ENSURE THAT SOUND EFFLUENT MANAGEMENT OCCURS AT ALL FACILITIES IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK.
- B. WATER QUALITY WILL BE MONITORED AND, WHEREVER NECESSARY, ALL MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO ELIMINATE OR PREVENT POLLUTION.
- C. STANDARDS WILL BE DEVELOPED TO ENSURE THAT ANY NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS OF STREAM CHANNELS OR FLOWS WILL BE MADE IN WAYS THAT MINIMIZE WATER SILTATION, LOSS OF HABITAT AND CHANGES TO NATURAL FLOW PATTERNS.
- D. THE ABANDONED DAMS AT DUTHIL AND SPRAY EIGHT MILE WILL BE REMOVED AND THEIR NATURAL FLOW PATTERNS RESTORED.
- E. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL ENSURE THAT THE HERITAGE VALUES OF THE NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER, WHICH LED TO ITS NOMINATION AS A CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER, WILL BE PRESERVED.
- F. AQUATIC RESOURCES WILL BE MANAGED ON AN ECOLOGICAL BASIS, THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AQUATIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Discussion:

A water quality monitoring program is being undertaken. Effluent will be managed to standards established by the Environmental Protection Service. General guidelines are also being developed to minimize water siltation, loss of habitat and change to natural flow patterns associated with stream modification. These guidelines will be used to minimize or eliminate all unnecessary and ecologically unsound streambed manipulations.

The North Saskatchewan River has been identified as a Canadian Heritage River in recognition of its outstanding natural, human heritage and recreational values. The Parks Service will ensure that these values are protected, and will encourage public awareness of its Canadian significance.

3.4 VEGETATION AND FIRE MANAGEMENT

The park's three major ecoregions (Montane, Subalpine, and Alpine) are identified largely by differences in vegetation. The Montane ecoregion is associated with the low valley bottom areas. This ecoregion encompasses five percent of the park and is restricted to the lower Bow River valley and a small portion of the North Saskatchewan River valley. The lower Bow valley provides important forage for the wildlife. It is also the most popular and heavily developed area in the park.

The Montane wetlands in the Vermilion Lakes area and the Cave and Basin marsh are noteworthy because of the presence of rare plant and animal species, the presence of prehistoric sites, their importance as waterfowl staging and nesting areas, and their importance to ungulates. Other significant Montane vegetation types found in these valleys include grasslands, dry Douglas fir forests, aspen and white spruce forests.

The Subalpine ecoregion occurs above the Montane and is characterized by closed conifer forests dominated by Engelmann spruce and Subalpine fir. Above the Subalpine is the Alpine. It is an ecoregion devoid of trees, reflecting the cold harsh climate of higher elevations. Alpine vegetation is sensitive to human disturbances. The Sunshine and Castleguard Meadows are examples of extensive Upper Subalpine and Alpine meadows.

Banff has followed a program of wildfire suppression based on a rapid initial attack, in cooperation with the other three parks and the Alberta and British Columbia forest services. The success of this suppression policy has altered the natural ecological balance. The Parks Service now recognizes fire as an important natural process which plays an integral role in the succession of park vegetation, and is vital to maintaining the stability and

diversity of the park ecosystem. Park facilities and neighbouring lands will continue to be protected from wildfires. An interim fire management program and research into the role of fire in the park ecosystem is underway.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. FURTHER RESEARCH AND ACTIONS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO INCREASE THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF MONTANE AREAS, AND TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT METHODS OF MANAGING AND PROTECTING THEM. SPECIAL MEASURES WILL ALSO BE DEVELOPED TO MINIMIZE THE HARMFUL CONSEQUENCES OF HUMAN USE. THIS WILL OCCUR DUE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MONTANE ECOREGION FOR BOTH RESOURCE PROTECTION AND VISITOR USE, AND THE PRESENCE OF SIGNIFICANT VEGETATION TYPES SUCH AS GRASSLANDS, AND DOUGLAS FIR, ASPEN AND WHITE SPRUCE FORESTS.
- B. VEGETATION WILL BE MANAGED ON AN ECOLOGICAL BASIS, RECOGNIZING THE COMPLEX INTERACTIONS BETWEEN VEGETATION AND OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE PARK'S ECOSYSTEMS. A VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN WILL BE DEVELOPED TO:
 - IDENTIFY AREAS THAT CONTAIN ECOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT VEGETATION ASSOCIATIONS SUCH AS MONTANE WETLANDS;
 - DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT MANAGEMENT ACTIONS TO MEET THE OBJECTIVES FOR VEGETATION MANAGEMENT; AND
 - MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE STATE OF THE PARK'S VEGETATION AND AMELIORATE ANY UNDESIRABLE CHANGES TO VEGETATION THAT RESULT FROM HUMAN INTERFERENCE.
- C. REHABILITATION PLANS MUST BE DEVELOPED AND APPROVED BEFORE UNDERTAKING AN ACTIVITY THAT MIGHT HARM VEGETATION.
- D. RESEARCH PROGRAMS WILL IDENTIFY AND ASSESS THE PRESENT DISTRIBUTION OF UNIQUE, RARE AND ENDANGERED VEGETATION SPECIES OR ASSOCIATIONS AND ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE GIVEN A HIGH LEVEL OF PROTECTION.

E. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO MANAGE AND MAINTAIN AREAS OF NATURAL VEGETATION THAT DEPEND ON FIRE AS PART OF THEIR NATURAL CYCLE. A FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN (A COMPONENT OF THE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN) WILL BE DEVELOPED FOR THE PARK AND WILL REQUIRE:

- CONTINUED RESEARCH INTO THE USE OF FIRE AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL AND INTO THE ROLE IT PLAYS IN VARIOUS VEGETATION ASSOCIATIONS;
- THE USE OF PLANNED IGNITION FIRES ("PRESCRIBED BURNING") IN SELECTED AREAS WHERE THEY ARE NEEDED TO MAINTAIN NATURAL VEGETATION, AND IN ORDER TO GAIN FURTHER EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE NATURE OF FIRES;
- CAREFUL SELECTION OF AREAS IN WHICH RANDOM IGNITION FIRES WILL BE PERMITTED TO BURN; AND
- AGGRESSIVE SUPPRESSION OF WILDFIRES THAT THREATEN PARK FACILITIES, PUBLIC SAFETY OR NEIGHBOURING LANDS.

F. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS WILL BE DEVELOPED TO CONTROL INSECT INFESTATIONS AND DISEASE; AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NON-NATIVE PLANTS. THESE PLANS WILL BE CONSISTENT WITH PARKS' POLICY AND WILL OUTLINE THE DEGREE AND LEVEL OF CONTROL REQUIRED.

Discussion:

Vegetation management has generally been included in other management actions such as wildlife management, fire suppression, and through environmental impact assessments. Vegetation management will be coordinated with the other three parks and with adjacent lands. A non-native plant control program will also be developed to minimize the impact of non-native plants, emphasizing control of noxious weeds.

Fire is one of the predominant natural processes in the national parks. Fire, however, has the potential to destroy human life and property and has thus been strictly controlled for several decades. National and regional fire management guidelines will be followed in the development and implementation of the park's comprehensive fire management plan. The fire management plan will be updated to reflect the knowledge and direction provided by the vegetation management plan. The fire management program will be coordinated with wildlife, fisheries and visitor management. It will retain examples of existing vegetation associations by relying on the natural ignition of fires in some areas, and actively managing other areas through prescribed burning. Active manipulation will occur primarily in southern areas of the park and a more passive approach, relying on natural ignition, will be taken in the

northeastern sections of the park. This approach ensures that the natural long term fire regime is restored while maintaining areas of the park where natural systems are left free from further manipulation by man. The Parks Service will continue to concentrate on the rapid initial attack of all wildfires and to work cooperatively with the other three parks and the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. All wildfires that threaten park facilities, public safety or neighbouring lands will be suppressed.

3.5 WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

The main topics of wildlife management concern in Banff National Park are 1) the preservation of important habitat in the lower Bow Valley, 2) highway and railway mortality, 3) bear management, 4) poaching, and 5) the management of wildlife which seasonally migrate across park boundaries.

The existence of the wildlife in the park is based on the preservation of their habitat. Wildlife habitat is dependent upon the complex interaction of resources and ecological processes. Facility development and visitor use can directly and indirectly affect habitat availability. Park wildlife will be managed on an ecological basis. Actions will be taken to ensure that representative populations are maintained in the park.

The lower Bow Valley contains limited Montane wetland habitats in the Vermilion Lakes-backswamp areas, and grassland habitats vitally important to wintering ungulates. The lower Bow Valley is also the most heavily developed area of the park. Management programs will be directed toward preventing, mitigating and counteracting man's influence on park wildlife, particularly in the lower Bow Valley.

Bears, due to their sensitivity to human activities and the potential danger of bear-human encounters, are the most actively managed species in the park. The Canadian Parks Service is currently involved in a comprehensive bear management program which includes visitor management, waste management and research components. Bears will be given a high priority for protection. For example, areas may be closed to protect both bears and people. Banff's bear management program will be coordinated with bear management in the other three national parks and with programs in adjacent provincial lands.

Highway and railway mortality has a major impact on park wildlife populations, particularly elk in the lower Bow Valley. Mitigation measures have been taken and further research is underway. Poaching is a concern in all four mountain parks and action is being taken to control the problem.

Wildlife, particularly large mammals, often migrate seasonally among the four parks and depend on seasonal habitats located on adjacent provincial lands. Management practices in the other national parks as well as hunting and resource extraction activities on adjacent provincial lands, can significantly affect park wildlife. Close cooperation among the parks and provincial agencies is needed for the management of species which migrate across the park's boundaries.

Woodland caribou are not common in the park. An estimated population of 10 to 15 animals is located in the Siffleur River area. This population represents the southernmost herd in Alberta. This isolated herd is in a precarious situation with regard to genetic diversity and the potential for catastrophic mortality. Alberta's Siffleur Wilderness Area borders this part of the park and provides further protection from hunting and other disturbances. Other species sensitive to human activities are grizzly bear, cougar, wolves and raptors.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITATS. MONITORING AND RESEARCH WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO RESOLVE SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS AND WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE AN ECOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.
- B. AREAS IDENTIFIED AS IMPORTANT WILDLIFE HABITAT WILL BE PROTECTED. CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING IMPORTANT HABITAT WILL INCLUDE:

- HABITATS OF LIMITED DISTRIBUTION AND EXTENT IN THE PARK WITHOUT WHICH CERTAIN SPECIES WOULD NOT OCCUR;
- AREAS USED AS BREEDING SITES BY RARE, SENSITIVE, OR THREATENED SPECIES; AND
- VITALLY IMPORTANT SEASONAL HABITAT.

SEASONAL OR TEMPORARY AREA CLOSURES TO VISITOR USE MAY BE NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF THESE HABITATS.

- C. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL ACTIVELY SEEK THE COOPERATION OF PROVINCIAL AGENCIES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COORDINATED APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE FOR WHICH THEY SHARE RESPONSIBILITY.

- D. UNIQUE, RARE, OR ENDANGERED SPECIES, OR THOSE SENSITIVE TO HUMAN ACTIVITIES SUCH AS GRIZZLY BEAR, CARIBOU, WOLVES, COUGAR AND RAPTORS WILL BE GIVEN THE GREATEST POSSIBLE PROTECTION.
- E. PRIORITY WILL BE PLACED ON MINIMIZING THE IMPACT OF THE TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY AND THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY ON PARK WILDLIFE.
- F. WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT WILL CONTINUE TO BE COORDINATED WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF OTHER PARK RESOURCES AND WITH VISITOR MANAGEMENT.

Discussion:

The current wildlife management program will be reviewed. Additional resource management plans, studies and research will be undertaken to ensure that the direction outlined through the plan guidelines is met. The Canadian Parks Service will ensure that sound ecological management occurs. Further study will be directed toward gaining more information on the status, productivity and distribution of park wildlife. Efforts will be directed at integrating wildlife management with the management of other resources and the management of park visitors.

Cooperation and coordination with the other three parks and adjacent provincial agencies is stressed. The establishment of a cooperative approach to wildlife management between the Parks Service and provincial agencies, particularly in the area of caribou and grizzly bear management is a priority. Management actions will continue to be directed at resolving the major wildlife management problems, highway/railway mortality, bear management, poaching and the management of wildlife which migrate across park boundaries.

3.6 FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

The Canadian Parks Service Policy allows for controlled sport fishing of naturally regenerating fish populations. The objective for sport fishing management is to ensure the protection of natural aquatic ecosystems and the maintenance of viable native fish populations. Catch limits, seasonal closures and a limited stocking program are the primary tools used to manage sport fishing in Banff National Park.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. A FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN WILL BE DEVELOPED TO MAINTAIN VIABLE NATIVE POPULATIONS IN THE PARK AND IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE SPORT FISHING LOCATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING FISH POPULATIONS IN THOSE LOCATIONS. THE LIMITED STOCKING OF ROAD ACCESSIBLE LAKES MAY CONTINUE AS A FISHERIES MANAGEMENT STRATEGY.

Discussion:

National and regional guidelines will be used to develop the park's sport fishing management strategy. Extensive limnological investigations have been completed on lakes in the park, with similar studies to be completed on streams. Further data about water quality, fish species distribution, population estimates and trends, the age structure of populations, spawning activities, exploitation rates, and habitat evaluation is necessary to develop the park's fisheries management plan.

The park protects the headwaters and upper reaches of many streams which flow through provincial lands. The park will work cooperatively with provincial agencies in the management of fish populations in these streams.

3.7 AESTHETICS

In Trust For Tomorrow describes the park experience as having the essential elements of "scenery, clean air, water, the presence of wildlife, and the sheer expanse of landscape". In order to enjoy these elements to their fullest potential, aesthetics must be considered.

Whether visitors choose to use the park's Visitor Service Centres, frontcountry areas, or to visit more remote backcountry locations, they come to the park in search of some level of peace and beauty. Even in Banff's frontcountry areas, visitors should be able to find places where they can feel some of the isolation that the earliest explorers must have felt. In the backcountry this feeling of privacy is even more important, and silence becomes an aesthetic resource. It is the responsibility of the Canadian Parks Service to ensure that visitors are not disappointed in this search. A great deal has already been accomplished. For example, the Parks Service has recently established measures to reduce the use of helicopters in Banff for administrative and operational purposes.

In areas where buildings and development exist, the architectural motif must be appropriate to the Canadian Rockies milieu, and buildings, utility lines, and so forth, should not interfere with

views of the surrounding landscape. Although directional signs are certainly necessary, the best possible visitor orientation must be provided with the fewest possible signs.

The scars of development, unrehabilitated road cuts and borrow pits, should not intrude upon park vistas. In addition, the lights from streets and buildings should not be visible to the distant viewer.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. THE AESTHETIC EFFECTS OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED LAND USE WILL BE EVALUATED. ACTION WILL BE TAKEN TO MINIMIZE NEGATIVE EFFECTS AND TO ENHANCE THOSE THAT ARE POSITIVE.
- B. THE AESTHETIC QUALITY OF THE PARK WILL BE GIVEN PRIORITY IN ALL FUTURE ACTIVITIES AND THE IMPACT OF DAILY OPERATIONS ON PARK AESTHETICS WILL BE MINIMIZED.

Discussion:

Aesthetic quality will be maintained and protected through the application of the Environmental Assessment and Review Process during the development of new facilities. Aesthetic concerns will be incorporated into the rehabilitation of disturbed areas. Aesthetic quality will also be maintained and protected through the development of architectural guidelines. Park architectural motifs are being developed (see Section 6.2). Visual quality considerations have also been incorporated into guidelines for the redevelopment/development of commercial and backcountry accommodation facilities. The Parks Service will set the example in this regard.

The visual appearance of overnight accommodation facilities is important because of their large size and proximity to roadsides. Screening and site rehabilitation, in addition to requiring conformity with the park Facility Appearance Guidelines (Section 6.2), will be used where necessary to improve the aesthetic quality of highway and road corridors.

3.8 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources include archaeological and historic resources. The Canadian Parks Service is committed to protecting and preserving cultural resources in national parks. The potential impact of development on cultural resources will be assessed through the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Process.

Although a detailed inventory and assessment of the park's cultural resources has not been completed, the lower Bow Valley, Bow Valley Parkway corridor and townsites region has been carefully studied. A number of nationally significant archaeological sites have been discovered in the Bow Valley. The Christensen site and the alluvial landforms fronting the Vermilion Lakes wetlands contain particularly significant archaeological resources.

The park also contains historic period resources of local, regional and national significance. There are seven National Historic Sites in the park. These include the Cave and Basin, Banff Park Museum, Sulphur Mountain Cosmic Ray Station and Howse Pass.

PLAN GUIDELINES

A. A CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM WILL BE DEVELOPED, CONSISTING OF:

- A COMPREHENSIVE INVENTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES, AND HISTORICAL OBJECTS, AND SPECIMENS HELD WITHIN PRIVATE AND MUSEUM COLLECTIONS;
- A CULTURAL RESOURCE DESCRIPTION WHICH WILL INCLUDE A SIGNIFICANCE RATING AND RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT APPROACHES;
- PRESERVATION PLANS FOR SIGNIFICANT SITES THREATENED BY NATURAL AND HUMAN DISTURBANCE;
- AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND THEIR BIOPHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT;
- A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE PARK; AND
- THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES.

B. THE POLICIES OF THE FEDERAL HERITAGE BUILDINGS REVIEW OFFICE WILL BE FOLLOWED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PARK, TO ENSURE THAT VALUABLE CULTURAL ASSETS ARE PROTECTED AND TO SET AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER AGENCIES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

C. INTERPRETATION, EITHER ON OR OFFSITE, WILL BE EMPHASIZED IN THE CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.

Discussion:

Archaeological and historic surveys of the park will be completed over the next 15 years. Cultural resource descriptions will be developed. Certain archaeological and historic sites, and areas within the park require special

management and maintenance. The park's cultural resource description will identify and recommend management approaches. A monitoring program will be developed for key sites within the inventory. Preservation plans will be developed for significant sites with sensitive physical remains.

Places of national historical and architectural significance will be managed as required by policy. The Canadian Parks Service is also committed to protecting historic resources of park significance and will seek the assistance of local residents in efforts to preserve the heritage character of significant structures. The Parks Service will also undertake to comply with the spirit of the Alberta Historic Resources Act for buildings on sites so designated within the park.

The Banff Springs Hotel is a structure of park significance. The Declaration of Heritage Preservation, signed by the Minister of the Environment and the President of Canadian Pacific Hotels, illustrates the commitment of both parties to work to preserve the architectural style and materials of the existing Banff Springs Hotel buildings and environs.

A prehistoric and historic record encompassing the last 10-12,000 years will be researched for Banff National Park. Sites which offer potential for establishing this record will be scheduled for investigation during the next 15 years.

The archaeological program will include a detailed analysis of the interrelationships between archaeological resources and their biophysical environment. This will enhance the prediction of cultural resource potential/significance, and will add significant interpretive benefits (public and scientific) to both the ecological and cultural resource base. In order to meet common goals and to promote an awareness about the importance of archaeological resources, a working relationship will be fostered between the Parks Service and archaeological societies.

The Canadian Parks Service will work with the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office and the Heritage Sites and Monuments Board to ensure significant historic resources are preserved.

3.10 AIR QUALITY

The park contains national railway and highway corridors, the town of Banff, Lake Louise Visitor Centre, and a number of large campgrounds all of which affect air quality. The mountainous terrain often results in inversions that concentrate air pollutants

in the Bow Valley. As facilities expand and visitor use increases, the potential for damage to air quality also increases.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. AIR QUALITY WILL BE MONITORED TO ENSURE THAT ANY DETERIORATION IS DETECTED AND TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS QUICKLY. WHEN A PROBLEM EXISTS, THE RESOURCES OF ENVIRONMENT CANADA WILL BE EMPLOYED, IN CONCERT WITH OTHER RELEVANT FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO MINIMIZE OR PREVENT POLLUTION.

Discussion:

As facilities expand and visitor use increases, the potential for damage to air quality also increases. Efforts will be directed at controlling sources of pollution in the park and air quality guidelines will be established in cooperation with Environmental Protection Service.

3.11 PROTECTING NATURAL AREAS

Most of Banff National Park is managed as Zone II - Wilderness, with minimal facilities and no motorized access. Five large backcountry areas; the Alexandra, Mistaya, Clearwater, Bonnet and Dormer areas contain few or no man-made facilities.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. THE ALEXANDRA, MISTAYA, CLEARWATER, BONNET AND DORMER AREAS WILL BE MANAGED AS LARGE NATURAL AREAS ESSENTIALLY FREE OF HUMAN INTRUSION.

Discussion:

These areas will be managed to ensure that ecological processes can operate undisturbed. These areas are important to the management of the park as they provide valuable benchmarks of natural processes and systems. Understanding the ecology of these areas will provide the information necessary for the development of comprehensive and ecologically based management strategies to minimize man's influence on resources and natural processes in other areas of the park.

4.0

**VISITOR UNDERSTANDING,
APPRECIATION AND
ENJOYMENT**





4.0

VISITOR UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION AND ENJOYMENT

Section 3 contained direction for the protection and management of heritage resources in Banff National Park. This section contains the direction for the other side of the national parks mandate - the provision of opportunities for visitors to understand, appreciate and enjoy the park.

Visitor activities are managed in a coordinated manner, following the Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP). This process permits 1) the identification of opportunities for visitors to appreciate, enjoy and understand their heritage, 2) the assessment of the market potential for those opportunities, 3) visitor services and facilities to be planned, developed and operated as part of a tourism destination area, and 4) the assessment of the effectiveness of these initiatives in meeting public needs. A marketing philosophy is inherent in VAMP. The park visitor's interest and satisfaction are considered in parallel with the Canadian Parks Service's conservation mandate.

Future demand for park opportunities is difficult to predict because of the volatility of the influencing factors. These factors include developments in the region surrounding the park, fluctuations in foreign exchange rates, changes in recreation and tourism patterns, and the manner in which tourism is marketed. Modest fluctuations in demand for park opportunities are anticipated, based on current trends, but there are other possibilities that require consideration and the development of responsive scenarios.

First, demand may increase faster than expected, in which case the defined expansion of facilities and services would be accelerated, within fiscal, operational and environmental constraints. Second, the demand for specific activities may diminish and would require an appropriate change in planning, design and operation of facilities, and the provision of services. In the event of declining use and the circumstance of under utilized facilities, The Parks Service will engage in market-oriented planning and marketing programs to increase visitor numbers to those facilities. No extraordinary attempt will be made, however, to stimulate increased use of facilities which are presently well used or to promote new types of use. Further development of park facilities will not occur unless the expected increase in demand is realized.

It is important to note, however, that a management plan is more than a prescription for responding to demands placed on a park.

The plan provides specific direction on the supply of park opportunities that will be provided. Services and facilities must be increased in recognition of the diversity of interests, ages, skills and physical capabilities of park visitors. Particular attention will be paid to the elderly and the handicapped, for whom the park experience is often particularly rewarding.

The Banff Park Management Plan provides broad direction for visitor services, facilities and opportunities. Throughout this plan, reference is made to the need for more information about visitor preferences and market demands. The collection and analysis of this information will result in the provision of visitor opportunities which are appropriate to a national park environment and meet the specific needs of the intended users.

The Visitor Activity Management Process provides a logical and structured framework for collecting and analyzing this information. Once this detailed information is available, park officials will prepare comprehensive operational or service plans which indicate how the broad direction, contained in the management plan, will be implemented. Service plans provide comprehensive direction on the specific mechanisms and requirements for providing service to the public. Specific project and funding requirements related to visitor services, which result from this approved park management plan will be identified in the Banff service plan.

Public safety planning will continue to be an integral component of the development of visitor facilities and programs. A public safety plan, based upon national and regional guidelines will be developed to coordinate the park's public safety program. The program will include a hazard assessment and evaluation to identify public safety concerns associated with recreational activities. The public safety plan will define specific roles and responsibilities; the scope and levels of service for accident prevention and search and rescue programs.

4.1

**Backcountry Opportunities
and Facilities**

4.1 BACKCOUNTRY OPPORTUNITIES AND FACILITIES

The vast majority of Banff National Park is presently managed as Zone II - Wilderness. Day-trips into these backcountry areas accounts for most of the use.

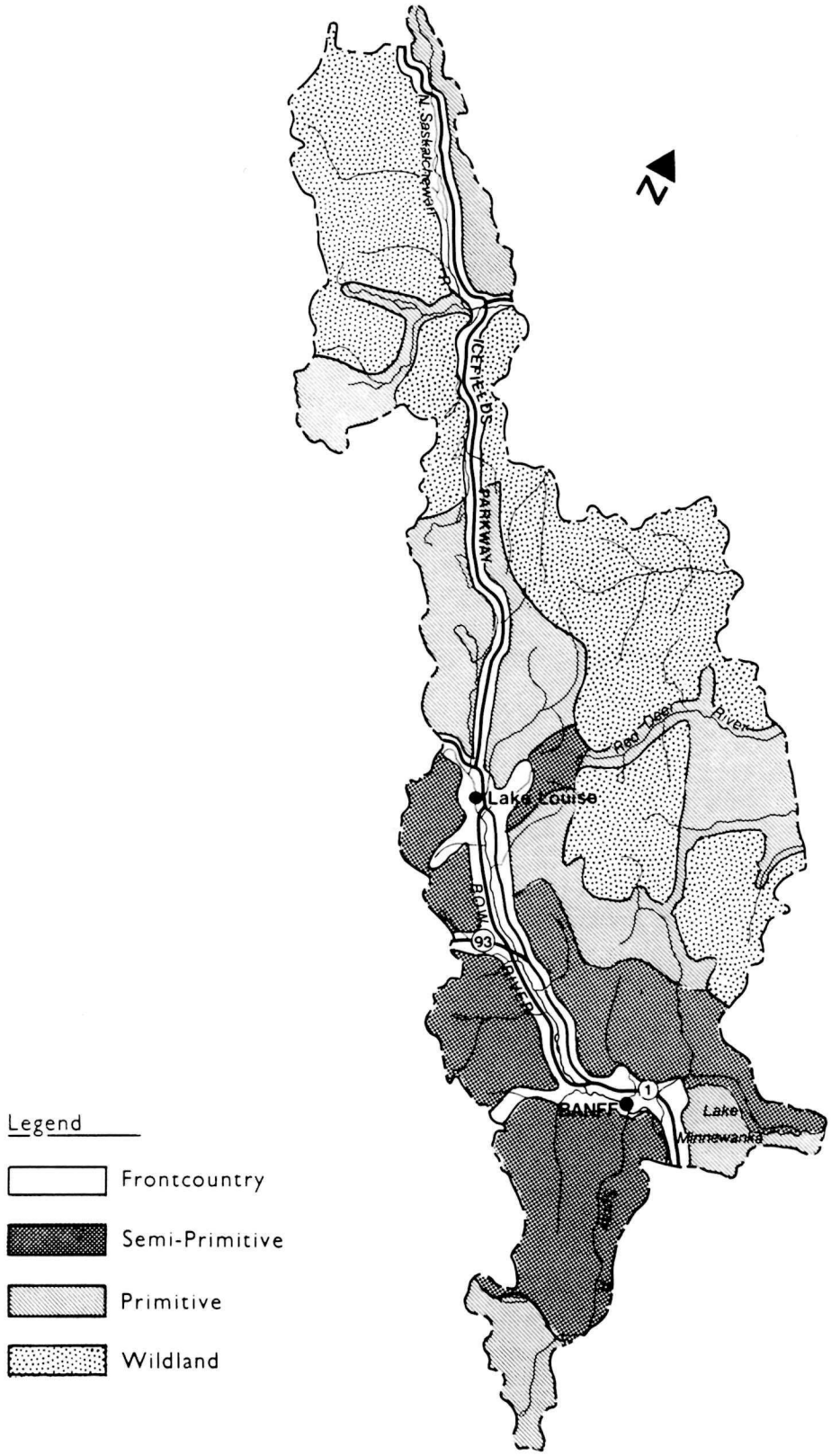
Banff receives about one-half of the overnight backcountry use in the Four Mountain Parks and a larger share of the day-use because of its proximity to Calgary. Backcountry use in the park is unevenly distributed. Hiking and trail riding are the most popular summer backcountry activities. Ski touring has increased in popularity as a winter activity, although most trips are made on a day basis. Overnight ski touring trips are usually associated with the park's system of shelters, huts and lodges.

Over the past six years (1982-1987) an average of 13,400 visitors obtained permits each year to stay overnight in the park. Levels of use remain below the peak reached in 1975 and have declined on average 4.6% per year since 1982. Eighty-seven percent of backcountry visitors camped or stayed at huts and shelters, and 13% were paying guests at outfitter camps or lodges. The number of day visitors to Banff's backcountry is much higher, although levels of use on specific trails are not known.

A complete range of backcountry opportunities* are presently provided in the park (Figure 6). There are approximately 1,575 km of designated trails in the park in varying conditions of repair. The Parks Service maintains an ongoing program of trail upgrading and maintenance. There is also an extensive but now redundant system of backcountry roads throughout Banff. Trail impairment resulting from intensive horse use is a problem in a number of areas. Most of the park's trails were neither planned nor designed for the level and type of use they now sustain. This has led to the development of a number of environmental and aesthetic impacts. The financial costs of addressing these concerns by upgrading trails to an appropriate standard are prohibitively high.

* In this planning program, backcountry opportunities have been divided into three broad categories: the most heavily-used and developed areas provide semi-primitive opportunities. Facilities such as commercial lodges, large-group camps and trail shelters are acceptable in these areas but "site hardening" (i.e. laying out gravel paths, fencing campsites and pathways) and vigorous management of visitors are required. At the opposite end of the spectrum are wildlands. In these relatively undisturbed areas, there are no facilities, random camping is permitted and the few trails are minimally maintained; visitors are assisted through information and education. Primitive opportunities are associated with areas between the other two categories and they include designated camping, but no sheltered accommodation other than alpine huts. The backcountry opportunity concept is based on the recognition that there is a combination of physical, biological, sociological and administrative conditions that provides recreational value to an area.

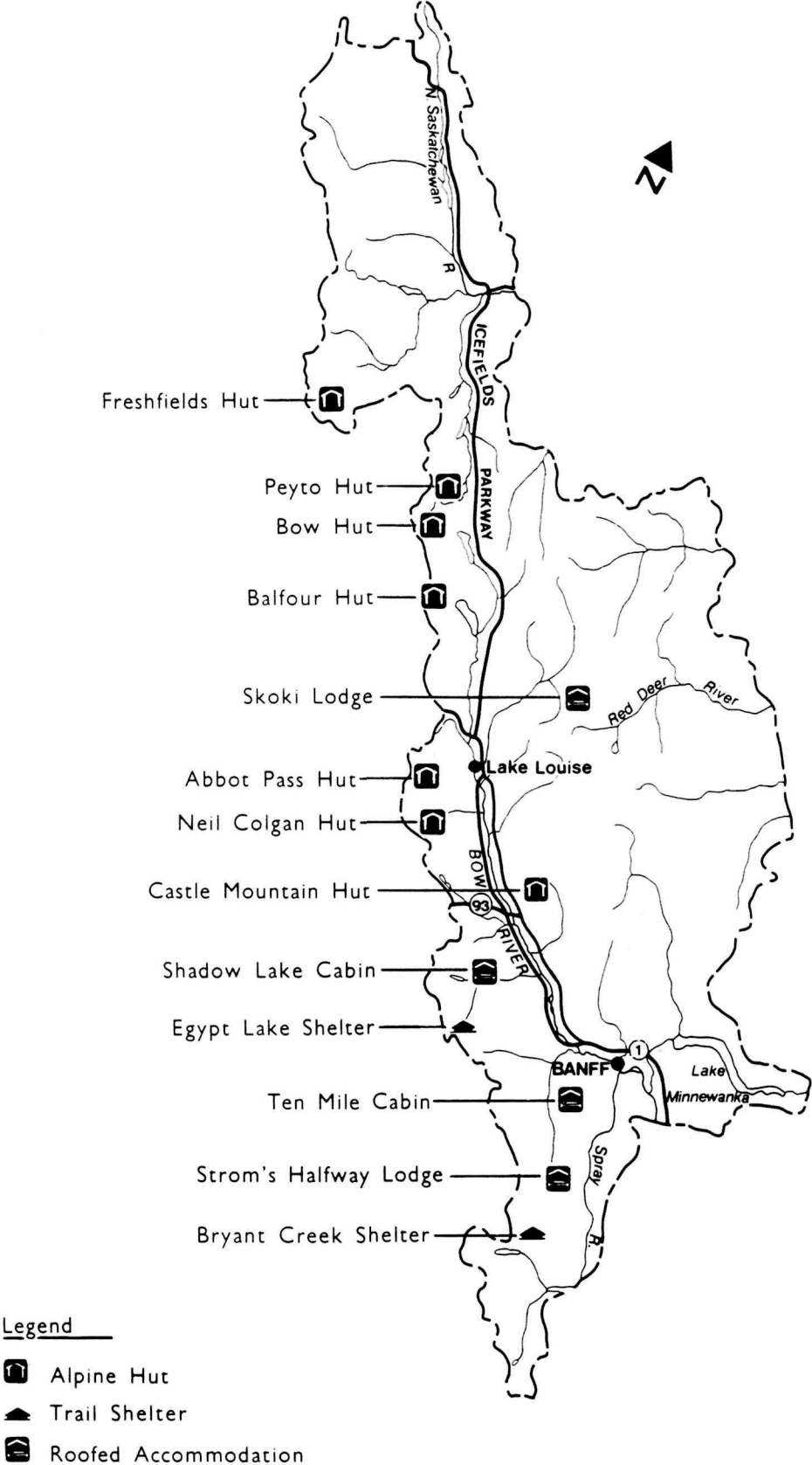
Figure 6: Backcountry Opportunities, Banff National Park



The park contains a range of accommodation facilities, consisting of three trail shelters, seven alpine huts, and four commercial lodges and cabins (Figure 7). In about one half of the park, random camping is permitted. Random camping is permitted in those areas which are managed to provide wildland opportunities and in several special cases, primitive opportunities. Backcountry visitors are required to use designated campgrounds, of which there are over 50, in the remaining areas.

Three types of backcountry group camps have been operated in Banff. First, non-profit organizations may request permission to establish a group camp for a special occasion. An example would be the Alpine Club of Canada operating a general mountaineering camp. Permission is only granted for a single season. The remaining types are associated with the park's long tradition of commercial horse outfitting. The second type are semi-permanent tent camps operated by commercial horse outfitters. There are six of these camps. Finally, two non-profit organizations - the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies and the Skyline Hikers - have been permitted to establish a series of rotational camps which are used once every five or ten years. Commercial horse outfitters are hired by these organizations to supply and run the camps, and in the case of the Trail Riders, provide horses for the use of the organization's members.

Figure 7: Backcountry Roofed Accommodation, Banff National Park



MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To manage the majority of Banff National Park for the perpetuation of a natural environment essentially unaltered by human activity and to encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this wilderness heritage so as to leave it unimpaired for future generations.
2. To continue to provide a complete range of backcountry opportunities from wildland to semi-primitive.
3. To provide unique recreational opportunities and the protection of significant natural resource values by managing significant portions of the backcountry to offer "wildland" opportunities.
4. To upgrade existing backcountry facilities consistent with the type of backcountry opportunities to be provided, in order to improve visitor experiences and reduce environmental conflicts; and to remove or relocate redundant or otherwise undesirable facilities.
5. To ensure that steps are taken to reduce wildlife conflicts associated with the development or redevelopment of backcountry facilities.
6. To reduce conflicts between horse-users and hikers in areas used by both types of visitor.
7. To meet the information needs of both day and overnight backcountry users and to upgrade visitor education programs to encourage low impact use.
8. To maximize the use of the existing facility infrastructure, within appropriate environmental and social limits, consistent with the backcountry opportunities to be provided.
9. To minimize the visual and environmental impact of man-made facilities on backcountry resource values.
10. To coordinate backcountry management in Banff National Park with appropriate provincial land management agencies in order to control access to Banff's backcountry, develop integrated user management strategies and information systems, and develop necessary trail linkages.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. THE ALEXANDRA, MISTAYA, CLEARWATER, BONNET AND DORMER AREAS WILL BE MANAGED TO PROVIDE A RANGE OF WILDLAND OPPORTUNITIES. GROUP CAMPS, SHELTERS, HUTS, LODGES AND DESIGNATED BACKCOUNTRY CAMPGROUNDS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. TRAILS, IF THEY ALREADY EXIST, WILL BE OF A LOW STANDARD.

