



Jasper Field Unit  
**2023 Review:**

# **A Year of Moments & Milestones**



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# Thank You

As we close this year's chapter, Parks Canada extends its gratitude to each member of our team, and to dedicated Jasper community members, Indigenous partners, local businesses, visitors, non-profit organizations, stakeholders and external partners. Your collective efforts, rooted in a commitment to stewardship, have been instrumental in nurturing our community's vitality. Through collaborative actions, volunteer efforts, sustainable operational practices and innovative local initiatives, we are collectively ensuring the preservation and protection of Jasper National Park's environmental and cultural heritage for generations to come.

As we wave goodbye to 2023, let's embark on a journey through Jasper National Park's eventful year, filled with nature's marvels, community spirit and remarkable achievements.

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## January

Kicking off with winter wonders

The year started on a high note with the [Jasper in January festival](#). Visitors indulged in the "Lighter Side of Winter," enjoying everything from a poutine showdown to the first-ever [Mountain Malanka](#) – a New Year's Eve revelry of Ukrainian culture. And don't forget the Parks Canada tent, where avalanche safety and winter travel were the hot topics.

Jasper in January returns in full force in 2024 from January 12 to 28. Don't miss the famous retro street party on **Saturday, January 27, 2024**, and look for the Parks Canada tent!

[Learn more](#)



# February

A land of ice and adventure

February was a winter enthusiast's dream come true. The [Friends of Jasper National Park](#) (Friends of Jasper) kept 50 km of trails pristine for hikers and snowshoers, while Parks Canada's trail crew groomed 40 km into a sublime cross-country ski haven. Ready to join the frosty escapades? Check the latest trail conditions here and dive into the wintry bliss! Back again for 2024, the Pipeline cross-country ski trail!

Avalanche Awareness Story Night at the [Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Archives](#) featured daring stories of high alpine rescue from Jasper National Park's Visitor Safety team and Marmot Basin operators. This event went beyond sharing tales—it fostered community spirit and safety awareness, all while raising funds for [Jasper Crisis Services](#).



# March

Spring awakenings

Parks Canada released the short film "[Planting the Future](#)", capturing conservation efforts for whitebark and limber pine in the mountain national parks. It's a must-watch for nature lovers!

March marked the start of construction of the [caribou conservation breeding centre](#), with the initial phase of building forested pens and installing essential utilities. This pivotal project flourished with significant contributions from Indigenous businesses and communities, showcasing a collaborative spirit in wildlife conservation.

[Learn more](#)

Rounding out the month, Parks Canada's fire and vegetation experts captivated audiences at the [Jasper Municipal Library's](#) spring gardening speaker series. This event was a gem for gardening enthusiasts and nature lovers alike, highlighting the importance of native flora in our ecosystem.

Spring sprung into action at Parks Canada on March 31 with our [first bear sighting](#) of the season! It was a timely reminder for everyone to revisit their [bear safety skills](#).



# April

Conversations and connections



On April 19, Jasper National Park hosted its first in-person [Annual Public Forum](#) since the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions buzzed with insights into trails, wildlife and more, setting the stage for an engaging year.

[Learn more](#)

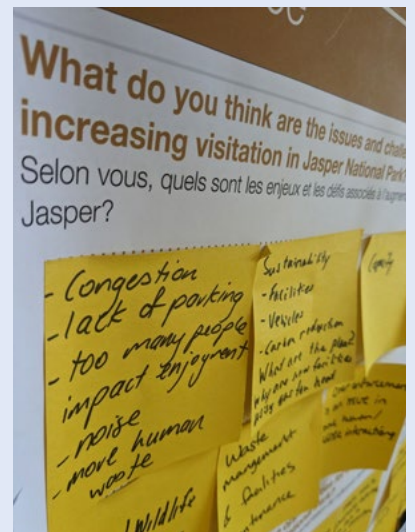
Trailblazing got an upgrade! A new online [trail condition report](#) launched in April, offering real-time updates. Now, trail enthusiasts may easily check the latest conditions and plan their adventures with ease.

In 2023, the [Palisades Education Centre](#) was a hub of excitement and learning, reaching 11,700 students through dynamic virtual programs and on-site adventures. Covering hot topics like wildfire, caribou conservation and leadership, the centre hosted 48 groups and connected with over 700 students at the Marmot Learning Centre.

[Jasper Pride & Ski Festival](#), launched on April 23, brought a burst of colour and inclusivity to the Rockies. Parks Canada showed its support for this unique celebration, the only gay ski week in the Canadian Rockies, hosting an afternoon of family activities at Lake Annette on April 22, including nature games, exploring and family fun.

