



Kootenay

National Park of Canada

Management Plan Implementation Report



Superintendent's Message

It is with pleasure that I present this report to Canadians, highlighting progress in implementing the 2010 Management Plan for Kootenay National Park of Canada. The past year and a half has included some significant challenges, yet Parks Canada staff and our partners have made significant progress in advancing priorities of the management plan and the Parks Canada Agency.

This report provides a glimpse into a range of accomplishments as diverse as providing new and improved visitor experiences, extending the reach of our stories beyond park boundaries, protecting wildlife populations, and advancing efforts to restore species-at-risk.

These accomplishments reflect Parks Canada's three priorities that are being advanced by the work we do in Kootenay National Park. Our first priority is maintaining our role as an international leader in conservation. Helping wildlife cross Highway 93S is an excellent example of applying conservation lessons in Banff to a similar situation in Kootenay.

Our second priority is encouraging more Canadians to experience their national parks. Whether visiting for the day or staying overnight in a new Redstreak Campground oTENTik, a wall tent designed for first-time campers, welcoming new and returning visitors is an important part of what we do.

The third, but no less important priority for the Agency is taking the stories of Kootenay National Park to the places where Canadians live and work. The social media and web-based initiatives described in this report are just one example of taking national parks to homes and workplaces of Canadians.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank our Parks Canada team, and our many partners who have contributed to this success. I remain confident that this spirit of collaboration and dedication will continue to achieve great results for Kootenay National Park in 2014.

Sincerely,

Melanie Kwong,
Field Unit Superintendent,
Lake Louise, Yoho and Kootenay Field Unit

Cover photos clockwise from top left: oTENTik (© Parks Canada / R. MacDonald), fireweed (© Parks Canada), ice climbing (© Parks Canada / S. Stevens), hiking on Mount Wardle above the Simpson River (© Parks Canada / K. Petkau)

Park Management Plan Implementation Reporting

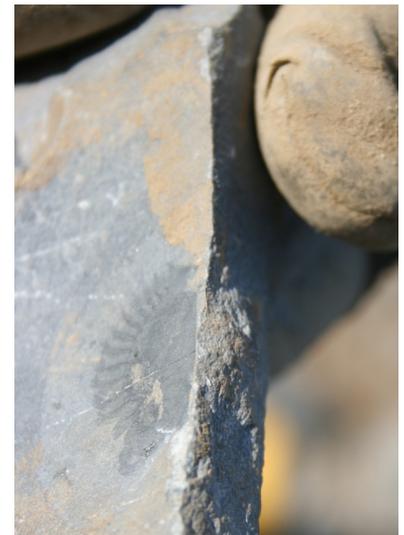
This report summarizes many of the important accomplishments from the past year and a half in Kootenay National Park, from spring 2012 to fall 2013. The achievements are reported under the five key strategies outlined in the Kootenay National Park Management Plan 2010. The report is intended to provide local residents and others with an interest in Kootenay National Park, with an overview of how Parks Canada is achieving the goals and objectives set out in the management plan. It is also an opportunity for Canadians to provide feedback to Parks Canada on park management priorities, and the progress that is being made in achieving them. A previous annual implementation report was published in 2011 and can be found at:

www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/kootenay/plan/gestion-mgmt/plandirecteur-mgmtplan.aspx

A Showcase of National Park Stewardship

Burgess Shale Research Expedition 2012

During the summer of 2012, the Royal Ontario Museum conducted a Burgess Shale research expedition in Yoho and Kootenay national parks. This research follows expeditions in 2008 and 2010 that helped to confirm the potential of some of the lesser-known fossil sites in the two parks. The 2012 expedition in Kootenay included a reconnaissance of some previously-known sites, and culminated in the discovery of a significant



Fossil discovered in Kootenay.
(© Parks Canada / T. Keith)

new fossil site near Marble Canyon. Preliminary results suggest that this new site could rival the famous Walcott Quarry in terms of its scientific importance. The results of this ongoing research will improve our understanding of this globally significant fossil resource and will be incorporated into guided hike programs and educational resources.

