

Jasper Wildfire 2024

COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT



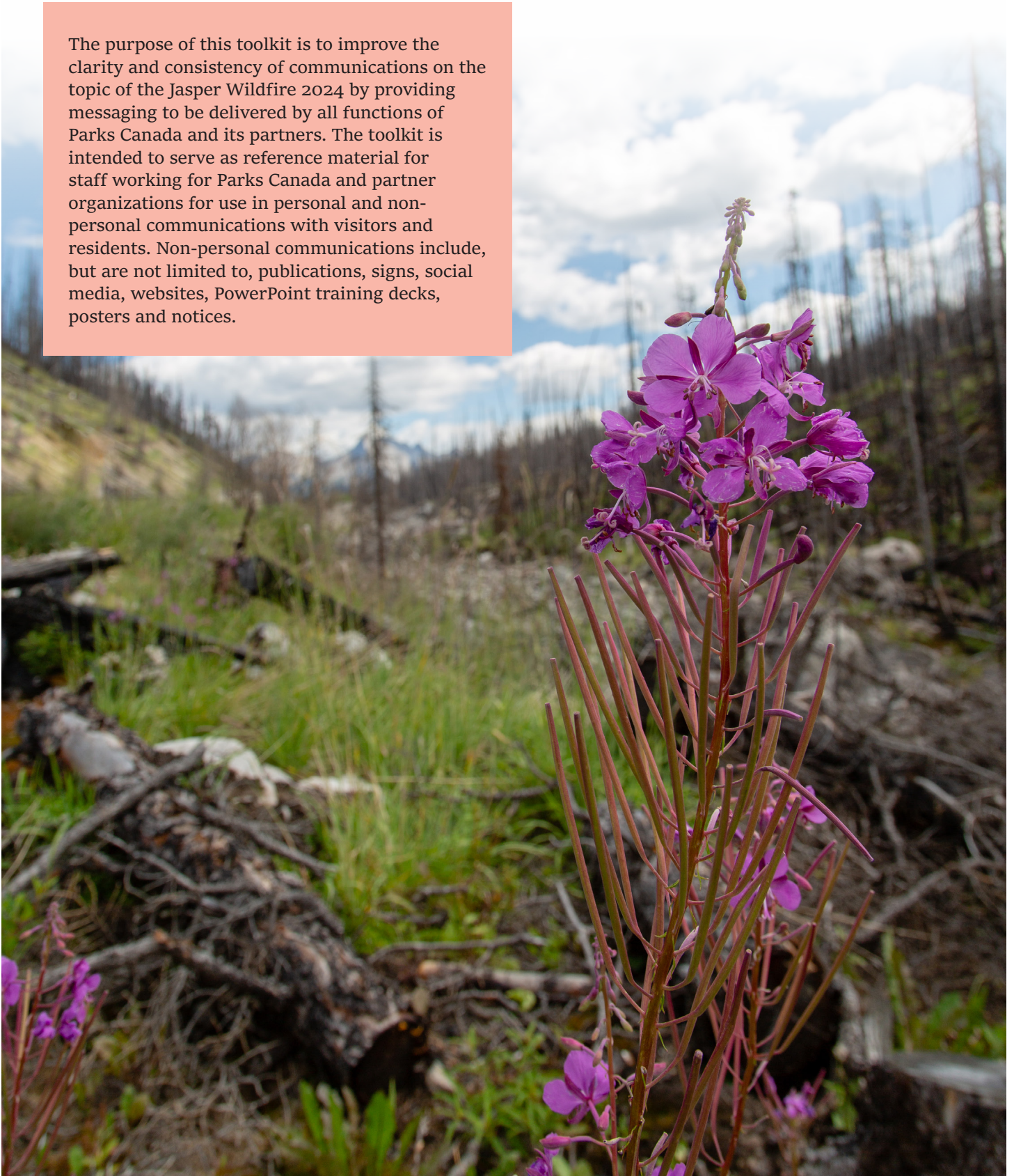
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Purpose

The purpose of this toolkit is to improve the clarity and consistency of communications on the topic of the Jasper Wildfire 2024 by providing messaging to be delivered by all functions of Parks Canada and its partners. The toolkit is intended to serve as reference material for staff working for Parks Canada and partner organizations for use in personal and non-personal communications with visitors and residents. Non-personal communications include, but are not limited to, publications, signs, social media, websites, PowerPoint training decks, posters and notices.