Discussion:

The distribution of backcountry opportunities, from wildland to semi-primitive, is based on an acceptance of existing patterns and levels of use. Except where significant problems require site-specific changes, this approach to backcountry management will be followed in preference to one which attempts to alter long-standing patterns of use.

Extensive tracts of undeveloped land will be managed to provide a range of wildland opportunities. Their wild and largely pristine setting provides visitors with opportunities to experience a sense of freedom, solitude and challenge. The knowledge that these areas exist will also produce benefits to the vicarious user.

Use of these areas will not be promoted, nor will detailed information be provided to visitors about them. Visitors will have an opportunity to learn about and explore these areas on their own. Random camping will be permitted throughout these areas.

- B. THE UPPER SPRAY, CARROT CREEK, BAKER-CASCADE, RED DEER, PANTHER, PIPESTONE-MOSQUITO, WAPTA-BALFOUR, HOWSE RIVER AND NIGEL-SUNSET AREAS WILL BE MANAGED TO PROVIDE A RANGE OF PRIMITIVE OPPORTUNITIES. ALPINE HUTS AND GROUP CAMPS MAY BE PROVIDED BUT NOT TRAIL SHELTERS AND COMMERCIALY-OPERATED LODGES. CAMPING MAY OCCUR AT DESIGNATED SITES OR ON A RANDOM BASIS, DEPENDING ON THE SPECIFIC AREA.

Discussion:

The areas that will be managed to provide a range of primitive opportunities receive approximately 30% of the park's overnight backcountry use each year and only moderate levels of day-use. Appropriate standard trails and designated primitive campsites will be provided in a manner consistent with visitor and resource protection requirements.

- C. SKOKI, PARADISE-TAYLOR, REDEARTH-EGYPT, JOHNSTON-FORTY MILE, MINNEWANKA AND BRYANT-BREWSTER-SPRAY AREAS WILL BE MANAGED TO PROVIDE FOR A RANGE OF SEMI-PRIMITIVE OPPORTUNITIES. ALPINE HUTS, TRAIL SHELTERS, COMMERCIALY-OPERATED LODGES AND GROUP CAMPS MAY BE PROVIDED IN THESE AREAS. CAMPING MUST OCCUR AT DESIGNATED BACKCOUNTRY CAMPGROUNDS.

Discussion:

A significant proportion of Banff's backcountry will also be managed to provide a range of semi-primitive opportunities. These include many of the relatively accessible, well known and attractive destinations, such as Egypt Lake, Marvel Lake and the Skoki area. Approximately 70% of the park's backcountry overnight use is in these areas. In addition, many of these areas receive high levels of day-use throughout the year.

Although public participants in the planning program favoured the retention and upgrading of those semi-primitive opportunities which are already provided, there was little support for the alienation of additional land for semi-primitive opportunities in the Four Mountain Parks. The potential exists to increase the amount of use in these areas, without increasing the amount of land allocated to that purpose.

- D. THE BASIC INFORMATION NEEDS OF BOTH DAY AND OVERNIGHT USERS WILL BE MET. MORE AND IMPROVED MESSAGES WILL BE PROVIDED ON THE PARK'S BACKCOUNTRY OPPORTUNITIES, CURRENT CONDITIONS, AND PERTINENT PUBLIC SAFETY, RESOURCE PROTECTION AND REGULATORY INFORMATION. THESE MESSAGES WILL BE PROVIDED TO BOTH POTENTIAL AND IN-PARK VISITORS. THE PROVISION OF THIS INFORMATION WILL BE COORDINATED ON A FOUR PARK AND REGIONAL BASIS. IMPROVED INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED ON BACKCOUNTRY ETIQUETTE AND LOW IMPACT USE.

Discussion:

Information will be developed and distributed to ensure that visitors plan and undertake backcountry trips with realistic expectations of the available opportunities. The quality of visitor experiences and overall satisfaction will be enhanced by upgrading information on current conditions (trail conditions, levels of use, bear sightings, snow conditions) and applicable regulations. The level of information will be targeted to the type of opportunity being provided. For instance, more information will be provided about those areas managed for semi-primitive opportunities than areas managed for wildland opportunities.

In addition, an information and education approach has proven to be an effective and relatively low-cost technique for achieving resource protection objectives. The Sunshine summer use program is exemplary in the application of this approach. Improved coordination with the other mountain national parks and provincial agencies in the preparation and distribution of backcountry information will be required.

Backcountry Trails

- E. THE PARK'S EXTENSIVE SYSTEM OF BACKCOUNTRY TRAILS WILL CONTINUE TO BE UPGRADED. SUBSTANDARD TRAILS IN SEMI-PRIMITIVE AREAS ARE A PRIORITY FOR UPGRADING. NEW TRAIL SEGMENTS WILL BE DEVELOPED ONLY IN RESPONSE TO SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM HORSE USE OR TO LINK SYSTEMS ORIGINATING FROM OUTSIDE THE PARK. TRAIL STANDARDS WILL BE CONSISTENT WITH THE BACKCOUNTRY OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED, THE TYPE OF TRAIL USE AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONS. TRAILHEAD FACILITIES AND INFORMATION WILL ALSO BE UPGRADED.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

Most of the trails in Banff National Park were not planned and designed for the type and level of use they now receive. Current problems include wet conditions, soil erosion and trail braiding. These conditions are most prevalent in Subalpine and Alpine areas. Unacceptable and deteriorating trail conditions are most frequently associated with commercial horse outfitting operations.

Noteworthy problems with trail conditions occur on sections of the following trails.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| - Bryant Creek | - Elk Lake Summit |
| - Palliser Pass | - Forty Mile Creek |
| - Marvel Pass | - Mystic Pass |
| - Owl Lake | - upper Johnston Creek |
| - Citadel Pass | - Skoki-Fossil Mountain |
| loop | |
| - Healy Pass | - Little Pipestone River |
| - Twin Lakes | - Fish Lakes area |
| - Shadow Lake | - Mosquito Creek |

In assessing the feasibility of new trail linkages or alternate hiking trails, consideration will be given to avoiding important wildlife habitats, particularly important bear micro-habitats, and fragile vegetation communities.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

Virtually all of Banff's backcountry use is related to its extensive trail system. Visitor impressions of the park are largely based on their trail experiences. The poor trail conditions found in Banff reduce the quality of visitor experiences and the impression of national parks as judiciously managed natural areas. Hikers also become antagonistic to horse riders about these conditions, whether horses are to blame or not. Significant levels of public support have been expressed throughout the Four Mountain Parks Planning Program for the upgrading of trail conditions. Priorities for trail upgrading have been established on the basis of the type and level of use.

Improving the quality of facilities and information at selected trailhead facilities, will assist not only overnight users, but the large numbers of day users who have no need to visit a park information centre in order to obtain a Backcountry Use Permit.

- F. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL NOT UNDERTAKE MAJOR OR EXTENSIVE TRAIL UPGRADING TO SUPPORT THEIR SOLE USE BY COMMERCIAL HORSE OUTFITTERS. WHERE UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF IMPACT OCCUR ON MULTIPLE-USE TRAILS, THE TRAIL SECTION WILL EITHER BE REPAIRED, OR ALTERNATIVES WILL BE PROVIDED FOR HIKERS.

Discussion:

Past trail upgrading efforts have been directed toward dealing with trails suffering the greatest level of impairment. Many of these trails are receiving heavy horse use as the result of commercial outfitting operations. In a number of cases, it may be cheaper to leave horses on the impaired trail section and to develop lower standard hiking trails around the impaired section. In these situations, monitoring will occur to ensure that the magnitude of the trail deterioration and resulting environmental impact, is not exacerbated by the development of new or parallel horse trails.

- G. ALL BACKCOUNTRY ROADS WILL BE CLOSED TO MOTOR VEHICLES AND SELECTED SECTIONS WILL BE REVERTED TO AN APPROPRIATE TRAIL STANDARD (see Access, Statement "D").

Discussion:

The park contains a system of redundant backcountry roads which at one time formed a major internal access network. The Cascade, Spray and Redearth roads already receive considerable year-round recreational use. Many sections of these roads have hard-packed or gravelled road beds, wide

road surfaces and extensive side hill cuts. Reversion of particular road sections to high standard and multiple-use trails would substantially enhance visitor experiences.

Much of the park's high volume commercial horse traffic would be redirected to these new and durable trails in the Spray and Cascade valleys. This will result in less trail deterioration, reduced maintenance costs and enhanced visitor experiences. Ultimately, a high quality and multiple-use trail system will be provided from the north to the south end of the park.

Backcountry Camping

- H. RANDOM CAMPING WILL BE PERMITTED IN AREAS MANAGED TO PROVIDE WILDLAND OPPORTUNITIES. SOME RANDOM CAMPING WILL ALSO BE PERMITTED IN IDENTIFIED PRIMITIVE AREAS.

Discussion:

Random camping provides an experience commonly associated with wildland opportunities. The environmental impact of random camping is negligible in wildland areas, because of the low levels of use. Visitor education about low-impact camping techniques will further reduce the potential for serious impact. Nonetheless, monitoring of wildland areas will occur on an on-going basis. Where unacceptable levels of degradation begin to appear, the provision of designated campsites may be warranted.

- I. SEPARATE CAMPGROUND FACILITIES FOR PRIVATE HORSE PARTIES WILL BE PROVIDED, WHERE APPROPRIATE, IN SEMI-PRIMITIVE AND PRIMITIVE AREAS.

Discussion:

In several areas of the park, there may be enough private horse use to warrant separate campgrounds for hikers and horsemen. Where this occurs, hitching rails and corrals would be provided. This initiative will better serve horsemen and reduce conflicts between visitors on trail rides and those who are hiking.

Roofed Accommodation

- J. NO NEW COMMERCIAL BACKCOUNTRY LODGES WILL BE PERMITTED FOR THE LIFE OF THIS PLAN. EXISTING COMMERCIAL LODGES (Skoki, Shadow Lake, Ten Mile, Halfway) WILL BE PERMITTED TO OPERATE AND REDEVELOP IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE APPROVED GUIDELINES FOR BACKCOUNTRY LODGES IN BANFF, JASPER, KOOTENAY AND YOHO NATIONAL PARKS. OFF-SEASON SERVICING BY HELICOPTERS AND CONTROLLED USE OF OVERSNOW VEHICLES TO TRANSPORT SUPPLIES AND FOOD WILL BE PERMITTED. ALL HELICOPTER AND OVERSNOW VEHICULAR USE WILL BE CONTROLLED TO MINIMIZE CONFLICTS WITH OTHER USERS. THE TRANSPORT OF DUFFEL OR GUESTS BY HELICOPTER OR OVERSNOW VEHICLE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THESE SERVICING TRIPS.

THE USE OF HORSES AT SHADOW LAKE LODGE WILL BE RESTRICTED TO THE SUMMER SERVICING OF THE LODGE. TRANSPORTING GUESTS AND DUFFEL BY HELICOPTER, OVERSNOW VEHICLE OR HORSE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. NO MOTORIZED ACCESS WILL BE PERMITTED BEYOND THE REDEARTH TRAILHEAD.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

There are no major environmental concerns associated with the existing lodges or their controlled servicing which would require their removal. Site specific impacts are associated, however, with the use of horses, the removal of firewood and visitor conflicts associated with the winter use of oversnow vehicles. Any redevelopment or expansion would be subject to the findings of detailed environmental assessments. The prohibition on trail riding in association with the Shadow Lake cabin is necessary to prevent visitor conflicts and severe trail impairment.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

There is a demonstrated demand for a limited supply of backcountry commercial lodges in the park. Throughout the public consultation program, there has been support expressed for the upgrading and proper operation of existing lodges.

Skoki Lodge has been the only commercial lodge which has operated regularly. It provides year-round opportunities but requires upgrading. Shadow Lake has been operated sporadically. It could also be operated to offer year-round opportunities. Ten Mile and Halfway cabins are located on the Brewster Valley and have been used in association with commercial horse outfitting.

- K. NEW ALPINE HUTS OR TRAIL SHELTERS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED FOR THE LIFE OF THIS PLAN.

Discussion:

No new alpine huts are proposed because the 1) Alpine Club of Canada and Parks have been unable to identify any potential sites and 2) the absence of demonstrated demand for additional huts. In addition, it is recognized that the existing system first needs to be upgraded before new huts are considered.

There is no significant demand identified by the general public or potential sponsoring agencies for new shelters. Improvements to the system of lodges, huts and shelters are expected to adequately meet the demand for roofed backcountry accommodation in Banff for the next 15 years.

- L. THE ROLE OF ALPINE HUTS WILL BE TO PROVIDE SIMPLE SHELTER AT OR ABOVE TREELINE AND TO SERVE AS SUPPORT OR EMERGENCY FACILITIES FOR MOUNTAINEERING ACTIVITIES. EXISTING ALPINE HUTS MAY REDEVELOP IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES FOR ALPINE HUTS AND TRAIL SHELTERS IN BANFF, JASPER, KOOTENAY AND YOHO NATIONAL PARKS. OFF-SEASON AND STRICTLY CONTROLLED PEAK SEASON SERVICING BY HELICOPTER WILL BE PERMITTED. HELICOPTER USE WILL BE CONTROLLED TO MINIMIZE CONFLICTS WITH OTHER PARK USERS. DUFFEL AND PARK VISITORS MAY NOT BE TRANSPORTED BY HELICOPTER OR OVERSNOW VEHICLES.

UPGRADING OF THE BOW HUT OR DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW HUT WILL BE PERMITTED, IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE APPROVED GUIDELINES.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

No major environmental concerns are associated with the existing system of alpine huts. Any redevelopment of these facilities must meet environmental requirements identified by the Parks Service. No environmental concerns are associated with the controlled servicing of alpine huts by helicopter.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

Negotiations are on-going with the Alpine Club of Canada regarding the future maintenance and operation of huts in the park. Redevelopment and expansion of individual huts within the established guidelines will be permitted towards this end. The proposed redevelopment and possible relocation of the Bow hut may reduce public safety concerns during the summer, because hikers would not be encouraged to cross the toe of the glacier. It would provide a better quality experience for visitors using the hut.

Additions to the hut system in Yoho National Park would promote use of some of the best ski mountaineering terrain in the Four Mountain Parks. This would place further demand on Bow hut to serve as the starting point for most trips across the Wapta and Waputik icefields. An assessment of avalanche hazards would need to be undertaken in association with this proposal.

- M. THE FRESHFIELD HUT WILL BE REMOVED. OPTIONS FOR ITS REMOVAL WILL BE DISCUSSED WITH THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA.

Discussion:

The newly developed Freshfield hut has become virtually inaccessible except by helicopter. This has been due to the formation of a large lake at the toe of the glacier and the calving of an ice-cored moraine along its margin. Originally, access was to occur along the moraine. Levels of use, therefore, have been very low. Options to improve access to the hut have been investigated and have not proven to be feasible. The Parks Service will help to relocate the hut to a more suitable location.

- O. THE ROLE OF TRAIL SHELTERS WILL BE TO PROVIDE PRIMITIVE ACCOMMODATION IN AN AREA BELOW TREELINE. THE BRYANT CREEK, EGYPT LAKE AND PTARMIGAN (HALFWAY) SHELTERS WILL REMAIN. THE PTARMIGAN HUT WILL BE RETAINED FOR DAY USE ONLY. THE BRYANT AND EGYPT SHELTERS WILL BE UPGRADED, AS REQUIRED, AND MAY BE REDEVELOPED IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES FOR ALPINE HUTS AND TRAIL SHELTERS IN BANFF, JASPER, KOOTENAY AND YOH0 NATIONAL PARKS.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

No major environmental concerns are associated with the existing system of trail shelters. Serious impacts resulting from the use of the Bryant Creek and Egypt Lake shelters have been mitigated by site hardening and improved visitor management techniques. Any redevelopment of these facilities must meet environmental requirements identified by the Parks Service. No environmental concerns are associated with the controlled servicing of these facilities by helicopter.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

The existing shelters are popular facilities that receive year-round use. The Ptarmigan hut is easily accessible from the Lake Louise ski area and is in poor repair. Once it reaches an advanced stage of deterioration, it will be removed and not replaced.

Backcountry Group Camping

- P. THE PRIVILEGE OF CONTINUING TO USE GROUP CAMPS IN AREAS MANAGED TO PROVIDE SEMI-PRIMITIVE AND PRIMITIVE OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE EXTENDED TO TWO NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND TWO RESIDENT HORSE OUTFITTERS. ALTHOUGH REQUESTS TO SUBSTITUTE CAMPS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF USER EXPERIENCES OR REDUCE IMPACTS WILL BE REVIEWED, NO INCREASE IN THE SIZE AND NUMBER OF CAMPS WILL OCCUR. FORMAL GROUP CAMP AGREEMENTS SPECIFYING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR EACH CAMP WILL BE ESTABLISHED WITH THE APPROPRIATE CAMP PROPONENT.

THE SEMI-PERMANENT GROUP CAMPS OPERATED BY RESIDENT OUTFITTERS WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE PUBLIC TENDERING PROCESS ON EXPIRATION OF THE GROUP CAMP AGREEMENTS IN 1994. AT THAT TIME, PARKS WILL REVIEW THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE CAMP LOCATIONS AND CHANGES MAY BE MADE.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

The system of rotational and semi-permanent group camps was adopted to avoid significant impairment to park resources. Numerous adjustments have been made to the location of the camps in order to situate them in acceptable areas. On-going monitoring is required to ensure that impacts are within tolerable levels. The establishment of formal group camp agreements will ensure that acceptable operating procedures for the camps are followed.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

The outfitter camps accommodate about 4,000 visitor nights each year. They provide an opportunity which is much appreciated by their users. Nonetheless, the large camps have been an on-going source of conflict with other park visitors. Camps operated by the Trail Riders and Skyline Hikers are moved each year so that their impact on other park visitors is dispersed throughout the park, rather than concentrated year after year in one valley.

The semi-permanent camps in the Cascade-Flint's park area cause little conflict because of the small number of hikers who use that area. The camps along the Pipestone trail also create little conflict, now that major trail improvements have been made, and because the existing levels of use are low. If the outfitter's business were to increase, the nature of the conflict with hikers would increase accordingly.

The provision of information to hikers about the location of these camps has proven to be the best mechanism for mitigating conflicts and social impacts caused by the presence of large group camps.

4.2

**Day-Use Facilities
and Services**

4.2 DAY-USE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

A variety of day-use opportunities are provided in the park. These range from roadside facilities, such as picnic sites and viewpoints, to an extensive network of day-use trails, and mountain-top gondola systems. Use of these facilities and services represents the primary exposure the vast majority of visitors receive to the park.

Day-use facilities are being removed on the Trans-Canada Highway, because it is being improved to better serve as a through transportation corridor. The demand for roadside opportunities is being redirected to the Bow Valley Parkway.

The supply of day-use facilities and services is adequate. It is recognized, however, that visitors should be made more aware of the opportunities that are available.

There are 28 picnic sites in the park (Figure 8). The existing supply of picnic sites is adequate, except at the most popular sites during peak periods of use. A gap in the system occurs along the Icefields Parkway. No picnicking facilities are provided between Bow Lake and Bubbling Springs in Jasper National Park - a distance of over 150 km. A need also exists for some picnicking facilities in the Lake Louise Visitor Centre.

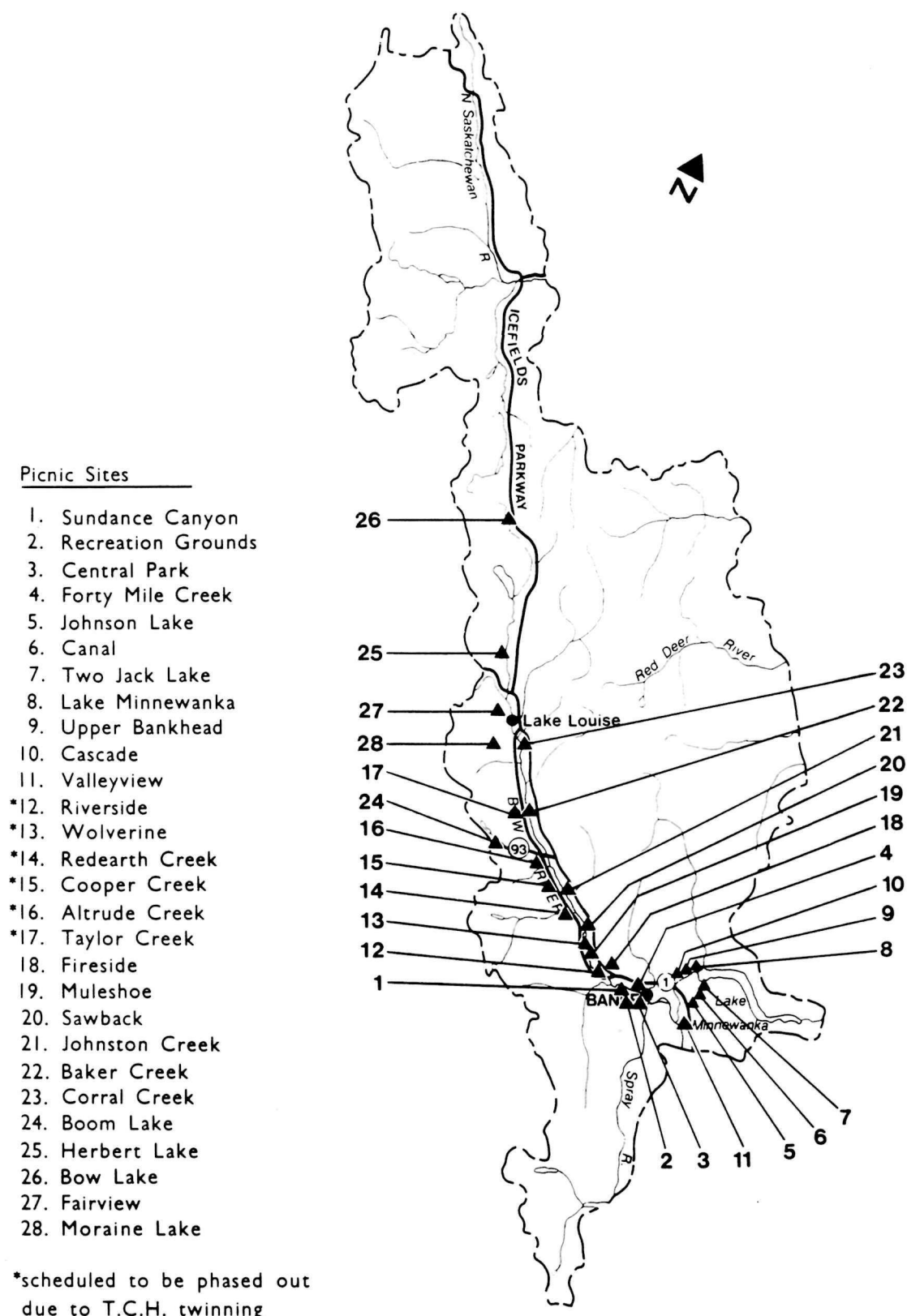
A system of day-use and self-guiding interpretive trails are maintained throughout the park, usually in proximity to other day and overnight facilities. The most heavily-used trails are at the Cave and Basin, Lake Louise, Moraine Lake, Johnston Canyon and Bow Summit. Visitor use of self-guiding trails is increasing. Opportunities exist to better connect trails to visitor attractions and to increase visitor information about the trails. There are few opportunities to develop new day-use trails in the park.

The park also contains a number of major day-use areas, including Lake Minnewanka, Johnson Lake, Upper Sulphur Mountain Hotpool/Sulphur Mountain Gondola, the Buffalo (Bison) Paddock, Sunshine Meadows, Johnston Canyon, Lake Louise and Moraine Lake. Descriptions of these areas are contained in the Banff Background Report.

Notable planning issues associated with these major day-use areas occur at Lake Minnewanka, Johnson Lake and the Sulphur Mountain Upper Hotsprings.

Lake Minnewanka provides relatively unique opportunities in the Canadian Rockies for intensive day-use recreation in association with a large body of water. Problems occur with parking, general site congestion, the mix of recreational demands placed on the area and the storage of privately-owned boats.

Figure 8: Picnic Sites, Banff National Park



Johnson Lake and the surrounding shoreline area was popular for swimming, fishing, sunbathing, picnicking and walking. A dam at the west end of the lake failed in February 1986, lowering the water level by 1.8 m and exposing 3 ha of the 8 ha reservoir. This lake, although altered, is one of the few low elevation Montane waterbodies in the park.

Finally, the Sulphur Mountain Hotsprings Pool and gondola are among the most popular day-use attractions in the park. Since 1981, however, use levels at the hotpool have decreased by about 25%. The hot pool complex is run-down and in need of upgrading or redevelopment. Before this can occur, the reason for the decline in use and the future requirements of visitors must be determined.

A number of commercially-operated facilities and services are provided in the park. These include guiding services, livery operations, boat tours on Lake Minnewanka, canoe rentals, raft tours on the Bow River and the park's three ski areas. These are services which are enjoyed by many thousands of visitors but which the Canadian Parks Service would not itself provide. New commercial facilities outside the town of Banff or Lake Louise Visitor Centre will only be provided in association with existing outlying commercial accommodation facilities.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To minimize the site disturbances caused by day-use facilities.
2. To improve the experience of day-users in the park and increase opportunities in locations with interpretive potential and where visitors congregate.
3. To expand the range and increase the quality of day-use opportunities along the Bow Valley and Icefields parkways and other park roads in a manner which does not compromise the parks natural and visual integrity.
4. To upgrade substandard day-use facilities.
5. To provide essential and better information about day-use opportunities to visitors prior to and upon arrival in the park and at locations where visitors congregate, (such as the Cave and Basin, roadside pull-offs and commercially-operated facilities).
6. To improve linkages between overnight facilities, day-use opportunities and points of interest in the park.
7. To fill gaps, where appropriate, in the existing roadside facility system.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. MINIMAL DEVELOPMENT OF NEW DAY-USE FACILITIES WILL OCCUR IN THE PARK. AN EMPHASIS WILL BE PLACED ON UPGRADING EXISTING FACILITIES AND SERVICES. THIS WILL IMPROVE VISITOR EXPERIENCES, WHILE MINIMIZING SITE DISTURBANCES.

Discussion:

A broad range of day-use facilities and services have evolved in the park. These fall into two categories - roadside facilities which are often used for durations of not more than a few hours and major day-use destinations. The supply of existing day-use opportunities is adequate to meet anticipated use pressures and the most obvious sites have already been developed. Some of the existing facilities are run-down and require physical upgrading.

There are several gaps in the provision of roadside facilities, particularly along the Icefields Parkway. In the past, roadside facilities have been situated in expedient locations such as roadside fill sites and borrow pits. Future gaps will be filled, subject to environmental implications, where 1) an obvious absence in the provision of visitor services is demonstrated, 2) there is an opportunity to interpret the park's heritage resources, and 3) the site meets known requirements of the park's visitors.

- B. DAY-USE OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE FURTHER REDUCED ALONG THE TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY BETWEEN BANFF TOWNSITE AND LAKE LOUISE. THE DEMAND FOR THESE OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE REDIRECTED TO THE BOW VALLEY PARKWAY. FURTHER CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REST STOP ON THE TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY IN THE VICINITY OF CASTLE JUNCTION.

Discussion:

A decision, separate from this planning program, has been made to remove park facilities from the Trans-Canada Highway. Therefore, park visitors will be redirected to the Bow Valley Parkway. The option of developing rest stop facilities along the Trans-Canada Highway for east and west bound traffic requires further analysis of the need for both commercial transport and private vehicles, as well as probable levels of use.

- C. USE PATTERNS AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF TOUR BUS OPERATORS WILL BE IDENTIFIED. ALTHOUGH NO NEW FACILITIES WILL BE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF THIS USER GROUP, NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING FACILITIES, SUCH AS EXPANDED PARKING SPACE, WILL BE CONSIDERED. THE PARKS SERVICE WILL ASSIST IN PROVIDING INFORMATION TO TOUR BUS OPERATORS ABOUT PARK RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

Discussion:

The amount of tour bus traffic is increasing, particularly on the Icefields Parkway. The Canadian Parks Service supports these tours by permitting commercially-operated facilities and services to develop in response to their requirements. Representatives of the tour bus industry indicate that the primary requirements are adequate parking at roadside attractions and information about the park. These representatives suggest that parking is adequate at most desired locations, except during peak periods. Initiatives, such as the Park Service's public transportation study, are being undertaken to assist in further identifying these requirements.

- D. THE SUPPLY OF DAY-USE AND INTERPRETIVE TRAILS IS GENERALLY ADEQUATE. THE EXISTING TRAIL SYSTEM WILL BE UPGRADED. NEW TRAILS AND TRAIL LINKS WILL BE DEVELOPED IN ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER DAY-USE AND OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES. THESE OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE EXPLORED AS FACILITIES ARE UPGRADED, REDEVELOPED AND NEWLY DEVELOPED.

Discussion:

A comprehensive and heavily-used system of frontcountry day-use and interpretive trails has been developed. No significant deficiencies or obvious new opportunities exist for their development, although some physical upgrading is required. There is a need, however, to better link this trail system with existing day-use and frontcountry accommodation facilities. This need will be investigated when facilities are upgraded, redeveloped and newly developed. Site-specific analyses will be required, therefore, of the available trail opportunities and the requirements of park visitors.

Roadside Facilities (Picnic Sites / Viewpoints / Pull-Offs)

- E. SOME INCREASE IN THE SUPPLY OF PICNIC FACILITIES WILL OCCUR ALONG THE ICEFIELDS PARKWAY. A NEW FACILITY WILL BE DEVELOPED AT COLEMAN CREEK. LEVELS AND PATTERNS OF USE WILL BE MONITORED AND IF DEMAND WARRANTS, ADDITIONAL SITES WILL BE DEVELOPED. POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL SITES ARE AT THE NORTH END OF WATERFOWL LAKE, AN AREA NORTH OF SASKATCHEWAN CROSSING AND AT PARKER RIDGE.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

No significant environmental concerns are associated with the proposed Coleman Creek picnic facility, which is located at the site of a former work camp. In fact, positive impacts will result from the rehabilitation of the existing disturbances. The environmental implications of other possible sites will be assessed if demand warrants additional picnicking sites along the Icefields Parkway.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

The Coleman Creek site will fill an unacceptably long 150 km gap in picnicking facilities along the Icefields Parkway. The proposed facility will provide positive opportunities because of its attractive setting and location on the North Saskatchewan River. It is well situated to serve picnicking requirements for visitors driving from the Banff townsite region (approximately 4 hours driving time).

- F. THE FOLLOWING TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY PICNIC SITES WILL BE REMOVED; RIVERSIDE, WOLVERINE, REDEARTH AND BOW RIVER. THE ALTRUDE SITE WILL REMAIN AS ACCESS WILL BE PROVIDED FROM THE KOOTENAY PARKWAY. THE TAYLOR CREEK SITE WILL REMAIN AS IT ALSO SERVES AS AN IMPORTANT TRAILHEAD. THE REDEARTH AND BOURGEAU LAKE TRAILHEAD FACILITIES WILL REMAIN.

Discussion:

Some inconvenience to travellers on the Trans-Canada Highway will occur as a result of the removal of the four picnic sites. Improved information will be required to redirect visitors to facilities provided on the Bow Valley Parkway.

- G. THERE ARE PRESENTLY NO CHANGES PROPOSED FOR PICNICKING FACILITIES ALONG THE BOW VALLEY PARKWAY. PATTERNS AND LEVELS OF USE WILL BE MONITORED. ONCE CONSTRUCTION IS COMPLETED ON THE PARKWAY AND THE TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY, FUTURE CHANGES WILL BE CONSIDERED ON THE BASIS OF THIS MONITORING.

Discussion:

It is anticipated that the existing supply of picnic sites on the Bow Valley Parkway will meet demand once the Trans-Canada Highway sites are removed. Levels of use will be monitored, however, and additional or expanded opportunities will be provided if required. Similarly, changes (such as reduction, development of complementary day-use opportunities) will be considered if it becomes obvious that the system is significantly under-utilized.

- H. PICNICKING OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE PROVIDED ON THE VALLEY FLOOR AT LAKE LOUISE. NO ADDITIONAL PICNICKING FACILITIES WILL BE PROVIDED IN UPPER LAKE LOUISE DUE TO THE EXISTING LEVELS OF USE AND CONGESTION.

Discussion:

There has been a long identified need for picnic facilities on the valley floor at Lake Louise. Options for a site or sites in the Visitor Centre will be pursued as part of the Lake Louise Development Project. No additional facilities will be provided in the upper Lake Louise area because of the high levels of use and congestion throughout the June to September period, and the absence of logical sites for such a facility.

- I. THE CANAL PICNIC SITE (on the Minnewanka loop road) WILL BE CLOSED. NO OTHER SIGNIFICANT CHANGES ARE PROPOSED IN THE BANFF TOWNSITE REGION WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE TWO JACK LAKE PICNIC SITE WHICH WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR FUTURE EXPANSION.

Discussion:

The Canal picnic site offers low quality experiences and is seldom used. Its removal will not be missed by park visitors. The site will be rehabilitated as required.

- J. REHABILITATION OF DISTURBED SITES WILL BE A PRIORITY ALONG THE ICEFIELDS PARKWAY. DAY-USE FACILITIES (e.g. parking, washrooms, trail conditions) WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE BOW GLACIER TRAILHEAD NEAR NUM-TI-JAH LODGE.

Discussion:

Rehabilitation of roadside disturbances in the fragile Bow Summit area will produce positive environmental and aesthetic impacts. No significant environmental impacts are associated with the proposed development of the Bow Glacier trailhead facilities (also referred to as Num-Ti-Jah day-use area). Major concerns relating to an independent and reliable waste water treatment system have been addressed .

These facilities are required for park visitors who are not paying guests at Num-Ti-Jah Lodge. In the past, more than one-half of the visitors to the area did not stay or eat at the lodge but merely used the parking and washroom facilities provided by the owner.

Major Day-Use Areas

- K. TRAILS AT LAKE LOUISE, MORAINÉ LAKE, JOHNSTON CANYON, AND IN THE SUNSHINE AREA HAVE BEEN UPGRADED. NO SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS ARE PROPOSED.
- L. A SITE PLAN WILL BE PREPARED FOR THE SULPHUR MOUNTAIN AREA TO INTEGRATE THE GONDOLA AND UPPER HOT SPRINGS POOL AS A HIGH QUALITY VISITOR DESTINATION AREA. OPTIONS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVED OPERATION OF THE UPPER HOT SPRINGS WILL BE PURSUED. THESE OPTIONS FOR REDEVELOPMENT WILL RELATE TO MARKET DEMANDS FOR HOT POOL FACILITIES THAT ARE APPROPRIATE IN A NATIONAL PARK SETTING.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

No major resource management concerns are associated with the existing operation of the Rimrock Hotel, Upper Hot Springs pool and Sulphur Mountain Gondola beyond the initial and substantial impacts associated with their development. The area does contain noteworthy heritage resource values associated with the hot springs outflow, bighorn sheep habitat and the site of the former Solar Research Station on the summit of Sulphur Mountain. It is also one area which is on prominent visual display from many vantages in the Banff townsite region. Any other proposed development or redevelopment of the day-use area should be subject to comprehensive environmental scrutiny. The Upper Hot Pool building possesses heritage value and therefore, will not be torn down.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

The Sulphur Mountain Upper Hotsprings pool and gondola are among the most popular day-use attractions in the park. The physical integration of these facilities is required. In addition, the Upper Hotsprings pool complex is in need of costly upgrading or redevelopment. Although the facility receives over 360,000 visits each year (41% of these in July and August), annual use has decreased by 25% since 1981. The specific reasons for the decrease and probable future trends for the facility are not known. Detailed marketing

and demand studies are required to help formulate options for its redevelopment. Considerations for the Solar Research Station site include the development of improved pedestrian access and an interpretive component which is consistent with its National Heritage Site designation.

