



Waterton Lakes

National Park of Canada

Management Plan

2010



WATERTON LAKES
NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

Management Plan

June 2010

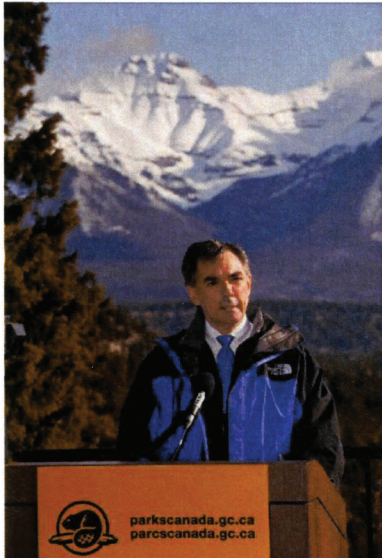
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Foreword

Canada's national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas offer Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast unique opportunities to experience and understand our wonderful country. They are places of learning, recreation and inspiration where Canadians can connect with our past and appreciate the natural, cultural and social forces that shaped Canada.

From our smallest national park to our most visited national historic site to our largest national marine conservation area, each of these places offers Canadians and visitors several experiential opportunities to enjoy Canada's historic and natural heritage. These places of beauty, wonder and learning are valued by Canadians - they are part of our past, our present and our future.


Our Government's goal is to ensure that Canadians form a lasting connection to this heritage and that our protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.

We see a future in which these special places will further Canadians' appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of Canada, the economic well-being of communities, and the vitality of our society.

Our Government's vision is to build a culture of heritage conservation in Canada by offering Canadians exceptional opportunities to experience our natural and cultural heritage.

These values form the foundation of the new management plan for Waterton Lakes National Park of Canada. I offer my appreciation to the many thoughtful Canadians who helped to develop this plan, particularly to our dedicated team from Parks Canada, and to all those local organizations and individuals who have demonstrated their good will, hard work, spirit of co-operation and extraordinary sense of stewardship.

In this same spirit of partnership and responsibility, I am pleased to approve the Waterton Lakes National Park of Canada Management Plan.

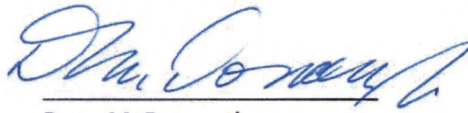

Jim Prentice
Minister of the Environment

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended by:



Alan Latourelle
Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada



Dave McDonough
Superintendent
Waterton Lakes / Bar U Field Unit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This updated management plan for Waterton Lakes National Park provides strategic direction for the integrated delivery of Parks Canada's mandate for protection, experience and education. It sets out a vision for the future that seeks to protect the unique natural and cultural heritage of the park, and provide visitor experiences that allow Canadians to make meaningful connections with their heritage. This plan emphasizes the importance of working collaboratively with others to produce authentic, nature-based opportunities to experience Waterton's distinctive prairie and mountain culture.

The management plan includes key strategies that describe the overarching management approach to the park, as well as area concepts which provide more detailed direction for specific geographic areas within the park. Area concepts have been developed for the Waterton Valley, the community of Waterton, Blakiston Valley, Cameron Valley, Belly River and Foothills areas. These concepts describe a future best scenario, current strengths and weaknesses, and key actions to help achieve each area's future best.

The plan also includes key performance indicators that will allow Parks Canada to measure and report on progress over time. The development of the plan included a public participation program that provided opportunities for Aboriginal people, stakeholders, community residents, park visitors and the general public to share their views and aspirations for this special place.

The key strategies and highlights of management actions that will be implemented during the life of this plan are summarised below.

Connecting – Reconnecting

Parks Canada has evolved since its early years. Today, Parks Canada is reaching more people, setting the stage for more memories and becoming more relevant to Canadians. This strategy builds on the emergent story of Waterton Lakes National Park as a place for connecting and reconnecting people, landscapes, wildlife and waterways. The next 15 years will be about fostering a culture of cooperation, learning and shared stewardship, connecting and reconnecting in ways that involves Canadians in protecting their heritage, celebrating their history, and inspiring more minds to explore, renew and imagine.

Celebrating the World's First International Peace Park and World Heritage Site Designation

The Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site provides an inspiring example of how countries can jointly protect their shared ecosystems in the spirit of peace and cooperation. This strategy builds upon this legacy, and strengthens and celebrates this successful model of international ecosystem conservation.

Providing Opportunities for Unique and Inspiring Visitor Experiences

Creating opportunities for unique and inspiring park experiences is integral to the successful delivery of Parks Canada's mandate and is a key theme of this management plan. Our national parks and national historic sites represent the very best that Canada has to offer. These special places contribute to our vibrant tourism industry and Canada's exceptional reputation around the world. This strategy focuses on improving existing opportunities and creating new opportunities to experience the park which will appeal to priority visitor groups. Partnerships with others will be strengthened in order to develop and deliver exciting visitor opportunities.

Setting Ecosystem Priorities and Showcasing Conservation Innovation

Parks Canada will protect, restore and monitor natural heritage, while showcasing innovative activities to achieve our goals. Parks Canada protects and presents these unique and authentic treasures on behalf of Canadians. We will approach conservation challenges as opportunities to engage a variety of interested stakeholders, to collaborate in implementing solutions, and to communicate rationales and needs to those affected.

History and Culture Within Contemporary Experience and Protection

This strategy aims to ensure the condition of the park's cultural resources is maintained or improved, and to increase the profile of the national historic sites and cultural resources in the park.

Improving Infrastructure to Enhance the Park Experience

The park's infrastructure plays an important role in supporting and creating opportunities for positive visitor experiences. This strategy is intended to maintain or improve park infrastructure to facilitate opportunities for visitor experience and to reduce the environmental impact of park operations.

The performance management framework includes broad indicators of success. Data from these indicators will be used to report on the success of management actions in the State of the Park Report prepared prior to the next five-year review of this management plan.

A strategic environmental assessment of this plan was conducted to evaluate potential environmental effects. This assessment concluded that implementing the directions and key actions outlined in the plan is likely to have many positive environmental effects, and unlikely to result in any notable, incremental or cumulative negative effects on either physical or cultural resources. Potential negative effects can be reduced and mitigated by implementing an integrated management approach and paying close attention to desired outcomes for ecological integrity.