Communication scope:

In scope:

- This toolkit applies to communications for Jasper National Park related to the Jasper Wildfire 2024, by anyone
 - delivering staff training (in a government or private business capacity);
 - working in park operations, promotions, education, outreach and engagement, or media relations; or
 - who is a stakeholder and/or partner of Jasper National Park.

Areas of overlap:

- Jasper Recovery Coordination Centre: rebuilding and recovery
- Municipality of Jasper: FireSmart
- Topics affected by the fire with existing messaging:
 - Wildlife safety is an example. The wildfire thinned forests, so animals may now be seen from farther away. No new messaging has been developed because previous key messages for wildlife safety still apply and can be found here: parks.canada.ca/pn-np/ab/jasper/securite-safety/faune-wildlife

Out of scope:

- Emergency and evacuation
- Fire bans
- Incident management teams (past and future)





Expected outcomes:

- Increased
 - awareness of where to find accurate information on the Jasper Wildfire 2024
 - understanding of the ecological role of fire
 - trust in timely and accurate fire communications, including wildfire risk reduction and restoration programs
 - appreciation of the changes to the landscape post-wildfire

All non-personal media¹ targeting the Jasper Wildfire 2024 will be guided from one of the four themes outlined in this document. Suggested key messages are linked to each of the four themes.

¹The Jasper Wildfire 2024 has had widespread impacts across all areas of Jasper National Park, and we are still learning about many of its effects. If you are working on a wildfire product that falls outside the scope of these messages, please reach out using the contact details at the end of this document.



Theme 1:

Preventing the spread of misinformation.

- Misinformation can harm people affected by the Jasper Wildfire 2024 and distract from continued recovery efforts.
- You can help Jasper's recovery by:
 - ▶ getting information from official and credible news sources and
 - ▶ sharing information only from official sources such as Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper.
- Find answers to FAQs here: parks.canada.ca/pn-np/ab/jasper/visit/feu-alert-fire/feudeforet-jasper-wildfire/questions.



photo by Brigid Scott @rockymountaincrambler



Theme 2:

Jasper is part of a fire-adapted landscape.

- For as long as Jasper National Park has existed, fire has been part of its ecosystem. Like storms, avalanches and floods, fire is a powerful force of change in nature.
- The park's ecosystems are constantly changing in response to natural forces such as fire.
- Wildfires occur naturally and play an important role in renewing ecosystems. The positive long-term ecological effects of wildfire are usually greater than the negative.
- A recently burned area may seem lifeless, but many species survive and thrive, giving rise to new, healthier ecosystems.
- Parks Canada is working with Indigenous partners to include Traditional Knowledge in post-wildfire regeneration.





Theme 3: Wildfire response and risk reduction.

Wildfire response

- Parks Canada takes the threat of wildfire seriously. Public safety is at the core of everything we do and fire protection is part of daily operations in Jasper National Park.
- Jasper National Park has a dedicated team of fire first responders, fire management officers, fire technicians, a wildfire risk reduction project manager and a fire and vegetation specialist. When the fire danger rating is high, a fire crew and helicopter are on standby. They conduct regular patrols to check for smoke, lightning strikes and illegal campfires.



- Maintaining strong partnerships is a big part of being prepared. Parks Canada is a member of the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre and works with the Municipality of Jasper, Alberta Wildfire, BC Wildfire Service, and other fire and emergency agencies across Canada. We share information, expertise, people and equipment. We train together to get ready for emergencies, help each other during wildfires and share lessons learned.

Wildfire risk reduction

- Jasper is a *FireSmart* community. Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper work together to prepare for emergencies and to reduce the potential impacts of wildfire.
- Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper work to thin the forest near the community, which helps keep wildfire on the ground rather than in the treetops. When fire is on the ground, it limits fire intensity, reduces windblown embers, and makes it easier and safer for responders to manage the fire.