Consideration of these options will form a significant part of an area plan for the Sulphur Mountain Area. The objective for the area plan will be to provide a high quality national park visitor destination area that integrates the three major facilities.

- M. THE WOOD BISON Paddock WILL BE RETAINED UNTIL THE SPECIES IS REMOVED FROM THE ENDANGERED OR THREATENED DESIGNATION, AND OTHER RESOURCE CONSERVATION STRATEGIES ARE ACHIEVED. THE Paddock FENCE WILL BE MODIFIED AND THE WINTER PASTURE FENCE REMOVED TO MAXIMIZE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR WILDLIFE MOVEMENT. THE WOOD BISON HERD WILL BE MAINTAINED THROUGH A WINTER FEEDING PROGRAM, AND BY SELECTIVE REMOVAL OF ASPEN AND SHRUB COVER TO MAXIMIZE AVAILABLE SUMMER GRAZE.

VISITOR ACCESS TO THE WOOD BISON Paddock WILL BE CONTINUED AND AN EXPANDED PROGRAM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION WILL BE OFFERED. THE Paddock WILL BE REMOVED AND THE WOOD BISON HERD RELOCATED OUTSIDE THE PARK WHEN CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN FULLY MET.

Discussion:

Wood bison are presently designated as a threatened species (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada). The protection of this herd, therefore, will receive precedence over other environmental considerations.

The bison paddock is a popular attraction which is open to the public during the snow-free months. It is estimated that over 25,000 vehicles drive through the paddock each summer season. A significant portion of the visitors who enter the bison paddock are on organized bus tours. Improved interpretive information will be provided about the bison as an animal which is indigenous to the Bow Valley area of Banff.

The bison paddock presently alienates important winter ungulate habitat and represents a noteworthy barrier to wildlife movement through the valley, particularly for elk. The paddock fence also hinders ungulates from grazing in the enclosed grassland habitat. The significance of this habitat loss and of the barrier to movement is increased by the twinning and fencing of the Trans-Canada Highway. An opportunity does exist to modify the size and nature of the enclosure so as to reduce the impact on ungulate movement.

- N. AN AREA PLAN WILL BE PREPARED FOR THE LAKE MINNEWANKA AREA. THE PLAN WILL ADDRESS 1) TRAFFIC FLOW AND PARKING PROBLEMS, 2) ACCESS FOR DISABLED PERSONS, 3) MARINA FACILITIES, AND 4) ITS OPTIMUM REDEVELOPMENT AS A WATER-BASED DAY-USE AREA. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REQUIRED IMPROVEMENTS WILL OCCUR IN A PHASED MANNER, BASED ON THE MAGNITUDE OF EXISTING PROBLEMS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. THE AREA WILL CONTINUE TO BE MANAGED TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY WATER-BASED RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

Large portions of the Lake Minnewanka day use area have been significantly impacted. Important resources associated with the Lake Minnewanka day use area include bighorn sheep, a mineral lick, archaeological resources near the mouth of the Cascade River and the Douglas fir forest - a rare vegetation type in Banff National Park. The potential impact of redevelopment on these resources, as well as water quality and the fishery will be addressed in the area plan.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

The requirement for an area plan at Lake Minnewanka is based on 1) its heavy use (average summer use is 1,660 visitors a day), 2) general levels of congestion, 3) importance as an area providing regionally unique and high-quality water-based recreational opportunities and 4) the need to resolve issues regarding the provision of public boat docking and storage facilities. The existing situation is not considered to be acceptable, particularly during peak periods. A detailed visitor analysis will be undertaken as a preliminary step in the preparation of an area development plan.

- O. AN AREA PLAN WILL BE DEVELOPED FOR THE VERMILION LAKES. THE PLAN WILL DETERMINE THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS REQUIRED TO PROTECT THE AREA'S SPECIAL FEATURES, AND WILL IDENTIFY THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL AND TYPES OF VISITOR ACTIVITIES TO BE PERMITTED.

Discussion:

The Vermilion Lakes area provides a biologically productive and diverse habitat for a number of plant and wildlife species. The high water table and wet conditions make the area susceptible to impact and mitigation is difficult. The alluvial landforms fronting the north and east shores of the lakes and adjacent wetlands are also extremely rich in significant prehistoric resources.

The area also provides visitors with a number of recreation activities such as fishing, canoeing, hiking, wildlife viewing, and sail boarding. An area plan is required to establish guidelines for the management and use of this significant area.

- P. THE WATER AT JOHNSON LAKE WILL BE RESTORED TO ITS LEVEL PRIOR TO THE FAILURE OF THE DAM IN 1986.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

Johnson Lake was originally created in 1930 by damming both ends of an erosional trough which contained an unnamed creek emanating from beaver swamps at the base of Mount Inglismaldie. It is one of only eight low elevation montane water bodies in the park. Although not a natural waterbody, Johnson Lake has provided fish and waterfowl habitat during the 50 years of its existence.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

The lowered lake levels reduced the quality of recreational opportunities. A petition signed by over 1,600 individuals was forwarded to the Canadian Parks Service in support of restoring the higher lake level. Residents of Banff townsites valued the lake, prior to the failure of the dam, as a local swimming spot. Restoration of the water level will satisfy the demand for recreational opportunities. The provision of these opportunities will take precedence, in this particular case, over the principle of permitting natural processes to operate without human interference.

Commercial Day-Use Facilities

- Q. ALL EXISTING COMMERCIAL DAY-USE FACILITIES WILL BE PERMITTED TO REMAIN. THIS APPLIES TO THE LAKE AGNES AND PLAIN OF SIX TEAHOUSES, LAKE MINNEWANKA BOAT TOURS, RAFT TOURS, SULPHUR MOUNTAIN GONDOLA, AND HORSE LIVERIES. ANY REDEVELOPMENT OR INCREASE IN SERVICE LEVELS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THE BASIS OF ITS ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT, AS WELL AS OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS. ADJUSTMENTS IN LEASE AREAS OR AREAS UNDER LICENCE OF OCCUPATION WILL BE CONSIDERED ONLY WHERE UTILITY SERVICES WOULD BE IMPROVED, OR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND VISITOR USE CONFLICTS REDUCED.

- R. NO NEW SKI AREAS OR GOLF COURSES WILL BE PERMITTED. DAY-USE FACILITIES AND SERVICES ASSOCIATED WITH THE BANFF SPRINGS GOLF COURSE ARE DETERMINED THROUGH A SEPARATE PLANNING PROGRAM, ALTHOUGH THE DIRECTION IN "IN TRUST FOR TOMORROW" AND ELSEWHERE IN THIS PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN WILL APPLY.

DUE TO THE SPECIAL NATURE OF THE SKI AREAS IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK (LAKE LOUISE, MOUNT NORQUAY AND SUNSHINE), A SPECIAL PROCESS HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO PRODUCE LONG RANGE DEVELOPMENT PLANS. THESE PLANS PROVIDE THE BASIS UPON WHICH THE SKI AREA DEVELOPMENT TAKES PLACE WITHIN PREDETERMINED BOUNDARIES AS ESTABLISHED IN THE LEASES.

Discussion:

Each long range ski area plan identifies, at a conceptual level, the extent of facility development that will be permitted, based on a thorough assessment of the requirements for natural resource protection, public safety, and visitor enjoyment. The status of the long range planning for the three areas follows.

1. Lake Louise - Plan and boundary established in 1982. No change in boundary is foreseen. Lease is in place.
 2. Mount Norquay - Tentative agreement on the plan and boundary reached in February, 1988 and will be presented for final public review prior to the preparation of the lease documentation.
 3. Sunshine - The plan direction was initially established in 1978. A boundary description and lease were prepared in 1981. The proposals for boundary and plan amendments, submitted by the ski area operator, are presently under review.
- S. ADDITIONAL LANDS WILL NOT BE ALIENATED FOR NEW COMMERCIAL DAY-USE FACILITIES OR SERVICES, EXCEPT WHERE AN EXISTING LEASE AREA OR AREA UNDER LICENCE OF OCCUPATION IS UTILIZED.
- T. GROUP BARBECUE FACILITIES WILL BE ACCEPTED AS DESIRABLE SERVICES TO PARK VISITORS. FORMAL LAND TENURE AGREEMENTS WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOR THREE SUCH FACILITIES.

Discussion:

At present there are three group barbecuing facilities in the park. The Donut tent is a popular barbecuing facility which is used throughout the summer by visitors and townsites residents. The level of service is presently low but would be upgraded as a condition for a formal land tenure agreement. The Sundance Road facility is used by visitors

who ride from the Warner horse barns during the summer and during the winter are transported by a horse-drawn sleds. It provides a visitor opportunity which is traditional and appropriate to Banff. A third site, very near the Banff sewage lagoon, will no longer be permitted to operate because of the low quality of experiences provided. An alternate location for this facility on an existing leasehold will be required.

4.3

Recreational Activities

4.3 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Banff National Park provides opportunities for a wide range of recreational activities, which include: driving for pleasure; cross-country skiing; canoeing, kayaking and rafting; lake boating; bicycling; horse riding; caving; dog-sledding and scuba diving.* These activities are enjoyed by regional (primarily Calgary), national and international visitors. The vast majority of recreational activity is associated with road accessible areas, camping, and backcountry day-use. Hang-gliding is a new activity in the park which is being permitted on a trial basis.

The private sector contributes substantially to visitors' enjoyment of Banff National Park by providing services such as guided raft tours, horse rental, dog-sledding trips, bicycle and boat rentals, and guiding services for mountaineering, trail riding and fishing. Opportunities exist for the Canadian Parks Service to develop cooperative information and marketing programs, and for the private sector to provide additional facilities and services in the park.

Driving for pleasure is the most popular activity in the park. Enjoyment and appreciation of the park's natural landscape is provided to visitors travelling along the Trans-Canada Highway, the Icefields and Bow Valley parkways, and other park roads. The facilities and services required to enhance the quality of experiences associated with travelling the highway and park roads are described in sections of this document dealing with "Communication Services", "Day-use Facilities and Services", and "Access".

Cross-country skiing is also popular. Most of the cross-country skiing in the Four Mountain Parks occurs in Banff. This situation exists because of the relatively close proximity of Calgary to the park, and Banff's consequent role as a day-use destination. Cross-country skiing in Banff encompasses nordic skiing, competitive racing, telemarking, backcountry touring and ski mountaineering. Nordic skiing and ski touring are the most common types of cross-country skiing carried out in the park. Existing opportunities are expected to be adequate for the next 15 years.

There are over 185 km of designated and groomed ski trails in the park. Approximately three-quarters of these trails are track-set. The most popular trails are the Spray backcountry road (east and west side), the Cascade backcountry road, the Forty Mile Creek trail, the Sunshine area, the Sundance loop trail, the Redearth

* This differentiation in recreational activities is made in order to maintain consistency with the direction contained in In Trust for Tomorrow. Sport fishing is discussed in the Resource Protection and Management section of this document. Boating, dog-sledding and scuba diving have been added since they represent particular management concerns in Banff National Park.

trail, the Pipestone loop trail, the Telemark trail and the Moraine Lake road. The development of extensive networks of nordic ski trails in Kananaskis Country has significantly reduced the pressure on Banff National Park. Similarly, the creation of the Canmore Nordic Centre, outside the park, accommodates most of the demand for advanced ski racing trails.

Ski touring is also a popular day-use activity. Popular areas for touring are Forty Mile Creek, Healy Creek, the Sunshine Meadows, Redearth Creek, Johnston Creek, Baker Creek and Mosquito Creek. Levels of overnight use are low. Most of the overnight use is associated with the Bryant and Egypt trail shelters, and Skoki Lodge.

Ski mountaineering occurs throughout the park, although much of the activity is centred on the Great Divide area. The presence of three alpine huts along the edge of the Wapta Icefield (the Peyto, Bow and Balfour huts), in addition to the easy access and superb terrain, attracts a relatively significant number of skiers into that area.

The Bow, Mistaya and North Saskatchewan rivers are popular for canoeing, kayaking and rafting. Levels of use on these rivers are measured in the thousands rather than the tens or even hundreds of thousands as is the case elsewhere in Canada and the United States. The Bow River, downstream of Lake Louise, receives the majority of use. It provides relatively easy open canoeing opportunities. A commercial rafting company provides float trips from Bow Falls to Canmore. The section upstream from Lake Louise contains navigable white water reaches and is paddled by a limited number of experienced kayakists.

The North Saskatchewan River, beginning above the Alexandra River confluence to the east park boundary, is navigable in open canoes. The section within Banff National Park has been designated as a Canadian Heritage River. This designation is based on its natural, recreational and historic values. Finally, sections of the Mistaya River are navigable in white water boats.

Currently, most facilities for river users are associated with existing roadside pull-offs, viewpoints, picnic sites and campgrounds. These facilities are adequate at the present time, but increased use may necessitate the development of additional facilities or site-hardening at existing facilities. Improved information for river users is desirable to enhance their enjoyment and to increase visitor safety.

Boating is a popular activity in Banff. Power boats are restricted to Lake Minnewanka. Non-motorized boats are permitted on all other lakes in frontcountry areas. The storage of boats at Lake Minnewanka creates some problems. The absence of suitable public moorage facilities means that boats must be taken out of the water after each period of use. Although the majority of use occurs on a day-basis, some boaters do camp at the designated backcountry campgrounds along the shore of Lake Minnewanka.

Bicycling occurs in various forms throughout the park. Vermilion Lakes Drive, the Lake Minnewanka Road and the Sundance Canyon Road are popular among casual bicyclists. The Bow Valley Parkway is also popular, although the absence of paved shoulders will create safety problems if traffic volumes increase. The alternative to the Bow Valley Parkway is the Trans-Canada Highway. Although the highway has wide paved shoulders, it is not well suited to bicycle touring because of the large volumes of high speed vehicular traffic on it.

The Icefields Parkway is one of the most popular bicycle touring routes in North America. In July and August, approximately 50 bicyclists per day travel the parkway. The road is safe for bicyclists because of the wide shoulders. The provision of hostels at suitable intervals along the parkway is an important factor contributing to its popularity. Increased motorist awareness of bicycle traffic would further reduce the potential for vehicle/bicyclists conflicts along all touring routes.

Trail bicycling is an appropriate activity in national parks but is restricted to designated areas. The levels of use are not precisely known, but are relatively low. Almost all trail use occurs on a day basis. To date, concerns associated with this activity have been negligible, except in the vicinity of Banff townsite where some conflict with pedestrians and equestrians has been reported.

There is a long-standing tradition of horse-use in the park. Livery concessions operate from the Banff townsite stables, Banff Springs Hotel, the Chateau Lake Louise and Deer Lodge. Most visitors day ride from these facilities on trips lasting a few hours. Private horse corrals are also located in the townsite area and are used by Banff residents. The frontcountry trails used by the commercial stables are well hardened. Where significant conflicts with pedestrians have occurred, separate trails have been constructed.

Significant levels of backcountry horse use are associated with commercial horse outfitting. The major concerns associated with backcountry horse use are the significant and widespread deterioration of trails, the large group camp operation and horse/hiker conflicts (see also: Backcountry Use and Facilities). Private horse use in both frontcountry and backcountry areas, does not create serious problems or conflicts and is viewed as an appropriate park activity.

Caving is a specialized activity which is carried out by a limited number of participants. It must be controlled because of resource protection and public safety concerns. The best-known cave in the park is Castleguard Cave. Recognized groups may enter a cave with prior permission from the park Superintendent.

Commercially-operated dog-sled rides are offered from the Banff Springs Hotel and the Chateau Lake Louise. The Lake Louise rides

have been offered for two years and the Banff rides for one year. The dogs are kenneled in Canmore and brought into the park daily. The Lake Louise operation uses the lakeshore trail, while the golf course grounds are used in Banff.

Scuba diving is permitted in Lake Minnewanka and Two Jack Lake. Lake Minnewanka receives most of the use, particularly the flooded ruins of the former Minnewanka townsite. No record is maintained on the level of use in the park.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To provide more outdoor recreational opportunities for a broader range of visitors in association with existing day-use facilities and services.
2. To upgrade opportunities for existing outdoor recreational activities as required and in response to demand.
3. To manage existing outdoor recreational opportunities in a manner which minimizes environmental impairment and conflicts between user groups.
4. To evaluate the appropriateness of new activities on the basis of environmental constraints, visitor demand, potential conflicts with current park users and available regional opportunities.
5. To encourage the private sector and non-profit organizations to play an increased role in the provision of outdoor recreational opportunities in the park.
6. To encourage, to the extent appropriate, the year-round outdoor recreational use of the park.
7. To improve visitor information and awareness regarding outdoor recreational opportunities in the park.

PLAN GUIDELINES

Driving For Pleasure

- A. OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE ENHANCED BY UPGRADING AND IMPROVING THE SYSTEM OF ROADSIDE FACILITIES AND ORIENTATION TO THESE FACILITIES. PROTECTION AND, WHERE NECESSARY, RESTORATION OF THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE ALONG ALL PARK HIGHWAYS, PARKWAYS AND ROADS WILL TAKE PLACE. ORIENTATION INFORMATION AT PARKWAY ACCESS POINTS WILL BE A PRIORITY. (See also Rehabilitation of Disturbed Areas, Communication Services, Access and Day-Use Facilities).

Cross-Country Skiing

- B. EXISTING CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING OPPORTUNITIES WILL CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED. INFORMATION ON TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES AND CURRENT SNOW CONDITIONS WILL BE UPGRADED. LEVELS AND PATTERNS OF USE WILL BE MONITORED AND THE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE PROVIDED ONLY IF WARRANTED BY DEMAND.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

There are no major resource management concerns associated with current and anticipated future levels of cross-country skiing in the park, except possibly with the ski trails on the Banff Springs golf course. This area contains important elk habitat. The impact of cross-country skiing on these ungulates is not known, but is not thought to be significant.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

Cross-country skiing opportunities are well developed in the park. Although detailed information on levels of use and demand is not complete, it is believed that no increase in the supply of opportunities is required at the present time. In fact, a number of the designated nordic trail systems are under-utilized. The initiative to upgrade information on opportunities and current trail conditions is on-going.

Although a wide range of cross-country skiing occurs in the park, nordic ski trails require the greatest investment in trail development and maintenance. If future expansion of

the system of nordic trails is required, first consideration will be given to developing trails in the Lake Louise area. Lake Louise contains snow conditions which are superior to the more eastern portions of the Bow valley. The area is also accessible within a two hour drive from Calgary, which is the major market for all forms of skiing in the park. Future monitoring of levels and patterns of use will occur and the provision of any future opportunities would be considered in response to demand.

- C. THE TRACK-SETTING OF DESIGNATED NORDIC TRAILS WILL CONTINUE. THE AMOUNT OF TRACK-SETTING WILL BE CONTROLLED ON NORDIC TRAILS TO ALLOW VISITORS TO ENJOY A FULL RANGE OF CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING.

Discussion:

At present, 143 km or 77% of the designated nordic ski trails in the park are track-set. The controlled use of over snow vehicles for track-setting has no significant impact on park resources. Sponsoring agencies and commercial operators in the park will be permitted to track-set selected trails. This will result in high quality skiing opportunities being provided to thousands of park visitors.

Canoeing, Kayaking, and Rafting

- D. USE OF NAVIGABLE PORTIONS OF THE NORTH SASKATCHEWAN, MISTAYA AND BOW RIVERS WILL BE MONITORED AND NECESSARY FACILITIES (e.g. designated access/egress sites, portages) AND INFORMATION (e.g. signs, brochures) PROVIDED ACCORDING TO NEED AND DEMAND. AN INFORMATION PACKAGE WILL BE PREPARED ON THE NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER EXPLAINING THE NATURAL, HISTORIC AND RECREATIONAL ATTRIBUTES WHICH LED TO ITS NOMINATION AS A CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

Negative resource impacts associated with existing use levels are minimal. Significant and unexpected use increases would have to occur before resource impairment would reach a level requiring management action.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

Reaches of the Bow, North Saskatchewan and Mistaya rivers provide good opportunities for canoeing, kayaking and rafting in spite of the highways, parkways and rail lines which run along much of their length. The Bow River, between Lake Louise and Banff townsite receives the vast majority of use, estimated at about 8,000 user days a year. Navigable portions of the other rivers are below 200 user days a year. At present, no new facilities are required or warranted on the North Saskatchewan and Mistaya rivers. Future requirements on the Bow River include the provision of designated access/egress sites at Lake Louise and upstream of Banff townsite, and the development of an appropriate river guide.

An information package is required on the North Saskatchewan River, explaining its role in the Canadian Heritage River System. This could be a part of a regional brochure which would also include information on the Athabasca and Kicking Horse rivers.

- E. RANDOM CAMPING WILL NOT BE PERMITTED ALONG THE NORTH SASKATCHEWAN, MISTAYA AND BOW RIVERS. WALK-IN SITES WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE JOHNSTON CANYON CAMPGROUND FOR PADDLERS AND BICYCLISTS.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

A detailed impact assessment of the proposal to develop walk-in camping sites at Johnston Creek, for paddlers and cyclists, is needed. The Johnston Creek area contains significant Montane vegetation types and prehistoric sites. The proposed development would add incrementally to the impacts on the environmentally important alluvial fan associated with Johnston Creek.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

Random camping will not be permitted along these rivers because the popular sections of river are located in frontcountry areas where random camping is not appropriate. The provision of walk-in camping facilities at Johnston Creek would be popular with canoeists if properly promoted. The site would also be developed for use by cyclists.

- F. EXISTING COMMERCIAL RAFT TOURING OPERATIONS ON THE BOW RIVER MAY CONTINUE. NO INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF RAFTING OR CHANGES IN THE SECTIONS OF RIVER FLOATED WILL BE PERMITTED.

Discussion:

Controls on commercial rafting, such as the number of in-park operations or the river sections they can operate on, are necessary to ensure that appropriate, high quality and safe visitor experiences are provided.

Lake Boating

- G. OPPORTUNITIES WILL CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED ON LAKE MINNEWANKA FOR PRIVATE MOTOR AND SAIL BOATING. CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO IMPROVED PARKING, LAUNCHING AND DOCKING FOR PRIVATE BOATS AS PART OF THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE LAKE MINNEWANKA AREA PLAN (see Section 4.2, Statement 'N'). CAMPGROUNDS ALONG THE LAKE WILL CONTINUE TO BE UPGRADED AND THE REQUIREMENT FOR DOCKING FACILITIES AT THESE CAMPGROUNDS WILL BE CONSIDERED IF DEMAND WARRANTS.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

No significant or negative environmental impacts are associated with private boating on Lake Minnewanka. Periodic monitoring of water quality in Lake Minnewanka occurs during the summer boating season. So far, no unacceptable levels of pollution have been recorded.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

Visitor opportunities for boating on Lake Minnewanka are limited by the absence of adequate docking and mooring facilities. At present mooring facilities are provided for a limited group of Banff residents. The area plan would address the need for public launching, docking and mooring facilities. Consideration will be given to providing more opportunities for park visitors to boat on the lake.

Boaters use several of the primitive campsites established along the shore of Lake Minnewanka. If demand warrants, consideration will be given to providing docking facilities at these sites.

- H. COMMERCIAL BOAT TOURS WILL CONTINUE TO BE PERMITTED ON LAKE MINNEWANKA.

Discussion:

The Minnewanka boat tours provide quality viewing opportunities. There are no visitor use conflicts associated with this operation, and a unique and popular visitor experience is provided. No significant or negative environmental impacts are associated with commercial boating on Lake Minnewanka. The Canadian Parks Service will continue to encourage the concessionaire to upgrade the quality of park interpretation programs provided on the tours.

- I. EXISTING CANOE CONCESSIONS AT LAKE LOUISE, MORAINÉ LAKE, ECHO CREEK/VERMILION LAKES AND TWO JACK LAKE WILL BE PERMITTED. NO NEW CANOE CONCESSIONS WILL BE LICENCED. OTHER TYPES OF BOATS (e.g. paddle boats) MAY NOT BE RENTED AS THEY ARE NOT APPROPRIATE ON THESE HIGH-PROFILE LAKES.

Discussion:

The existing canoe concessions provide good park opportunities and do not conflict with other visitor uses. The prohibition on the rental of other types of boats is intended to ensure that the aesthetic quality of high profile lakes are not impaired by flotillas of paddle boats or similar types of water craft.

- J. NON-MOTORIZED BOATS WILL CONTINUE TO BE PERMITTED ON ALL PARK LAKES. STORAGE OF THESE BOATS ALONG LAKESHORE AREAS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

Discussion:

Although the prohibition on the storage of boats will be an inconvenience to some visitors, the aesthetic quality of some lake shore areas, such as at Marvel Lake, has been negatively impacted by the presence of old and abandoned boats.

Bicycling

- K. OPPORTUNITIES FOR BICYCLING WILL CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED ON THE ICEFIELDS PARKWAY, THE TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY, THE BOW VALLEY PARKWAY AND ALL PARK ROADS. MOTORISTS WILL BE MADE AWARE OF THE PROBABLE PRESENCE OF BICYCLISTS ON THE POPULAR ROUTES. THE PARK WILL CONTINUE TO REVIEW COMMERCIAL MANUSCRIPTS ON BICYCLING AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, ENCOURAGE THE AUTHORS TO INCLUDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK AND PERTINENT REGULATIONS.

Discussion:

There are no environmental implications associated with cycle touring on the Trans-Canada Highway, the Icefields and Bow Valley parkways, and other park roads.

Bicycling, in its various forms, is recognized as an appropriate park activity which encourages visitor enjoyment and appreciation of heritage resource values. There is every indication that the popularity of bicycling will continue to grow in Banff as the Icefields Parkway continues to be widely promoted as an international calibre touring route.

Public safety concerns exist on park roads and the Trans-Canada Highway because of the growing practice of motorists to drive on the paved shoulders in order to permit other motorists to pass. The potential for future safety problems exists on the Bow Valley Parkway due to the absence of paved shoulders for bicyclists. As well, the development of passing lanes on the Trans-Canada Highway, between Sunshine and Lake Louise, and the Icefields Parkway requires a reduction in the width of the designated shoulders. These circumstances place bicyclists in jeopardy as they must travel along paved shoulders. Means will be sought to inform motorists of the probable presence of bicyclists.

Good information is available about bicycling in the park from outside sources. When requested, Parks Service officials will review the manuscripts of bicycling guides and encourage the authors to include appropriate park messages.

- L. OFF-PAVEMENT BICYCLING WILL BE PERMITTED ON DESIGNATED PARK TRAILS WHERE VISITOR USE CONFLICTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS ARE NOT APPARENT. LEVELS OF USE AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS ACTIVITY WILL CONTINUE TO BE MONITORED. ADJUSTMENTS WILL BE MADE IN THE LIST OF DESIGNATED TRAILS TO REFLECT THE RESULTS OF THE MONITORING. NO BICYCLING WILL BE PERMITTED IN WILDLAND AREAS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE FORMER ALEXANDRA ROAD.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

Preliminary studies indicate that there are few environmental concerns associated with trail (off-road) bicycling where it is presently permitted. Use will be monitored as part of an on-going program and any impacts will be mitigated by undertaking trail improvements or restricting bicycle use.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

Trail bicycling is an appropriate activity where it does not conflict with hikers or horse users, cause environmental damage or interfere with the enjoyment of wildland opportunities. Existing levels of use are low, except on trails in the vicinity of Banff townsite. Trail bicycling will continue to be permitted on designated trails and excluded from all areas managed to provide wildland opportunities. The Alexandra road is an exception which will create few conflicts because of the limited number of hikers who use that area. Adjustments in the list of designated trails will be made from time to time, based on the findings of the park's monitoring program.

Horse Use

- M. EXISTING HORSE CONCESSIONS AT BOW LAKE, LAKE LOUISE AND BANFF TOWNSITE MAY REMAIN. NO NEW LICENCES WILL BE ISSUED FOR ADDITIONAL CONCESSIONS AS THE EXISTING SUPPLY OF OPPORTUNITIES IS ADEQUATE. NO SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF HORSE USE WILL BE PERMITTED. THE LEVELS AND IMPLICATIONS OF USE WILL BE MONITORED AND CHANGES MADE AS REQUIRED.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

The majority of use associated with livery operations, occurs on designated and hardened trails. Beyond the impact of the trails themselves, the activities have minimal additional affect on park resources. The decision to not permit an increase in the livery operations and to monitor the resulting situation will ensure that any undesirable environmental consequences are minimized.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

The livery operations are traditional, popular and accepted services in the park. There are about 180 horses in the Banff townsite region and 115 in Lake Louise which are used in these livery operations.

Past conflicts between this type of horse use and other park visitors have occurred because the liveries were situated in or near important park attractions. Although no outstanding social impacts presently exist, livery operations will continue to be closely monitored and changes will be made as required.

- N. THE PRIVATE HORSE CORRAL IN BANFF MAY REMAIN. CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO DEVELOPING A CORRAL AT LAKE LOUISE FOR RESIDENTS OF THE VISITOR CENTRE. CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE CORRAL WOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL LIGHT HORSE ASSOCIATION.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

The Banff public horse corrals are located on an area possessing high historic potential and the facilities alienate important winter ungulate habitat. The implications of a possible corral at Lake Louise cannot be determined, as no specific site has yet been proposed. A site assessment would be required once a location is identified.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

The public corrals at Banff are used to their 126 horse capacity and provide a valued community amenity. In addition, private horse owners from outside the park may corral their horses at this facility overnight.

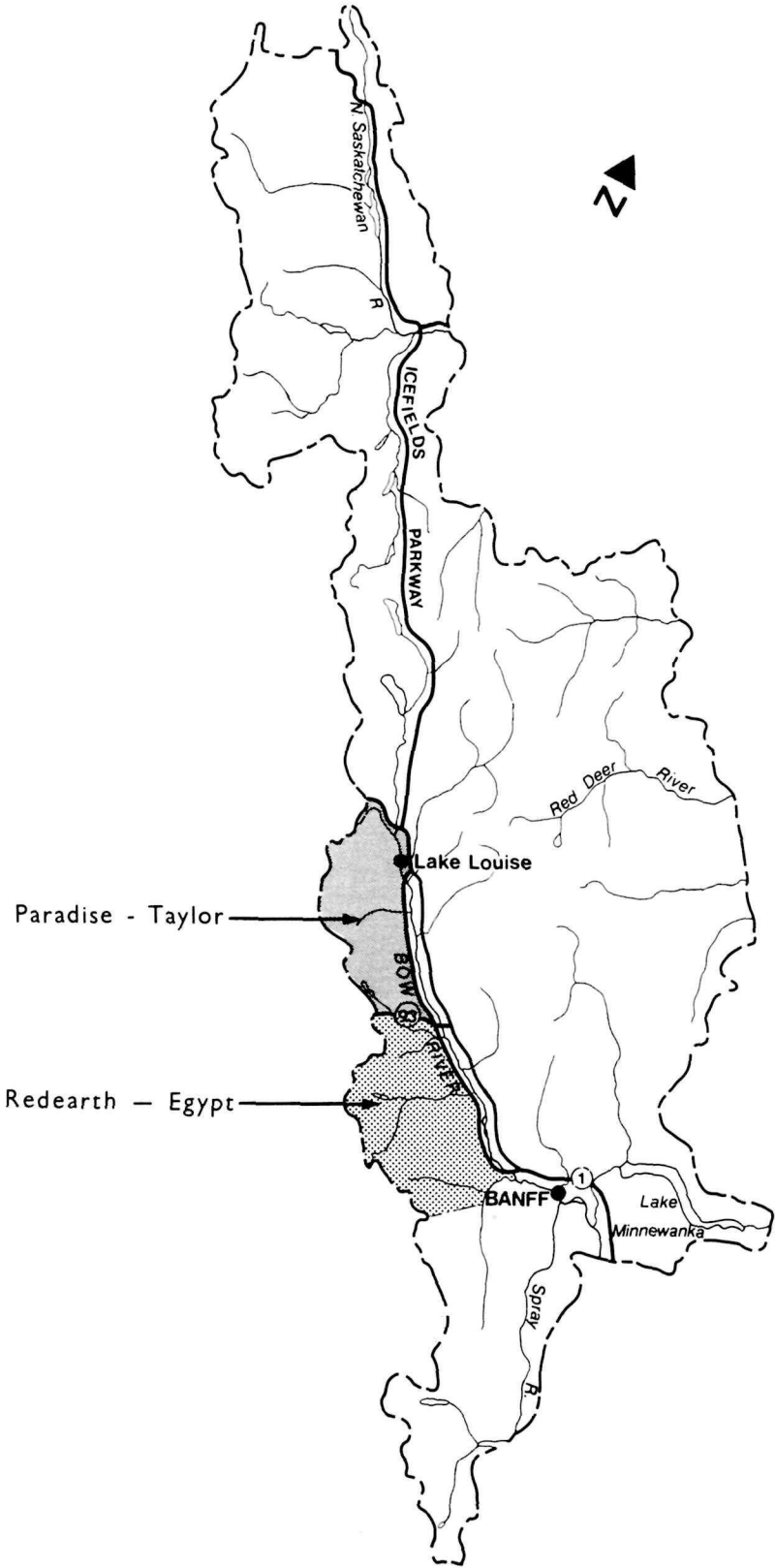
- O. THE PARADISE-TAYLOR AND REDEARTH-EGYPT BACKCOUNTRY AREAS WILL BE CLOSED TO GRAZING AND CAMPING WITH HORSES (see Figure 9). THE RESTRICTION APPLIES TO BOTH PRIVATE HORSE PARTIES AND COMMERCIAL HORSE OUTFITTERS.

Discussion:

The Paradise-Taylor and Redearth-Egypt areas lack suitable grazing areas and contain extensive sections of trail which would be susceptible to damage from intensive horse use. The restrictions on horse camping and grazing are justified, therefore, on environmental grounds. These areas are popular day and overnight hiking destinations. The restrictions will also eliminate conflicts with hikers, without requiring an outright prohibition on horse use.

Horses would be permitted to assist in servicing Shadow Lake Lodge, providing that horses are corraled in the vicinity of the lodge. The use of horses is not expected to result in a negative public reaction, providing necessary controls are placed on the days of the week that horses are used.

Figure 9: Horse Grazing, Banff National Park



- P. THE EXISTING CONDITIONS IN THE PARK REGARDING COMMERCIAL HORSE OUTFITTING AND HORSE-ASSISTED GROUP CAMPS WILL CONTINUE - THAT IS THE PARK WILL CONTINUE TO LICENSE ONLY TWO RESIDENT COMMERCIAL HORSE OUTFITTERS - WARNER MACKENZIE GUIDING AND OUTFITTING LTD. AND PAUL PEYTO'S TIMBERLINE TOURS AND PERMIT ONLY THREE ORGANIZATIONS TO OPERATE ROTATING GROUP CAMPS IN THE BACKCOUNTRY - ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA, SKYLINE HIKERS OF THE CANADIAN ROCKIES, AND THE TRAIL RIDERS OF THE CANADIAN ROCKIES.