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WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

As part of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site, the park is a living example of international cooperation in the protection and stewardship of ecological values. Waterton is an awe-inspiring legacy of mountains, lakes, prairies, forests, alpine meadows and wildlife that inspires a sense of wonder, self discovery, and a heartfelt connection to the landscape and its stories. Waterton's character is welcoming and friendly, encouraging people of all ages and cultures to appreciate, enjoy and celebrate their heritage through a range of experiences, confident that this natural ecosystem and the processes that shape it will remain intact for future generations.

The community of Waterton, the heart of the park, retains its leisurely paced, small town charm that visitors have enjoyed for generations. Its low density, small scale character, evokes and respects its history and local values. Waterton's programs, events and festivals are rooted in authenticity and are delivered with the active participation of local and regional residents, the Aboriginal community, tourism partners and other interested parties.





1.0 A Management Plan For Waterton Lakes National Park of Canada

1.1 Introduction

National parks are some of Canada's most recognized treasures, each a celebrated part of our nation-wide family of special places. Among our most rewarding and memorable destinations, each national park is integral to Canada's vision of protecting natural environments that represent the diversity of our land and our people. These are places of renewal and deep connection, where we experience, first hand, the wonder and richness of our heritage. When Canadians work together to protect these spaces and build upon our park system, we are doing much more than preserving the integrity of our wildlands – we are preserving the very things that define us as Canadians.

The *Canada National Parks Act* requires that each of Canada's national parks have a management plan that reflects the policies and legislation of the Government of Canada. Management plans are prepared in consultation with Canadians and are reviewed every five years. This management plan will guide the overall direction of Waterton Lakes National Park of Canada for the next 10 to 15 years, and will serve as a framework for all planning and decisions within the park. Parks Canada is accountable for ensuring that management of each national park gives first priority to the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity.

PARKS CANADA'S MANDATE

On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations.

Parks Canada's corporate outcome statement, which frames all program activities, is:

Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.

Corporate priorities that influence the management plan for Waterton Lakes National Park include:

- Parks Canada will continue to lead active management and monitoring projects in national parks to improve key ecological integrity indicators.
- A greater percentage of Canadians will report awareness and understanding of the heritage places managed by Parks Canada. As well, more Canadians will be aware of the increasing number of opportunities created for their involvement.
- Targeted Parks Canada initiatives will attract a greater number of visitors to national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas as experiential travel destinations through a Parks Canada focused approach on the creation of visitor experience opportunities.

In implementing its integrated mandate for protection, experience and education, Parks Canada Agency is accountable for ensuring that management of each national park gives first priority to the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity.

Parks Canada wants national parks to remain relevant and meaningful to Canadians. To remain relevant, Parks Canada must provide national park opportunities that both support and encourage visitor use and do so in a manner that respects goals related to protection. Increasing visitation to national parks does not mean that Parks Canada considers environmental impacts or a decline in visitor experience to be acceptable. Efforts to increase visitation will be undertaken in a manner consistent with our continuing actions to enhance ecological integrity and improve visitor learning opportunities and experiences.

There are many different perspectives on the types of recreational activities and events that should occur in a national park. Some are traditionally based, some financially oriented, while others are more neutral. Parks Canada's goal is to objectively review potential activities and events in a manner that supports our efforts to protect heritage values and nurture positive connections to national parks – including opportunities for youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians – in a way that does not impact other visitors or the ecological values of the park.

Developing a personal connection to a national park or national historic site may take place after one visit or it may be nurtured over many years. Participating in a new activity or special event for the first time provides a window to many other possibilities for meaningful experiences in the park. For many, this window may act as a bridge to developing a life-long connection. While Parks Canada will consider new activities and events, the majority of our efforts will be focused on enhancing existing services and opportunities.



Parks Canada's approach to management planning has evolved over the years. In 2008, the Parks Canada Agency finalized new national management planning guidelines. These guidelines are intended to ensure that management plans provide strategic direction, as opposed to specific prescriptive measures, and that their content more effectively integrates the three key elements of Parks Canada's mandate: protection of heritage resources, visitor experience, and learning opportunities.

The *Waterton Lakes National Park of Canada Management Plan (2010)* replaces the previous management plan, approved in 2000. The revised plan builds on the strengths of the previous plan. It emphasizes improving ecological integrity and the visitor experience, as well as our important role as the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site. This plan outlines new direction to better connect our visitors to this special place and emphasizes the importance of working collaboratively with others to produce authentic, nature-based opportunities to experience Waterton's distinctive prairie and mountain culture.

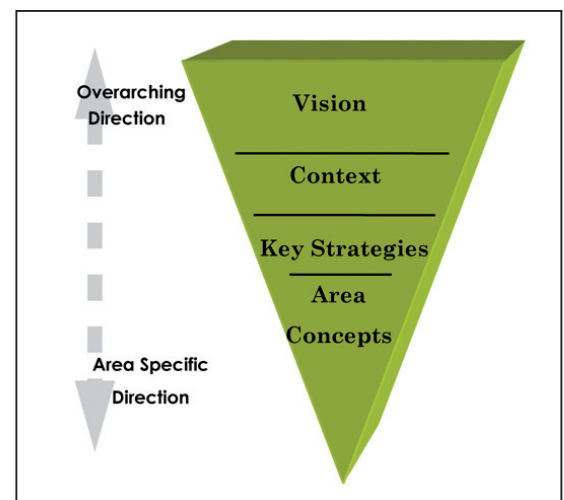
1.2 Management Plan Review Process

The review of the *Waterton Lakes National Park Management Plan (2000)* was undertaken concurrently with plan reviews for Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, Yoho, Glacier, and Mount Revelstoke national parks, and provides an opportunity to substantially rewrite and reorganize the management plan so it is aligned with the new planning guidelines and corporate priorities. This is not a new plan; rather, it is a rewritten plan that carries forward existing policy direction for the ecological integrity of Waterton Lakes National Park and integrates it with new content to strengthen direction in a number of areas, from visitor experience to outreach programs and work with Aboriginal communities. As we move forward, implementing this plan presents us with powerful opportunities to connect the hearts and minds of Canadians to the living legacy placed under our stewardship.

In December 2007 and March 2009, regional residents received newsletters outlining key planning issues and were encouraged to send comments and sign up to receive further information. During the spring of 2009, community and regional stakeholders participated in a full-day workshop to provide feedback on a suite of specific issues. Consultation also included Internet-based participation and consultation events in Waterton and Lethbridge. Market studies and visitor surveys were also reviewed to identify Waterton's planning priorities.