Theme 4: Visiting Jasper after the wildfire.

- Parks Canada may keep an area closed for weeks or even years after a wildfire to keep visitors safe or to protect fragile recovering areas.
 - Check what's open and available before you go:
parks.canada.ca/pn-np/ab/jasper/visit/ouvert-fermee-open-closed.
- After a wildfire, invasive plants can establish quickly and soon out-compete native species. Clean your boots and gear before and after adventuring to avoid spreading seeds to new areas.
- **Wildfire affected areas have new hazards:**
 - ▶ **Stay on trails.**
 - Hidden holes can appear where trees were burned. Burned soil can cause unstable ground.
 - ▶ **Check for trail changes.**
 - Signs may be missing, and paths may look different.
 - ▶ **Check the weather.**
 - After rain, burned areas absorb less water, increasing the risk of flooding.
 - Windy days can cause burned trees and branches to fall. Be aware of overhead hazards.
 - ▶ **Bring a map and be prepared to adjust your plans.**
 - ▶ **Report hazards to Parks Canada at 780-852-6155.**

Find more information: parks.canada.ca/pn-np/ab/jasper/securite-safety/apres-incendie-post-wildfire





Key facts

- The Jasper Wildfire 2024 burned nearly 33,000 hectares or 5% of the forest cover in Jasper National Park.
- The Jasper Wildfire 2024 was driven by extreme conditions including intense winds and the driest conditions recorded in over 60 years.
- Since 2003, Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper have treated more than 1,700 hectares of forest around the community through wildfire risk reduction activities, including prescribed burns, mechanical fuel reduction and FireSmart initiatives.
- The wildfire's intensity near the community was reduced by proactive measures including fuel-reduction work south of town, ignition operations, and sprinkler lines south of the community. Coordinated efforts from hundreds of firefighters helped save over 70% of the town's structures, including all critical infrastructure.
- Indigenous partners worked with Parks Canada throughout the 2024 Jasper Wildfire response, providing culturally appropriate support for all staff, including smudges, Elder visits and pipe ceremonies. This collaboration continues in the recovery phase, including archaeological projects to protect and learn from artifacts uncovered by the wildfire.



Timeline of the 2024 Jasper wildfire



July 22:
A fire was reported near the Jasper Transfer Station. Shortly after, three additional wildfires were reported approximately 22 km south of town near Kerkeslin Campground. Wind gusts of 30-45 km/hour merged the three wildfires south of town into one.



July 22 – 23:
Over 20,000 people are evacuated safely from Jasper National Park, including the town of Jasper.

August 3: Perimeter fencing, and hazardous tree removals are completed in town.

August 16:
Re-entry begins for residents and business owners.



August 22:
The Jasper Recovery Coordination Centre was established to ensure continued collaboration and progress as the community moves forward.

August 17: The fire is classified as being held and the evacuation alert is lifted from the townsite.

April 2025:
The 2024 Jasper Wildfire is classified as extinguished.

Incident

Re-entry

Recovery

July 12:
A fire ban went into effect for the whole park.

July 10:
Fire danger rating was set to Extreme following weeks of extreme hot and dry weather.

July 24 – 26:
755 of the town's structures, including all critical infrastructure, is protected and saved from destruction. Approximately 30% of the town's structures were lost. 255 Parks Canada infrastructure assets were destroyed or damaged during the wildfire and 132 of those were deemed total loss.



July 29:
Re-entry criteria is established.

July 31:
Highway 16 is partially reopened.



August 9:
The northwest fire perimeter closest to town is 80% contained.

August 12:
The northwest fire perimeter is 99% contained or controlled. The re-entry for residents is announced.

August 14: 78% of the total fire perimeter is contained or controlled.

August 15: The northwest fire perimeter is 100% contained or controlled.

August 19:
Highway 16 fully reopens.



September 7:
The 2024 Jasper Wildfire is classified as under control. This means that the wildfire has received sufficient suppression action to ensure no further spread of the fire.