CHANGES IN THE CONDITIONS MAY OCCUR IF AN EXISTING OUTFITTER DIVESTS HIMSELF OF HIS BUSINESS OPERATION. NO INCREASE IN THE LEVELS OF HORSE USE WILL BE PERMITTED. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL NO LONGER UNDERTAKE MAJOR OR EXTENSIVE TRAIL UPGRADING TO SUPPORT THEIR SOLE USE BY COMMERCIAL HORSE OUTFITTERS (See section 4.1, Statement "F").

INTEGRATED POLICIES WILL BE DEVELOPED WITH APPROPRIATE LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES TO DEAL WITH CONFLICTS ASSOCIATED WITH NON-RESIDENT OUTFITTERS OPERATING FROM AREAS BORDERING THE PARK'S EASTERN BOUNDARIES.

Discussion:

Commercial backcountry horse outfitting is an important part of the heritage of human use in Banff National Park. Each year between 7,000 and 9,000 visitor-nights of use are associated with horse outfitting operations. This is by far the highest level of horse use in any Canadian national or provincial park. Visitors on horse-back tend to stay in the backcountry for four nights, which is considerably longer than the average for hikers.

Satisfactory arrangements have been established in recent years between the park and resident outfitters regarding guidelines and procedures for conducting trail rides and operating group camps. Severe trail degradation is a consequence of intensive horse use in some areas of the park. Problems of trail tread erosion, braiding, and lateral expansion of the trail tread are severe along sections of poorly drained trails.

The decision to limit the amount of horse use to the existing level provides an opportunity to respond to existing problems. The guideline of not upgrading damaged trails, which are primarily used by outfitters and their guests, is acceptable in circumstances where existing and probable future impacts are within tolerable levels. Mitigative measures may be required, however, where impacts are beyond those levels, irrespective of the primary user.

Changes in the nature of the commercial operations will be considered if an existing outfitter sells or closes his business. In the meantime, the status quo will remain with specific adjustments and improvements made as necessary.

Non-resident outfitter use is a growing concern along the eastern portion of the park. Banff is becoming more popular for outfitted and guided horse trips because it provides increasingly rare, large areas of wilderness. Integrated policies will be developed with appropriate land management agencies to deal with conflicts associated with non-resident outfitters operating from areas bordering the park's eastern boundaries.

- Q. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF PRIVATE HORSE USERS. SEPARATE CAMPING FACILITIES WILL BE PROVIDED FOR HORSE PARTIES WHERE USE LEVELS AND POTENTIAL USER CONFLICTS WARRANT. CORRALS AND HITCHING RAILS WILL BE PROVIDED IN LOCATIONS WHERE WARRANTED. PRE-TRIP PLANNING INFORMATION AND TRAIL SIGNS WILL CLEARLY IDENTIFY TRAILS WHERE HORSES MAY BE TAKEN. WHERE APPROPRIATE, INFORMATION ON ETIQUETTE AND MINIMUM IMPACT USE WILL BE IMPROVED.

Discussion:

Private use of horses is an appropriate and long-standing activity in the park. The Banff public corral serves as a base for numerous day and overnight trips by residents of the park. Levels of private horse use have increased marginally in recent years. Over the past five years, there has been an annual average of 53 parties accounting for 265 visitor days of use in the park. Over 95% of the parties were Albertans.

Most private horse use in the backcountry is concentrated along the Red Deer and Clearwater valleys, with the majority of trips originating outside the park in Alberta. Other popular areas include the Cascade, Panther, Dormer, Pipestone and Bryant valleys. This use distribution is determined by the ease of road access and by the availability of good grazing areas.

No significant environmental impacts are associated with private horse use, under the current guidelines and conditions.

Conflicts between horsemen and hikers are restricted to a few camping areas such as Fish Lakes, Red Deer Lakes, and Allenby Junction. Hikers are not amenable to sharing their camping areas when horses are present. Separate camping areas are required, therefore, in these areas. The quality and availability of information for private horse users in the park will need to be improved.

R. HORSE-DRAWN WAGONS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED IN ANY BACKCOUNTRY AREA.

Discussion:

Horse-drawn wagons create unacceptable impacts by negating trail reversion initiatives. Therefore, their use by individuals or commercial outfitters will not be permitted.

S. MONITORING OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND VISITOR USE CONFLICTS ASSOCIATED WITH HORSE USE WILL CONTINUE. ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS MAY BE PLACED ON HORSE USE AS A RESULT OF NEW INFORMATION.

Caving

T. ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER CAVES, PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE FEATURES, AND PUBLIC SAFETY WILL BE ASSURED IN COOPERATION WITH RECOGNIZED SPELEOLOGICAL ORGANIZATIONS. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL COOPERATE WITH RECOGNIZED SPELEOLOGICAL ORGANIZATIONS TO COMPLETE A PRELIMINARY INVENTORY AND CLASSIFICATION OF CAVE FORMATIONS. THE PARKS SERVICE WILL THEN PREPARE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES WHICH WILL IDENTIFY THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF SPECIFIC CAVE FORMATIONS.

Discussion:

Banff contains several well-known cave systems in Mount Castleguard and Sulphur Mountain. Restrictions and controls are necessary because of the fragility of many karst features and to ensure that public safety requirements are met. The proposed arrangements will achieve the resource protection requirements by controlling access to known caves.

There are also a number of caves in the park which have not been documented. The cooperation of recognized speleological organizations is the only practical manner in which knowledge about these features can be obtained. These organizations have not always found Parks Service officials to be cooperative in authorizing entry into caves. The proposed arrangements would provide the park superintendent with the discretion to permit responsible organizations to enter caves.

Dog Sledding

- U. THE EXISTING COMMERCIALY-OPERATED SLED RIDES MAY CONTINUE ON DESIGNATED TRAILS/ROUTES. THE DOGS MAY NOT BE KENNELED IN THE PARK. THE TRAILS/ROUTES THAT ARE USED WILL BE MONITORED AND ALTERED IF UNACCEPTABLE IMPACTS TO PARK RESOURCES OR OTHER VISITOR ACTIVITIES RESULT.

Discussion:

Some concerns exist that fecal matter left by dogs along Lake Louise and other water courses in the park will result in Giardia lamblia contamination. This is a particular concern at Lake Louise because the lake serves as the water source for Chateau Lake Louise during the winter. Water quality is therefore being closely monitored. Options for relocating the Lake Louise operation have been considered, but would create unacceptable conflicts with cross-country skiers.

The Banff Springs operation uses the looped golf course roads. The golf course area is important to wintering elk and the introduction of dog teams could further stress these animals. The Banff operation has been small so far and the significance of any impact associated with the operation is thought to be slight.

The two commercial operations provide unique opportunities for visitors to enjoy the park. Some conflicts with other park users occur at Lake Louise in the early winter season as both the skiers and dog teams must share the same trail. This conflict is eliminated once cross-country skiers can use the lake. No user conflicts are associated with the Banff Springs operation. Monitoring of these operations will ensure that any necessary adjustments can be made to avoid conflicts with other park activities.

- V. THE USE OF SLED-DOGS BY PRIVATE PARTIES WILL BE PERMITTED, EXCEPT IN WILDLAND AREAS, DESIGNATED CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TRAILS, OR OTHER DESIGNATED AREAS. NO USE OF PUBLIC SHELTERED FACILITIES WILL BE PERMITTED BY INDIVIDUALS AND PARTIES USING SLED-DOGS.

Discussion:

The amount of dog-sledding activity by park visitors is minimal and no known environmental impacts are associated with it. No conflicts between private parties using sled-dogs and other park visitors are anticipated because the areas designated for sledding do not conflict with popular cross-country skiing trails. Existing levels of use are minimal and are at no time expected to become significant.

Scuba Diving

W. SCUBA DIVING WILL CONTINUE TO BE PERMITTED IN LAKE MINNEWANKA AND TWO JACK LAKE.

Discussion:

The impact of scuba diving is believed to be negligible. Lake Minnewanka receives most of the use, particularly the flooded ruins of the former Minnewanka townsite. There are no conflicts with other park visitors. Some problem has been encountered with divers parking on the top of the Minnewanka dam to avoid having to carry their heavy diving equipment from the Minnewanka day-use parking lot.

4.4

Frontcountry Accommodation

4.4 FRONTCOUNTRY ACCOMMODATION

The main source of visitor accommodation in the park is provided in the town of Banff and the Lake Louise Visitor Centre. The amount and nature of accommodation in the Lake Louise Visitor Centre is governed by the 1981 Lake Louise Development Guidelines. The future provision of accommodation in the town of Banff will be dealt with in the townsite planning program, which is presently underway.

In addition to the accommodation facilities in these two areas, there are 14 campgrounds, three overflow campgrounds, one group tenting area, six hostels and ten outlying commercial accommodation facilities (or OCAs). These facilities are generally more rustic than those in the townsite and Visitor Centre, and provide more direct opportunities for visitors to experience the park's natural environment.

Banff's 14 campgrounds have a combined total of almost 2,500 sites (Figure 10). Each summer, they accommodate about 178,342 party nights. In addition, the three overflow areas provide an additional 425 sites. Group tenting is provided at the 400 site Castle Meadows Group facility. Winter camping opportunities are provided at the Tunnel Mountain Village II campground, Lake Louise Trailer campground and Mosquito Creek.

The park's campground occupancy rates have decreased an average of 2.3% per year since 1980, for a total 18% for this period (the other three parks have had an average five year decrease of 16.3%). The reason for this decrease is not fully understood, but is generally consistent with use trends for other facilities in the Four Mountain Parks. Campgrounds in the Banff townsite region and Lake Louise are the most popular. Use of a number of campgrounds along the Bow Valley and Icefields parkways is below capacity. Heaviest use of the campgrounds occurs on weekends in July and August. Additional information on campground use is contained in the Banff Background Report and in Table 1.

These campgrounds serve a variety of roles. Facilities in the Banff townsite and Lake Louise sectors serve as a base from which a wide range of park opportunities can be enjoyed. Others, such as Cirrus Mountain or Castle Mountain are primarily used as transient stops by visitors travelling through the park. Campgrounds such as Waterfowl Lake and Two Jack Lakeside are used frequently as destination facilities. Visitors specifically choose these campgrounds because of the availability of nearby park opportunities.

There are seven hostels in the park, including the new hostel in Banff Townsite (Figure 11). These facilities are operated by the Canadian Hostelling Association. An eighth hostelry will operate in the Lake Louise Visitor Centre. Use of the original six hostels peaked in 1980-1981 and then decreased significantly. Initiatives

Figure 10: Frontcountry Campgrounds, Banff National Park

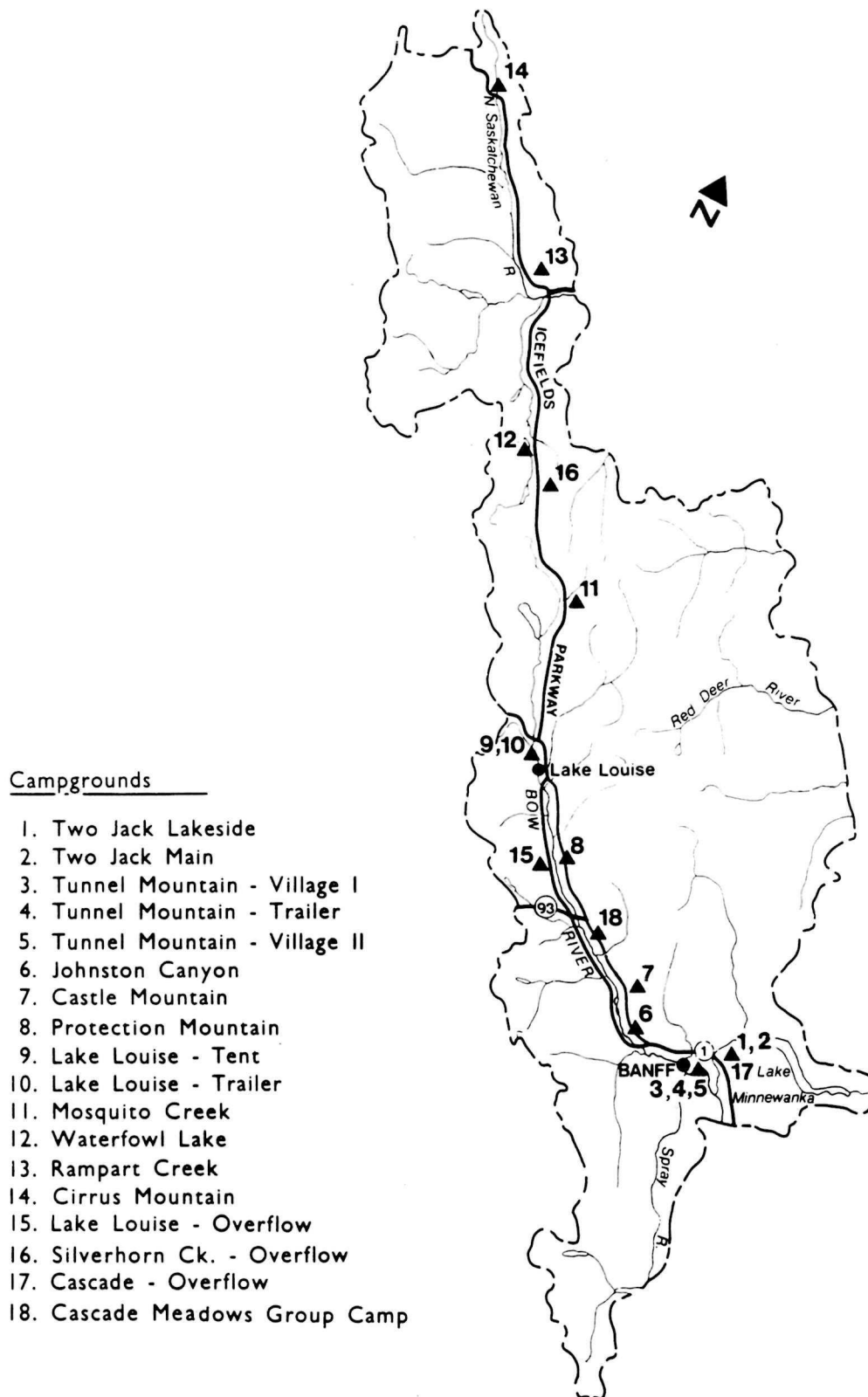
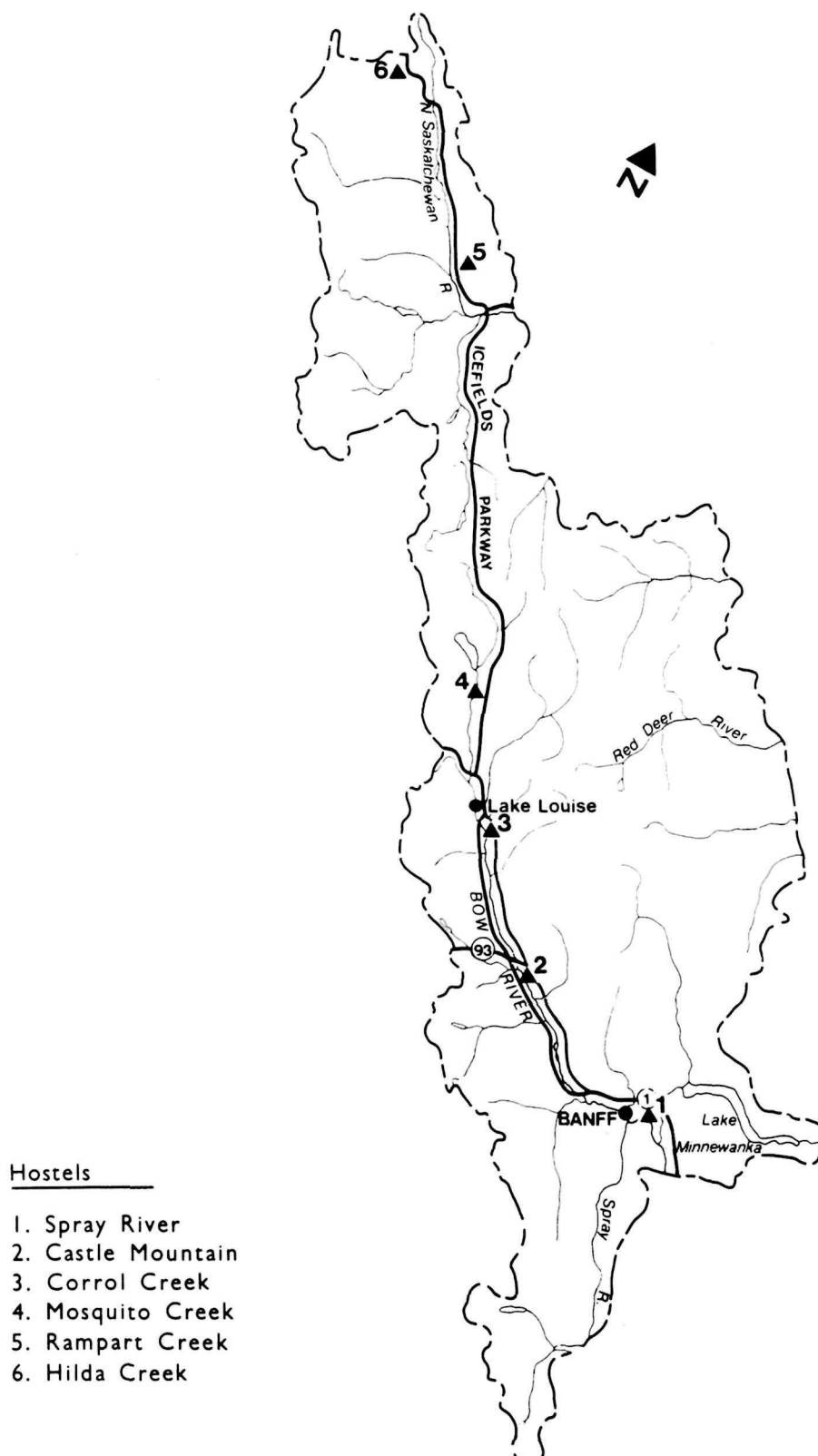


TABLE 1
CAMPGROUND OCCUPANCY IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK
(% July-August, 1986-87)

CAMPGROUND	NUMBER OF SITES	WEEKENDS		WEEKDAYS	
		July	August	July	August
a) Banff Townsite Sector					
Tunnel Mountain	615	91	96	93	88
Tunnel Mountain II	228	83	76	83	70
Tunnel Mountain Trailer	320	99	89	98	85
Two Jack Main	381	41	58	29	23
Two Jack Lakeside	77	80	89	75	74
b) Castle Sector					
Johnston Canyon	139	100	98	98	97
Castle Mountain	43	84	92	88	88
Protection Mountain	89	74	51	57	36
c) Lake Louise Sector					
Lake Louise Tenting	221	36	68	36	69
Lake Louise Trailer	163	80	71	80	69
Lake Louise Overflow					
d) South Parkway Sector					
Mosquito Creek	32	131	116	134	114
Waterfowl Lake	116	84	86	81	84
Silverhorn Overflow					
e) Icefields Sector					
Rampart Creek	50	60	78	64	71
Cirrus Mountain	16	64	98	75	92

Figure 11: Hostels in Banff National Park



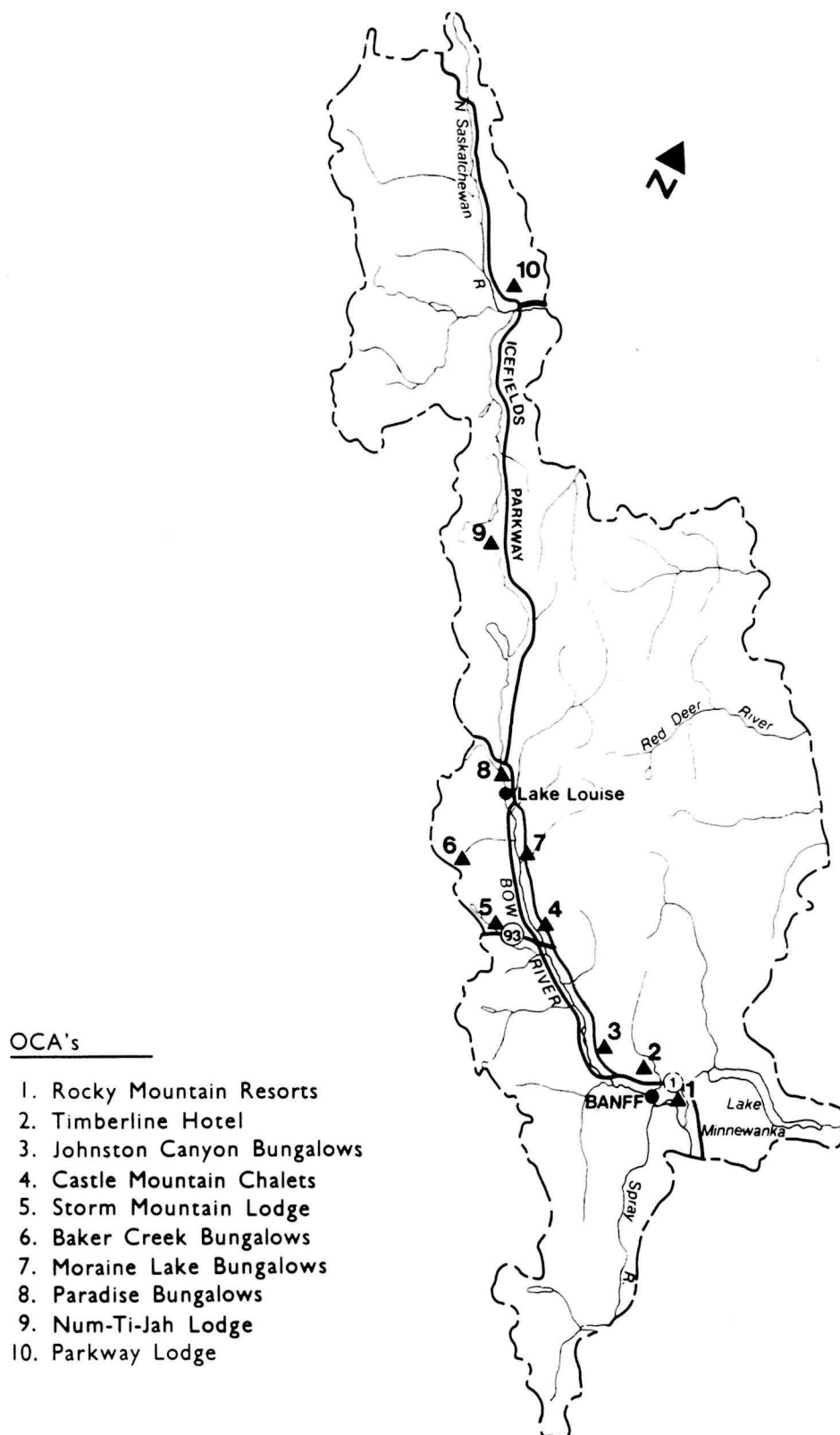
are currently underway to address this problem. Hostels play an important role in national parks. For instance, the suitability of the Icefields Parkway for cycle touring is enhanced by the system of hostels operated at appropriate intervals along it.

The ten OCAs provide an alternative type of accommodation to the hotels and motels in the town of Banff and the Lake Louise Visitor Centre (Figure 12). Information about Banff's OCAs is in Table 2. The Timberline Hotel, Rocky Mountain Resort, Num-Ti-Jah Lodge and Parkway Lodge operate year-round. The remaining OCAs are open for the summer season only. The Rimrock Hotel is not classified as an OCA. It is treated as an anomolous facility and is subject to special guidelines.

TABLE 2: OCAS IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK

OCA	LOCATION	LEASE AREA (ha)	UNITS	CAPACITY (persons)	ADDITIONAL SERVICES
Timberline Hotel	Townsite Region	2.0	49	120	Dining, Conference Facility, Lounge
Rocky Mountain Resort	Townsite Region	2.8	132	396	Restaurant, Lounge, Pool, Rec. Club
Johnston Canyon	Bow Valley Parkway	2.0	41	160	Store, Restaurant, Gas
Storm Mountain	Banff- Windermere Parkway	2.8	12	48	Dining
Castle Mountain	Bow Valley Parkway	1.5	21	74	Store, Gas
Baker Creek	Bow Valley Parkway	0.9	21	74	Restaurant
Paradise Bungalows	Lake Louise Region	1.4	27	85	Store
Moraine Lake	Lake Louise Region	0.7	45	15	Store, Restaurant Dining, Lounge
Num-Ti-Jah	Icefield Parkway	2.4	28	60	Store, Restaurant Dining, Lounge, Stables
Parkway Lodge	Icefields Parkway	2.5	70	210	Cafeteria, Dining, Lounge, Gas, Store

Figure 12: Location of OCAs in Banff National Park



MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To retain the existing types and distribution of visitor accommodation.
2. To undertake or encourage the upgrading of accommodation facilities as required so as to improve the experience of overnight visitors.
3. To develop park-related opportunities (e.g. interpretative displays, trails etc.) where appropriate and in association with frontcountry accommodation facilities.
4. To minimize the visual impact of roadside accommodation facilities in order to improve the viewing experience of travellers along parkways and roads.
5. To improve the quality of information available at campgrounds and OCAs on outdoor recreational opportunities, park services and facilities.
6. To reduce environmental concerns and impacts associated with the provision of overnight accommodation in the park.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. FUTURE GROWTH OF ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES WILL BE LIMITED. EXISTING CAMPGROUNDS, HOSTELS AND OUTLYING COMMERCIAL ACCOMMODATION OPERATIONS MAY EXPAND WITHIN DEFINED LIMITS AND STANDARDS. NO NEW ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES WILL BE DEVELOPED, EXCEPT THROUGH THE ALLOWABLE EXPANSION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING FACILITIES.
- B. LIMITS TO THE EXPANSION OF ACCOMMODATION IN THE TOWN OF BANFF WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN THE BANFF TOWN PLAN AND HAVE ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE LAKE LOUISE VISITOR CENTRE. NO NEW COMMERCIAL ACCOMMODATION OPERATIONS WILL BE PERMITTED BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES PRESCRIBED FOR THESE TWO AREAS.
- C. FUTURE DEMAND FOR INCREASED ACCOMMODATION OR SPECIFIC TYPES AND STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE WILL BE REDIRECTED TO AREAS OUTSIDE THE PARK.

Campgrounds

- D. CAMPING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PARK WILL BE UPGRADED AND IMPROVED, AS NECESSARY, THROUGH PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS AND REHABILITATION OF DISTURBED AREAS. IN ADDITION, TRAIL SYSTEMS ORIGINATING FROM THE PARK'S CAMPGROUNDS WILL BE FURTHER DEVELOPED AND THEIR USE PROMOTED. INFORMATION ON THE AVAILABILITY OF CAMPING SITES WILL BE IMPROVED TO ASSIST VISITORS IN PLANNING THEIR PARK VISIT. THE EXISTING EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL INTERPRETATION AT CAMPGROUNDS WILL CONTINUE. MORE INFORMATION ON PARK SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE AT CAMPGROUNDS.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

Rehabilitation of disturbed areas in existing campgrounds will produce positive environmental and aesthetic impacts. Site-specific assessments will be required of any proposal to expand the system of trails associated with the campgrounds.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

High quality visitor experiences will be provided at existing campgrounds as a result of initiatives to physically upgrade facilities and rehabilitate disturbed areas. Priority for improvements is directed to Lake Louise Tenting, Two Jack Lakeside and Two Jack Main campgrounds.

Various mechanisms will be considered to inform visitors of the availability of camping sites prior to and upon their arrival in the park. There continues to be an expressed public demand for this information during peak periods and particularly for the more popular campgrounds. Albertans, in particular, are becoming increasingly familiar with the system operated by Alberta Provincial Parks and expect a similar level of service in Banff.

- E. THE SUPPLY OF CAMPING OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE INCREASED BY EXPANDING EXISTING CAMPGROUNDS IN THE ICEFIELDS PARKWAY AND BOW VALLEY-LAKE LOUISE REGIONS IN RESPONSE TO DEMAND AND SUBJECT TO THE FINDINGS OF DETAILED ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS. NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE TYPE OF SERVICES PROVIDED AT THESE CAMPGROUNDS WILL OCCUR.

Discussion:

Serviced campgrounds are presently available in the Banff townsite and Lake Louise areas. Semi-serviced campgrounds are provided elsewhere. This distribution is appropriate given the high capital costs associated with the provision

of serviced sites. Further adjustments may be considered, however, once the study of campground user requirements is completed.

- F. THE SUPPLY OF CAMPING OPPORTUNITIES WILL NOT BE INCREASED IN THE BANFF TOWNSITE REGION, DUE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AREA AND THE LARGE AMOUNT OF CAMPING ALREADY PROVIDED. UNMET DEMAND WILL BE REDIRECTED ELSEWHERE IN THE PARK OR TO AREAS OUTSIDE ITS BOUNDARIES.

Discussion:

Existing campgrounds in the Banff Townsite region are located in the Montane ecoregion and impair important heritage resource features. The decision not to increase the amount of camping will ensure there is no further impairment on this heavily-impacted and environmentally significant portion of the park.

- G. A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES WILL BE PURSUED IN THE BOW VALLEY-LAKE LOUISE REGION. THE LAKE LOUISE OVERFLOW WILL BE CLOSED ONCE THE TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY IS TWINNED IN THAT AREA OF THE PARK. SEVERAL OPTIONS WILL BE INVESTIGATED TO MEET THE UNFILLED DEMAND AT LAKE LOUISE. THE OPTIONS INCLUDE EXPANSIONS TO THE LAKE LOUISE TENTING AND TRAILER FACILITIES, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW OVERFLOW, BUILT TO THE STANDARD OF THE SILVERHORN OVERFLOW.

FUTURE EXPANSION OF THE PROTECTION MOUNTAIN AND CASTLE MOUNTAIN CAMPGROUNDS WILL BE CONSIDERED IF DEMAND WARRANTS. NO EXPANSION OF THE JOHNSTON CANYON CAMPGROUND WILL OCCUR, ALTHOUGH THE PROVISION OF A LIMITED NUMBER OF WALK-IN SITES FOR CANOEISTS AND BICYCLISTS WILL BE PURSUED.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

Rehabilitation of the borrow pit presently used for the Lake Louise overflow will provide positive environmental and visual impacts. Additional investigation would be required to determine the implications of expanding the Protection Mountain and Castle Mountain campgrounds on wildlife and cultural resources. No expansion of the Johnston Canyon campground will occur because of environmental considerations. The possible development of walk-in sites at Johnston Creek will be reviewed in terms of impacts on ungulate use, significant Montane vegetation types and prehistoric sites.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

Closure of the Lake Louise Overflow will occur as a consequence of the Phase III Twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway. It is expected that during peak periods the demand for camping in the Lake Louise area will exceed the available supply, despite the general declining trend in campground use throughout the park. The 163 site Lake Louise Tenting campground has an average occupancy rate of 97% throughout the week, while the trailer campground has an average rate in excess of 90%. Options for meeting the unfulfilled demand in the Lake Louise area are 1) expanding existing facilities or 2) developing a new overflow.

The three campgrounds along the Bow Valley Parkway presently have a supply surplus of 10%. Expansion of the Castle and Protection campgrounds would be considered only if the demand increases. Physical opportunities exist to expand both facilities by up to 50%.

The provision of walk-in campsites at Johnston Creek, at a site near the Bow River, would offer camping opportunities for canoeists, cyclists and any other visitor group wishing to use this type of facility

H. THE SUPPLY OF CAMPING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ICEFIELDS PARKWAY REGION COULD BE INCREASED, IF DEMAND WARRANTS, BY EXPANDING RAMPART CREEK AND MOSQUITO CREEK CAMPGROUNDS.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

No major impacts would be associated with the expansion of the Mosquito Creek campground. The ecosite on which the Rampart Creek campground occurs is subject to periodic flooding and high water tables. It also provides important autumn and winter moose habitat.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

The 32 site Mosquito Creek campground is generally full throughout the summer. The 116 site Waterfowl campground is 80 to 85% full in July and August, while the occupancy rate for the Rampart Creek campground is 81%. Declining use levels of 4.6% per year to 1994 are predicted for the Mosquito Creek, Silverhorn Overflow and Waterfowl Lake campgrounds. Declining rates are also projected for the Rampart Creek and Cirrus Mountain campgrounds to the north.

Should these declining use trends reverse and increased demand warrant expansion, Mosquito Creek and Rampart Creek could expand in response to demand, by at least 300 sites.

If the declining trend continues the down sizing or even closure of several campgrounds will be considered.

Hostels

- I. HOSTELS WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENJOYMENT OF THE PARK AND LOW-COST ACCOMMODATION. THE PRIORITY FOR EXISTING HOSTELS WILL BE THE NECESSARY UPGRADING OF THEIR PHYSICAL CONDITION AND VISUAL APPEARANCE. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH THE CANADIAN HOSTELLING ASSOCIATION TO IMPROVE THE AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF HOSTEL USERS ABOUT PARK OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES AND MESSAGES.

Discussion:

Hostels play a variety of important roles which are highly appropriate in a national park. The chain of hotels along the Icefields Parkway, for instance, greatly contributes to the parkway's popularity for bicycle touring. Use of the six outlying hostels peaked in 1980/81 and then declined. Park managers and the executive of the Southern Alberta Hostelling Association attribute this negative trend to a variety of factors which includes their 1) image as noisy youth hostels, 2) poor condition, and 3) the limited marketing that has been directed at them. The Parks Service and the Canadian Hostelling Association will cooperate to deal with these problems. A first priority must be the physical upgrading of the hostels to ensure that contemporary structural and safety requirements are satisfied. The Parks Service will continue to work with the Canadian Hostelling Association to ensure hostel users are provided with necessary information about the park.

- J. THE HILDA CREEK HOSTEL WILL BE REDEVELOPED AND EXPANDED. THE INCREASED CAPACITY WILL PARTIALLY REPLACE THE BEAUTY CREEK HOSTEL IN JASPER NATIONAL PARK WHICH WILL BE REMOVED.

Discussion:

No noteworthy environmental concerns are associated with the present location of the Hilda Creek hostel. The hostel is used as both a transient and destination facility. Superb opportunities are available nearby, for hiking, mountaineering and cross-country skiing. Expansion of the Hilda Creek hostel to a maximum capacity of 40 beds will be permitted to assist in replacing the Beauty Creek hostel. Consideration was given to relocating the Hilda hostel to the Icefield Centre which is 8.5 km to the north. The notion was rejected, because the hostel users have expressed strong support for the existing location.

- K. THE CORRAL CREEK HOSTEL WILL BE REMOVED ONCE A HOSTELRY AT LAKE LOUISE BECOMES OPERATIONAL.

Discussion:

The ecosite on which the Corral Creek hostel is located is not well represented in Banff and provides important habitat for wildlife. In addition, six cultural sites have been identified on the Corral Creek alluvial fan. Removal of the Corral Creek hostel will provide some positive benefits to wildlife and restore the area to its natural condition.

The Corral Creek hostel will become a redundant facility once the hostelry at Lake Louise is operational. It is not anticipated that there will be a negative reaction to the removal of this facility.

- L. THE CANADIAN HOSTELLING ASSOCIATION AND THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE HAVE AGREED TO REMOVE THE SPRAY HOSTEL

Discussion:

The proposed removal of the Spray hostel (see Banff Core Concept, 1987) met with considerable opposition from members of the public who valued its natural setting and rustic character. The primary reason for proposing its removal was the need to close the Spray backcountry road to administrative vehicle use. The Canadian Hostelling Association, however, has determined it is no longer economically feasible to upgrade, maintain and operate the facility and an agreement has been reached with the Canadian Parks Service for its removal.