As mentioned above, management plans for all seven of Canada's mountain national parks are being reviewed concurrently, through a common process. The mountain national parks share a common vision that aligns with, and frames, each national park's specific vision:

Elements of a Park Management Plan.



Key Strategies for Waterton Lakes National Park:

- Connecting – Reconnecting
- Celebrating the World's First International Peace Park and World Heritage Site Designation
- Providing Opportunities for Unique and Inspiring Experiences for Visitors
- Setting Ecosystem Priorities and Showcasing Conservation Innovation
- History and Culture Within Contemporary Experience
- Improving Infrastructure to Enhance the Park Experience

Canada's mountain national parks are renowned living examples of all that is best in the conservation of mountain ecosystems and history, facilitation of authentic nature-based experiences, shared initiative, meaningful learning and Canada's heritage. Visitors to these places feel welcomed into experiences that exceed their expectations.

The silent peaks, forest mosaics, living waters, wildlife, people, clean air and endless capacity to inspire bring rejuvenation, hope and self-discovery to future generations, just as they have for the many generations that came before.

Each management plan begins with a vision for the individual park that highlights what is distinctive about the park, and Canadian's collective aspirations for the park's future. The vision will guide future planning and decision making. Key strategies provide overarching direction that applies to the whole park. Elements of each key strategy are shared with the other mountain parks, however each strategy responds to the unique context of Waterton Lakes National Park.

Area concepts have been prepared for the following areas of Waterton Lakes National Park:

- Waterton Valley
- Community of Waterton
- Blakiston Valley
- Cameron Valley
- Belly River
- Foothills

Each management plan also contains area concepts, in which detailed direction is provided for specific geographic areas within the park. Ecological integrity, visitor experience and recreational use of the park are linked. Quality national park experiences are founded on the protection of the heritage values and settings of the park. The management actions outlined in each concept integrate the three elements of the Parks Canada mandate – protection, education and visitor experiences – and reflect the heritage values and ecological sensitivity of each area.

1.3 Measuring Success

Parks Canada's protected areas measure performance by using common, consistent national indicators for all three elements of the mandate, as shown in Annex 1. The indicators are supported by both national and local measures. To reflect current Parks Canada guidelines, indicators and measures for public appreciation and understanding and for visitor experience are updated from those used in the 2008 State of the Park Report (SOPR).

One of the implementation tasks for this management plan is to work with stakeholders to develop focused, achievable and robust local measures where these do not already exist.

Parks Canada will continue to publicly account for its performance by preparing annual reports and by publishing, every five years, a SOPR giving a synopsis of the current condition of the park based on key indicators, and assessing performance in advancing PCA's mandate.

1.4 Regulatory and Policy Context

Management authorities and accountabilities for national parks are established under the *Parks Canada Agency Act and the Canada National Parks Act*. The park management plan provides strategic direction for a national park and is mandated by Section 11 of the *Canada National Parks Act*. Other important pieces of



legislation and regulations are part of the legal framework that defines Parks Canada's accountabilities. For example:

- *The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and Parks Canada's *Policy on Strategic Environmental Assessment* ensure thorough, science-based consideration of potential environmental effects and appropriate public review in advance of any development, licensing, or policy decision.
- Parks Canada has specific obligations under the *Species at Risk Act* and is working with the responsible federal agency and adjoining provincial agencies in the preparation of recovery plans.
- Specific limits to community development (community boundaries and maximum commercial space allocations) are registered under Schedule 4 of the *Canada National Parks Act*.
- Large areas in the mountain parks are legislatively protected by regulation in the *National Parks Wilderness Area Declaration Regulations* in order to preserve their natural character and the unique opportunities associated with that character.

Additionally, all operational and business planning decisions are subject on an ongoing basis to national policies and guidelines that frame Parks Canada's approach to all national parks, historic sites, and marine conservation areas. Some examples include:

- *Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies*
- *Cultural Resource Management Policy*
- *Redevelopment Guidelines for Outlying Commercial Accommodations and Hostels in the Rocky Mountains National Parks*
- Management Bulletin 2.6.10. *Recreational Activity and Special Event Assessments*

In addition to preparing annual reports, Parks Canada will continue to publicly account for its performance by preparing a State of the Park Report every five years that provides a synopsis of the current conditions of the park based on key indicators, and assesses performance in advancing the Agency's mandate.

1.5 Collaborative Planning and Management

The effective management of Waterton Lakes National Park requires close collaboration with other jurisdictions and regional stakeholders. Waterton is located within the Crown of the Continent ecosystem, a complex and unique ecosystem covering approximately 44,000 km², including southeast British Columbia, and Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex in Montana. To maintain ecosystem integrity, various management agencies work together to raise public awareness and understanding of how environmental, social, and economic components of ecosystems interconnect and support each other.

Waterton Lakes National Park shares a boundary, a history, and an ecosystem with ranchers, the Kainai First Nation, Glacier National Park in the United States, Akamina-Kishinena Provincial Park in British Columbia, and the Castle Special Place in Alberta. Waterton has particularly strong ties with its neighbour to the south, Glacier National Park. In 1932, the two national parks were established as the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. The importance of our relationship with Glacier National Park was recognized internationally in 1995 when Waterton Lakes and Glacier national parks were designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the *Waterton - Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site*.

Parks Canada is committed to work more closely with Aboriginal peoples to assist them in reconnecting with their heritage and more fully participate in and benefit from the park. In addition, Parks Canada works closely with other regional organizations in the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem in planning and implementing programs, and in celebrating and telling our shared stories to visitors.



1.6 The Community of Waterton

For most visitors, the Waterton community is the gateway to broader national park experiences. In many ways, the community is the heart of the park. It is a significant part of the visitor experience and is integral to the character of the park. The Waterton community is administered by Parks Canada and is subject to the *National Parks Act* and regulations. The federal government retains ownership of all land within the community. Guided by the *Waterton Community Plan 2000*, Parks Canada Agency is the authority for community planning, land use, development and environmental issues.