Highway 93S Project - Helping Wildlife Cross the Road

Over 5,000 vehicles travel Highway 93 South through Kootenay National Park on a typical summer day. Wildlife-vehicle collisions endanger both wildlife and travellers. The Highway 93S Wildlife Crossing Project was designed to reduce these collisions, while keeping habitat connected. In 2013, 4.7 km of fences and three wildlife underpasses were built near the Dolly Varden picnic site - a hot spot for wildlife-vehicle collisions where white-tailed deer, elk, moose, wolf, fox, and coyote mortalities have occurred. The completion of this project is a significant milestone in Parks Canada's efforts to reduce the impacts of highways on park wildlife and improve safety for travellers. More information can be found at:

www.parksCanada.gc.ca/hwy93s



White-tailed deer use new wildlife underpass. (© Parks Canada)

Experiencing the Dramatic Effects of Fire and Water

Park Visitation

The Kootenay Park Management Plan includes an objective to increase visitation by 3% annually. Data for the last 4 fiscal years (April to March) are presented in the table below. Visitation has remained relatively steady over this period. From April 2010 until March 2013 visitation has increased by 1.9% or an average of approximately 0.6% per year.



Hiking through fireweed in Kootenay. (© Parks Canada / S. Morgan)



Verendrye Creek recovering after 2003 wildfire. (© Parks Canada / D. Griffith)

KOOTENAY	2009-10	2010-11	change (%)	2011-12	change (%)	2012-13	change (%)
Visitors	426,570	429,365	0.7	427,128	- 0.5	434,781	1.8

oTENTiks

Ten oTENTik tent cabins were installed in Redstreak campground during the summer of 2013, and opened for visitors in August. The new oTENTik experience was created in response to visitors' changing needs and expectations of the experiences offered in national parks. Part tent, part cabin, each oTENTik sleeps up to six people and includes comforts such as high density foam mattresses, raised wooden floors, a spacious indoor sitting area, and an outdoor picnic table and fire pit.



Redstreak campground oTENTik tent cabin. (© Parks Canada / R. MacDonald)

Trails

Parks Canada trail crews were kept busy throughout 2012 and 2013 addressing flood damage on many of the park's main trails. A significant high water event in June 2012 caused extensive damage to trails and bridges in the northern end of the park. The Paint Pots suspension bridge, which had just been refurbished, was completely destroyed. Five other major backcountry bridges sustained significant damage, including the Tumbling-Ochre suspension bridge, and 13 smaller bridges were damaged or destroyed.

In June 2013 high water and flooding again caused damage to trails and bridges in the park. There was a large washout on the Simpson River trail resulting in its closure for most of the summer. The Tumbling Creek trail remains closed until bridges can be repaired in 2014.



Flood damaged bridge on Paint Pots trail. (© Parks Canada)

Experiences with Park Interpreters

New 'discover the park' programs were developed in 2012 and 2013 to complement the popular evening Redstreak Campground theatre shows. These new programs emphasize hands-on activities such as sing-alongs, art classes and wildlife tracking. Classic guided hikes with an experienced park interpreter are offered on several park trails, for an additional fee.



Interpretive program. (© Parks Canada)

Volunteerism

Attracting volunteers to participate in hands-on experiences is an important way for Parks Canada to connect Canadians to their national parks. Recently, volunteers have helped with campground hosting, migratory bird surveys, wildlife tracking, a litter pick, and photography. Additionally, the non-profit Friends of Kootenay National Park Society undertakes numerous projects in support of the park.



Volunteer litter pick in Kootenay. (© Parks Canada / R. MacDonald)

Bringing the Mountains to People Where They Live

Web Page Renewal

Work continues to improve Kootenay's website, and Parks Canada has become active on social media, maintaining a presence on Facebook and Twitter. Check us out at:

www.facebook.com/kootenaynp
www.twitter.com/kootenaynp

Parks Canada's YouTube channel has short videos on Kootenay National Park including: "Helping Wildlife Cross the Road – Kootenay National Park".

www.youtube.com/parkscanada

Numa Fire on YouTube

The Numa Creek wildfire in 2013 provided an opportunity to showcase Parks Canada's fire management expertise to a wide audience. A video "Fighting Fire with Fire - Kootenay National Park" has been posted on YouTube illustrating a "burn-out" technique used to keep the wildfire within defined landscape boundaries. The video can be viewed at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sW89E6wZbA

Google StreetView

Parks Canada partnered with Google Street View to capture popular roads, short trails, and day use areas in the mountain parks during the summer of 2013. Many of the images are now online at maps.google.ca and in Google Street View galleries. In Kootenay, virtual visitors can tour the Juniper Trail, Redstreak Campground, the Restoration Trail, and Campground Trail. Additional locations were mapped and will come online after the images have been processed by Google. Learn more at:

www.pc.gc.ca/eng/apprend-learn/cartes-maps.aspx.