- M. THE EXISTING HOSTELS MAY REDEVELOP AND EXPAND IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH THE APPROVED GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AND REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING HOSTELS IN BANFF, JASPER, KOOTENAY AND YOHO NATIONAL PARKS.

Outlying Commercial Accommodation (OCA)

- N. THE PARK'S EXISTING OCAS WILL BE PERMITTED TO REDEVELOP AND EXPAND TO THE CAPACITY OF THEIR LEASEHOLDS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REDEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR OUTLYING COMMERCIAL ACCOMMODATION IN BANFF, JASPER, KOOTENAY AND YOHO NATIONAL PARKS.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

The following resource concerns will be addressed in assessing redevelopment proposals for OCAs in Banff.

Rocky Mountain Resorts:

- situated on important winter and early spring elk habitat.
- feeding, bedding and travel routes for elk have been identified in the immediate area.
- cumulative impact that redevelopment may have on wildlife in this area of the low Bow Valley.
- site also contains significant Montane vegetation and historic resource potential.

Timberline Lodge:

- located in important bighorn sheep habitat and wildlife travel corridor.
- facility has on-going problems with sewage disposal.
- area possesses high cultural resource potential.
- general area contains rare plants and significant vegetation types.

Johnston Canyon Bungalows:

- area provides important winter wildlife habitat.
- general area contains significant geological features, Montane vegetation and potential for significant historical features.

Castle Mountain Bungalows:

- ecosite contains significant lodgepole pine-bilberry vegetation type.
- area contains a number of prehistoric and historic sites.

Storm Mountain Lodge:

- immediate area contains a number of historic features.
- sewage disposal remains a problem.

Baker Creek Bungalows:

- area contains important wildlife habitat.
- present sewage treatment system is inadequate.

Paradise Bungalows:

- there are no major concerns.

Moraine Lake Lodge:

- immediate area contains a number of historic features.

Num-Ti-Jah Lodge:

- lodge is a candidate historic building based on assessments by the Canadian Parks Service and the Province of Alberta.

Saskatchewan River Crossing - Parkway Lodge:

- area contains highly important wildlife habitat and the extensive gravelled roads, paved parking areas and facilities eliminate use of the leasehold by ungulates.
- the extensive gravelled and paved areas also add to the urban quality of the lodge.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

Levels of expansion may occur subject to environmental constraints and in compliance with the Redevelopment Guidelines for Outlying Commercial Accommodation in the Four Mountain Parks (1986).

- O. THE WINTER OPERATION OF OCAS WILL BE VIEWED FAVOURABLY, SUBJECT TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS. PUBLIC SAFETY HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE WINTER OPERATION OF MORAINÉ LAKE LODGE WILL BE ASSESSED. PROPOSALS BY THE OWNERS OF NUM-TI-JAH LODGE, MORAINÉ LAKE LODGE, BAKER CREEK AND CASTLE JUNCTION FOR TRACK-SETTING NORDIC SKI TRAILS IN THE VICINITY OF THE RESPECTIVE OCAS WOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THIS MANNER.

Discussion:

Proposals for track-setting by OCA owners would expand the range of opportunities available to park visitors and could enhance the economic viability of a year-round operation. To date, the winter operation of the Moraine Lake Lodge has not been considered because of the avalanche hazards associated with the upper portions of the access roads. These hazards will be reassessed, and the lodge may be permitted to operate year-round, subject to the findings of this assessment.

- P. MINOR ADJUSTMENTS TO THE LEASEHOLD AREA BOUNDARIES AT JOHNSTON CANYON WILL BE CONSIDERED WITH THE OWNER, TO BETTER SEPARATE DAY VISITORS FROM OVERNIGHT VISITORS OF THE OCA.

Discussion:

Minor adjustment of the lease area boundary at Johnston Canyon will be considered in consultation with the owner. Setting back any newly developed accommodation facilities from the day-use area would result in a better quality opportunity for guests staying at that OCA. It would also provide some aesthetic benefits by making the accommodation facilities less visible from the Bow Valley Parkway.

4.5

Access

4.5 ACCESS

Two national transportation corridors follow the Bow River valley, from the park's east gate to the boundary with Yoho National Park. They are the Trans-Canada Highway (TCH) and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP Rail) mainline.

The TCH is Canada's primary east-west transportation route and is the main access highway into the mountain parks. Public Works Canada is presently upgrading the highway between the east gate and Lake Louise from two to four lanes. The objective of the highway twinning is to provide a functional, efficient, safe and aesthetically pleasing through highway which will meet future user demands and be environmentally acceptable. Mitigation measures to address the unacceptably high levels of ungulate mortality are part of this project. Roadside facilities such as picnic sites and pull-offs will not be provided, although the needs of through highway travellers will be considered. Work is completed as far west as the Sunshine turn-off.

The Canadian Pacific Railway mainline handles about 18 freight and two passenger trains a day. A significant number of elk and moose are killed by trains along this section of track.

There are 11 park roads outside the Banff townsite and Lake Louise areas. These roads provide visitors with scenic viewing opportunities, as well as access to destination areas and locations where recreational activities can be pursued.

The Icefields Parkway is known around the world, because of the spectacular scenery that can be seen along it. Numerous abandoned road alignments and borrow pits are a man-made disturbance that is not appropriate along a parkway of this international stature.

The Bow Valley Parkway is being upgraded to a standard that is consistent with its parkway designation. Once completed, it is intended to absorb much of the slower park traffic now on the Trans-Canada Highway.

Highway 1A parallels the Trans-Canada Highway between Lake Louise and the Wapta Lake area in Yoho National Park. The road requires upgrading. At present it receives relatively little use and is not kept open during the winter months.

The Sunshine and Moraine Lake roads provide access to destination areas, with few park opportunities provided along them. The Sunshine road is used year-round and provides access to the Sunshine Ski area and the Healy Creek trailhead. Approximately one-half of the road is paved. The Moraine Lake road is not open during the winter because of avalanche hazards. The lower sections of the road are popular for nordic skiing.

Vermilion Lakes Drive is a popular 4.5 km long road in the Banff townsite area. Due to its slow speed traffic, a wide variety of activities such as walking, bird-watching, bicycling and jogging are associated with it. The wetland areas along the road provide excellent opportunities for nature appreciation and natural history interpretation.

The Canadian Parks Service also maintained a number of roads on which restricted vehicular access was permitted. These were the Spray backcountry road, the Cascade backcountry road to the Cascade bridge, the Sundance and Brewster backcountry road to Ten Mile Cabin and the Redearth backcountry road to Corral Creek. The roads were used by resident horse outfitters and Canadian Parks Service employees.

The Banff airstrip, at present, is an unlicensed turf field without lights, hangers or significant buildings. A number of privately-owned aircraft are based at the airstrip year-round.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To maintain existing highways, parkways and park roads at a suitable standard.
2. To maximize public safety and the quality of driving experiences, minimize wildlife mortality and maintain traffic flows along the the park's major road systems.
3. To rehabilitate disturbed areas along the Trans-Canada Highway, parkways and park roads, as well as along the mainline of the Canadian Pacific Railway.
4. To manage the Trans-Canada Highway as a national transportation corridor for through traffic and to redirect park traffic from it.
5. To rehabilitate backcountry roads to a suitable trail standard or to allow them to regenerate naturally.

PLAN GUIDELINES

Trans- Canada Highway

- A. THE TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY BETWEEN THE EAST GATE AND THE ICEFIELDS JUNCTION WILL BE MANAGED FOR THROUGH TRAFFIC. MOST EXISTING ROADSIDE FACILITIES WILL BE REMOVED AND THE DEMAND REDIRECTED TO THE BOW VALLEY PARKWAY.

Discussion:

A decision has been made, separate from this planning program, to remove park facilities from the Trans-Canada Highway and to redirect users to the Bow Valley Parkway. The option of developing rest stop facilities for east and west bound Trans-Canada Highway traffic requires further analysis of need and probable levels of use.

Icefields and Bow Valley Parkway

- B. THE ICEFIELDS PARKWAY WILL BE MAINTAINED TO A STANDARD SUITABLE FOR PRIVATE VEHICLES (INCLUDING RECREATIONAL VEHICLES) AND TOUR BUSES. COMMERCIAL TRUCK TRAFFIC WILL CONTINUE TO BE RESTRICTED BY REGULATION. A CONCEPTUAL PLAN WILL BE PREPARED FOR THE ICEFIELDS PARKWAY TO COORDINATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNING INITIATIVES IDENTIFIED IN BOTH THE BANFF AND JASPER PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS.

Discussion:

The Icefields Parkway attracts over one million visitors each year. Although the management of the 225 km parkway is shared by Banff and Jasper national parks, visitors view the parkway as a single entity. Initiatives to improve visitor experience and opportunities are identified in both the Banff and Jasper park management plans. A cooperative planning program is required to coordinate the implementation of these initiatives. The development of a marketing strategy will be included in the program.

- C. THE BOW VALLEY PARKWAY WILL CONTINUE TO BE MANAGED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY. PARK-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES ALONG THIS PARKWAY WILL BE IMPROVED AND EXPANDED.

Park Roads

- D. ALL BACKCOUNTRY ROADS WILL BE CLOSED TO VEHICULAR ACCESS BY PARKS SERVICE STAFF AND PARK OUTFITTERS, AND SELECTED ROADS ALLOWED TO REVERT TO AN APPROPRIATE TRAIL STANDARD. DRAINAGE AND BRIDGE STRUCTURES WILL BE DOWN-SCALED TO A TRAIL STANDARD. REVERSION INITIATIVES INCLUDE THE REDEARTH, BREWSTER, CASCADE AND SPRAY ROADS.

THE CASCADE ROAD WAS CLOSED TO ALL VEHICULAR USE AT THE END OF THE 1987 SUMMER SEASON, AND CLOSURES WILL OCCUR ON THE BREWSTER, SPRAY AND REDEARTH ROADS AT THE END OF THE 1988 SUMMER SEASON.

Discussion:

i) Heritage Resources

The park contains seven major backcountry roads, totalling 185 km. They are the Cascade, Flint's Park, Spray, Brewster, Redearth, Alexandra and Saskatchewan roads. These roads were originally built for fire detection and suppression purposes, and as resource haul roads. They have also been used to provide access to remote areas of the park for park warden patrols, relocating problem bears, park facility servicing, scientific resource studies, park boundary patrols, and for the operation of commercial horse camps and lodges.

These roads are now redundant and are being closed. Natural rehabilitation is not a preferred option for the majority of roads because they involve a gravelled or hard-packed roadbed. Fiscal restraints, however, will limit the amount of active rehabilitation.

This initiative will eventually provide a significant aesthetic improvement and restore the impacted areas of the park to a more natural condition.

ii) Visitor Opportunities

A number of backcountry roads such as Cascade, Spray and Redearth already receive considerable year-round recreational use. Reversion of particular road sections to high standard and multiple-use trails will substantially enhance visitor experiences and ultimately provide a trail system from the north to the south end of the park. Much of the park's high volume commercial horse traffic will be redirected to these new and durable trails. This will result in reduced maintenance costs, reduced trail deterioration and enhanced visitor experiences.

- E. HIGHWAY 1A (west of Lake Louise) WILL BE UPGRADED TO A PARKWAY STANDARD TO PROVIDE A SLOWER, ALTERNATE ROUTE TO THE TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY. NO ROADSIDE FACILITIES WILL BE PROVIDED ALONG THE BANFF SECTION BECAUSE OF THE LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE. REDEVELOPMENT WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN COOPERATION WITH YOHO NATIONAL PARK. THE ROAD WILL CONTINUE TO BE CLOSED AFTER THE FIRST SNOWFALL.

Discussion:

Upgrading the 1A Highway west of Lake Louise to a parkway standard will provide an attractive alternative route to the Trans-Canada Highway, as well as a better quality experience for park visitors. In the winter, this road forms part of a designated and popular cross-country ski trail, so plowing is not desirable. Winter demand for vehicular use does not warrant plowing.

- F. MINOR IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE MADE TO THE MORAINÉ LAKE ROAD. RESURFACING WILL OCCUR IN THE FUTURE.

Discussion:

Improvements to the road surface are required. As part of this initiative, disturbed roadside areas will be rehabilitated.

- G. FUTURE SURFACING OF THE SUNSHINE ROAD WILL OCCUR. ROADSIDE DISTURBANCES WILL BE REHABILITATED AS PART OF THE ROAD UPGRADING.

Discussion:

Upgrading of the Sunshine Road and landscaping of the road embankments are required. Peak winter traffic volumes reach 650 vehicles per hour, while the summer operation is drawing up to 1,400 visitors a day.

- H. VERMILION LAKES DRIVE WILL REMAIN AS A SLOW SPEED AND DEAD END ROAD. NECESSARY RESURFACING WILL OCCUR WITH NO INCREASE IN THE DESIGN SPEED. A BICYCLE TRAIL WILL BE DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE WESTERN END OF THE ROAD AND THE BOW VALLEY PARKWAY, SUBJECT TO THE FINDINGS OF A DETAILED ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION.

Discussion:

Vermilion Lakes Drive provides year-round opportunities for both park visitors and residents. Due to its low-design speed, it is popular not only for "driving for pleasure" but a variety of pastoral activities which include walking, bird-watching and general natural history appreciation.

Surface improvements are required to maintain an acceptable driving surface. As part of these initiatives, disturbed roadside areas will be rehabilitated.

Consideration was given to the extension of Vermilion Lakes Drive to provide a continuous alternative to the Trans-Canada Highway from Banff townsite to Lake Louise. There has been vocal opposition to any proposal for significantly upgrading or extending the road because of the significant loss of natural and environmental values that would result. This opposition has primarily come from residents of the town of Banff.

- I. UPGRADING AND NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS SUCH AS PAVING PULL-OFFS AND PARKING AREAS, WILL BE MADE TO THE LAKE MINNEWANKA ROAD.

Discussion:

The pavement surface along much of the Lake Minnewanka road is in poor condition and requires upgrading. As part of this initiative, disturbed roadside areas will be rehabilitated.

- J. THE SULPHUR MOUNTAIN SUMMIT ROAD WILL BE REHABILITATED SO AS TO REDUCE ITS VISUAL IMPACT.

Discussion:

The Sulphur Mountain road is a high-profile visual scar, which is inappropriate in a national park setting. Rehabilitation of this road would represent an important and significant commitment by the Canadian Parks Service to restoring man-made disturbances to a natural condition. As restoration is costly, it will be undertaken as funds become available.

Banff Airstrip

- K. THE BANFF AIRSTRIP WILL BE RETAINED SOLELY FOR EMERGENCY / DIVERSIONARY LANDING PURPOSES. ITS FUTURE REQUIREMENT FOR THESE PURPOSES WILL BE MONITORED OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS. A FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE AT THE END OF THIS MONITORING PERIOD.

Discussion:

Minimal facilities will be retained by the park administration during the three year monitoring period. These are 1) a reasonable runway surface, 2) a small off-runway parking area, 3) boundary markers, 4) a wind

sock, and 5) a telephone. Aircraft designated by the Park Superintendent may be based at the strip during the monitoring period for demonstrated search and rescue requirements.

At the discretion of the Superintendent, written consent may be granted for aircraft to use the airstrip during the monitoring period for 1) the purposes of park resource protection, and 2) search and rescue operations.

The use of the airstrip as an emergency / diversionary landing facility will be reviewed annually, and at the end of a three year period (1991) its future requirement for this purpose will be assessed.

4.6

Community Concepts

4.6 COMMUNITY CONCEPTS

4.6.1. Lake Louise Community Concept

In 1892, the Lake Louise area was included in a 132 km² forest reserve (later incorporated into Banff National Park). The lake area was developed for resort purposes by the Canadian Pacific Railway as early as 1890 and expanded in the early 1900s. The valley floor was the site of a railway camp and later the station to service CPR's resort.

With the addition of the ski hill operation in the 1950s, three distinct areas developed in Lake Louise; the lake area, the valley floor and the ski hill. Although the immediate lake and ski hill areas are major attractions, visitors usually stay only for the day, and the area has not grown into a major community but remains a service area. The population of around 450 permanent residents and 1000 seasonal or short-term residents is expected to increase to 510 permanent and 1300 seasonal or short-term residents by the completion of the Action Plan in 1989.

From 1978 to 1981, the Lake Louise area was the subject of a major management study focusing on its future role as a visitor service centre for the mountain parks. The approved Action Plan (1979) contained a number of policy parameters. These are contained in the management objectives for Lake Louise which follow.

The Lake Louise Development Guidelines, which are based on the Action Plan, were approved in 1981. They guide all development in Lake Louise which includes:

- elimination of existing staff accommodation in mobile homes and trailers through replacement by employer built staff housing units on the valley floor;
- development of a commercial mall and visitor reception centre on the valley floor;
- re-organization and improvement to the transportation, water, sewage and utilities systems; and
- redevelopment and construction of more year-round visitor accommodation to a maximum of 1600 additional persons (approximately 550 rooms) on existing leaseholds and on a new parcel designated for a 200 bed hostel.

During the summer and fall of 1986 the public was invited to comment on the expansion of the Chateau Lake Louise to include 125 more guest rooms, a 400 car parkade, improved restaurant and kitchen areas, more staff housing, return lakefront land to the Crown, and a general environmental "clean-up". This public review was encouraged

because of the high profile of the Lake Louise area and because the Action Plan addressed upgrading and only indirect expansion at the lakeside. The expansion was approved and accepted as part of the Action Plan because of the strong public support it received and its positive design elements.

The development projects, both private and public, should be complete by 1989, at which time a review of their effectiveness will be necessary.

The existing Action Plan is consistent with the Banff Park Management Plan and any changes as a result of the above review must also be consistent with this management plan.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To maintain Lake Louise as a visitor centre.
2. To control development so as to limit the long term growth at Lake Louise.
3. To ensure that accommodation is provided in staff housing units owned by employers or housing entrepreneurs.
4. To ensure that visitor facilities at Lake Louise are reasonably accessible to the physically handicapped and disabled, and are designed to accommodate the full range of potential users in various economic and age groups.
5. To better integrate Lake Louise Visitor Centre with the community of Field.

PLAN GUIDELINES

Role

A. LAKE LOUISE WILL CONTINUE AS:

- A MAJOR DAY-USE DESTINATION AREA;
- A CENTRE PROVIDING LIMITED VISITOR GOODS AND SERVICES FOR DAY USERS AND A TOTAL OVERNIGHT VISITOR CAPACITY OF 3500 PERSONS (1200 ROOMS);
- AN OPERATIONAL AND MINOR ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE FOR BANFF NATIONAL PARK;
- A MAJOR INTERPRETIVE/INFORMATION CENTRE FOR BANFF NATIONAL PARK; AND
- A LIMITED RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY FOR THOSE WITH A "NEED TO RESIDE".

B. IMPROVED INTEGRATION WILL OCCUR BETWEEN LAKE LOUISE AND THE COMMUNITY OF FIELD IN THE PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATION, SCHOOLING, MEDICAL SERVICES AND ELECTRICAL POWER.

Size

C. LAKE LOUISE WILL BE LIMITED TO THE AREA CONTAINED WITHIN THE LIMITS PRESCRIBED IN FIGURE 13.

Density / Form / Character

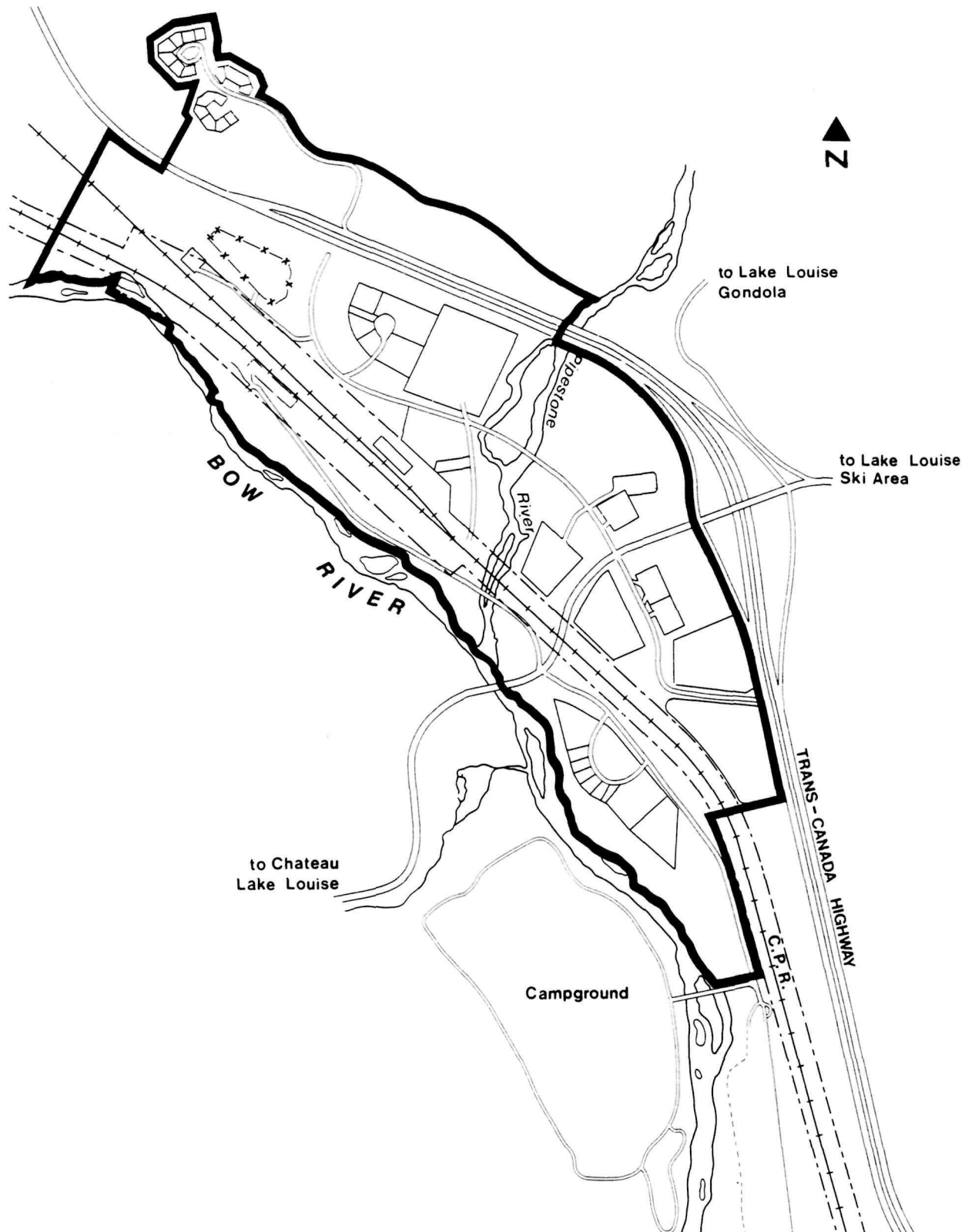
D. THE FORM AND MASSING OF LAKE LOUISE WILL EMPHASIZE INTEGRATION WITH THE NATURAL SURROUNDINGS RESPECTING THE TIMELESS INTRINSIC QUALITIES OF STONE, WATER AND WOOD.

E. LAKE LOUISE WILL BE A COMMUNITY OF PREDOMINANTLY MEDIUM DENSITY DEVELOPMENTS CONTAINED BY BUFFERS OF NATURAL VEGETATION.

F. LAKE LOUISE WILL MAINTAIN A SMALL VILLAGE CHARACTER. INDIVIDUAL PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL LEASES WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE. HOUSING WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH EMPLOYERS OR STAFF HOUSING ENTREPRENEURS.

G. VISITOR ACCOMMODATION WILL BE RESTRICTED TO THE VALLEY FLOOR AND LAKESIDE AREA.

Figure 13: Community of Lake Louise Boundary



Development Controls

- H. THE LAKE LOUISE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES WILL CONTINUE TO CONTROL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN LAKE LOUISE.
- I. PERTINENT COMMUNITY-RELATED REGULATIONS WILL BE REVIEWED, MODIFIED AND DEVELOPED TO CONTROL DEVELOPMENT.

Discussion:

The program of improvement to facilities and services in the Lake Louise Visitor Centre will help make the area a significant and high quality tourist destination. Nonetheless, the level of development in the visitor centre will be restricted, to be consistent with the "low-growth option". The development is intended to allow visitors to better enjoy the park. The visitor centre will not become an attraction that generates use from visitors who would not otherwise come to this part of Banff National Park.

The scale of development at Lake Louise is dependent on several factors. The first factor is the range and size of facilities needed to serve day visitors and highway travellers. As a result, restaurants, food stores, laundry facilities and gasoline outlets are provided. Secondly, the scale of development is affected by the amount of overnight accommodation that is provided. A nightly ceiling of 3500 persons has been established. This represents an increase of 1600 persons over the 1979 levels, the year when planning for the visitor centre commenced.

Finally, residents of the visitor centre will be provided with the opportunity for a variety of suitable housing types. They will also be provided with an adequate but not necessarily complete range of retail, social and institutional services. Increased coordination in community planning between Lake Louise and Field will assist to reduce these limitations.

The plan, now nearing the end of its implementation phase, has addressed the obvious need to improve visitor and residential services and facilities. Care has been taken to ensure, however, that the spirit of the "low-growth option" has been respected and that another park townsite will not be created. As part of the upcoming plan review, minor expansion of commercial and residential facilities may be considered.

4.6.2. Banff Community Concept

The town of Banff will remain the focus for visitor services and associated developments in Banff National Park. Due to its location in the Montane life zone which provides critical wildlife habitat, the town will continue to have a compact character. Both the town plan and the boundary will reflect this natural resource sensitivity, as well as address the continuing redevelopment of commercial lands and the consequent requirement for residential development and community services.

The difficult task of achieving these divergent needs is not typical of town planning for most Canadian communities, and reflects the special challenge to create a town environment in an internationally renowned national park. The challenge can only be met if innovative approaches to land use and development are sought out and rewarded. Building form and character, land use distribution, and development density are examples of planning issues that will be pursued in a creative manner. In addition, the following issues need to be considered in the town planning program and the setting of town boundaries.

1. Environmental and physical constraints limit the available supply of additional developable land contiguous to the existing built up areas.
2. Sufficient commercial lands are available through redevelopment and infilling to meet the needs for visitor and community services for a 20 to 25 year planning horizon. Innovative mixes in land uses can be used to respond to special needs such as the provision of community retail services.
3. Up to 1300 new residential units will be required to accommodate staff needed for the foreseen commercial expansion.
4. The emphasis of the past decade on commercial development must be replaced by balanced development which better reflects the need for community and social amenities.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To plan and design the town of Banff in a manner which is consistent with its designation as a World Heritage Site.
2. To maintain the primary function of the town as a visitor centre for the park.
3. To minimize the effects of the townsite on the natural environment surrounding its developed boundaries.
4. To provide "comfortable community living" for those who need to reside in the town.
5. To provide a full range of interpretation and orientation services to the park visitor.
6. To create a community character which reflects the surrounding environment.
7. To permit or encourage only those commercial uses which serve visitor demands for the enjoyment of the park and basic community needs.
8. To plan and administer the town of Banff so that it is more fully integrated with other urban centres in the Bow Valley Corridor.

PLAN GUIDELINES

Role

A. THE TOWN OF BANFF WILL FUNCTION AS:

- A CENTRE TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES TO VISITORS;
- A MAJOR INTERPRETIVE/INFORMATION CENTRE FOR BANFF NATIONAL PARK AND THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM;
- THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE PARK;
AND
- AN ATTRACTIVE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY FOR THOSE WITH A "NEED TO RESIDE".

Size

- B. THE BOUNDARIES OF THE TOWN WILL INCLUDE THE EXISTING CONTIGUOUS BUILT-UP AND SUB-DIVIDED AREAS, INCLUDING FACILITIES ON TUNNEL MOUNTAIN. ADDITIONAL LANDS TO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE TOWN BOUNDARY ARE THOSE LANDS ALREADY DESIGNATED FOR DEVELOPMENT, AND SUCH OTHER LIMITED LANDS AS ARE ESSENTIAL TO MEET THE BACKLOG OF CRITICAL RESIDENTIAL NEEDS. FINAL DELINEATION OF THE TOWN BOUNDARY WILL BE DETERMINED THROUGH THE TOWN PLANNING PROCESS.
- C. THE TOWN OF BANFF WILL RETAIN ITS COMPACT FORM. NO DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED ON ADDITIONAL PARK LANDS IF THEY ARE IDENTIFIED BY THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE AS POSSESSING A PRIORITY FOR PROTECTION IN THE NATURAL STATE.

Density / Form / Character

- D. A SINGLE AND STRONG BUSINESS CORE WILL BE RETAINED.
- E. INCREASED DENSITY AND INNOVATIVE DESIGN IN BUILDING FORM AND CHARACTER, AS WELL AS A MIX OF LAND USES WILL BE NECESSARY TO ACCOMMODATE THE DEMAND FOR DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE TOWN BOUNDARY.
- F. NEW EMPHASIS WILL BE PLACED ON IDENTIFYING PRACTICAL MEANS TO MEET SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS SUCH AS VISITOR PARKING, SEASONAL STAFF ACCOMMODATION, VEHICLE CIRCULATION AND BUS PARKING.

Development Controls

- G. PERTINENT COMMUNITY-RELATED REGULATIONS WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO CONTROL DEVELOPMENT.
- H. INCREASED COOPERATION WILL BE SOUGHT WITH MUNICIPAL, REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL JURISDICTIONS IN THE BOW VALLEY CORRIDOR. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL ENDEAVOUR TO PLAN AND ADMINISTER THE TOWN OF BANFF SO THAT IT FUNCTIONS AS A MUNICIPAL ENTITY WHICH IS FULLY INTEGRATED WITH OTHER URBAN CENTRES IN THE BOW VALLEY CORRIDOR.

Discussion

The designation of Banff National Park as part of a World Heritage Site requires that the town be worthy of its international stature. It must become a place Canadians can truly take pride in and, in its own right, become an acclaimed heritage resource. The achievement of this

objective will take time and the commitment of not only the Canadian Parks Service but also those who reside and operate businesses in the town.

Generally the existing land use patterns within the town boundaries will not change over the life of the management plan. The strong commercial core along Banff Avenue will remain. The town has a low to medium building density. The three storey height limit and the architectural controls for commercial and residential structures will continue to provide a low scale profile. This scale and density will be maintained to enhance the blending of the town into the surrounding national park environment.

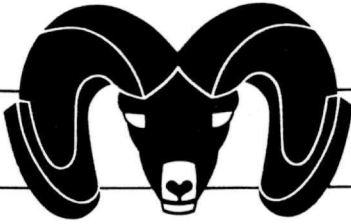
Although the original intention had been to do so, the park management plan does not include a detailed town boundary due to the complexity of the issue and time needed to make the final determination. Environmental considerations and infrastructure limitations make it difficult to expand the boundary, which will be developed through the town planning process. The final delineation will include the existing contiguous built-up and sub-divided areas, including facilities on Tunnel Mountain. Additional lands to be included within the town boundary are those already designated for development, and such other limited lands as are essential to meet the backlog of critical residential needs.

Funding has been set aside for the construction of a new sewage treatment system. Final determination of the requirement for and precise location of a second Banff bridge will occur as part of the on-going town planning program.

5.0

COMMUNICATION SERVICES





5.0

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Communication services are one of the major links between the park and the visitor. They help the visitor to experience, enjoy and better understand the park. Communication services must satisfy the needs of the visitor at every stage in the park experience: from initial awareness through pre-trip planning, park arrival, reception, orientation and undertaking activities, to the return home and trip evaluation. People who may never visit the park also benefit from learning about park opportunities and heritage values. Not only do effective communication services assist the visitor, but they also help managers to safeguard park resources by encouraging appropriate visitor use and behaviour. Support for park management practices and operations is also gained by actively involving the public in cooperative activities and in a communication exchange. Four objectives should be met by the park's communication program:

1. to ensure that visitors and potential visitors have realistic expectations for their park experience and are aware of the park opportunities and services offered;
2. to assist park visitors in having safe, well-planned and enjoyable experiences;
3. to educate the public in general, and park visitors in particular, about the heritage resources protected in the park so that they have a better understanding and appreciation of these resource values and a greater awareness of man's relationship with the natural environment; and
4. to instill a sense of public respect, responsibility and support for the protection and wise use of the park.

Communication services for Banff National Park are provided at the following four levels:

- park awareness and pre-trip planning;
- orientation to and information about park resources, opportunities, services and facilities, park fees, regulations and visitor safety;
- interpretation of park heritage resources; and
- public involvement in park management, planning and operations through participation in public consultation programs, volunteer programs and other cooperative activities.

To achieve these communication objectives, coordination of the following is required:

- the senders of messages (e.g. the sections within the Canadian Parks Service and also outside agencies and commercial interests who provide park information and messages);
- the messages to be communicated and their presentation at each stage of the visitor's park experience; and
- the receivers of the messages (the identification of various visitor and interest groups and their specific information needs).

Plan guidelines are developed for each communication service level in the following sections. They provide the direction for a comprehensive communications program for Banff National Park. Due to the park's high visitation and complex operation, a park visitor services plan will be developed which contains a communication services component. This will provide overall coordination of the responsibilities among the park's subactivities for implementing communication services.

Park service plans will develop the strategies for achieving the direction provided in this management plan. The preparation of park service plans will follow the Visitor Activity Management Process. This will ensure that visitor needs, heritage messages, resource protection and public safety concerns are integrated and that communication services are coordinated at the park level.

5.1 PARK AWARENESS AND PRE-TRIP PLANNING

Park awareness and pre-trip planning information for the park is provided at three levels; Headquarters in Ottawa, the Regional Office in Calgary and Western Region national parks. There is a duplication of effort between the levels. More significantly however, many visitors are arriving in the park poorly informed and with inappropriate expectations. Most visitors do not understand the role of the park as a special area where important natural and cultural resources are protected. Others arrive inadequately prepared to undertake park activities. Visitors are also not clearly informed about the opportunities available in the park relative to those offered regionally. It is apparent that the Canadian Parks Service needs to do a better job of providing park information.

Other government agencies and commercial operators promote the park's mountain scenery. Some cooperation has occurred between the Parks Service and these sources to assist in providing more accurate information about park opportunities. The park is often used as a scenic backdrop by film companies and advertising agencies. Some scenes, such as those of people feeding wildlife, can inadvertently communicate messages detrimental to the park's resource protection objectives. Appropriate messages would, on the other hand, help the park to increase public awareness of the Canadian Parks Service's role in heritage resource protection.

Better trip planning information needs to be made available to potential visitors if the Parks Service is to succeed in creating realistic visitor expectations and in improving the visitor's park experience.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To provide park awareness messages to the general public and potential visitors so they are aware of the Purpose and Objectives of the park, opportunities and services available both in the park and the surrounding region, and have realistic expectations for their park experience.
2. To encourage appropriate marketing of the park by outside agencies and commercial interests.
3. To upgrade the quality of trip planning information and coordinate its dissemination both by sections within the Canadian Parks Service and between the Parks Service and outside agencies.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. PARK AWARENESS MESSAGES WILL PRESENT BANFF NATIONAL PARK AS A CANADIAN HERITAGE AREA OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE. AN EMPHASIS WILL BE PLACED ON THE PARK'S ROLE AS CANADA'S FIRST NATIONAL PARK AND AS PART OF THE FOUR MOUNTAIN PARKS BLOCK WHICH HAS BEEN DESIGNATED A WORLD HERITAGE SITE. AWARENESS MESSAGES WILL INCLUDE THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE'S MANDATE TO:

- PROTECT HERITAGE RESOURCES REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FRONT AND MAIN RANGES OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATURAL REGION; AND
- PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISITOR UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION AND ENJOYMENT OF THIS INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED MOUNTAIN PARK.