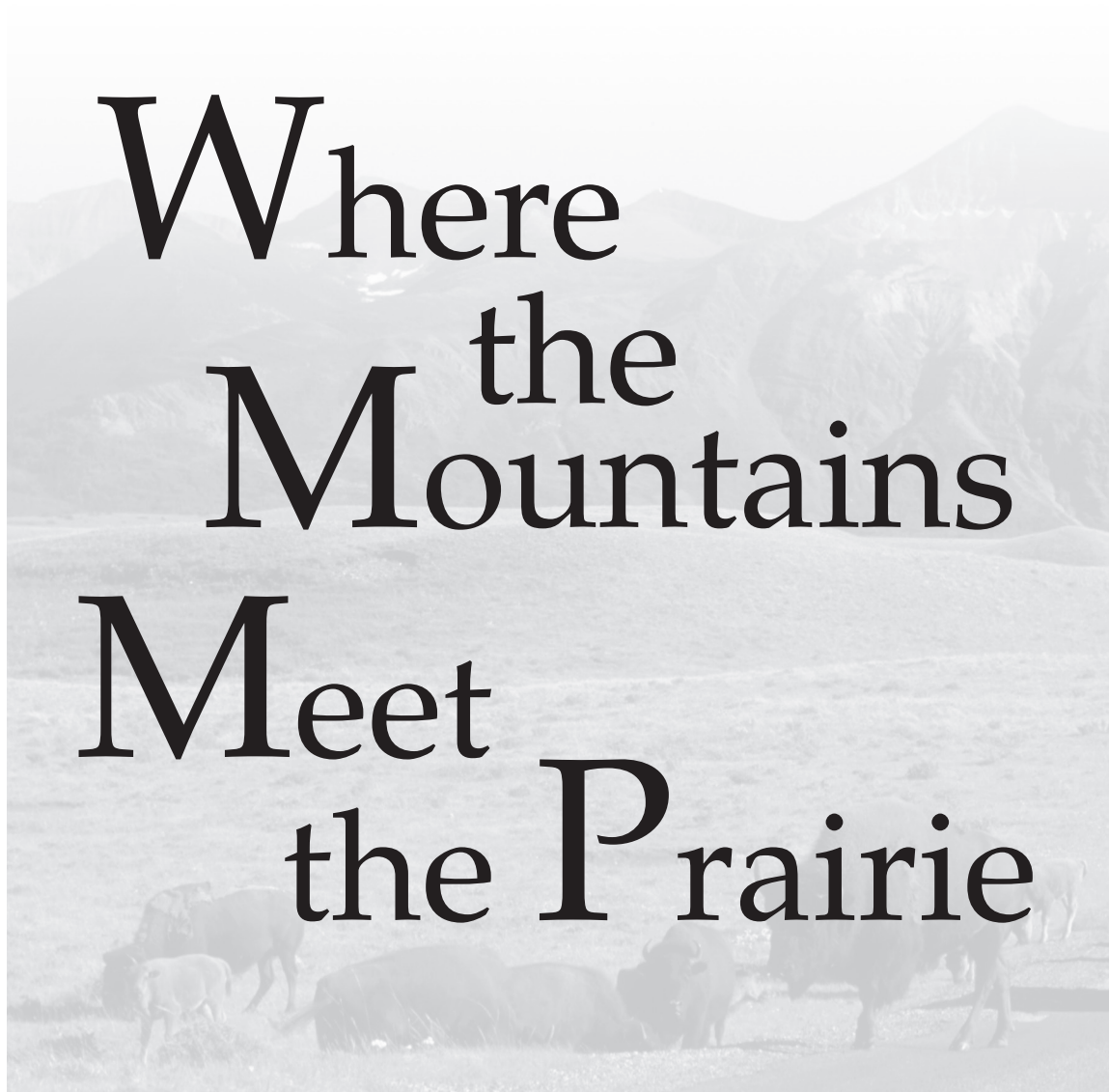
1.7 National Historic Sites

National historic sites are managed using plans that direct conservation and communication efforts, and ensure their continued commemorative integrity. Waterton Lakes National Park contains two national historic sites: the Prince of Wales Hotel and the First Oil Well in Western Canada. Direction in the park management plan will expand the relevance and reach of national historic site programs and enhance their contribution to contemporary visitor experiences.

The *Prince of Wales Hotel National Historic Site* stands isolated on a bluff overlooking a spectacular sweep of mountains, lakes, town and prairie. The largest wooden structure in Alberta at the time it was built, its striking design and dramatic setting make it Waterton's most recognized cultural landmark. The hotel is one of Canada's historic grand railway hotels, a local and national landmark, and an icon of Canadian history and architecture. Constructed in the chalet architectural style, the hotel opened its doors on July 25, 1927. The Prince of Wales Hotel was designated a national historic site by the Canadian government in 1992 as one of five outstanding examples of the rustic design tradition that was so strongly associated with architecture of Canada's Rocky Mountain Parks throughout the first half of the 20th century.

The *First Oil Well in Western Canada National Historic Site* commemorates the first commercially productive oil well in Western Canada. Located in the Cameron Valley, this exploration well foreshadowed the growth of the oil industry that has underwritten much of Alberta's subsequent economic development. The First Oil Well in Western Canada became a national historic site on May 17, 1965.





Parks Canada

2. WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK – WHERE THE MOUNTAINS MEET THE PRAIRIE

Waterton Lakes National Park protects and presents a portion of the southern Rocky Mountains Natural Region, where some of the most ancient mountains in the Rockies abruptly meet the prairie. Tucked away in a quiet corner of southwest Alberta, Waterton Lakes National Park is a meeting place for people, culture, nature and history, resulting in a storied history and a richly diverse landscape. Today, the park protects 505 km² of mountain and prairie in the southern Rocky Mountains, as well as the deepest lake and some of the oldest exposed sedimentary rock in the Canadian Rockies.

Established in 1895 in response to local citizen action, Waterton Lakes National Park is Canada's fourth national park. Waterton is a meeting place that inspires friendship and respect between nations, among people and with all of nature. In 1932, the park was joined with Glacier National Park in the United States to form the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park – the world's first. In 1979, Waterton formed the core area of Canada's second biosphere reserve, the first Canadian park in this UNESCO program, which is aimed at achieving a better understanding of the relationship between people and the natural environment. In 1995, the International Peace Park became a World Heritage Site because of its significant ecological, scenic and cultural values.