Google Earth backpack camera in Kootenay. (© Parks Canada / A. Krause)

Outreach

Parks Canada has officially partnered with the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network to increase the number of student field trips to the mountain national parks. In 2013, outreach staff highlighted park research at the East Kootenay Regional Science Fair in Cranbrook. Kootenay was also profiled at several community events in the Columbia Valley. During the summer of 2013 six students hired by Parks Canada profiled western national parks, including Kootenay, at numerous venues including Science World, Vancouver Aquarium and special events throughout Greater Vancouver. The students contacted 55,000 people. Parks Canada also continues to share stories of Kootenay National Park in regional and national media.



Vancouver Outreach students. (© Parks Canada)

Parks Canada upgraded the Burgess Shale Edukit that showcases the remarkable Burgess Shale fossils. This educational resource is now available to school districts across Canada, thanks to a new collaborative agreement with the Royal Ontario Museum.



The Burgess Shale Edukit. (© Parks Canada / D. Griffith)



School trip to Kootenay Valley Viewpoint. (© Parks Canada / D. Griffith)

Celebrating History, Culture and the World Heritage Site

Aboriginal Heritage

In 2012-13 the park webpage on “Learning Experiences” was updated to profile and promote the award-winning interpretive display in the Kootenay Visitor Centre that highlights the history and culture of the Ktunaxa Nation.



Exhibit at Kootenay Visitor Centre. (© Parks Canada / D. Griffith)

Archaeological Research

Parks Canada continues to conduct archaeological inventory work in order to identify and protect important cultural resources, and to understand how people may have used the landscape in the past. In 2012 surveys focused on the area of Highway 93S where wildlife underpasses and fencing have recently been constructed, and on the adjacent Crook’s Meadow area. This work concluded that there were no archaeological concerns with the current projects or the known resources at Crook’s Meadow.

Ensuring Healthy Park Ecosystems

Wildfires

Fire continues to be important to the ecological health of Kootenay’s forest ecosystems. Lightning-caused fires in both 2012 and 2013 helped Parks Canada achieve some fire restoration goals in the park. In 2012 the Octopus Mountain fire burned approximately 436 ha in Kootenay National Park and an additional 575 ha in adjacent Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park. This fire was closely monitored by Parks Canada and the BC Wildfire Management Branch and was allowed to burn naturally on the landscape where there were no nearby values at risk.

In 2013, the Numa Creek Wildfire burned 450ha of high elevation forest in northern Kootenay. This fire was managed with a modified response, allowing natural fire behaviour to dominate through most of the burn period. Occasional fire control actions were taken to limit the fire’s spread beyond the defined containment area. Temporary closures of parts of the Rockwall Trail and backcountry campsites were required in order to protect visitor safety.



(Numa Creek Wildfire. (© Parks Canada / L. McPherson)

Grizzly Bears

Grizzly bears are an iconic species in the mountain parks, and their persistence on the landscape is used as an important indicator of ecosystem health. The Park Management Plan contains objectives to minimise both bear-human conflicts and bear mortality due to unnatural causes. No human caused grizzly bear mortalities were recorded in Kootenay over the reporting period.



Grizzly bear. (© Parks Canada / A. Dibb)

Parks Canada continues to use warnings, area restrictions, and when necessary area closures, to protect both people and wildlife in the park. In the fall of 2013 warnings were posted in both Marble Canyon and Redstreak campgrounds due to bear activity. During 2012 and 2013 several short closures were activated throughout the park, the longest being a 10-day closure of Marble Canyon due to a grizzly feeding on an elk along the trail. Also in 2012 and 2013, a group access requirement was put in place on the Kindersley-Sinclair loop due to a sow grizzly with two cubs frequenting the area. This approach requires hikers to travel in a close group of 4 or more in order to reduce the likelihood of bear-human conflicts. This was successful in helping to prevent human-wildlife conflicts, with the exception of one bluff-charge that was experienced by a group that had become separated during poor weather.



(© Parks Canada / K. Smith)

Species at Risk

In 2012, whitebark pine was listed as endangered under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). This relatively-rare tree species occurs at upper elevations near the tree-line in the western cordillera, and its nutrient-rich seeds are an important food source for a variety of wildlife. A key factor in the decline of this species is the introduced pathogen white pine blister rust. Other stressors include the mountain pine beetle and climate change. Parks Canada is contributing to a recovery strategy for this species. In 2012 and 2013 work has focussed on collecting seeds from trees that appear to be resistant to the white pine blister rust in Yoho, Kootenay and Banff national parks. In 2012, more than 4,300 seeds were collected from 14 sample trees in six different study areas. Data for 2013 are still being compiled. The collected seeds will be stored and germinated at the National Tree Seed Centre for use in future ecological restoration work. Updated whitebark pine distribution maps have been created to aid future recovery efforts.