Discussion:

Pressure on park managers to provide opportunities and services considered inappropriate in a national park setting would be reduced. A greater understanding of and support for the conservation role of the Canadian Parks Service will be fostered. A general increase in park awareness may result in increased visitation to the park. This increase would likely come from the market segment specifically seeking a national park experience. The increase in park visitation would enhance tourism in the region and indicate an active role for the Canadian Parks Service in meeting regional tourism objectives.

- B. PRE-TRIP PLANNING INFORMATION ON THE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES PROVIDED IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK WILL BE PREPARED BY THE PARKS SERVICE FOR MAJOR VISITOR GROUPS AND DISTRIBUTED SO THAT RETURNING AND POTENTIAL VISITORS HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS, ARE AWARE OF AND SENSITIVE TO PARK RESOURCES PRIOR TO THEIR VISIT, AND ARE ENCOURAGED TO USE THE PARK SERVICES, FACILITIES AND RESOURCES APPROPRIATELY.

THIS INFORMATION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE AT MAJOR POPULATION CENTRES IN ALBERTA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA; FROM THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE; TOURISM CANADA; AND OTHER INFORMATION AGENCIES (e.g. Travel Alberta, British Columbia Tourism, local Chambers of Commerce, the Alberta Forest Service and adjacent provincial parks).

- C. COMMUNICATION SERVICES WILL REDISTRIBUTE USE IN THE PARK FOR EITHER VISITOR MANAGEMENT OR RESOURCE PROTECTION PURPOSES.

Discussion:

Accurate and up-to-date information will assist visitors to plan a safe and enjoyable trip. Impact on park resources would be reduced if visitors were more prepared and aware of the potentially adverse effects of their actions. In addition, the information would influence trip planning by making visitors more aware of alternatives both in the park and surrounding region. Visitors may choose to avoid the crowded places and heavily impacted areas by planning visits during the shoulder season or using facilities on weekdays or morning hours. Use may also be shifted from Banff to other parks. No concerted effort to redistribute use will occur until the environmental implications are known.

Many visitors to the region are from Alberta and British Columbia and particularly from the Calgary area. Visitors can more easily acquire the pre-trip planning information they need if it is available at major centres in both provinces.

Within the Canadian Parks Service, the distribution of information is not always efficient and many gaps exist in the exchange of information with outside agencies. A formalized inter-agency and intra-agency exchange of information must be established and a cheaper, more appropriate means of providing and updating information on the park needs to be developed. Modernization of the information system is essential to better meet visitor needs and ultimately to reduce the cost of providing the service.

- D. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES TO TARGET MARKETS OUTSIDE THE PARK. THIS EXTENSION PROGRAM WILL FOCUS ON THE BANFF-CALGARY-EDMONTON REGION OF ALBERTA. LOCAL AND REGIONAL RESIDENTS WILL BE MADE MORE AWARE OF AND UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF THE PARK IN PROTECTING HERITAGE RESOURCES. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND VISITOR GROUPS WHICH HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON PARK RESOURCES WILL BE A PRIMARY TARGET FOR EXTENSION PROGRAMS. THE PARKS SERVICE WILL IDENTIFY TARGET GROUPS AND DEFINE STRATEGIES TO REACH THEM USING COMMUNICATION MEDIA SUCH AS NEWSPAPER, RADIO, TELEVISION, EDUCATIONAL KITS AND PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS.

Discussion:

The area encompassing Banff-Calgary-Edmonton is an important local and regional audience for the park. Through an extension program, the Parks Service can clarify its role as a national heritage area and its role in the region's tourism industry.

Extension programs have not been adequately financed and are considered a low priority. Appropriate funding at the

regional and park levels will be required to develop an effective extension program. Coordination between Banff and the other three mountain parks will also be required to develop cost-effective programs.

- E. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL ENCOURAGE OUTSIDE AGENCIES SUCH AS THE CANMORE AND BANFF-LAKE LOUISE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, TRAVEL ALBERTA, TOURISM BRITISH COLUMBIA, REGIONAL TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS AND TOURISM CANADA, TO STRESS APPROPRIATE PARK RESOURCE MESSAGES AND ACCURATE PARK INFORMATION IN THEIR MARKETING INITIATIVES.
- F. PRIVATE SECTOR AGENCIES USING BANFF AS A SCENIC BACKDROP FOR PRODUCT OR SERVICE PROMOTIONS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO APPROPRIATELY REPRESENT THE PARK AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA.

Discussion:

Appropriate marketing of the park by outside agencies will help to ensure an accurate representation of park opportunities. These agencies will be better informed of the heritage protection role of the park and to encourage them to include this message in their marketing initiatives.

5.2 PARK ORIENTATION AND INFORMATION

Park orientation and information services are provided mainly through the park's two information centres in the town of Banff and Lake Louise. Park warden offices, highway orientation signage, trailhead and campground notices, park brochures and park staff all contribute to the information program. Despite these services, the visitor, upon entering the park, has difficulty finding information about park and Four Mountain Park opportunities. The accessibility of information varies through the seasons and with the time of day. Roadway signage, although it follows a national sign standard, does not meet the facility identification and direction finding needs of the visitor. In addition to park staff, the employees of local commercial operators are often asked for information about the park. At the present, most of these employees do not have the information they require to adequately respond to visitor information requests.

The Banff information centre is prominently located in the town, however it is too small and poorly designed to fulfill its role. Visitors are often redirected elsewhere for information not provided at the centre, and there is inadequate space to present important park messages. There is a need to upgrade the facility and to consolidate park and regional information services in order to conveniently serve visitors in one location.

Different levels and types of information are required by visitors as they plan and undertake park activities. In addition, park managers need to communicate regulatory, public safety and management messages specific to particular visitor activities. Many of these messages are common to the Four Mountain Parks and their presentation needs to be better coordinated.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To provide, at appropriate locations, an integrated information and orientation service about park and Four Mountain Park opportunities to visitors as they arrive, travel through and visit the park, and undertake activities within it.
2. To assist park visitors in having safe, well-planned and enjoyable experiences through a greater awareness of potential hazards and the skills and equipment required to safely undertake park activities.
3. To improve information on backcountry opportunities on a coordinated Four Mountain Park and adjacent parkland basis.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. A VISITOR INFORMATION FACILITY WILL BE LOCATED IN THE VICINITY OF THE BANFF EAST GATE. THE FACILITY WILL PROVIDE FOUR MOUNTAIN PARK AND BANFF PARK ORIENTATION AND INFORMATION SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AND ON A 24-HOUR BASIS.

Discussion:

An average of 1.6 million vehicles and 3.9 million people enter through the east gate each year. Traffic volume has increased on average of 1% per year since 1979. The proposed orientation facility would provide enroute service for westbound visitors destined to various areas of the park and Four Mountain Parks. It would serve an important role because over 50% of the visitors to the Four Mountain Parks who enter the block do so through the Banff East Gate. The function of the facility would be to orient newly arrived visitors to major opportunities, facilities and services in the park and Four Mountain Parks. Important park regulations and management messages would also be highlighted.

- B. THE BANFF INFORMATION CENTRE WILL BE REDEVELOPED AS A PARK INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION CENTRE. ORIENTATION TO AND INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES IN THE FOUR MOUNTAIN PARKS AND ADJACENT REGION WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE. INFORMATION SERVICES FOR THE PARK, COMMUNITY, PRIVATE SECTOR AND REGIONAL TOURISM AGENCIES WILL BE CENTRALIZED IN ONE LOCATION. ALL ELEMENTS OF THE PARK STORY WILL BE INTRODUCED AND THE INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN THE PARK WILL BE EMPHASIZED AT THIS CENTRE. BASIC AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY AND THROUGH ALL SEASONS.

Discussion:

The redeveloped Banff information centre will complement the role of the East Gate facility. More in-depth information and also interpretation about the park will be provided.

The information centre will provide sufficient parking, access for the handicapped, improved theatres and an adequate design for serving the large numbers of visitors (133,000 visitors per year with about 1,400 inquiries per day during peak season). The centre will provide a "one stop" information facility for Banff visitors. Space will be required to include a chamber of commerce information booth as well as "self-serve" information stations.

The interpretive opportunities available in the park will be promoted here. Visitors will be introduced to the park's story and its relationship to the regional and national heritage themes.

Of the 8.5 to 10 million visitors to the Four Mountain Parks, 81% eventually visit Banff. The average visitor stays 3.7 days in the town of Banff. In addition, approximately 90% of the escorted bus tours to Alberta spend at least one night in the park.

Considering the number of visitors attracted to and accommodated in the town (over 9,000 capacity in hotels/motels) as well as the 6,600 residents, a well designed visitor information and interpretation centre will serve a large and important segment of the park visitor.

- C. THE LAKE LOUISE VISITOR RECEPTION CENTRE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE LOCAL AREA, IN THE PARK AND IN THE FOUR MOUNTAIN PARKS. THE CENTRE WILL BE A MAJOR FACILITY FOR INTERPRETING THE GEOLOGY OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS AND ORIENTING VISITORS TO INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES IN ALL FOUR PARKS. BASIC AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE YEAR-ROUND AND 24 HOURS A DAY.

Discussion:

Lake Louise is a major visitor centre and a popular Rocky Mountain destination which is internationally known. Many visitors travel from Lake Louise to other areas in the Four Mountain Parks. A new visitor reception centre is scheduled for completion in 1990 which will serve the 800,000 people who visit Lake Louise each year. Its central location in the heart of the Main Ranges of the Rocky Mountains makes it an ideal location for interpreting the geology of the Rocky Mountains.

- D. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE PUBLIC SAFETY AND BACKCOUNTRY INFORMATION YEAR-ROUND ON A 24-HOUR BASIS. THE ROLE OF THE WARDEN SERVICE IN PROVIDING GENERAL INFORMATION WILL CEASE AS OTHER INFORMATION SYSTEMS ARE IMPROVED.

Discussion:

The warden dispatch service will continue to provide a 24-hour emergency public service. More information will also be made available after working hours at the redeveloped Banff town information centre and the new East Gate information facility.

The public has requested that information be available at all parks on a 24-hour basis.

- E. ALL BANFF PARK STAFF AND STAFF OF PARK COMMERCIAL OPERATORS WILL BE PROVIDED WITH HOSPITALITY TRAINING AND ORIENTATION SESSIONS SO THAT THEY CAN BECOME MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT PARK OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES AND FACILITIES AND BETTER UNDERSTAND PARK HERITAGE RESOURCE AND MANAGEMENT MESSAGES. ORIENTATION SESSIONS WILL BE DESIGNED TO MEET STAFF NEEDS.

Discussion:

Seasonal park employees and of commercial operators form a base of approximately 2,000 transient residents employed in the tourist service industry. All park staff and employees of commercial operators in the park should be able to provide basic and accurate information to the visiting public. Commercial operators often hire staff from outside the region. These employees often do not know the area nor do many of them have a basic appreciation of the national park mandate. Informed and courteous staff which serve the public, directly or indirectly, are essential in making a park experience positive, enjoyable and safe. Funds will be required to develop and produce programs for training and orientation purposes.

- F. ORIENTATION INFORMATION AT PARKWAY ACCESS POINTS WILL BE PROVIDED TO CLEARLY INFORM VISITORS ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE ALONG THE RESPECTIVE PARKWAY.

Discussion:

The majority of park visitors tour along park roadways. They will be better informed of the opportunities available to stop and experience the resources first hand. This orientation service will be improved at the Icefield Parkway's three entrance points (north, south and David Thompson) as well as at the Bow Valley Parkway entrances and the entrance to the Kootenay Parkway.

- G. SIGNAGE FOR FACILITIES AND SERVICES WILL BE CONCISE AND EASILY UNDERSTOOD BY VISITORS. SIGNS AT EACH PARK ENTRANCE WILL BE CONSOLIDATED TO AVOID SIGNAGE CONGESTION AND DUPLICATION AT COMMON PARK BOUNDARIES.

Discussion:

Orientation signage to services and facilities for the town of Banff and the Lake Louise Visitor Centre are particularly confusing. A more effective method to orient and inform visitors as they enter these centres or travel park roads will be developed.

Several regulatory signs are posted along the highway at each park boundary. This creates an unnecessary duplication

of signs at inter-park boundaries and contributes to redundancy and unsightly sign congestion. The regulatory signs also create a negative, rather than a positive, welcoming impression as visitors enter the park. These circumstances will be rectified.

- H. INFORMATION ABOUT RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES WILL BE UPGRADED AND IMPROVED TO MAKE PARK VISITORS MORE AWARE OF OPPORTUNITIES, INCREASE VISITOR ENJOYMENT, IMPROVE VISITOR SAFETY AND ALSO PROVIDE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RESOURCES. (Specific recommendations are made in Section 4.2 "Recreational Activities" and in Section 4.1 "Backcountry Opportunities and Facilities".)

Discussion:

Driving for pleasure is the most popular activity in the park's frontcountry. This user group will be better informed of opportunities available along all roadways to stop and experience the park's resources first-hand.

Cross-country skiing is expanding in popularity. Since many of the ski trails cross avalanche paths, more public safety information will be provided. Information about trail conditions and orientation at trailheads will also be improved.

Canoeing, kayaking and rafting are popular activities on the Bow River, particularly downstream from Lake Louise. Paddlers also use the North Saskatchewan River. Access, egress and portage points will be better marked and information on natural hazards will be increased. The North Saskatchewan River has been nominated a Canadian Heritage River. Information explaining the river's heritage values will be developed.

Information about boating and sport fishing will be improved, in particular, clarification of regulations and use restrictions. Bicycling is a popular activity, especially along park roads in the vicinity of the townsite. Touring along the Icefields Parkway and trail bicycling are growing in popularity. Information will be available to bicyclists to help them enjoy the park and to help ensure their safety. The Canadian Parks Service has had the opportunity to review manuscripts of commercially produced bicycling literature for inclusion of park messages. This approach will continue.

Horse/hiker/cyclist conflicts on multiple use trails will be mitigated with appropriate information so that users have realistic expectations and are knowledgeable about trail etiquette. Private horse use is increasing along the park's eastern slopes and information is required to help reduce

resource impacts caused by negligence. The Parks Service staff of Banff and Jasper will work along with provincial agencies to address the problem.

- I. PARK INFORMATION AND ORIENTATION WILL BE PROVIDED TO VISITORS AT HOTELS, MOTELS, HOSTELS AND CAMPGROUNDS, AND AT PLACES WHERE VISITORS CONGREGATE (Additional recommendations are made in Section 4.1 "Day-Use Facilities and Services" and in Section 4.4 "Frontcountry Accommodation").

Discussion:

The visiting public's access to information will be made easy and obvious. The provision of information at arrival points such as the proposed East Gate facility, Via Rail station and bus terminal will improve this service. The East Gate information facility is the most important of these three arrival points since the majority of visitors to Banff National Park travel in private vehicles.

The town of Banff and Lake Louise Visitor Centre can accommodate 48% of the overnighing park visitors in hotels and motels. An additional 47% can be accommodated in frontcountry campgrounds and 4% in outlying commercial accommodations. An increase in information about park opportunities provided at these facilities will substantially improve this service to as many as 21,000 park visitors per day during peak use periods.

More information will be provided at day-use areas or popular roadside pull-offs in order to orient visitors to other opportunities nearby or similar opportunities in the park. Use of under-utilized facilities could also be encouraged this way.

An integrated system will fill gaps in the present information service. Information would be readily available to visitors at various stages in their park experience and at locations where visitor contact can be maximized.

- J. THE PARK WILL ENCOURAGE THE AUTHORS OF PARK GUIDE BOOKS AND RECREATIONAL LITERATURE TO INCLUDE PARK MESSAGES AND REGULATIONS AND WILL OFFER TO REVIEW MANUSCRIPTS FOR ACCURACY OF INFORMATION.

Discussion:

The Canadian Parks Service cannot afford to publish and distribute all the literature necessary to adequately inform the public. Cooperating with others by reviewing manuscripts or providing information for inclusion in publications will help to ensure the public receives accurate and useful information.

K. BACKCOUNTRY INFORMATION ABOUT THE FOUR MOUNTAIN PARKS WILL BE PROVIDED ON A COORDINATED BASIS.

- CURRENT BACKCOUNTRY INFORMATION ON ALL FOUR PARKS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT INFORMATION CENTRES IN ORDER TO ASSIST VISITORS IN PLANNING TRIPS AND TO IMPROVE THE DISTRIBUTION OF BACKCOUNTRY USE.
- MAJOR BACKCOUNTRY PUBLICATIONS WILL CONTAIN INFORMATION AND MESSAGES COMMON TO THE FOUR PARKS AS WELL AS HIGHLIGHT SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN BACKCOUNTRY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.
- BACKCOUNTRY INFORMATION ABOUT PARK TRAILS WILL BE ACCESSIBLE TO VISITORS ENTERING BACKCOUNTRY AREAS FROM ADJACENT LANDS.
- INFORMATION AT TRAILHEADS WILL BE UPGRADED AND WILL MEET CRITERIA WHICH WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOR THE FOUR MOUNTAIN PARKS BLOCK.

(Additional recommendations are made in Section 4.1 "Backcountry Opportunities and Facilities".)

Discussion:

Backcountry information needs to be available to visitors at all stages of the backcountry experience. Coordination will be required to develop a communications strategy specific to the needs of Banff National Park and that also highlights significant differences in management practices among the four parks.

Greater visitation, particularly of infrequently used backcountry areas, may result. A distribution of use can also be encouraged. Visitors will be aware of potential dangers and the appropriate behaviour required to minimize conflicts with wildlife and reduce resource impairment.

Since random camping is allowed in about one-half of the park, educational programs which foster low-impact camping techniques will be important to help reduce resource impairment.

Backcountry users travelling on inter-park trails will be provided with accurate and consistent levels of information regardless of the trailhead they access. Since a number of Banff's trails interconnect with Yoho, Kootenay, Jasper, Kananaskis Country, Alberta Forest Service lands and Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park, a coordinated approach which provides complete and accurate information is required. Most visitors to the Clearwater/Red Deer/Panther rivers area of the park begin and end their trip in Alberta provincial lands. There were 4,300 visitor nights recorded for this area in 1985. Consistent information will avoid confusion among backcountry users and help to ensure a safe and well planned trip.

Information provided at park trailheads is being upgraded. The information will ensure that visitors have appropriate expectations for their trip before they proceed. Trailhead information will, for example, include emergency information, trail name, length of trails, major connections and destinations, the need for camping permits and where to get them, as well as designation of multi-purpose trails. Provision will also be made for temporary information notices such as trail conditions, wildlife alerts, or trail closures. Information appropriate to day hikers will also be provided at trailheads, particularly those in the vicinity of the townsite.

- L. INFORMATION ON REGULATIONS AND PARK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES WHICH IMPROVE VISITOR SAFETY AND SAFEGUARD PARK RESOURCES WILL BE INCREASED AND IMPROVED. THESE MESSAGES WILL BE PROVIDED IN CONJUNCTION WITH INFORMATION ON PARK OPPORTUNITIES AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES. THE PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION AND MESSAGES ON COMMON PARK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES SUCH AS BEAR MANAGEMENT, WILL BE COORDINATED AMONG THE FOUR MOUNTAIN PARKS.

Discussion:

In recent years, education programs which encourage appropriate visitor behaviour have been recognized as an effective management tool to safeguard park resources. Education programs are, in many cases, more effective in changing or correcting behaviour than law enforcement actions. If park visitors are aware of the effect their behaviour may have on park resources or the reasons behind various park regulations, they will generally alter their behaviour or comply with regulations with a positive and supportive attitude.

- M. INFORMATION ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS OFFERED IN THE PARK OR IN THE NEIGHBOURING REGION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE AT PARK INFORMATION OUTLETS. THE PARKS SERVICE WILL ENCOURAGE OTHERS (guides, outfitters, volunteers, educational institutions, outdoor clubs) TO PROVIDE SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, HOWEVER, NO NEW FACILITY DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED NOR WILL NEW LAND BE RELEASED FOR THESE PURPOSES.

Discussion:

The Canadian Parks Service will continue to cooperate with outside agencies in the development of information about terrain hazards and skills and equipment required for various outdoor pursuits. In this way, information provided to the public is more consistent and cost-effective. Information will help to ensure that visitors are aware of and prepared for various activities, and better able to

select activities within their capability. Visitor enjoyment of the activities would be increased as well as visitor safety. Many of these messages will be included in improvements to the information provided on recreational activities.

A number of outdoor schools operate in the Canmore area and provide skill development programs. Professional guiding services are also available in the park and region. Information services will help to make the visitor more aware of these opportunities.

5.3 INTERPRETATION OF PARK HERITAGE RESOURCES

Interpretation programs help to inform the visitor about park heritage resources. Individuals are encouraged to recognize their proprietary interest in national heritage resources and to develop a sense of stewardship towards them. As a result, support for the national parks mandate and its role in the larger context of the World Heritage Conservation Strategy is cultivated.

In Banff National Park, interpretation programs help visitors to experience and understand the heritage story of the Rocky Mountains natural region as represented in the park. The central theme for the park story is "The Rockies - Birthplace of Canada's National Parks". Natural history themes cover the geology of the Front and Main Ranges of the Rocky Mountains; sculpturing of the landscape by water, glaciers and wind; and the ecology of the Montane, Subalpine and Alpine life zones. Cultural history themes emphasize the role Banff National Park has played in the evolution of Canadian national park policies and management practices and the town of Banff's role as a staging area for mountain adventurers.

The interpretive services presently reach a limited percentage of the visitors to the park. Interpretation is often perceived as an "event" or an isolated opportunity rather than as a level of understanding which should be integrated into the park experience. For visitors to gain an appreciation and understanding of the park's heritage values, they need to be able to relate individual themes and messages to a complete story. In Banff, the whole park story has not been told to the visitor, only fragments of it have been developed at on-site locations throughout the park.

The town of Banff will be a key interpretive area for presenting the park story and for promoting interpretive opportunities in the park. It will also be a major centre for interpreting the entire Canadian National Park system. A central location in the townsite is required where the park story can be introduced and linked to the larger regional, national and world heritage stories.

In addition to communicating heritage themes, interpretation programs educate visitors about park management practices and appropriate visitor behaviour. Interpretation programs are an effective way of explaining and gaining compliance for park regulations and for encouraging support for park management practices. Many park management practices and visitor groups are common to the Four Mountain Parks. Close coordination is required to ensure that all messages are covered and all visitor groups are reached without being redundant.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To improve the understanding and appreciation of heritage resource values and man's relationship to and dependence on the natural environment by the public in general and park visitors in particular, through education about the heritage resources protected in the park.
2. To provide visitors with information and interpretation programs which help to safeguard park resources by encouraging appropriate visitor behaviour and fostering support for management practices.
3. To improve and coordinate the presentation of messages common to the Four Mountain Parks in order to ensure complete coverage of messages, to avoid any unnecessary duplication of effort and improve visitor access to information.
4. To increase and improve the interpretive opportunities provided at major visitor attractions and areas of concentrated visitor use and to encourage, where appropriate, first-hand experience of park resources.
5. To develop interpretation as part of an integrated communications strategy.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. THE PARK'S INTERPRETATION PROGRAM WILL PRESENT THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATURAL REGION HERITAGE THEMES AS REPRESENTED IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK.
 - APPROACHES WILL BE DEVELOPED THROUGH UNIT PLANS TO INTERPRET THESE THEMES TO GENERAL PARK AUDIENCES, SPECIFIC VISITOR GROUPS AND AUDIENCES OUTSIDE THE PARK.
 - EACH THEME WILL BE PRESENTED AS PART OF THE WHOLE PARK STORY. THE PARK STORY WILL RELATE TO THE REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL HERITAGE STORIES.
 - A RANGE OF INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE PROVIDED INCLUDING A BALANCE OF PERSONAL AND NON-PERSONAL SERVICES.
- B. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WILL BE DEVELOPED TO ENCOURAGE WISE USE OF THE PARK AND TO HELP VISITORS UNDERSTAND AND SUPPORT PARK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND REGULATIONS. THESE MESSAGES WILL BE INTEGRATED WITH INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES.

Discussion:

The "Interpretive Plan for the Seven National Parks of the Canadian Cordillera" has guided interpretive planning in the park and Western Region since 1975. The purpose of the plan was to coordinate message presentation in the mountain parks to ensure complete coverage of heritage themes and to reduce duplication of messages. In recent years additional heritage themes which have gained prominence and are shared by the Four Mountain Parks include Heritage Rivers and World Heritage Sites. The role of interpretation has also expanded to include park management messages and to use education as a management tool.

An emphasis will be placed on addressing the needs of specific visitor groups. Consequently, more information is required on park visitors, their interests, knowledge levels and motivations in order to design more effective interpretation programs. Natural region heritage themes, public safety, resource protection and management messages will be integrated in the interpretation and information programs.

- C. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ENTIRE NATIONAL PARKS SYSTEM WILL CONTINUE TO BE PRESENTED AT THE CAVE AND BASIN CENTRE IN BANFF TOWNSITE.

Discussion:

The town of Banff is to act as a major interpretive centre for the park and for the entire national parks system. The program presented at the Cave and Basin Centre helps to fulfill this role.

- D. AN INTRODUCTION TO ALL ELEMENTS OF THE PARK STORY AND AN ORIENTATION TO PARK INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE PROVIDED IN THE TOWNSITE AT THE REDEVELOPED PARK INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION CENTRE.

Discussion:

Interpretation of the park story should be presented in association with the information centre. This would help to clearly establish an understanding of the heritage protection role of the park at an early stage in the visitor's park experience.

The present information centre will require redevelopment to accommodate an interpretive function.

Considering the number of visitors attracted to and accommodated in the townsite (over 9,100 capacity in hotels/motels), as well as the 6,600 permanent and seasonal residents, a well designed visitor information and interpretation centre would serve a large and important segment of the park user.

- E. THE GEOLOGICAL STORY OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS AND AN ORIENTATION TO THE INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED IN THE FOUR MOUNTAIN PARKS WILL BE EMPHASIZED IN THE LAKE LOUISE VISITOR RECEPTION CENTRE.

Discussion:

A new visitor reception centre at Lake Louise is scheduled for completion in 1990.

Its central location and high visitation for the Four Mountain Parks makes it an ideal location for interpreting the geology of the Rocky Mountains on behalf of the other national parks in the natural region.

- F. THE PARK WILL COOPERATE WITH JASPER, KOOTENAY AND YOHO NATIONAL PARKS AND WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE TO DEFINE:

- SHARED MESSAGES AND THE APPROACH TO BE USED TO COMMUNICATE THESE MESSAGES (e.g. bear awareness, Heritage Rivers, World Heritage Site, the Burgess Shale);
- THE APPROACH TO BE USED TO INTERPRET TO AUDIENCES SHARED BY THE FOUR PARKS (e.g. corridor users along the Kootenay Parkway, bus tour groups travelling interpark circuits);
- THE NATIONAL MESSAGES WHICH SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK AND IN THE FOUR MOUNTAIN PARKS;
- A METHOD TO MAKE INTERPRETATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES IN THE FOUR PARKS MORE RECOGNIZABLE TO PARK VISITORS; AND
- THE APPROACH TO BE USED TO PROVIDE EXTENSION PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES.

Discussion:

The "Interpretive Plan for the Seven Parks of the Canadian Cordillera" has guided interpretive planning in the park and Western Region since 1975. It assigned common messages for natural region heritage themes to individual parks. Since 1975, some park messages such as the archaeology story for Banff have changed in significance and others have gained prominence. Other themes in common for the four parks include the recent designation of the Four Mountain Parks as

a World Heritage Site and the designation of Canadian Heritage Rivers in three of the four parks. Other messages in common include most of the park management practices (e.g. bear awareness and management, fire management) and low-impact use techniques for backcountry users. The presentation of common messages will be coordinated among the four parks.

Messages will be tailored to specific user groups based on the activities undertaken. Since so many of the visitors travel between the Four Mountain Parks and do not often distinguish between parks, coordination will occur to ensure that the messages presented are not redundant and that all user groups are reached.

The "National Parks' National Messages" manual identifies 36 messages which help to outline the meaning and purpose of the national parks and to explain the work of the agency in building and managing Canada's system of National Parks. The Four Mountain Parks as well as parks in the rest of the region need to coordinate the presentation of these national messages.

Visitors to the park do not understand the symbols presently used to identify interpretive facilities and opportunities. All parks in the system are faced with this problem. A national identifier should be redesigned.

The Four Mountain Parks share to a large extent, the same extension market. This market is also shared with Waterton Lakes and Elk Island national parks. In addition, Alberta provincial parks are developing educational resource kits for schools in the province. We should not be competing with them by addressing similar grade levels with similar messages. Coordination is required at the regional office level to establish an approach for reaching educational institutes.

- G. A PRIORITY WILL BE PLACED ON PROVIDING MORE AND IMPROVED INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES AT MAJOR VISITOR ATTRACTIONS OR AREAS OF CONCENTRATED VISITOR USE (e.g. Banff townsite, Lake Louise visitor centre, frontcountry accommodation locations and at day-use areas including roadside attractions along the three parkways in the park). WHERE APPROPRIATE, DAY-USE AND INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE INTEGRATED WITH AN EMPHASIS ON PROVIDING FIRST-HAND OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE THE PARK RESOURCES. (For additional recommendations, see Section 4.2 "Day-Use Facilities and Services" and Section 4.4 "Frontcountry Accommodation".)

Discussion:

The town of Banff and the Lake Louise Visitor Centre are major visitor use areas. At these locations, visitor contact can be maximized. The Cave and Basin Centre and Banff Park Museum are major facilities located in the town of Banff, however, neither serves to introduce the park story or encourage visitors to participate in other park interpretive opportunities. This problem will be rectified.

Over one-half of the over-nighting park visitors would gain a better understanding of the park and be more aware of interpretive opportunities if services were provided at appropriate frontcountry accommodation facilities.

Popular day-use areas in the park presently lacking in interpretive opportunities include Lake Minnewanka, Johnson Lake, Vermilion Lakes and the Upper Hot Pool. Interpretive opportunities could also be targeted to the downhill skier. The park's three downhill ski areas can accommodate 13,000 skiers daily during the winter season. Of these users, 62% are Albertans and many are repeat visitors from the Calgary area.

The integration of interpretive and day-use opportunities will help to consolidate facility development, as well as capitalize on existing visitor use patterns. Providing more interpretive opportunities for experiencing park resources first-hand will help to increase the level of understanding visitors have of park resources. These opportunities will help the visitor to integrate an appreciation of the heritage values into his/her park experience.

- H. IN ADDITION TO THE CORE INTERPRETATION SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE PARK, THE NON-GOVERNMENT SECTOR WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO OFFER QUALITY INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH PRESENT PARK MANAGEMENT AND HERITAGE RESOURCE MESSAGES.

Discussion:

The potential exists for more private sector involvement in the provision of interpretive opportunities. Base levels for interpretation services provided by the agency must be established. Guidelines for the provision of interpretive opportunities by the private sector will be required.

5.4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement in the planning, management and operation of the park is currently provided through public consultation programs and cooperative activities. A number of public consultation programs have been held in Alberta and British Columbia communities on park management planning issues. These programs provide a forum where concerned individuals and groups may contribute to the development of plans and practices. Cooperative activities include the park's volunteer program and cooperative agreements with the non-government sector to co-produce interpretive media. These activities provide opportunities for the public to participate in the achievement of park objectives. Public involvement also encourages two-way communication and fosters understanding and support for the park.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To instill a sense of stewardship and encourage active support and involvement among the public for the protection and wise use of the park through an improved public consultation program and increased cooperative activities.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE PROVIDED FOR CONTINUED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ON PARK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, OPERATIONS, FACILITIES, SERVICES AND PLANS.

Discussion:

Dialogue with the public on an ongoing basis is important for maintaining regional cooperation and local support for park operations. Visitor comments on park facilities and services are also useful in monitoring Parks' performance in providing a public service.

Park staff will continue to be accessible to interested individuals for purposes of public feedback, comment, and specialized discussions. This service will "personalize" or "humanize" the visitor's park experience as well as provide a receptive and responsive forum for his participation in park concerns, be they planning issues, quality of service, or natural resource topics.

- B. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL EXPAND THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM TO PROVIDE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN ACTIVITIES WHICH SUPPLEMENT THE PARK'S OPERATIONS. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO BE RECEPTIVE TO ESTABLISHING A COOPERATING ASSOCIATION.

Discussion:

The park's volunteer program will be proactively managed so that interested individuals or groups can be informed of opportunities or projects which the park managers are prepared to support.

Opportunities to use volunteers in programs which supplement park operations are almost unlimited. Banff is a popular area which would attract many potential volunteers, however accommodation is limited. The local and regional market would probably be the best area from which to draw volunteers. Limited staff time for supervising volunteers presently limits the program as well.

The potential for establishing a cooperating association in Banff National Park will be reviewed periodically. At this time, it is more appropriate to pursue cooperative agreements as a method to expand its service to the public.

- C. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH INTERESTED PARTIES FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR, LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS, SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS, AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR THE JOINT PRODUCTION OF SERVICES OR PRODUCTS WHICH MEET PARK OBJECTIVES AND ARE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL.

Discussion:

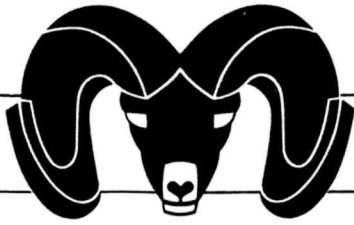
A number of successful cooperative projects have been undertaken with the private sector. These range from the production of interpretive media for Sunshine Village and the Sulphur Mountain Gondola to films co-produced with the Banff Centre and the park's newsletter co-produced with the local Chamber of Commerce. Training programs, consulting services and resource kits have been prepared for park concessionaires and bus tour operators in order to help them upgrade their "interpretive" talks. The potential in Banff is great for expanding third party initiatives and co-produced media. The number of visitors provided the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the park increases exponentially.

The emphasis has been placed on the development of interpretive media, however projects for other subactivities could be pursued as well. The success of future ventures will depend on adequate financial and human resources to support the program.