As the place '*Where the Mountains Meet the Prairie*,' the abundance of plants and animals attracted many people to the area throughout early and modern history. There is a long history of Aboriginal hunting and gathering along Waterton's lakes and throughout its mountains. The earliest evidence dates back 10,000 years, after alpine glaciers melted out of the main valley. Some present day hiking trails follow historic routes over mountain passes. Over 300 archaeological sites have been discovered in Waterton, many of them Aboriginal sites including fire rings, stone tools, arrowheads, spear heads, bison drive lanes, butchering and fishing camps, and vision quest sites. Radiocarbon tests reveal a base camp in the Blakiston Valley dating back over 8,000 years ago, the oldest camp discovered in the park. The Nitsitapii and K'tunaxa peoples hunted bison and other game and collected plants for food in the park's rich valleys. Today, there are two Nitsitapii groups living near Waterton, the Piikani and the Kainai. These tribes continue to hold Waterton as a sacred and powerful place.

The park is part of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem, a place with unusually diverse physical, biological and cultural resources. This ecosystem is one of the narrowest places in the Rocky Mountain chain, which places Waterton and its surrounding region on a crucial north-south wildlife corridor. No protected area of similar size in the Canadian Rocky Mountains has as much ecological diversity as Waterton. Natural features, from old-growth forests to wind-swept prairies, flowing rivers to deep lakes, meet and mingle to create an astounding variety of plants and animals.

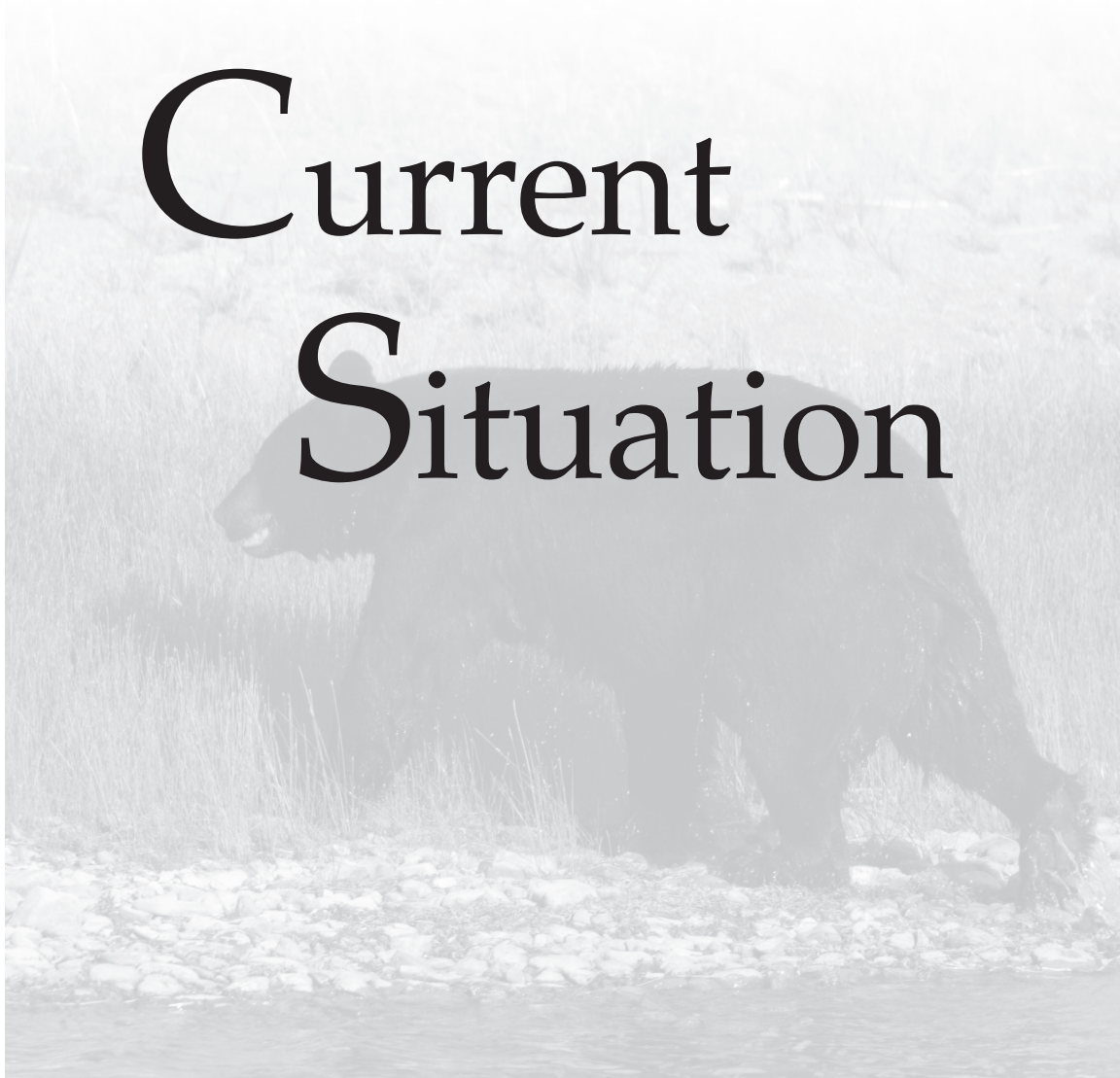
Climate plays a key role in the incredible diversity found here. Warm, moist Pacific coast weather systems, unimpeded by mountain ranges to the north and south, penetrate inland allowing plants and animals characteristic of the Pacific Northwest to extend to and across the continental divide in the park. To the east, prairie communities nestle against the mountains with no intervening foothills, producing an unusual interface of prairie, montane and alpine communities. The park's four ecoregions - foothills parkland, montane, subalpine and alpine - embrace 45 vegetation communities, including grasslands, shrublands, wetlands, spruce-fir, pine and aspen forests and alpine areas. Sixteen of these are significant because they are rare or fragile and threatened. Waterton is the only national park preserving the Foothills Parkland Ecoregion, a fescue grassland ecosystem stretching along the plains and foothills from southern Alberta into Montana.

Waterton is graced with over 1000 species of vascular plants, with over half of Alberta's plant species concentrated into this relatively small mountain park. Almost 200 of these are rare or not found elsewhere in Alberta or Canada. These include showy wildflowers such as mountain dwarf primrose, beargrass and mountain hollyhocks, as well as inconspicuous flora such as Macloskey's violets and threatened Bolander's quillworts. Waterton is also a global hotspot for its variety of tiny ferns known as moonworts.