Public consultation on land use planning and development in the town of Jasper wrapped up in April, following online, in-person and Indigenous consultations. Read the [What We Heard Report](#).

The majestic [bald eagles](#) soared back to their nest at Medicine Lake, a yearly delight for locals and visitors.



# May

Community spirit and nature's call to action

Parks Canada delivered great news: [The Chetamon Wildfire was extinguished!](#) A thorough infrared scan confirmed no hotspots, marking a significant success in wildfire management.

[Community-Wide FireSmart](#) Day saw Jasperites uniting to reduce fire risk. Supported by Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper, everyone from apartment dwellers to homeowners cleared combustible materials, showcasing a community dedicated to safety.

The 2023 wildfire season saw fire crews actively involved in both local and national wildfire management efforts. Nationally, the park contributed 14 fire specialists and an additional 17 trained staff to support regions across Western Canada.

[Learn more](#)

As the ice melted on Maligne Lake, paddlers rejoiced, readying their life jackets and refining their J-strokes. It was a return to beloved waters and a signal of adventurous days ahead.

[Fort St. James National Historic Site](#) kicked off its season on May 20 with pancakes, kite decorating and chicken races! The [Home Stretch Diner](#) reopened with a new menu, and three adorable baby goats joined the Fort's furry population.





# June

Or was it “January”?

June in Jasper took a surprising twist with a “January” snowstorm—a rare meteorological event! Locals and visitors watched in awe as over 100 mm of rain and a blanket of 55 cm of snow transformed the landscape. This unseasonal spectacle brought its share of challenges: Parks staff rescued hikers stranded on backcountry trails and roads, and businesses experienced hardship due to necessary closures to repair roads damaged by mudslides. Jasper National Park’s trail crew and the Highways team were instrumental in the clean-up effort.

[Learn more](#)

The Traffic Congestion Management team made their debut this month, expertly easing motorists’ journeys at Lake Annette and Maligne Canyon. Paired with [JasperNow](#), our handy web map for parking updates, exploring Jasper’s hotspots became a breeze.

On June 13, Parks staff gloved up for Stewardship Day as part of [National Public Service Week](#), enthusiastically combing through Jasper to pick up litter. This collective effort not only fostered camaraderie but also kept our beloved park looking its pristine best!

Jasper National Park, in partnership with host First Nation Simpcw (People of the River), celebrated [National Indigenous Peoples Day](#) on June 21. This vibrant event showcased the culture of the Simpcwúl’ecw, from the Secwépemc Nation, through songs, dances and workshops on plant knowledge, language and traditional skills.

[Learn more](#)

[The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride](#) trotted into Jasper for the first time since 1974. The “Return of the Ride,” orchestrated by a committee including the Jasper Chamber of Commerce and the local RCMP detachment, was highly anticipated. Despite tumultuous weather, the troop of more than two dozen horses and riders met with the public in their temporary stable at the Jasper Arena and performed two rides through town to give the community a glimpse of the majestic presence of the horses.



[The Aquatic Invasive Species \(AIS\) prevention program](#) in Jasper National Park launched in 2023. The AIS team conducted 944 “effectiveness monitoring surveys” and 114 hot washes from June to October, with a significant focus on Maligne Lake, where they engaged with more than 450 visitors, emphasizing the importance of “Clean, Drain, Dry” practices.

[Learn more](#)



# July

Summer adventures  
and festivities

Canada Day celebrations abounded in Jasper National Park on July 1. Parks staff proudly designed parade floats while Parka, our beloved beaver mascot, made a celebrity appearance at “Picnic in the Park.” Thank you to the Municipality of Jasper, the Canada Day Committee and volunteers for an event-packed day!

Fort St. James National Historic Site celebrated Canada Day with a fur trade skills competition, birthday cake and a name-the-baby-goats contest!

[Park interpretation programs](#) kicked off on the July long weekend, featuring theatre productions, activity stations, campfire events and a speaker series, captivating 23,000 visitors with over 200 programs during July and August. Simultaneously, the wildlife patrol team managed 460 “wildlife jams” and educated 19,000 individuals about responsible wildlife viewing.

Fort St. James National Historic Site put a call out to all foodies to join them for the [“Best Salmon Chef in New Caledonia Salmon Cook-Off”](#)! The event celebrated the historical significance of salmon at this iconic site and invited community members to show off their culinary skills.

[Parks Day](#), hosted by Friends of Jasper, was a hit! The community and visitors enjoyed a day filled with guided hikes, outdoor activities, artist displays and family fun. Parks Canada added to the excitement with engaging activity booths at the lively celebration in Robson Park, highlighting the value of our parks and historic sites. Thanks to the Friends of Jasper and volunteers for a magical day!