6.0

**SUPPORT FACILITIES
AND FACILITY
APPEARANCE
GUIDELINES**





6.0

SUPPORT FACILITIES AND FACILITY APPEARANCE GUIDELINES

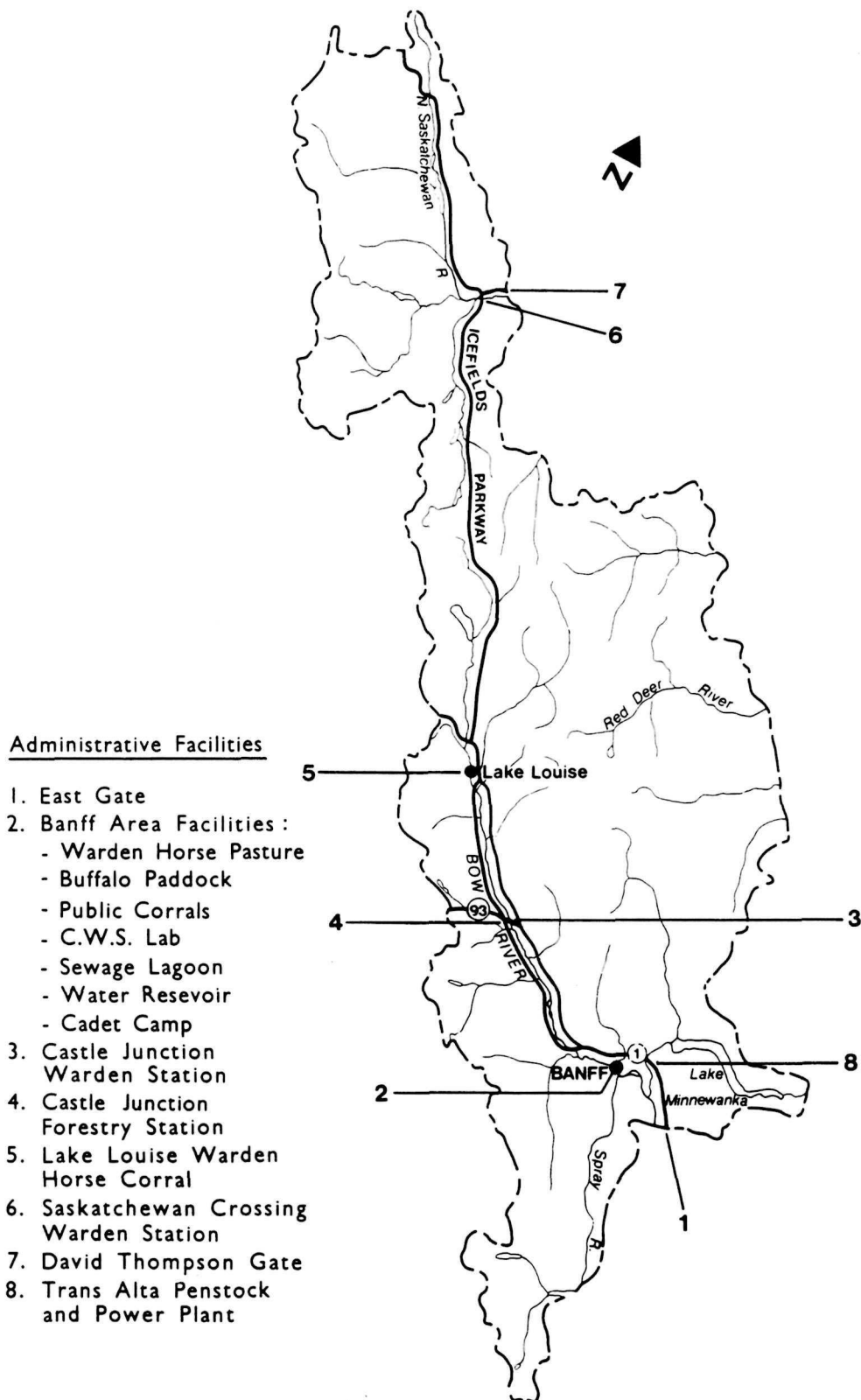
6.1 SUPPORT FACILITIES

A variety of facilities have been established to support the management and operation of Banff National Park and to serve functions not directly related to the park such as utilities. Administrative facilities in the frontcountry are located at Saskatchewan River Crossing, Lake Louise, Castle Junction and the Banff townsite region. Where feasible, administrative facilities have been concentrated at these needed locations, rather than dispersed along the park's road and highway corridors. The Banff Warden Service also maintains a system of backcountry patrol cabins throughout the park. A more detailed description of the park's administrative facilities is contained in the Banff Background Report (see Figure 12).

The following major concerns are associated with the existing system of administrative facilities;

- a) improvements are needed to the park gate on the David Thompson Highway, as the existing situation provides a poor sense of arrival to a national park,
- b) staff accommodation at Saskatchewan River Crossing is inadequate, both in standard and quantity - particularly for the park's summer seasonal staff working in the area,
- c) the dispersed collection of redundant administrative facilities in the Banff townsite region,
- d) the presence of facilities in the Banff townsite region, which are operated by other agencies and utilities companies, and unacceptably impair heritage resource values, and
- e) the absence of a visitor reception centre near the Banff East Gate which forces all visitors requiring information about the park to drive into the townsite.

Figure 14: Support Facilities, Banff National Park



MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To provide support facilities which are fundamental to the provision of visitor services (e.g. information centres).
2. To minimize the impact of support facilities on park resources, particularly in the lower Bow Valley.
3. To improve the visual and architectural character of the park's administrative and operational support facilities
4. To provide working areas and accommodation facilities which are of a suitable standard.
5. To provide a system of support facilities which are cost-effective and contribute to the efficient operation and management of the park.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE MADE TO THE PARK GATE FACILITY ON THE DAVID THOMPSON HIGHWAY TO CREATE A MORE APPROPRIATE SENSE OF ARRIVAL IN THE PARK.

Discussion:

The existing park entrance facilities along the David Thompson Highway require improvement (see Section 5.2, statement "F"). Improvements will occur in signing, landscaping and the gate kiosk facility. These improvements will create a more positive impression for visitors entering the park.

- B. A PROGRAM WILL BE INITIATED BY THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE TO REVIEW THE EXISTING HOUSING SUPPLY, WITH RESPECT TO LOCATION, QUALITY, QUANTITY, AND SIZE SO AS TO ENSURE THAT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES WHICH ARE DEPENDENT ON RESIDENT PARK STAFF ARE ACHIEVED. IF STAFF HOUSING IS NOT ADEQUATE, A PROGRAM WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MAKE THE NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS.

Discussion:

Canadian Parks Service staff working in Banff have resided in the park ever since park operations commenced. Employee housing needs have been provided traditionally by the agency. In the last few years, however, fiscal restraints have meant that funding for housing has been diverted to the fundamental requirements for resource protection and the provision of core visitor services.

This circumstance and a shift in the demographic makeup of Parks Service staff away from large numbers of single students towards young families has resulted in a housing mix which is frequently inadequate. The consequences are a lowering of staff morale, and inhibiting the ability of the Canadian Parks Service to attract the best qualified employees.

- C. APPROPRIATE STAFF ACCOMMODATION AND OPERATIONAL FACILITIES WILL BE PROVIDED AT SASKATCHEWAN RIVER CROSSING ON THE SITE PRESENTLY USED BY THE PARKS SERVICE. A COMPLETE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA IS REQUIRED. THE BANFF WARDEN SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE THE SASKATCHEWAN CROSSING WARDEN STATION ON A YEAR-ROUND BASIS.

Discussion:

Saskatchewan Crossing provides employee accommodation and an essential base of operation in the northern portion of the park. Redevelopment of the accommodation and operational facilities is required.

Year-round operation of the Saskatchewan Crossing warden station is required. During the winter, the station is the only operational park facility on the Icefields Parkway between Lake Louise and the Paboktan (Mile 45) Warden Station in Jasper National Park. Seasonal and temporary accommodation facilities are needed for Interpretive Service, Visitor Services and General Works staff.

- D. THE CASTLE WARDEN STATION WILL REMAIN. THE CASTLE FORESTRY CAMP WILL BE UPGRADED AND USED FOR SEASONAL PARK STAFF HOUSING.

Discussion:

The Castle Forestry Camp provides needed summer accommodation in the park for seasonal employees involved in trail reconstruction programs. Physical upgrading of the existing structures is required.

- E. GOVERNMENT FACILITIES AND STRUCTURES IN THE BANFF TOWNSITE REGION WHICH ARE NOT ESSENTIAL FOR THE OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PARK WILL BE REMOVED AND THE SITES REHABILITATED. NECESSARY FACILITIES WILL BE DEVELOPED WITHIN THE TOWN BOUNDARIES.

Discussion:

A number of redundant facilities are located in an area along the northern periphery of the Banff town boundary. These facilities include the former laboratory used by the Canadian Wildlife Service, and all the miscellaneous

buildings north of Hawk Street and beyond the fenced perimeter of the Canadian Parks Service maintenance compound.

- F. THE TRANSALTA PENSTOCK, WATER TOWER AND GENERATING STATION ARE HIGH PROFILE AND VISUALLY INTRUSIVE STRUCTURES. THE PENSTOCK IS ALSO A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO UNGULATE MOVEMENT. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL WORK WITH TRANSALTA TO MITIGATE THESE IMPACTS WHEN REDEVELOPMENT OR REPLACEMENT OF THESE FACILITIES OCCURS.

6.2 FACILITY APPEARANCE GUIDELINES

All facilities and structures provided in Banff National Park contribute to the total impact of human presence on the park environment. A wide variety of architectural styles, landscaping treatments and colour schemes are presently associated with existing structures in the park. There is a traditional style of architecture in Banff National Park which should be preserved and incorporated into new building designs.

When new structures are constructed or existing structures redeveloped and upgraded, careful attention needs to be given to the elements of design and style to ensure that a harmonious, aesthetically pleasing and visually unobtrusive relationship with the park environment is achieved.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To provide structures and facilities, which need to be located within the park, in a manner that ensures their visual impact on the park landscape is minimized.
2. To ensure, where ever possible, that the image of the park that is conveyed to visitors will be one of minimal human intrusion on a natural setting, and a unity among structures and facilities.
3. To ensure that the spectacular natural elements present in the park should remain the dominant elements with respect to any proposed architecture.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. ARCHITECTURAL MOTIFS WILL BE ESTABLISHED AND WILL BE APPLICABLE TO ANY NEW STRUCTURES OR SUBSTANTIALLY REDEVELOPED STRUCTURES IN THE PARK.
- B. THE DESIGN AND SITING OF ANY STRUCTURES AND FACILITIES WILL BE CAREFULLY CHOSEN TO MINIMIZE THEIR VISUAL IMPACT ON THE SURROUNDING NATURAL LANDSCAPE.
- C. THE ARCHITECTURE MUST BE AESTHETICALLY COMPATIBLE WITH THE SURROUNDINGS AND SETTING.

- D. THE BUILDING FORM AND MASS SHOULD REFLECT THE VARIETY OF LOCAL SITE CONDITIONS FOUND IN THE PARK.
- E. THE COLOUR AND TEXTURE OF EXTERIOR FINISHING MATERIALS SHOULD BLEND WITH THE NATURAL SURROUNDINGS. NATURAL MATERIALS SUCH AS STONE AND WOOD SHOULD BE USED WHERE POSSIBLE.
- F. ALL REQUIRED LANDSCAPING AROUND STRUCTURES AND FACILITIES IN THE PARK SHOULD USE INDIGENOUS PLANT SPECIES WHEREVER POSSIBLE.
- G. WHERE POSSIBLE AND DESIRABLE, MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONAL FACILITIES WILL BE SCREENED FROM COMMON VIEW OF THE VISITOR TO BANFF.

7.0

REGIONAL INTEGRATION





7.0

REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The policy of the Canadian Parks Service is to seek to integrate the management, development and operation of national parks with surrounding regions so as to have positive, social, economic and physical impacts on the surrounding region. By acting in a manner sensitive to local concerns and in close collaboration with other government agencies, the Parks Service will strive to fulfill its mandate in ways which will be beneficial to, and ensure the best possible integration with, the surrounding region. There are many factors which make cooperation essential. Two are particularly significant. First, Banff National Park plays a significant role in the tourism industry of western Canada. Second, the Trans-Canada Highway and the mainline of the Canadian Pacific Railway transect the park and are nationally significant transportation corridors.

The successful application of this policy also requires that the converse be equally applicable for the region and its relationship to the park. Adequate recognition of the interdependence of Banff National Park and its surrounding region, and of the key aspirations, goals and objectives held by regional interests and the Canadian Parks Service is a prerequisite to achieving a mutually satisfactory level of integration.

The preservation and management of resources in Banff National Park is dependent on the complex interaction of ecological components. As park boundaries do not directly coincide with ecosystem boundaries, many species depend on habitats both within and adjacent to the park. Close cooperation with the other three contiguous national parks, adjacent provincial agencies, private organizations and regional residents is required to ensure that Environment Canada, Parks achieves its mandate for resource protection and visitor use.

Most of the lands to the east of the park are administered by the Alberta Forest Service. The majority of these Alberta lands which are adjacent to Banff have received protection status. Three designated wilderness areas are located adjacent to Banff along the Eastern Slopes of Alberta. They are the Ghost, Siffleur and White Goat wilderness areas. Similarly, provincial lands to the west are administered by the British Columbia Forest Service. Logging and, to a lesser extent, mining, are the principle land use activities on these lands. Planning is being initiated by the British Columbia Forest Service for the proposed Height of the Rockies Wilderness Area, which borders the southern end of Banff and Alberta's Peter Lougheed Provincial Park.

The development of a network of roads has been associated with these resource uses on both sides of the park's boundaries. These roads are now allowing increased accessibility to formerly remote areas of the park. Resource management problems and changes in backcountry use patterns are probable consequences of this circumstance. Existing concerns are associated with the recreational use of off-highway vehicles in the Devil's Gap area. The Province of Alberta is preparing an "access management plan" to deal with concerns associated with this activity. Parks representatives will be provided with an opportunity to participate in this planning program.

The development of recreational opportunities on some of these adjacent Crown Lands is providing needed alternatives for meeting regional recreational demand. Most notably, the development of Kananaskis Country has significantly changed outdoor recreation use patterns in the Calgary region. There is no longer an exclusive reliance on Banff National Park for nordic skiing, camping and backcountry activities. Improved access along the Smith-Dorrien Road from Peter Lougheed Provincial Park and Canmore has generated increased use in the Goat Creek, Watridge Lake and Mud Lake/Burstall Pass areas of Kananaskis Country. Cooperative development of trails, trailhead facilities and backcountry information has occurred in these areas. Similar levels of cooperation have occurred in the case of Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park in British Columbia.

Increasing the range of recreation and tourism opportunities has been contemplated along the David Thompson Highway (Highway 11). Proposals for this area include a possible provincial park at Kootenay Plains (Rocky - North Saskatchewan Sub-Regional Integrated Resource Management Plan, 1986). Kootenay Plains was designated as an Ecological Reserve by Alberta in 1987 so as to protect its significant culture and ecological features.

The most obvious example of the need for regional integration occurs in the case of the town of Banff and the communities in the Bow Valley Corridor. The Canadian Parks Service relies on the neighboring community of Canmore, to the east, for a variety of needed services and housing opportunities. A number of people working in Banff have chosen to reside in the Canmore Corridor area. In turn, Banff's international reputation assist to draw tourists to these services and provide the base for a variety of economic benefits to Canmore residents. Limits to the expansion of the town of Banff will have an important affect on the Town of Canmore and the entire Bow Valley Corridor in general. The restrictions mean that future commercial and residential developments will have to occur, if at all, in the Bow Valley Corridor.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To cooperate with provincial and municipal governments in the planning of areas adjacent to the park in order to ensure that Banff continues to have a positive economic, social and environmental impact on local communities, organizations and individuals.
2. To continue to integrate programs for the protection and management of the park's natural resources, notably wildlife, forest resources and fire management, with those of neighbouring provincial and regional jurisdictions.
3. To ensure that outdoor recreational and tourist opportunities in the park complement those of other government agencies, business organizations and individuals in the surrounding region.
4. To establish complementary programs with appropriate provincial agencies for the provision of backcountry opportunities and backcountry information.
5. To cooperate with various federal, provincial and municipal agencies, as well as tourism and business organizations, in programs to ensure that Banff contributes to the region's tourism industry of western Canada.
6. To increase cooperative policies and programs with municipal, regional and provincial agencies, as well as, the local tourism industry in providing complementary and mutually beneficial marketing messages, and visitor services and facilities.
7. To improve local and regional residents' understanding of and appreciation for the park, its Purpose and Objectives, and management strategies and to provide opportunities for these residents to become involved in the future planning and on-going management and operation of the park.
8. To establish mechanisms for active regional integration with appropriate regional and provincial jurisdictions.

PLAN GUIDELINES

- A. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, ORGANIZATIONS, INDIVIDUALS AND RESIDENTS OF COMMUNITIES IN THE REGION SURROUNDING BANFF NATIONAL PARK TO PURSUE A WIDE RANGE OF MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE INITIATIVES.

Discussion:

Considerable cooperation already occurs between Banff and the surrounding region, particularly in the Canmore Corridor area. Parks will continue to cooperate, where possible, with the variety of government agencies, private-sector groups, non-profit organizations and individuals who are affected by Banff National Park. Mechanisms will be established to carry out the proposed initiatives for integration.

- B. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS WITH AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ON ADJACENT LANDS. PARTICULAR ATTENTION WILL BE DIRECTED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FOREST RESOURCES ALONG THE PARK'S BOUNDARIES.

Discussion

Coordination of resource management programs among neighbouring agencies is essential. Although a great deal already occurs, many of the programs are informal and are established at the individual initiative of field-level personnel. The Parks Service will work toward formalizing these cooperative programs by which the appropriate agencies can discuss issues of mutual concern and can cooperatively achieve their respective management objectives. Controlling off-road recreational vehicle access in areas which are located near the park boundaries is an example of a particular concern held by Parks where cooperation is required. Other particular concerns are associated with the management of wildlife species which seasonally travel outside the national park boundary. The Clearwater-Siffleur area has been designated as a Zone I, Special Preservation Area. It borders land administered by the Province of Alberta. Cooperative management of the area's wildlife species, including woodland caribou, will be sought.

Other specific guidelines in this park management plan which deal with the need for regional integration in the management of natural resources are found in Section 3.4 (Vegetation and Fire Management), Section 3.5 (Wildlife Management), Section 3.6 (Fisheries Management) and Section 3.8 (Cultural Resources).

- C. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL CONSIDER EXISTING AND POTENTIAL OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WHEN MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PARK ARE UNDER REVIEW. COMPLEMENTARY PROGRAMS WILL BE SOUGHT WITH THE RESPONSIBLE ALBERTA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA PROVINCIAL AGENCIES FOR THE PROVISION OF BACKCOUNTRY OPPORTUNITIES. GREATER COORDINATION IN THE PROVISION OF BACKCOUNTRY INFORMATION WILL BE EMPHASIZED.

Discussion:

The integration of planning efforts for outdoor recreational opportunities will ensure that complementary initiatives are undertaken. This is an increasingly important factor because of the recognition that the well-developed and heavily-used mountain national parks can no longer meet all the pressures placed upon them for outdoor recreational activities. Cooperation will also ensure that the efficient use and promotion of outdoor recreational facilities and related opportunities occurs throughout the region. Examples of the Canadian Parks Service's future regional participation include the coordinated development and management of canoeing, kayaking and rafting opportunities along the North Saskatchewan and Bow rivers. The North Saskatchewan River, within the park, is particularly significant because it has been declared a Canadian Heritage River. Integrated planning also needs to continue in the development of backcountry trails for hiking and horse-riding. This is particularly important in the case of Kananaskis Country and Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park. The requirement for integrated policies with appropriate land management agencies in Alberta also exists in the context of commercial horse outfitting and guiding services along Banff's eastern boundary.

Further discussion of initiatives related to outdoor recreation are contained in Section 4.1 (Backcountry Opportunities and Facilities), Section 4.3 (Recreational Opportunities) and Section 5.2 (Park Orientation and Information).

E. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL PARTICIPATE WITH REGIONAL INTERESTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF ORIENTATION/INFORMATION SERVICES AND MARKETING PROGRAMS FOR BANFF NATIONAL PARK AND ADJACENT AREAS.

Discussion:

A number of initiatives are identified in Section 5 (Communication Services) of this park management plan. A major cooperative venture would be the development of a visitor reception centre in the vicinity of the park's east gate. Cooperation would be required with a variety of provincial and tourism agencies. In addition, the Parks Service will continue to provide information and interpretation extension services to residents in the Canmore Corridor. Cooperative and volunteer agreements will be sought to support these extension programs and other park services.

In addition, the Canadian Parks Service will participate in the development of mutually required marketing messages with

regional and provincial tourism interests. The provision of information on recreational opportunities and accommodation facilities that are available both within and outside the park will be coordinated with other regional tourism information services and nearby provincial parks and recreation areas.

- F. PUBLIC CONSULTATIVE PROGRAMS WILL BE EXPANDED TO INCREASE THE AWARENESS OF REGIONAL RESIDENTS ABOUT THE CANADIAN NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM IN GENERAL, AND CURRENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PLANNING PROGRAMS IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK.

Discussion:

Regional involvement in the planning, management and operation of the park is provided through public consultation programs and cooperative activities, such as school extension programs. Considerable effort was made to involve regional residents in the deliberations leading up to the final preparation of this park management plan. Cooperative activities, such as volunteer programs, have provided a limited number of regional residents with high quality opportunities to become involved in the operation of the park and in some cases to gain valuable work experience. Consultative programs and cooperative activities will be increased and improved in order to instill a sense of stewardship and to encourage active support and involvement among regional residents for the protection and wise use of Banff National Park.

- G. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL WORK TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF PARK VISITORS AND THEIR PATTERNS OF USE, AND WILL SHARE THIS AND OTHER INFORMATION WITH LOCAL AND REGIONAL BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO ASSIST THEM IN THEIR PLANNING. DUE TO THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF BANFF NATIONAL PARK AS A MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTION IN ALBERTA, AND OF THE FOUR MOUNTAIN PARKS GENERALLY IN WESTERN CANADA, THE PARKS SERVICE WILL WORK WITH LOCAL, REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPING APPROACHES TO FURTHER ENHANCE ITS TOURISM ROLE.

Discussion:

Information will continue to be made available on standardized visitor profiles, park gate attendance, use of Banff's accommodation facilities, use of backcountry areas, and the marketing study results for the Sulphur Mountain Upper Hot Springs pool. The Canadian Parks Service will work with regional tourism interests to appropriately market the park and adjacent areas. The feasibility of a joint marketing strategy will be pursued once the information indicated above is available.

- H. INCREASED COOPERATION WILL BE SOUGHT WITH MUNICIPAL, REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL JURISDICTIONS IN THE BOW VALLEY CORRIDOR. THE CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE WILL ENDEAVOUR TO PLAN AND ADMINISTER THE TOWN OF BANFF SO IT FUNCTIONS AS A MUNICIPAL ENTITY WHICH IS FULLY INTEGRATED WITH OTHER URBAN CENTRES IN THE CANMORE CORRIDOR.

Discussion:

The need for cooperative planning between the Canadian Parks Service and responsible agencies in the Bow Valley Corridor has long been recognized. This is dictated by growing development pressures in both Banff National Park and provincial lands, as well as the recognition that cooperative planning is needed in the field of tourism related initiatives. There has not been a corresponding level of active cooperation between the parties involved. Cooperative planning and integration in the provision of municipal services is becoming an increasingly apparent need in the face of increasing municipal costs and the growing concern of municipal residents about the social fabric of their communities. Restrictions on any expansion of the Banff townsite boundaries and on facility development in the townsite region, for instance, will place new demands on areas outside the park. Parks can no more assume that residents of Canmore wish to absorb all of Banff's seasonal housing requirements, than Canmore could direct a wide range of industrial services to be located in Banff townsite. Integrated planning and management can assure that mutually acceptable objectives are realized.

8.0

**ENVIRONMENTAL
AND SOCIAL IMPACT
ANALYSIS SUMMARY**





8.0

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The procedure developed to analyse the impact of the guidelines contained in the Banff Park Management Plan applies the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP) and the Canadian Parks Service's guidelines for socio-economic impact assessment. The purpose of EARP is to determine, in advance, the environmental acceptability of projects under federal government control and to ensure environmental impacts are reduced to a minimum. EARP provides a formal procedure to ensure sound environmental planning. The socio-economic analysis is based on the Canadian Parks Service Directive 2.2.1 - "Socio-Economic Analysis in Management Plans for National Parks". The "Socio-Economic and Environmental Impact Analysis of the Banff National Park Management Plan identifies the positive and negative implications of the proposals on visitor use and identifies information requirements.

The application of EARP within the Canadian Parks Service is a multi-level process. The impact analysis of the Banff Park Management Plan is one of the first steps in that process. A final detailed impact assessment will be carried out at the plan implementation stage when the extent and magnitude of each proposal is more clearly defined.

The impact analysis was designed to ensure environmental and social implications were considered during the development of each plan guideline rather than conducting a reactive assessment of those guidelines. The impact analysis concentrates on identifying and mitigating the impact of proposals on resources and issues of high social or ecological value. The analysis identifies knowledge gaps, potential impacts, mitigating measures, monitoring and research requirements. It also provides an information base for the detailed assessment at the plan implementation stage.

The social and environmental impact analysis of the Banff Park Management Plan began with a comprehensive review of the impact of existing facilities and uses on park resources. This review was used in the development of the plan guidelines and was summarized for the public as a background report. The review was also used to predict the impact of the plan guidelines on resources and visitor use, and to identify mitigation measures.

The following is a summary of the environmental and socio-economic impact analysis of the Banff Park Management Plan.

8.1 THE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE RESOURCES

A strategy is provided in Section 3.0 of the park management plan which ensures that park resources receive a level of protection commensurate with their significance and sensitivity. A series of actions are outlined to mitigate existing impacts and to minimize further resource impairment.

Implementation of the plan guidelines will result in positive benefits to the park's heritage resource values. Noteworthy positive effects are indicated below.

- a) A high priority for protection will be given to unique, rare, endangered species. Habitats critical to a species' survival, areas used as breeding sites by rare or sensitive species, significant cultural resources and important habitat for grizzly bear, raptors and large predators will be preserved.
- b) Rehabilitation plans will be mandatory for all new developments and a systematic approach will be used to identify, prioritize and rehabilitate disturbed areas, particularly along the Icefields Parkway corridor.
- c) The plan guidelines for vegetation management include the development of special measures to minimize the harmful consequences of current and past uses of Montane areas, the rehabilitation of man-disturbed areas, and the requirement for rehabilitation plans for all new projects. The guidelines will also lead to the development of a comprehensive fire management plan, which will restore fire's role in the ecosystem.
- d) The two main wildlife management problems in the park are addressed: the loss of significant Montane habitat and the effects of adjacent land management on wildlife. The guidelines will work towards the cooperative management of wildlife species which migrate beyond the boundaries of Banff National Park.
- e) A high priority is given to improving the aesthetic quality of all man-made facilities and related developments in the park.
- f) Direction is provided for systematic cultural resource management which will prevent further impact and reduce existing impairment.

8.2 BACKCOUNTRY OPPORTUNITIES AND FACILITIES

No significant adverse effects on heritage resources will occur as a result of the plan guideline implementation. Large areas managed to provide wildland opportunities are identified. Beneficial social effects are associated with the increasingly rare opportunities in easily accessible park lands to experience a sense of freedom, solitude and challenge associated with wildland settings. In addition, many of the heavily-used and attractive destination areas will continue to be managed to provide semi-primitive opportunities. This will help to fill the gap throughout the Rocky Mountains in the provision of these types of opportunities. An increased level of resource disturbance and site hardening are accepted as a consequence of this decision to provide semi-primitive opportunities.

The plan addresses horse/hiker conflicts, by directing the development of separate hiker and horse party campgrounds, and controlling horses in areas where they are causing severe trail degradation. Positive environmental and social impacts will result.

The emphasis contained in the plan on upgrading existing trails will minimize many current aesthetic and environmental impacts associated with wet conditions, soil erosion, braiding and trail widening; particularly in fragile Alpine and Subalpine environments. It will also have a major positive impact on the quality of visitor experiences and the impression of Banff as a judiciously managed natural area. The reversion of selected backcountry roads to high standard and multiple-use trails will substantially enhance visitor experiences. It will also permit some of the parks high volume commercial horse traffic to be redirected to these durable trails from the more environmentally sensitive areas.

The plan guidelines for commercial lodges, alpine huts and trail shelters maintains the existing range of facilities and permits limited improvements within environmentally acceptable limits. These limits will be determined through site specific environmental assessments. The upgrading of these facilities will enhance visitor experiences. Increased numbers of visitors will be able to use the park's four backcountry lodges. No new lodges, huts and shelters, however, will be provided in the park.

The system of semi-permanent and rotational group camps has resulted in visitor conflicts and resource impairment. The proposal to establish formal group camp agreements will ensure that impacts are minimized. An on-going monitoring program is required to ensure the group camps continue to have a minimal impact on park resources and visitors.

8.3 DAY-USE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The plan guidelines for day-use facilities and services will have a positive social and environmental impact. They provide for the needed upgrading of roadside opportunities along park roads, notably the Icefields and Bow Valley parkways. Significant gaps in the roadside facility system will also be filled. Components of the existing system have fallen into disrepair. Upgrading, consolidating and relocating these facilities will improve aesthetics, visitor experience and mitigate environmental impacts through rehabilitation efforts. As a consequence, visitor experiences will be improved while minimizing site disturbances.

There are a number of resource concerns which must be addressed in detailed assessments of redevelopment in the Upper Hotsprings/Sulphur Mountain area. These concerns include; aesthetics, problems associated with the steep slopes, erosion control, hot springs hydrology, wildlife and wildlife migration routes, and cultural resources. The hotsprings pool and gondola are among the most popular day-use attractions in the park. The upper hotsprings pool complex, however, is in need of upgrading and has suffered a 25% decline in use since 1981. Detailed marketing and demand studies will be required to assist in the formulation of options for its redevelopment.

The bison paddock fence alienates important winter ungulate habitat and represents a major barrier to wildlife movement, particularly elk, through the Bow Valley. With increased development in the narrow valley and the fencing of the Trans-Canada Highway, the bison paddock fence is becoming an increasingly significant barrier to wildlife migration. Modifications to the paddock fence will have a major positive impact.

There are a number of visitor conflicts and resource concerns associated with the Lake Minnewanka day-use area. These include parking and traffic flow problems, the need for improved access for the handicapped, terrain impacts, potential cultural resource impacts, the habituation of bighorn sheep, and impacts to the Douglas fir forest, which is rare in Banff National Park. The potential impact of the proposed redevelopment on these resource and visitor use concerns, including the potential impact to water quality and fishery resources, must be addressed.

Restoration of the water levels at Johnson Lake will enhance summer recreational opportunities. Johnson Lake, despite its history of water level manipulation, does represent one of only eight low elevation Montane waterbodies in the park.

The guidelines for commercial day-use facilities will have minimal adverse effect on park resources. Although no new commercial day-use facilities will be provided, the quality of facilities and services offered to visitors will continue to be of a high standard.

8.4 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The proposals for recreational activities will have a positive social and environmental impact. More outdoor recreational opportunities for a broader range of visitors will be provided. Existing opportunities will be upgraded, conflicts between user groups will be minimized, and visitor information and awareness regarding outdoor recreational opportunities in the park will be improved. Improving information about the availability of recreational opportunities is a significant initiative in this regard. Guidelines are identified to manage outdoor recreational activities in the park in a manner which minimizes environmental impairment.

There are no major resource concerns associated with current and predicted levels of cross-country skiing.

The guidelines for canoeing, kayaking, rafting and boating will maintain and improve existing opportunities. The impact of canoeing and boating on waterfowl in the Vermilion Lakes must be monitored to ensure this ecologically sensitive area receives a high degree of protection. This area has been designated as an environmentally sensitive site and a specific management strategy must be developed to manage use and ensure resource protection. Initiatives are identified in the plan guidelines to improve the quality of boating opportunities on Lake Minnewanka.

Bicycling touring on the Trans-Canada Highway, the Icefields and Bow Valley parkways, and other park roads is extremely popular and opportunities will continue to be provided. Some public safety concerns are associated with bicycling on both the Trans-Canada Highway and the Bow Valley Parkway.

Preliminary studies indicate that there are few environmental or visitor conflicts associated with off-road bicycling. Use is being monitored and impacts will be mitigated.

The guidelines concerning horse use will permit existing opportunities for private and commercial horse use in the park to continue. Existing impacts will be mitigated through use restrictions, the development of separate facilities and trail upgrading. The guideline to prohibit an increase in livery operations and to monitor the resulting situation will ensure undesirable consequences are minimized. These initiatives will reduce environmental impairment, minimize user conflicts and upgrade the quality of trail riding experiences.

Positive effects will result from the guideline to establish a cooperative agreement with recognized speleological organizations and to inventory and classify cave formations in the park, because the present level of knowledge is limited.

8.5 FRONTCOUNTRY ACCOMMODATION

The proposals for campgrounds ensure that high quality visitor experiences are provided with minimal environmental impact. Rehabilitation of disturbed areas in existing campgrounds, the upgrading of existing facilities and improved information services will be used to minimize impacts and improve visitor experiences. The direction not to expand campgrounds in the Banff townsite area reduces further impairment of the environmentally sensitive Montane region.

There are no major environmental impacts anticipated for the possible expansion of the Mosquito Creek campground. Rampart Creek campground, however, is located on a landform subject to periodic flooding. The area also provides important winter ungulate habitat.

The guidelines for hostels maintains and improves hostelling opportunities in the park while reducing environmental impairment through the removal and/or relocation of redundant facilities. The removal of the Corral Creek hostel will have a positive impact on park resources as it is located on a rare ecosite.

The guidelines pertaining to outlying commercial accommodation facilities allow for expansion in accordance with the approved redevelopment guidelines. In addition, all expansion proposals are still subject to the Environmental Assessment and Review Process. Modifications and the implementation of mitigation measures may be required to meet environmental assessment requirements. The assessments will give special attention to sewage treatment, water supply, aesthetics, garbage handling and the protection of wildlife habitats. Specific resource concerns which must also be given special attention in assessing redevelopment proposals for the various facilities are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| Rocky Mountain Resorts
and Timberline Lodge | - Both facilities are located in areas of high ecological importance, sensitive to further development (Leeson 1986). |
| Num-ti-jah Lodge | - The lodge is a candidate historic building and is located in a fragile Upper Subalpine area. |

8.6 ACCESS

The rehabilitation of disturbed areas along the Trans-Canada Highway, Icefields and Bow Valley parkways will have a major positive aesthetic and environmental impact. Wildlife highway mortality is another major concern in Banff. This problem is being addressed as part of the Trans-Canada Highway Twinning Project.

The closure of the park's seven major backcountry roads will provide a major aesthetic improvement and restore these impacted areas to a more natural condition and enhance their recreational use.

Visitors wishing to travel the Bow Valley Parkway from Banff townsite will be required to travel 8 km along the Trans-Canada Highway, because of the decision to retain Vermilion Lakes Drive as a low speed dead-end road. While this is an inconvenience to some visitors, significant natural values and year-round outdoor recreational opportunities along Vermilion Lakes Drive will be preserved. There appears to be only minor environmental concerns associated with the option of extending a trail connection, for bicyclists, to the Bow Valley Parkway.

The guidelines to undertake surface improvements to a number of park roads and to rehabilitate roadside disturbances is much needed and will enhance the experience of driving in the park. Finally, the initiative to rehabilitate the Sulphur Mountain road as funds become available, will reduce the impact of a high-profile visual scar. It also represents a significant symbolic commitment of the Canadian Parks Service to restoring man-made disturbances.

8.7 COMMUNITY CONCEPTS

The community concept for Lake Louise follows the 1979 approved Action Plan. The Action Plan included a detailed environmental impact assessment (Leeson, 1979). The proposed expansion of Chateau Lake Louise has also been subject to an impact assessment and the expansion proposal conforms with the guidelines identified in that assessment (Tempany, 1986).

The Banff community concept provides direction that the town boundaries will be defined to include existing and adjacent built-up and subdivided areas, and limits growth to environmentally and heritage sensitive redevelopment and infilling.

The community concept conforms with the recommendations of the "Banff Townsite Peripheral Land-Use Initial Environmental Evaluation" (Leeson and Harrison, 1986). Social implications of infilling, redevelopment and increased density will be addressed in the town planning program.

8.8 COMMUNICATION SERVICES

The plan guidelines for communication services will improve visitor experiences and opportunities to enjoy the park and surrounding region. They are intended to foster a sense of stewardship for heritage resources in the park. In the long term, greater visitor awareness and understanding of the park's purpose and objectives

should assist to relieve the pressure on park managers to develop and provide facilities and services which are inappropriate in national park setting. Specific initiatives are identified which relate to four communication service levels. They are park awareness and pre-trip planning, orientation to and information about the park, interpretation of the park's heritage resources, and opportunities for public involvement.

The proposals provide for a coordinated program which identifies park and regional opportunities, and improves information for pre-trip planning. An emphasis is placed on better meeting visitor needs. Communication services will also be used as a resource management tool, encouraging appropriate visitor actions and directing use from impacted areas to areas or services which are presently under-utilized.

8.9 SUPPORT FACILITIES AND FACILITY APPEARANCE GUIDELINES

The plan guidelines will generally produce positive impacts on heritage resources because their implementation will result in the removal or relocation of redundant facilities from significant areas of the park, notably the Montane region of the Bow River valley. These guidelines will beneficially affect the economic efficiency of operating the park, improve staff morale, and improve the aesthetic quality of driving through the park.