The park's diverse vegetation communities provide homes for many animals, including more than 265 kinds of birds, 62 species of mammals, 20 fish species, 10 different reptiles and amphibians, and thousands of tiny insects and invertebrates. Birds found in Waterton are as common as American robins and yellow warblers, and as unique as Vaux's swifts and harlequin ducks. Bull trout, mountain whitefish and lake trout inhabit Waterton's rivers and lakes. Herptiles such as the boreal chorus frog, long-toed salamander and plains garter snakes also inhabit Waterton, and more recently, the once common northern leopard frogs were reintroduced following their puzzling disappearance.

The diverse suite of mammals in Waterton ranges from one of North America's largest mammals, the plains bison, to one of its smallest, the vagrant shrew. The park alone does not provide enough habitat for wide-ranging wildlife such as grizzly, cougar and wolf, whose survival depends on habitat preservation in the landscape that surrounds the park.





Stephen Harrington

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Sources of Information

Parks Canada evaluates programs and activities to ensure that they are meeting the objectives outlined in the management plan for visitor experience, resource protection, and public awareness and understanding. The State of the Park Report is a major tool for assessing and reporting on the condition of the park and the effectiveness of Parks Canada's management actions. Prepared every five years, these reports are based on the results of ongoing monitoring of natural and cultural resources, and social science data gathered from visitors and other Canadians. The first SOPR for Waterton Lakes National Park was released in 2008. The report played an important role identifying deficiencies in current park management approaches, emerging issues and information gaps, and determining the scope of this management plan review.

The *Waterton Lakes National Park Visitor Survey (2005)* and the *Mountain Park Management Planning: Findings from the Parks Listens Panel (2010)* are the most recent surveys of park visitors.¹ The survey

¹ Waterton Lakes National Park 2005 Visitor Survey Final Report, Parks Canada, September 2007.

reports influenced many of the visitor experience initiatives contained in this plan. Public comments received during consultation workshops, web-based engagement and newsletters were consistent with conclusions drawn from the surveys. A visitor experience assessment, included in the Blakiston Valley Redevelopment Project, similarly confirmed public opinions about park services and facilities. The Human Use Management Strategy (2006), developed by a public advisory group working with Parks Canada, also outlined objectives and key actions for discussion during this management plan review.

3.2 Situation Analysis

3.2.1 Resource Protection

While a new focus on visitor experience is highlighted in this plan, ecological integrity remains Parks Canada's first priority. The previous *Waterton Lakes National Park of Canada Management Plan (2000)* identified the ecological issues facing the park, and much progress has been made to address these issues during the last decade.

One of Waterton's unique characteristics is the rich variety of plant species that are located within such a small area. Invasive, non-native plant species compete with native species undermining their success and survivability. Waterton Lakes National Park is also defined by the foothills fescue grasslands found along the eastern slopes of the Front Ranges. These rare grasslands are under threat from invasive species, and, due to the absence of fire, the encroachment of aspen trees. The SOPR rated the park's terrestrial ecosystems and landscapes as being in poor condition.

The State of the Park Report rated the park's biodiversity to be in good condition with a stable trend. Ungulate and bird populations in the park are in good condition with stable or growing populations. Amphibian populations are generally stable, and the northern leopard frog is being reintroduced after extirpation.

The park's carnivores, such as grizzly bears, wolves, cougars, wolverines and lynx, are part of a regional population that ranges into Montana, British Columbia and adjacent parts of southern Alberta. Park populations of all these species are small and some populations are considered to be of concern.

The park is home to six species at risk²: half-moon hairstreak butterfly, Bolander's quillwort, northern leopard frog, western toad, Lewis' woodpecker and long-billed curlew. Four others have been assessed but are not yet listed: westslope cutthroat trout, horned grebe, common nighthawk and olive-sided flycatcher. Research and monitoring programs continue.

Although the SOPR concluded that aquatics were generally in good condition, this was based on a relatively limited number of measures. Since that time, monitoring has indicated that non-native fish species pose a significant risk to threatened native species such as bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout. In future, the monitoring program will report on a wider range of aquatic indicators, which will reflect more accurately on the state of aquatic ecosystems.

There is international consensus that global climate is warming at an unprecedented rate. This warming trend will have implications for ecological conditions in the park, and will also have the potential to affect how people use and view the park in the future. A major knowledge gap identified through the SOPR is our understanding of how climate change is likely to impact park ecosystems.

Based on the SOPR, priorities for the first five years of this management plan will include reintroducing fire into the ecosystem, managing non-native plants, addressing non-native fish species, and protecting species at risk.

Cultural resources in Waterton Lakes National Park are represented by archaeological sites, historical objects and heritage structures. The SOPR rated these resources to be in fair condition. Messages

² *The Species at Risk Act* represents the Government of Canada's commitment to conserving biological diversity and conservation of wildlife. In Canada the responsibility for the conservation of wildlife is shared among the governments who must work cooperatively to pursue the establishment of complementary legislation and programs for the protection and recovery of species at risk.



concerning cultural and natural resources are delivered directly by parks staff and through partnerships with groups such as the Waterton Natural History Association, Aboriginal peoples, regional museums, and the community of Waterton.

3.2.2 Visitor Experience

Annual visitation to Waterton Lakes peaked in the late 1990s at around 400,000, and today averages 380,000 visitors per year. Visitation is concentrated in the summer months. Winter visitation is significantly reduced due to challenges related to winter weather and reduced commercial services. The SOPR identified Parks Canada's understanding of visitors, providing opportunities for visitor experiences, and quality of service to be in good condition.

Waterton's 2005 visitor survey showed that most visitors to the park are from Alberta (46%). Compared to other mountain parks, Waterton has a higher proportion of American visitors (37%), reflecting the park's location adjacent to the international boundary and Glacier National Park. Many American visitors combine a visit to Waterton with a visit to Glacier. Approximately 65% of visitors make day trips to the park from the surrounding region and from Glacier National Park, and 53% of all visitors are repeat visitors.

A recent study of visitors to the seven mountain parks ranked Waterton the third most favourite park for a day trip or a long overnight trip, behind Banff and Jasper (*Mountain Park Management Planning: Findings from the Parks Listens Panel, 2010*). Waterton is largely a destination park. Visitors to Waterton are much less likely than average mountain park visitors to include more than one mountain park per trip (only 13% do), which is not surprising given its distance from the other mountain parks and from major thoroughfares. The park's relative freedom from traffic, crowds and commercialization, combined with its huge diversity of plants and animals, provides a sense of seclusion and exclusivity for those who describe Waterton as their favourite park. While there is strong interest in the services, information and accommodation available in the community of Waterton, the park is largely viewed as a place to relax by escaping civilization.