Best practices for personal fire communications:

Don't:

- share your personal experience with the wildfire if you don't feel comfortable.
- share information from unofficial sources.

Do:

- say, "I don't know, but I can find out". It is always ok to ask for contact information to follow up with someone after you've confirmed an answer.
- redirect tough questions to the Wildfire FAQs: parks.canada.ca/jasper-wildfire-questions
- ask for help when you need it. Check with your supervisor to ask about what mental health resources are available from your organization.
- flag unverified or misleading information with the Parks Canada communications contacts at the end of this document.

See Appendix A at the end of this document for sample responses to visitor questions.

For more information

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Jasper fire information

infofeupnj-jnpfireinfo@pc.gc.ca
parks.canada.ca/jasper-wildfire-questions



Appendix A: Wildfire Q&A

Good/neutral comments or questions (well-meaning visitors)

Q1: “We love Jasper—it’s heartbreaking what happened with the fires. You guys have been through so much. We’re so sorry.”

A1: “Thanks for choosing to visit Jasper this year. It’s truly a beautiful place, and I’m here to help make your visit a memorable one.”

Q2: “Jasper’s always been a favourite. It’s just magical—even more so after all this.”

A2: “So happy that you’ve had such a positive experience, it is a pretty special place. Even though the fire has changed the landscape the majority of visitor areas reopened soon after the fire and there is lots to explore. Check the latest visitor info online or at the Parks Canada information centre for the latest information.”

Neutral or “phishing” comments (probing for personal views or opinions)

Q3: “It’s crazy, isn’t it?”

A3: “Yes, the changes have been dramatic. Even though the fire has changed the landscape, the majority of visitor areas reopened soon after the fire and there is lots to explore. Can I help with anything for your visit?”

Q4: “What’s your take on all this wildfire stuff?”

A4: “I prefer not to share my personal opinion, but I can definitely help you with anything you need today.”

Q5: “Where were you during the fire?”

A5: “I’d rather not discuss my personal experience. As a team member here, I like to keep the focus on our visitors and how we can help you enjoy your time in Jasper.”

Q6: “What do you think about the government’s response to the wildfire?”

A6: “Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper worked closely together in Unified Command to safely evacuate more than 20,000 people and save over 70 percent of the town’s infrastructure. I encourage you to visit Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper’s websites for more information.”





Appendix A: Wildfire Q&A (cont.)

Aggressive/hostile comments (escalating or confrontational visitors)

Q7: “What do you think about the government’s response to recovery?”

A7: “Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper worked closely together this winter to bring interim housing in for displaced residents, coordinate debris removal all over town and plan for rebuilding. The majority of visitor areas reopened soon after the fire and are open this summer. Details on recovery and what’s open can be found on the Parks Canada and Municipality of Jasper websites.”

Q8: “You’d think Parks Canada would know how to manage a forest by now—how was this allowed to happen?”

A8: “Since 2003, Parks Canada has been working with the Municipality of Jasper and other partners to reduce the risk of wildfires and promote FireSmart practices. Jasper was one of the first places in Canada to take this kind of proactive approach.

This ongoing work includes removing dead trees, thinning forests around the community to reduce fuel for wildfires, and creating natural fireguards to help protect people, homes, and infrastructure.

Thanks to these long-term efforts—including prescribed burns and FireSmart planning—the recent wildfire’s impact was reduced.

You can find more information on wildfire risk reduction on the Parks Canada fire protection and restoration projects page [page t page](#), or through the FireSmart Canada website.”

Q9: “I saw online that... Why aren’t you telling the truth about it?”

A9: “I’m here to help you with your visit, not to discuss personal views. Let me know if I can assist you in any other way.”

If the visitor continues to escalate and responses are ineffective, the following responses may be used to end the interaction:

- “I’m going to step away now. I hope you enjoy the rest of your visit.”
- “This conversation isn’t productive, and I will be moving on. Please kindly refrain from making similar statements to other team members.”
- “I’m ending this conversation now. If you need further assistance, please speak with my supervisor.”
- “We encourage respectful conversations here. Let me know if you have any questions related to your visit today.”