The visual appearance of facilities and structures will be enhanced positively by adherence to the facility appearance guidelines and the guidelines for architectural motifs.

8.10 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The plan guidelines will have a positive incremental impact on park resources and visitor use. The proposals provide the direction necessary to eliminate or mitigate existing environmental and social impacts in both frontcountry and backcountry areas. The main area of concern regarding potential incremental impact is in the lower Bow River valley.

The lower Bow valley is the most heavily used and developed area of the park. It also contains a number of ecologically important resources, particularly in the region surrounding the town of Banff, which are sensitive to incremental development. The "Banff Special Resource Study" (Achuff, Pengelly and White, 1986) and "Banff Townsite Peripheral Land Use Initial Environmental Evaluation" (Leeson and Harrison 1986) identified a number of significant and sensitive resources and areas requiring a high degree of protection. The townsite IEE also makes a number of recommendations for land use in the lower Bow valley. The guidelines in this park management plan are consistent with these recommendations.

The guidelines restrict expansion of the town and campgrounds and also direct the removal of a number of facilities located in ecologically significant areas. These include the airstrip, Canadian Wildlife Service laboratory, buildings in the Hawk Street area and possibly the bison paddock. The proposals also provide for the protection of vitally important wildlife migration corridors and critical habitats in the area.

Zoning is the primary tool used to minimize incremental impacts and to manage visitor use. The Cave and Basin Marsh is designated Zone I - Special Preservation. The Vermilion Lakes wetlands and Middle Springs are designated as Environmentally Sensitive Sites to ensure their protection. Zone II - Wilderness designations are used to protect the lower slopes of Mount Norquay and bison paddock area. The Whiskey Creek-Indian grounds and airfield areas will be designated Zone III - Natural Environment to ensure they are preserved in a natural state. The Vermilion Lakes wetlands and Middle Springs Environmentally Sensitive Sites are particularly sensitive to incremental disturbance associated with the range of recreational activities in the area. Resource and visitor activity management strategies are required to further ensure the protection of these sites.

8.11 KNOWLEDGE DEFICIENCIES

Heritage Resources:

A comprehensive body of information is available on both biotic and abiotic resources in the park. This is largely a consequence of the Ecological Land Classification program, as well as a number of special studies. Responses to the following knowledge deficiencies are a prerequisite to the full implementation of this park management plan.

- a) Area specific guidelines for each zone I (Special Preservation Area) and environmentally sensitive sites are required to identify appropriate levels and types of visitor use. The guidelines will allow visitors to enjoy these areas while preserving their sensitive features.
- b) The feasibility and public safety implications of establishing a free-roaming bison herd.
- c) The impact of redevelopment at Lake Minnewanka on wildlife and cultural resources.
- d) The implications of establishing a bicycle trail between the western end of Vermilion Lakes Drive and the Bow Valley Parkway on natural and cultural resources.
- e) The environmental implications of permitting development in the identified land parcels associated with the Banff townsite boundary.

Visitor Opportunities and Socio-Economic Factors:

The available socio-economic information base for the Banff planning program was not complete. Throughout the Banff Park Management Plan, reference is made to the need for more information about specific trends in visitor activities, visitor preferences and market-driven demands.

The collection and analysis of this information will result in the provision of visitor opportunities which are appropriate to Banff National Park and meet the specific needs of the intended users. The Visitor Activity Management Process provides a logical and structured framework for collecting and analyzing this information. Specific information requirements will be identified in a socio-economic research plan. In a number of cases, the collection of this information is a prerequisite to the implementation of specific initiatives contained in the plan. Once this detailed information is available, Parks officials will prepare comprehensive operational or service plans which indicate how the broad direction, contained in this management plan, will be implemented. Monitoring the success of the resulting development and service initiatives is as critical in responding to visitor needs as it is to managing the park's heritage resource values.

There are, however, a number of major socio-economic research initiatives which are underway. These are identified below.

- a) Standardized profile studies of visitors to a number of national parks and historic sites, including Banff National Park, are now underway. These studies, which are carried out jointly by Federal, British Columbia and Alberta tourism agencies will identify in statistically correct terms, the range of people using the park, their frequency of use, the nature of use, modes of travel and other necessary descriptive measures. The periodic recycling of these studies will permit trends to be identified and the results of planning and marketing programs to be assessed.
- b) The system to define and accurately report attendance to the park is undergoing extensive modification. As a result, realistic measures will be available of all entries to the park with subcategories describing staff/service traffic, through traffic on the highway and visitors making use of more than just the highway facilities.
- c) The use of accommodation facilities in the park is being studied within three main contexts;
 - i. the numerical demand for campsites in the park,
 - ii. satisfaction levels of visitors using the park's campgrounds, and
 - iii. the overall quantity of overnight park use.

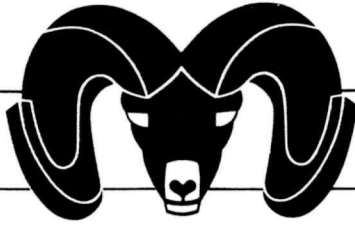
- d) A variety of experimental programs are in the development stage to measure and report on the use of backcountry areas which comprise the vast majority of the park. From these use statistics, attitudinal parameters can be developed in sample surveys in order to ensure that multi-million dollar trail and backcountry facility programs are consistent to the extent possible with visitor expectations.
- e) A market analysis of the Upper Sulphur Mountain Hotsprings pool is nearing completion. The study will determine existing and future user preferences, identify future market segments, and evaluate and present recommendations on future market positions to guide redevelopment of the pools.

Adjustments may be necessary in the Banff Park Management Plan to reflect the findings of these studies. If substantial changes are required, full public review of the affected portions of the plan will be conducted.

9.0

**STRATEGY FOR
IMPLEMENTATION**





9.0

STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

This management plan provides broad direction for the management and operation of Banff National Park over the next fifteen years. Management planning does not result, however, in the production of static and inflexible documents. It is rather an on-going process of developing and refining broad statements of intent for the management and operation of a park. As new information becomes available or conditions and trends change, amendments to the plan will be made.

A two-part review process has been established to ensure that management plans remain current. First, an annual review of the plan is undertaken to ensure that 1) obvious needs for revision are identified, and 2) sub-activity planning and plan implementation occurs in accordance with the broad direction of the management plan. Secondly, a formal and comprehensive review occurs every five years. If major revisions or amendments to the Banff Park Management Plan are required, appropriate opportunities for public review and comment will be provided.

9.1 GUIDELINES FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Priorities for implementing the various initiatives in the management plan have been identified.

The following guidelines direct the implementation of the first plan initiatives. They are;

- a) to resolve significant public safety problems,
- b) to upgrade the quality of existing visitor opportunities and services,
- c) to make necessary improvements to existing facilities before undertaking new development,
- d) to ensure that the basic needs of Banff's visitors are met,
- e) to undertake natural and cultural resource studies to resolve pressing management concerns,
- f) to prepare a socio-economic research plan which will identify socio-economic research and analyses required as input to individual proposals included in the management plan; and will stipulate the time-frame for carrying out the necessary studies and identify resource requirements,

- g) to work with government agencies and other groups in the region surrounding Banff National Park to achieve mutually acceptable objectives,
- h) to address long-standing problems which affect the efficient operation and management of the park, and
- i) to carry out market assessments and establish satisfaction levels of existing visitors prior to upgrading, improving or redeveloping existing facilities, services or programs.

9.2 IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Note: Numbers do not reflect an implementation priority within each topic.

First Priority

Resource Protection and Management:

- 1. restore man-disturbed sites;
- 2. develop water quality monitoring program;
- 3. remove dams on lower Spray River;
- 4. develop vegetation management plan;
- 5. develop and implement fire management plan;
- 6. develop and implement specific wildlife management plans;
- 7. develop and implement wildlife management plan for Eastern Slopes in conjunction with Alberta;
- 8. develop and implement fisheries management plan;
- 9. develop architectural motif for park;
- 10. implement air quality monitoring program; and
- 11. conduct specific archaeological studies.

General:

- 1. complete a socio-economic research plan;
- 2. complete Service Plan for visitor facilities and services.
- 3. carry out market assessments of day and backcountry visitors.

Backcountry Opportunities and Facilities:

- 1. upgrade backcountry trails;
- 2. revert selected backcountry roads to trail standard; and
- 3. upgrade campgrounds.

Day-Use Facilities and Services:

1. upgrade roadside facilities;
2. develop Coleman Creek picnic site;
3. develop Bow Glacier trailhead;
4. remove and rehabilitate Canal picnic site;
5. develop Saskatchewan Glacier trailhead;
6. develop Parker Ridge trailhead;
7. complete and implement Sulphur Mountain area plan;
8. complete Lake Minnewanka area plan; and
9. restore Johnson Lake dam.

Recreational Activities:

1. improve information on available opportunities;
2. develop Vermilion Lakes bicycle path;
3. monitor patterns of use for specific activities and make adjustments as required; and
4. determine requirement for Johnston Canyon walk-in campground.

Frontcountry Accommodation:

1. remove Spray hostel and rehabilitate site;
2. rehabilitate Two Jack Lakeside campground;
3. monitor camping demand;
4. upgrade and expand Hilda Creek hostel (with C.H.A.); and
5. remove Corral Creek hostel and rehabilitate site;

Access:

1. prepare disturbed area plan and begin implementation;
2. investigate need for TCH rest stop;
3. revert selected backcountry roads to a trail standard;
4. resurface Sunshine road;
5. resurface Lake Minnewanka road; and
6. resurface Vermilion Lakes Drive;

Support Facilities:

1. improve David Thompson gate facilities;
2. prepare Saskatchewan Crossing redevelopment plan;
3. remove redundant facilities near townsite;

Communication Services:

1. improve signage;
2. improve backcountry information;
3. develop information centre in east gate vicinity;

Second Priority

Resource Protection and Management:

1. complete implementation of rehabilitation plan;
2. implement vegetation management plan;
3. implement fire management plan; and
4. continue implementation of wildlife management plan.

Backcountry Opportunities and Facilities:

1. continue backcountry trail upgrading;
2. continue backcountry road reversion;
3. continue upgrading campgrounds;
4. develop campsites for horse-users;
5. continue roadside facility upgrading;
6. remove and rehabilitate TCH picnic sites;
7. develop Lake Louise picnic site;
8. implement Sulphur Mountain area plan; and
9. implement Lake Minnewanka area plan.

Frontcountry Accommodation:

1. possible Protection and Castle campground expansion;
2. possible Johnston Canyon walk-in campground; and
3. possible Mosquito and Rampart campground expansion.

Access:

1. possible TCH rest stop development;
2. continue implementation of backcountry road reversion;
3. upgrade 1A Highway (west of Lake Louise); and
4. resurface Moraine Lake road.

Support Facilities:

1. implement Saskatchewan Crossing redevelopment plan; and
2. mitigate impact of TransAlta facilities.

Communication Services:

1. develop Banff townsite information/interpretation centre.

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REFERENCES

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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PLANNING

"Architectural motif":

the dominant or unifying architectural theme unique to a park, identified through the assessment of existing built forms, their architectural and historical significance and their appropriateness to the natural setting.

"Area plan":

the reapplication of the management planning process to a specific area of the park where the issues and strategies identified in the Park Management Plan are sufficiently complex to require more detailed analysis and planning.

"Backcountry":

those portions of a park that are not accessible by private vehicle.

"Extension services":

communication activities which take place outside the park and aim to increase public awareness and appreciation of park heritage resources, increase awareness of recreational and educational opportunities, encourage appropriate use of park resources, and increase public support for national parks.

"Frontcountry":

those portions of a park that are accessible by private vehicle.

"Marketing":

the technique of influencing demand levels for specified facilities or services. It relies heavily upon designing offerings consistent with client's wants, and on using effective pricing, communication and distribution to inform, motivate, and service the markets.

"Park management plan":

is a statement of management objectives for a park and the means and strategies for achieving them, stated in a broad but comprehensive manner. It is not an end in itself; rather, it constitutes a framework within which subsequent management, implementation and detailed planning will take place.

"Primitive opportunities":

areas offering backcountry opportunities which are between those offered in wildland areas and the more heavily used and developed semi-primitive areas. There is less evidence of human intrusion than in areas offering semi-primitive

opportunities. Facilities include designate campgrounds and higher standard trails than found in wildland areas. Alpine huts are the only permitted form of roofed accommodation.

"Semi-primitive opportunities":

are found in backcountry areas having the easiest access, highest levels of visitor use and greatest amount of facility development. Facilities include campgrounds, trail shelters, group camps and backcountry lodges. Site hardening techniques and vigorous visitor management are required to reduce impacts at facilities in these areas.

"Service plan":

a document which translates the conceptual direction of the Park Management Plan into how and when to provide services to visitors. The service plan is a key product of the Visitor Activity Management Process.

"Wilderness":

extensive areas containing examples of the natural history themes of a park and maintained in a wild state. Such areas are designated as Zone II - Wilderness in the park zoning plan. The management priority is preservation of heritage resources and the essential natural or primitive condition of the area. Visitor activities are limited to those requiring nothing more than primitive facilities and no motorized access. Limits are placed on the number of users allowed and use is dispersed rather than concentrated.

"Wildland opportunities":

in the context of backcountry recreational opportunities, areas providing wildland opportunities are those with the lowest level of use and which are essentially free of human intrusion. There are no structures except necessary warden patrol cabins and the few trails are minimally maintained. Random camping is permitted in the larger areas and visitors are assisted through off-site information and education.

FACILITIES

"Alpine hut":

a simple shelter, at or above treeline, designed to serve as a support and/or emergency facility for mountaineering activities. Huts are normally operated by the Alpine Club of Canada under a Licence of Occupation.

"Appropriate trail standard":

refers to the Western Region Parks trail classification and maintenance standards. The system sets trail design and maintenance standards within each of five trail classes ranging from primitive, minimally maintained trails in wildland areas to high standard, well maintained trails such as self-guided interpretive trails.

"Backcountry lodge":

a privately owned and operated facility offering overnight visitor accommodation in a backcountry setting not accessible by private vehicle.

"Backcountry patrol cabins":

a strategically placed network of cabins in remote areas of the parks established to provide support to the backcountry resource management and public safety operations of the park Warden Service.

"Backcountry (trail) shelter":

a primitive roofed structure designed to provide overnight accommodation in an area, below treeline, that normally has no vehicular access. They also provide emergency shelter in dangerous areas. Shelters are normally owned by Environment Canada, Parks and may be operated by Parks or a sponsoring agency such as the Alpine Club of Canada.

"Backcountry roads":

low-standard (dirt/gravel) roads receiving minimal maintenance, originally constructed to provide access to remote park areas primarily for the purposes of fire detection and suppression. The roads have also been used for park warden patrols, relocating problem bears, park administration and facility servicing, scientific resource studies, federal-provincial land management, commercial outfitting and backcountry lodge operation, and transportation and communication facility servicing.

"Cooperating association":

a registered, non-governmental, non-profit organization that assists Environment Canada, Parks by providing services to the public or generating revenues to direct toward activities which support Environment Canada, Parks' mandate.

"Cooperative activities":

joint endeavors between one or more parties and Environment Canada, Parks to attain mutually beneficial results through the sharing of resources and responsibilities.

"Expansion":

the increase in size, within specified limits, of an existing facility or the increase in scope or quality of an existing service.

"Hostel":

a public building which offers low-cost, supervised, overnight accommodation for use by families, groups or individuals travelling for pleasure, education or recreation. It is usually equipped with separate dormitories and washrooms for males and females, a common food preparation area, and a common room for socializing.

"Improvements":

the individual actions taken as part of facility upgrading, e.g. road resurfacing, trail realignments, roof replacement. Improvements can also be made to park services which are not of a physical nature, e.g. improving visitor awareness of park opportunities.

"Leasehold property":

the property held under tenure of a lease. The right of use and occupancy of the property is by virtue of the lease agreement.

"Licence of Occupation":

the grant of a licence to enter upon and use the Crown's land in a certain manner for a specified purpose. It is a personal right granted to the licensee and does not create a proprietary interest in the land itself.

"Maintenance":

the ongoing up-keep of park facilities to prescribed standards.

"Operational activities":

those activities concerned with the day-to-day operation of a park.

"Outlying commercial accommodation (OCA)":

are privately owned and operated, road-accessible accommodation facilities located outside of towns and visitor centres. They provide low-density overnight accommodation and day-use services to park visitors in outlying areas.

"Parkway":

a unique and specialized category of park road, specifically designed to provide pleasant driving by means of aesthetic location and attractive roadside development. Parkways are for scenic drives; they need not have specific destinations.

"Redevelopment":

the replacement of or extensive renovations to existing structures or the development of new structures on a previously developed site.

"Semi-permanent and rotating backcountry group camps":

designated backcountry sites where specified commercial outfitters and non-profit organizations are permitted to establish group camps, either on a permanent or five to ten year rotational basis. No group camps are permitted in wildland opportunity areas.

"Support facilities":

all park facilities related to the administrative, operational and visitor service functions within a park.

"Upgrading":

a series of actions aimed at improving the physical conditions of a facility, bringing it to a higher standard. Upgrading generally results in an improved facility. For example, trail upgrading may involve providing a more durable surface tread, bridge construction and rerouting to avoid problem areas. Where facility expansion is part of the upgrading, this has been explicitly stated.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

"Cross-country skiing":

three types of cross-country skiing are recognized by Environment Canada, Parks; nordic, touring and mountaineering. The distinction between the three types is primarily based on terrain and route characteristics.

Nordic skiing - usually occurs on flat valley bottom and bench land areas. Groomed and track-set trails are associated with nordic trails.

Ski touring - is an activity that usually occurs along summer backcountry trails which may involve crossing high passes and exposure to many of the hazards of prolonged mountain travel.

Ski mountaineering - occurs on high alpine terrain and may involve glacier travel.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

"Canadian Heritage Rivers":

rivers which are outstanding examples of Canada's natural heritage, or which played a significant role in Canadian history, or which offer outstanding opportunities for recreation. The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative conservation program which includes representatives of the federal government, a number of provincial and the two territorial governments. Through their parks administrations, Canada's heritage rivers are being identified and management programs put into effect to manage and preserve them for the public's benefit and enjoyment.

"Cultural history":

the chronological and spatial framework for describing the development of human societies and cultures, and the documentation processes of change involved in their development. Cultural history is primarily concerned with defining the geographic extent, relative age, and course of development of cultures.

"Cultural resource":

any physical manifestation of past human presence and activity together with associated tangible natural phenomena (a strictly historic resource), to which may be added any tangible natural phenomenon valued now or in the past for aesthetic, educational, recreational or other reasons.

"Ecoregion":

the broadest level in a hierarchical ecosystem classification used in the Ecological Land Classification of the Four Mountain Parks. Three Ecoregions (ecological zones) are recognized in Banff, Jasper and Kootenay national parks: Montane, Subalpine and Alpine. A fourth Ecoregion, Montane-Subalpine, is recognized in Yoho National Park. These broad ecological zones are based on differences in vegetation structure and composition which reflect differences in climate.

"Ecosite":

the lowest level in the hierarchical ecosystem classification system used in the Four Mountain Parks. Separations are based on vegetational, as well as soil and landform differences.

"Ecosystem":

a community of organisms, interacting with one another, plus the environment in which they live and with which they also interact.

"Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP)":

the process applies to all programs, projects and activities that are proposed or sponsored by federal departments and agencies or involve federal funds or federal properties. All federal departments and agencies are obliged to apply the process, except proprietary Crown Corporations and regulatory agencies, who are invited to participate. The purpose of EARP is to determine, in advance, the environmental acceptability of projects under federal government control and to ensure environmental impacts are reduced to a minimum.

"Grazing quotas":

limits established to control the location and extent of horse grazing by commercial outfitters and private horse users in some backcountry areas. The quota establishes a maximum allowable number of horse nights per horse campsite or grazing area per summer season.

"Heritage resources":

resources associated with the natural and cultural history features of a park.

"Historic resource":

(see Cultural Resource) customarily restricted to tangible evidence of human presence or activity, either in situ or otherwise, such as an artifact, structure, road or similar work, monument, burial site, habitation or processing site, drawing or inscription; including the directly associated material context as well as any mark, trace, mold, stain, or other disturbance of the natural environment resulting from human presence or activity.

"Impacts":

changes in the environment which may result from man's actions.

"Incremental/cumulative impacts":

the total impact resulting from the successive additions of individual impacts.

"Initial Environmental Evaluation (IEE)":

a documented assessment of the nature and extent of environmental effects of any proposed project or activity identified in a screening report as having the potential for adverse environmental effects. The IEE is prepared, as part of the EAR Process, as early as possible in planning following screening.

"Minimum impact use":

strategies and mechanisms designed to provide for visitor use while minimizing impacts of that use, e.g. area use quotas, dispersed use, site hardening.

"Mitigation":

measures taken to prevent or reduce the severity of negative effects likely to be caused by a particular activity.

"Monitoring":

repeated measurement and observation to quantify changes in one or more variables recorded according to a standardized schedule and methodology.

"National Historic Site":

a place of national historic or architectural significance so designated by the Minister of the Environment on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, under the authority of the Historic Sites and Monuments Act.

"Natural Region Heritage Theme":

a physical, ecological or cultural resource feature representative of a Natural Region. Environment Canada, Parks, Systems Planning, divides Canada into 39 Natural Regions based on physical, ecological and cultural resource factors. The representative natural and cultural history

themes of each region are identified, assessed and evaluated for their regional, national or international significance. One of the goals of the Canadian national parks system is to have each Natural Region represented. At present, 20 of the 39 Natural Regions are represented by the 32 national parks.

"Rehabilitation":

in the broadest sense, rehabilitation is the repair or restoration of an area where an action, either man-made or natural, has resulted in a disturbance. Rehabilitation includes:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Restoration | - the replacement of the landform, soil and plant community which existed prior to the impact; |
| Successional rehabilitation | - the rehabilitation with species which will allow/promote vegetative, edaphic and wildlife succession to restore the pre-impact community; |
| Revegetation | - rehabilitation with species to provide vegetation cover, but not necessarily to promote attainment of a native species cover; |
| Urban landscaping | - refers to rehabilitation with species appropriate for area of high human density. |

"World Heritage Site":

those cultural and natural properties throughout the world which are considered to be of outstanding universal value according to criteria drawn up by the World Heritage Committee. The Committee was established by Convention in 1972 of the member nations to the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to preserve for future generations the world's cultural and natural heritage.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

AN EXPLANATION OF THE BACKCOUNTRY OPPORTUNITY CONCEPT

Visitors to backcountry areas seek a range of recreational opportunities: some want solitude, while others enjoy meeting people. Some want the comfort of staying in roofed overnight accommodations while others avoid such amenities.

Management of more than 95 per cent of the lands in the Four Mountain Parks is designed to provide backcountry opportunities for visitors in a massive area covering more than 19,000 square kilometres, ranging from heavily used Egypt Lake in Banff National Park to the less used Snaring River Valley in Jasper.

The concept of recreational opportunity is based on a recognition that the value an area holds for visitors is based on a combination of physical, biological, sociological and administrative conditions (Clark and Stankey, 1979.) Four factors are important in determining the suitability of an area for backcountry recreation: access, visitor contact, site management, and resource impairment. The following is a brief description of each:

A) Access

In the Four Mountain Parks, most backcountry visitors are restricted by topography and the presence of dense forests to using trails. Consequently, these are an important tool in determining use patterns and they influence the way visitors experience the backcountry (Hendee, et al., 1978.)

Ease and type of access are particularly important variables; ease is related to the degree of difficulty of the trail and to the standard used in its design. Type is related to the mode of travel: foot, horse, or ski. In the Mountain Parks, there is a variety of ease and type of access.

B) Visitor Contact:

Backcountry experiences are affected by the amount and the nature of contact with others. Numerous visitor-use surveys indicate that there is a strong preference for solitude in backcountry settings, generally reported to be most marked at campsites. Observation of actual behaviour shows that: 1) many visitors seek varying degrees of contact with other users; 2) encounters with people who have very different backcountry expectations and values may be undesirable. The level of contact beyond which crowding occurs (or in which social carrying capacity is exceeded) varies according to the expectations and perceptions of individual visitors. At present, backcountry areas in the Four Mountain Parks offer a range of opportunities for both contact and solitude.

C) Site Management:

In backcountry settings, site management usually consists of developing a facility and of site hardening, although some revegetation may be required in special cases. Such facilities as alpine huts, trail shelters, and designated primitive campsites have been used to concentrate and channel the use of backcountry areas. Their effectiveness as techniques for protecting resources depends, however, on site-specific conditions. Facilities can also be provided for the convenience, enjoyment, and safety of visitors. Areas that attract large numbers of relatively inexperienced users may require higher levels of site management than those used by experienced backcountry visitors. The level and type of site management should be consistent with the opportunity to be provided.

D) Resource Impairment:

Determining acceptable levels of impact on the environment is difficult; it is based on objective assessments of how much users affect a site and subjective evaluations of the significance of their impact on it. Moreover, information about ways to reduce the impact of visitors on the environment is needed. While the degradation of heavily used backcountry areas is not acceptable, a narrow range of allowable consequences and appropriate measures to limit those consequences must be accepted if the backcountry is to be used at all.

Collectively, visitor contact, site management, and resource impairment affect the opportunities available to backcountry users. Each of the three is acceptable under certain conditions; based on those conditions, it is possible to identify areas that are suitable for backcountry use. Three types of recreational areas - semi-primitive, primitive, and wildland - and the factors in managing each are shown in Table 1.

Semi-primitive sites are those with easy access, high levels of visitor contact and such facilities as campsites, shelters, and commercial lodges. They are, typically, such popular destinations as the Tonquin Valley in Jasper National Park and Egypt Lake in Banff National Park.

Primitive sites are provided in areas where there is less evidence of people than in semi-primitive areas. At present, these are the most commonly available sites in the Four Mountain Parks. The Helmet Creek-Floe Lake area of Kootenay National Park and the Ottertail-Goodsir area in Yoho National Park have such primitive sites.

Wildland sites are those with low levels of use and they are essentially free of human intrusion - for example, in the Snake Indian and Snaring valleys in Jasper and in the northwest portion of Banff.

Table 1: BACKCOUNTRY OPPORTUNITY AREAS

MANAGEMENT FACTORS	OPPORTUNITY AREAS		
	SEMI-PRIMITIVE	PRIMITIVE	WILDLAND
ACCESS			
1. Trail Standard	← (high) →	← (medium) →	← (low) →
2. Difficulty	← (easy) →	← (moderately) →	← (no trails) →
		← (very) →	
CONTACT			
1. Level	← (high) →	← (moderate) →	← (low) →
SITE MANAGEMENT			
1. Facility Conveniences	← (many) →	← (some) →	← (few-none) →
2. Site-hardening Requirements	← (required) →	← (some required) →	← (not required) →
RESOURCE IMPAIRMENT			
1. Acceptable Impacts	← (some) →	← (few) →	← (very few) →
2. Acceptable Mitigation	← (site management) →	← (some site management) →	
	← (visitor management) →	← (visitor management) →	

The concept of backcountry opportunity areas is not intended to replace or refine the Canadian Parks Service's five part land-use zoning system; rather, it can be applied in the following specific ways:

1. to inventory backcountry opportunities currently available;
2. to plan for providing and allocating a range of backcountry opportunities;
3. to identify the consequences of management styles and decisions on those opportunities;
4. to match what backcountry users want with what is available;
and
5. to monitor any impairment to resources that results from use and to ensure that objectives for resource protection and visitor satisfaction in an area are being met.

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- | | | | | |
|----------|----------------------|---|----------|-----------------------|
| Zone I | Special Preservation |  | Zone I | Préservation spéciale |
| Zone II | Wilderness |  | Zone II | Milieu sauvage |
| Zone III | Natural Environment |  | Zone III | Milieu naturel |
| Zone IV | Outdoor Recreation |  | Zone IV | Loisirs de plein air |
| Zone V | Park Services |  | Zone V | Services du parc |

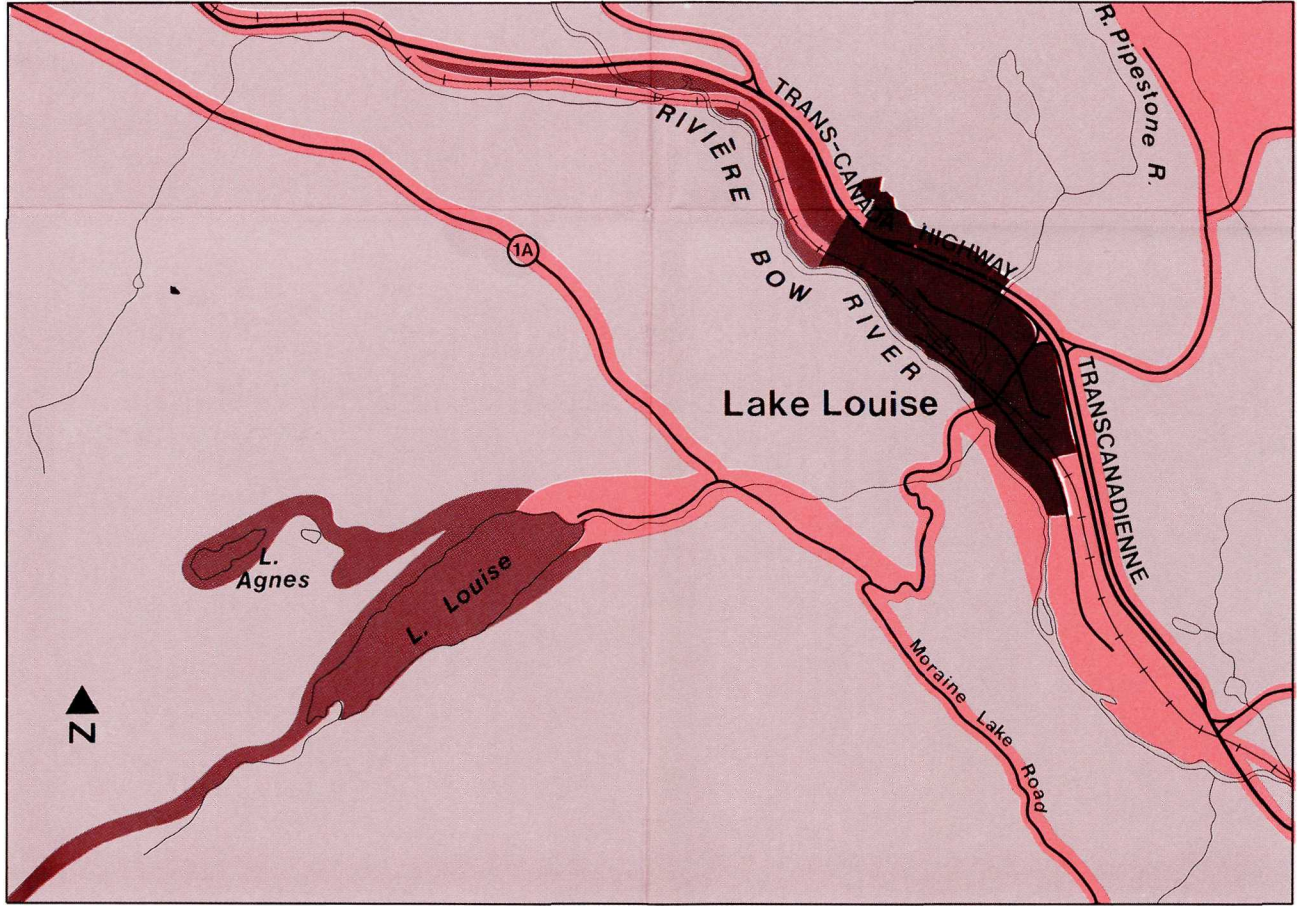


Castleguard
Caves & Meadows
cavernes et prairies
de Castleguard

Clearwater-Siffleur

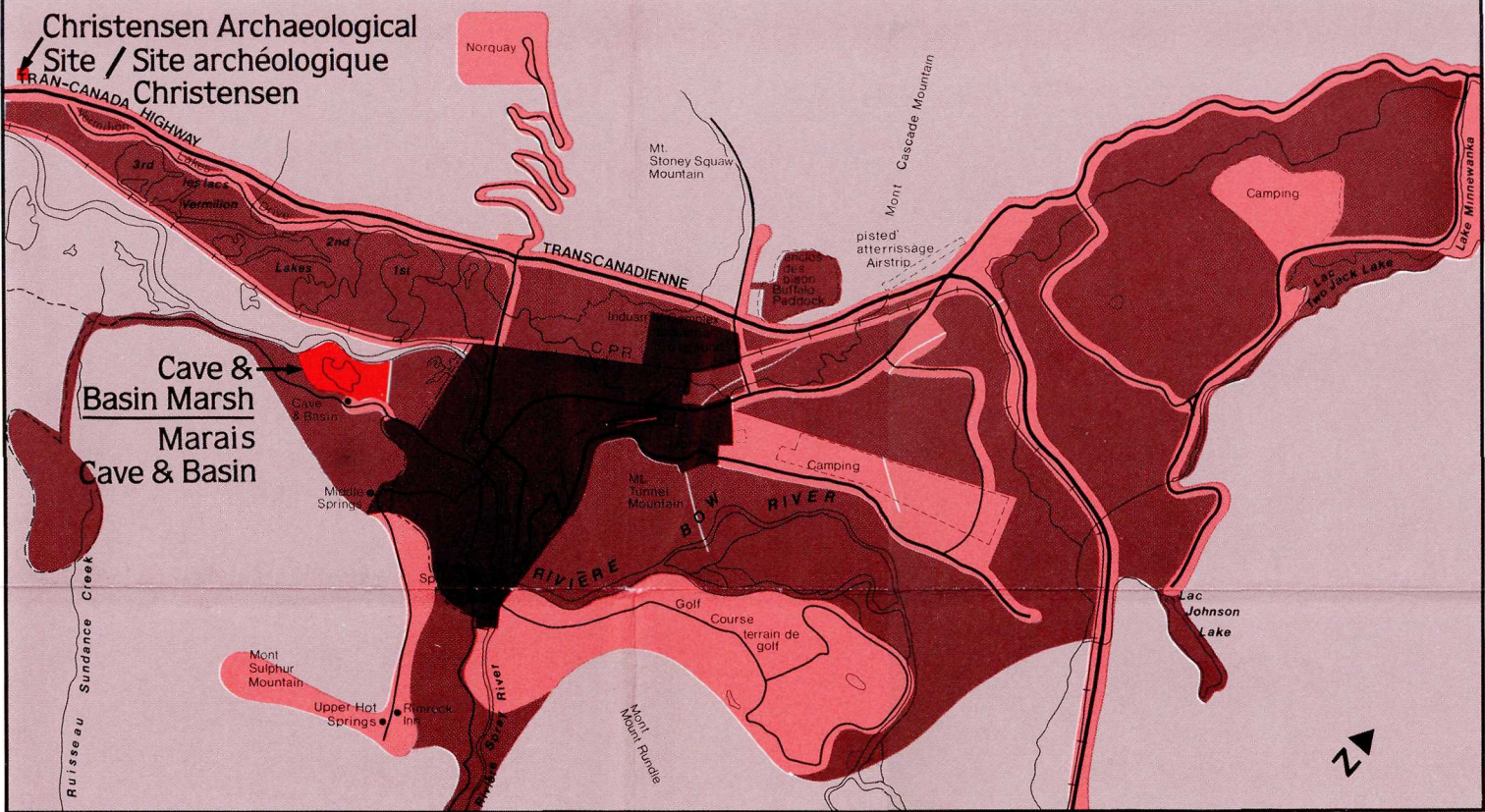
Lake Louise Area

Région de Lake Louise



Town of Banff and Surrounding Area

Région de la ville de Banff



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