Visitors say they choose Waterton because it is the most peaceful and quiet, offers the best opportunities for relaxation, has the best scenic drives, and excellent opportunities for photography and wildlife viewing. Other favoured activities include short and long walks, unguided hikes, picnicking, birding, and taking a boat tour. Waterton's visitors name well-maintained trails, well-marked trail heads, notices of wildlife sightings, and good road signage as the most crucial services and amenities.

Visitors indicate that value for money and good personal service is central to their perception of park opportunities and experiences. They tend to be very satisfied with opportunities in the natural areas of the park, such as hiking trails and picnic areas. Lower satisfaction scores resulted from the availability of information prior to the visit, the condition of park washrooms, and the availability of campsites. Phased capital upgrades are underway in the Townsite Campground to improve these visitor services.

The Waterton community is the centre of visitor use and almost all visitors enter it at some point during their time in the park. The historic character and relaxed, small town atmosphere of the community is highly appreciated by visitors. While the community has been the subject of capital reinvestment with phased upgrades to roads, curb and gutters, and sidewalks, continued reinvestment is required.

3.2.3 Public Awareness and Understanding

The 2008 SOPR rated Parks Canada's understanding of its audiences, the ability to extend its reach, and facilitate understanding among Canadians as fair. An issue of concern is that surveys indicate visitors may not be retaining national park messages at Parks Canada's desired level. Also, while the majority of visitors read at least one interpretive panel, high repeat regional visitation poses a challenge to increasing attendance at park interpretation programs. Action is needed to expand beyond our regional market to attract new visitors to the park, including youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians.

Since the early 1990s, the regional Aboriginal community has delivered “Storyteller” speaker presentations to visitors on Monday nights at the Crandell and Townsite campgrounds. Park staff deliver programs to the local community, schools, regional public, other stakeholders and visitors about a variety of conservation topics. These topics include the role and importance of national parks and Parks Canada’s system of national parks, the re-establishment of fire on the landscape, non-native plants, and species at risk.

3.2.4 Partnering and Engagement

Cooperation among regional stakeholders and land management agencies is a key feature of Waterton Lakes National Park. Waterton works collaboratively with Glacier National Park in Montana, Aboriginal people, provincial agencies and municipal districts, community residents and businesses, local ranchers and the Nature Conservancy of Canada by sharing information and resources to manage fire, search and rescue, non-native species, wildlife, and restoration projects. Many local ranchers have protected their land from development, helping to preserve Waterton’s natural mountain and prairie viewscape and maintain habitat outside Waterton’s park boundary for wide-ranging animals like elk and grizzly bears.

3.2.5 Challenges and Opportunities

3.2.5.1 Resource Protection

- Working with other jurisdictions to ensure that large predators, such as bears, have secure habitat at local and regional scales.
- Managing non-native fish species to reduce risk to threatened native species such as bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout.
- Reintroducing fire to park ecoregions through use of prescribed fire.
- Taking management actions to address invasive plant species.
- Continuing with programs to reduce wildlife habituation, particularly in the community of Waterton.

3.2.5.2 Visitor Experience

- Connecting with new visitor market segments.
- Addressing reduced opportunities for winter experiences.
- Reinvesting in park infrastructure to improve the experience of visitors.

3.2.5.3 Public Awareness and Understanding

- Increasing visitor participation in interpretation and communication programs, and increasing retention of national park messages.
- Ensuring the integrity and improving presentation of archaeological sites, historical objects and heritage structures.
- Seeking increased participation and connection with regional Aboriginal communities.

3.2.5.4 Partnering and Engagement

- Working with adjacent jurisdictions to reduce fragmentation of surrounding land.
- Integrating communication and educational actions into protection programs.





Parks Canada

4. KEY STRATEGIES

Key strategies are the guiding direction that defines the specific approach Parks Canada takes to setting priorities, selecting and implementing actions, and evaluating the success of park management. The following six key strategies summarize the overall approach to delivering Parks Canada’s mandate in the unique context of Waterton Lakes National Park.

4.1 Connecting – Reconnecting

4.1.1 Objectives

- *Make Waterton Lakes National Park a place of connecting – and reconnecting – people, landscapes, wildlife populations and waterways.*
- *Foster a culture of cooperation, learning and shared stewardship, involving Canadians in protecting their heritage, celebrating their history and inspiring a deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.*

National Parks are about connecting and working with others in ways that create meaning and possibilities for the future. While Parks Canada has an exemplary record of cooperation with partners and stakeholders, it will strive to further enhance the involvement of Canadians in managing, protecting and operating their national parks. Waterton Lakes National Park requires the active collaboration and participation of regional land managers and owners, Aboriginal people, the academic community, national park lessees, and the interested public in providing services, carrying out research activities, delivering education programs and in protecting park resources. All Canadians benefit by being active participants in sustaining their heritage.

Aboriginal people have a relationship with the landscape that pre-dates the creation of Waterton Lakes National Park by thousands of years. Consequently, they have a unique and valuable perspective on the land, its processes, component parts and benefits. Parks Canada will work to establish regular ongoing consultation and foster significant, respectful relationships with Aboriginal communities. Our goal is to increase Aboriginal participation in park programs, to better understand and incorporate their knowledge and perspectives into visitor experiences and park management, in ways that respect cultural traditions and ownership of the knowledge.

Waterton is also an important component of the larger Crown of the Continent ecosystem and the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site located north of the Crown. These protected mountain areas provide a secure core of connected land and critical wildlife travel corridors extending north-south from Canada into the United States.

While Waterton's most enduring relationship is with Glacier National Park, the park also collaborates with many other organizations including the Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association, the Waterton Front Project, and members of the Crown Managers Partnership, all of which share the Crown of the Continent ecosystem and its rich cultural history. Fostering positive relationships with neighbouring landowners has also been beneficial as we share significant common goals and values. Working with regional tourism providers improves our understanding of visitor needs and motivations, and the sharing of knowledge and best practices facilitates enhanced opportunities to meet or exceed their expectations.