[The Glacier Gallery](#) in the Icefields Centre reopened! Visitors explored the fascinating exhibits and watched the award-winning short film, *Through Ice and Time*.

During [Shark Week](#), the AIS prevention team happily reported on social media that no sharks or invasive species had been detected in Jasper’s waters.

A “Teddy Bears’ Picnic”? Not quite! On July 24, [a grizzly bear family](#) of mom and two cubs accessed a visitor’s picnic at Lake Annette day-use area, prompting wildlife specialists to close the area to track down the bears and relocate them, for bear—and public—safety.

Fort St. James’s [baby-goat-naming campaign](#) came to an end, introducing “Oreo,” “Cookie,” “Latte” and “Cashew” to the world. Participants whose name suggestions were not chosen tried not to let it “get their goat.”



# August

## Trailblazing achievements and cultural celebrations

In 2023, the Jasper National Park trail crew were trailblazing heroes! They skillfully maintained routes like the Pyramid fire road, built four nifty new bridges in the Tonquin Valley, and gave the Moab Lake bridge a fantastic facelift. Not to forget, they impressively managed 51 backcountry poo barrels!

[Learn more](#)

[Celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary](#), the [Friends of Jasper](#) have significantly impacted their favourite park with initiatives like the Pyramid Island, Whistlers Mountain, and Cavell Meadows restoration projects. Their unique programs, including Junior Naturalist and Full Moon hikes, coupled with a popular gift shop, showcase their commitment to nature and community. This small team demonstrates how passion and dedication can lead to remarkable achievements. Thank you, Friends of Jasper, for making Jasper National Park the vibrant place it is!

Fort St. James National Historic Site invited the public to join them for the Celebration of Nak'azdli Salmon on August 24. The event was hosted by Nak'azdli Whut'en Health Centre and included a salmon offering ceremony at the Chief Kwah Memorial, followed by a salmon feast, a presentation from the Nak'azdli Fisheries Department and a theatrical performance of *The Legend of Salmon Boy*.

[Learn more](#)

[Whistlers Theatre speaker series](#) engaged visitors eager to get a “behind the scenes” look into park operations and environmental conservation. Featured presentations by Visitor Safety, vegetation restoration, and Jasper’s caribou recovery team demonstrated the passion and highly specialized work of our Parks Canada staff.

The velvet came off and the elk rutting began! Coinciding with the start of the elk rut in late August, the wildlife patrol team stepped up their efforts in delivering [safety messages](#) to the public and local community.

Fort St. James National Historic Site celebrated Caledonia Day on August 26. Visitors bid in the pie auction and enjoyed games for kids, exhibitions, tournaments and live music. Parks Canada staff were on hand to gather feedback from the public and stakeholders for the Fort’s new Draft Management Plan.

[Learn more](#)

In 2023, Jasper townsite became a [bear hotspot](#), with around a dozen curious bears, lured by non-native fruit trees and tempting yard goodies, stirring up safety concerns. It’s a wild problem, but solving it is a team sport! Since 2019, Parks Canada staff have been on a tree-removal mission, uprooting over 200 fruit trees from residential, commercial and public lands. Joining the bear-busting brigade, owners of at least 10 trees voluntarily removed their trees themselves. Thank you to residents, businesses and the Municipality of Jasper who worked with Parks Canada to remove fruit trees and other bear attractants.

[Learn more](#)





# September

New beginnings and commemorative steps

Jasper National Park's [Miette Hot Springs](#), known for the hottest mineral waters in the Canadian Rockies, reopened to hot-spring aficionados' delight on September 1, after a closure caused by a June snowstorm-induced mudslide which damaged the road.

[Learn more](#)

Thanks to public reports and rapid response, Jasper's fire crews efficiently managed and extinguished 15 wildfires this summer, with three of them over 2 ha in size and requiring more than 12 hours of suppression activities.

[Learn more](#)

On September 30, the [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#) was commemorated by Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper. This event served as a remembrance of the residential school legacy. In the 30 days leading up to September 30, the Jasper National Park Indigenous Relations and Cultural Heritage team collaborated with Municipality of Jasper staff to create a [ReconciliACTION Calendar](#) with daily activities and resources to promote cultural awareness and advance reconciliation.

[The Happy Little Trees Project](#) was brilliantly led by Snape's Hill historian Danny Frechette, in partnership with Parks Canada and Trans Mountain. This team skillfully transplanted Douglas-fir trees from Lake Annette to rejuvenate areas devastated by mountain pine beetle. The project attained an impressive 93% success rate, with the transplanted trees flourishing in their new environment.