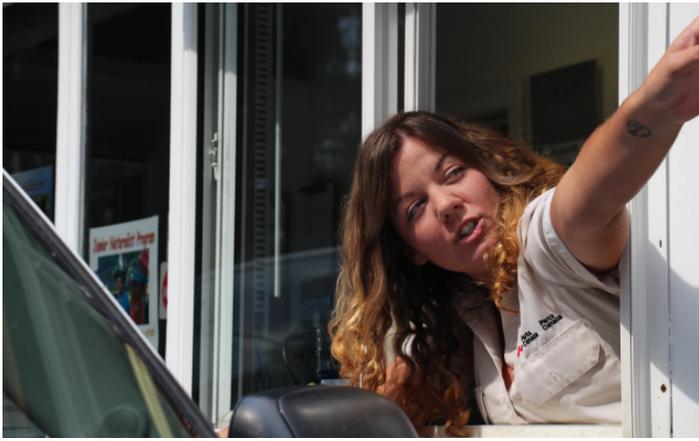
Whitebark pine cones. (© Parks Canada)

Invasive Species Management

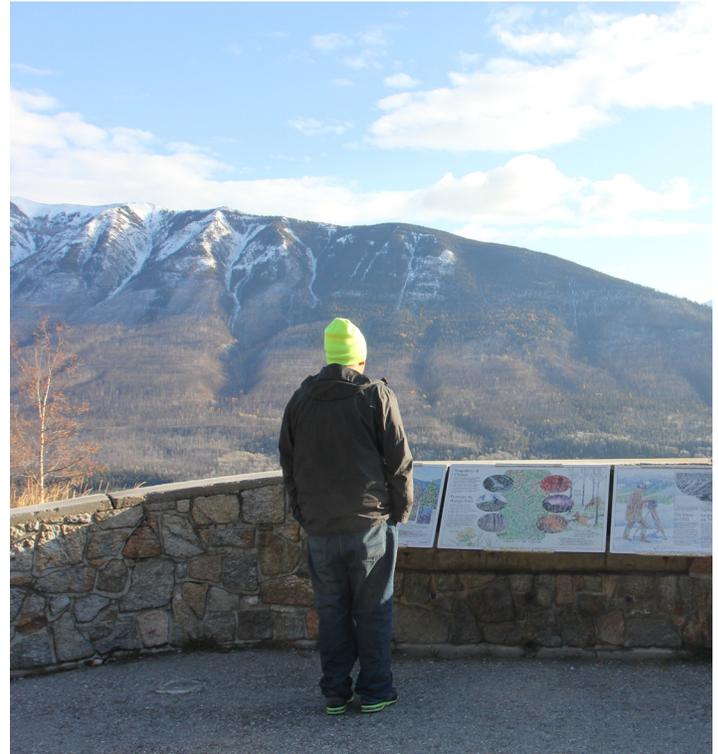
Parks Canada continues to actively combat the spread of invasive weed species in the national parks. Results from the previous two years have been promising, and all invasive weed species, with the exception of orange hawkweed and knapweed are in decline in Kootenay and Yoho parks.



Orange Hawkweed, an invasive non-native weed. (© Parks Canada / A. Dibb)



Redstreak campground staff. (© Parks Canada / K. Smith)



Kootenay Valley Viewpoint. (© Parks Canada / L. McPherson)

Looking Ahead...

Throughout the year there are numerous ways for people to get involved, or stay involved, in activities in the park. Volunteering is one way to contribute while enjoying time in the park. Anyone interested in volunteering can find more information at:

www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/kootenay/ne/benevole-volunteer.aspx

Some projects to watch for in 2014 include:

- The demolition and removal of Radium Lodge, and the former park administration building near Redstreak Campground;
- Restoration of open forest habitat in Sinclair Canyon;
- Re-construction of the Paint Pots trail bridge;
- Re-construction of the Tumbling-Ochre suspension bridge.

How to Contact Us

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www.parkscanada.gc.ca/kootenay

Kootenay National Park Visitor Centre
(open from mid-May until mid-October)
Phone: 250-347-9505
Email: kootenay.info@pc.gc.ca



Parika and young visitor at Kootenay National Park Visitor Centre. (© Parks Canada / R. MacDonald)