Parks Canada worked with the [Municipality of Jasper](#) on their [Jasper Transit](#) initiative, which launched on September 5. This new fixed-route service is not just a ride; it helps to alleviate congestion at popular day-use areas and offers a sustainable public transportation option for locals and visitors alike.

# October

Starry nights and ecological endeavours

From May to October, vegetation restoration field technicians planted 2,880 Douglas-fir seedlings and 1,564 native forbs and grasses, and transplanted 340 Douglas-firs, to combat invasive species and aid ecological restoration. They also implemented various techniques like native grass seeding and willow staking across 17 sites.

[Learn more](#)

Simpw First Nation and Stoney Nation approached Parks Canada to express their intent to renew a territory sharing agreement. Their original agreement pre-dated the establishment of Jasper National Park. As a partner, Parks Canada responded by working with Simpcw First Nation and Stoney Nation to facilitate a gathering this past October, which included a ceremony and a faunal harvest to observe the renewed territory sharing agreement. This event, aligned with shared conservation goals, supports Indigenous partners to reconnect with their territories and honours their rights.

October in Jasper National Park sparkled with the annual Jasper [Dark Sky Festival](#), a signature event organized by Tourism Jasper and elevated by the dedicated efforts of partners and volunteers. This celebration brought the community and visitors together with an innovative drone light show, a safer choice than traditional fireworks, minimizing wildfire risks and being more accessible for those with noise or light sensitivities. Stargazing enthusiasts also enjoyed laser-guided constellation tours at Marmot Meadows with Parks Canada interpreters and celebrated "International Observe the Moon Night" at Commemoration Park.



[Learn more](#)





# November

Safeguarding and inspiring

In November, Jasper National Park began conducting wildfire risk reduction work, focusing on the Community Fireguard on Pyramid Bench and surrounding areas. The efforts included hand-thinning vegetation and controlled burning of debris to mitigate wildfire risks and manage the impact of mountain pine beetle. Residents and visitors may notice increased activity and smoke from these essential and safety-focused operations until March 31, 2024.

[Learn more](#)

Parks Canada took steps to advance [avalanche safety](#) by [evaluating new tools](#) and procedures for avalanche control. This initiative, critical for ensuring visitor and staff safety in avalanche-prone areas, was skillfully executed by the Parks Canada Visitor Safety team. Know before you go when traveling at any time of the year; check [511Alberta](#) for the most current road conditions throughout Jasper National Park.

On November 11, Remembrance Day was observed by Parks Canada, the Municipality of Jasper, Royal Canadian Legion (Branch 31) and the community at large, as we honoured Canada’s war veterans and peacekeepers, and remembered those who lost their lives in military service. There was a moment of silence at 11 a.m. in tribute to those who have served and continue to serve our country during war, conflict and peace.

November 16 saw Grade 9 students exploring Parks Canada careers during [“Take Our Kids to Work Day”](#). Engaging in activities like wildlife tracking and conservation efforts, they gained valuable insights, inspiring their future paths. A big thanks to the students and staff who made this day a success!

November 17 marked “National Take a Hike Day” and our Parks staff celebrated by hitting the trails for some rejuvenating fresh air. Want to connect with nature today? Check trail reports [here](#) and take a hike!



# December

Lighting up winter

Fort St. James National Historic Site sparked with joy during the [“Light up the Fort”](#) event from December 9 to 23. Visitors embraced winter’s magic, capturing “picture perfect” moments and sharing them under #LightuptheFort, fostering a warm sense of community and celebration.

# Social media highlights

Jasper National Park's social media channels connected millions of Canadians and visitors from around the globe in 2023. Here are the top five most engaging posts:

1. [Happy #Thanksgiving everyone!](#)  
(October 9, 2023) - 8,156 likes
2. [After recent rain and an assessment of the Celestine Road, the Chetamon Wildfire area closure has been lifted](#)  
(May 26, 2023) - 1,455 likes
3. [As August waves goodbye, let's give a roaring round of applause to the trail crew for their incredible efforts!](#)  
(August 31, 2023) - 853 likes
4. [Meet Caribou 73!](#)  
(September 6, 2023) - 779 likes
5. [UPDATES from the snowstorm. That's right, a snowstorm in June!](#)  
(June 23, 2023) - 737 likes



Whether you have cultural connections to its lands or are a regular visitor, whether you love it from afar or are proud to call it home, Jasper National Park is a special place for many people around the country and the world.

From Jasper National Park, we hope you continue to enjoy the holidays, travel safely and find time to rest and celebrate with your family and friends.

## Happy New Year!



P.S. Stay tuned in the new year for the upcoming Jasper National Park 2023 Annual Report and the Annual Forum, taking place in person March 12 and virtually March 13, 2024.

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