4.1.2 Direction

4.1.2.1 Parks Canada will increase and enhance park external relations capability to better involve Canadians in celebrating, protecting, enjoying and managing the park.

- Engage the public, regional tourism providers, Aboriginal people, and stakeholders in authentic activities that contribute to the enjoyment, presentation, stewardship and protection of Waterton's ecological and cultural resources.
- Broaden existing partnerships and create new partnerships with groups that have not traditionally been associated the park. Innovative communications and programs will be targeted to youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians to link them to the park's setting, stories and experiences.
- Develop visitor experience products and programs that encourage and support children and their families to make nature and outdoor experiences a part of their lives.
- Include a communication and public education component for all strategies and actions developed to achieve ecological integrity. Similarly, all visitor education, interpretation and external relations communication actions will integrate ecological messages where appropriate.
- Enhance Parks Canada's presence on the web by continually refreshing and renewing web content to provide learning, sharing and experiential opportunities for Canadians and others.



4.1.2.2 Park management challenges will be approached as opportunities to engage diverse communities of interested Canadians in learning and sharing information, creatively imagining options, and implementing solutions that enhance resource protection, add value to visitor experiences, and create learning opportunities.

- All program activities will continually be assessed to identify and create new volunteer opportunities for regional residents and visitors who wish to actively participate in stewardship of Waterton Lakes National Park.

4.1.2.3 Parks Canada will actively work with adjacent land managers, regional tourism providers, and landowners through partnerships such as the Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association and Crown Managers Partnership.

- Work collaboratively to improve the ecological integrity of the shared ecosystem, improve habitat and population connectivity through secure high quality corridors, manage invasive non-native species, and better integrate the network of protected landscapes.
- Actively collaborate with:
 - Heritage-based agencies, schools and festival organizers to bring outreach education programming into small communities and larger urban centres in Western Canada on a regular basis.
 - Provincial education authorities to tie park themes and messages into school curricula at all levels. We will work with local schools and community youth groups to investigate opportunities to create in-park engagement opportunities and incorporate Waterton stories into their programs outside the park.

4.1.2.4 Parks Canada will actively and regularly consult the Aboriginal community on how to honour and restore their cultural connections to the park and facilitate their enduring involvement with the park.

- Seek the involvement of regional Aboriginal partners on a formal park management advisory committee.

4.2 Celebrating the World's First International Peace Park and World Heritage Site Designation

4.2.1 Objectives

- *Provide an inspiring example of how countries can jointly protect their shared ecosystems in the spirit of peace and cooperation.*
- *Strengthen and celebrate this successful model of international ecosystem conservation.*

The Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park was established in 1932 – the first in the world. The Peace Park was created through the efforts of Rotarians from Alberta and Montana, leading to legislation passed by both Parliament and the United States Congress. The Peace Park became a symbol of peace, goodwill and friendship between nations. In 1995, the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park was designated a World Heritage Site due to its scenic values, abundant and diverse wildlife and wildflowers, and its distinctive climate and landforms. The natural beauty of the International Peace Park is enhanced by the friendship and cooperative relations shared by Canada and the United States.



4.2.2 Direction

- 4.2.2.1. **Waterton will be positioned as being unique among Canadian national parks by integrating World Heritage Site and International Peace Park messages into communications to ensure that visitors and people around the world are aware of, understand and appreciate these globally significant models of international ecosystem conservation.**
- 4.2.2.2. **Parks Canada will continue to look for opportunities to enhance our strong working relationship with Glacier National Park and advance our shared ecosystem conservation and World Heritage Site objectives.**
- Deliver Peace Park and world heritage site messages throughout the park and in external communications.
 - Seek opportunities to increase collaboration with other World Heritage Sites in the region, such as the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks, Head Smashed in Buffalo Jump and Dinosaur Provincial Park World Heritage Sites, on joint initiatives.
 - Continue to work with organisations and agencies in the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem, such as the Crown Manager’s Partnership, Rotary International, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association, to pursue shared World Heritage Site ecological and sustainability objectives, to offer characteristic International Peace Park visitor experiences, and to communicate the importance and benefits of cooperative resource management across boundaries.

4.3 Providing Opportunities for Unique and Inspiring Visitor Experiences

4.3.1 Objectives

- *Create opportunities for visitors to make personal heartfelt connections to the park and Canada’s heritage.*
- *Increase awareness of and visitation to Waterton Lakes National Park among a wider array of Canadians including youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians.*

Waterton Lakes offers a variety of high quality opportunities to experience the park year-round. In developing their own personal connections to Canada’s protected heritage, visitors can enjoy options ranging from wilderness adventure, to citizen science activities, to relaxing boat tours and cultural events.

When considering opportunities in the park, a number of challenges and opportunities arise given the size of the park, and the need to integrate tourism and recreation with the protection of sensitive ecosystems. A renewed focus on experiential tourism³ will enable visitors to easily find the right opportunities for the kinds of experiences they seek. A priority is to ensure that visitors arrive quickly at their intended destination, and that their park experiences meet or exceed expectations.

Connecting Canadians to a stimulating range of authentic park experiences is integral to the successful delivery of Parks Canada’s mandate. Parks Canada will facilitate opportunities for the following types of experiences:

- A “**Virtual Experience**” is for those who are interested in mountain and prairie ecology, culture and history, but who may never visit the park. An appealing, consistently refreshed Internet offer will provide a strong sense of Waterton for those who visit electronically, and is also a way for visitors to experience parts of the park too sensitive and rare to allow a human presence.

³Experiential tourism is where people, through direct experience, achieve understanding and authentic connection to place, nature and local culture. The experiences could include the people they meet, the places they visit, their accommodations, the activities they participate in and the memories created. In a very personal and individual way, visitors are encouraged to participate in activities that draw them into cultures, communities and the outdoors.



- A “**View from the Edge**” experience appeals to perhaps the largest group of first-time park visitors, those who tend to stay close to the community and the parkways. Through entertaining presentations and events with heritage based themes, programs will be created for visitors seeking hassle-free travel, rejuvenation, relaxation, or fun in the outdoors. These opportunities will be promoted in the Waterton, Blakiston and Cameron valleys, and within the community of Waterton.
- A “**Step into the Wild**” experience typically appeals to visitors who stay in the park for more than a few hours or overnight, but do not venture too far from developed areas. This type of visitor has more time for personal reflection and in-depth learning, may take day hikes, has high hopes for encountering wildlife, and may participate in a guided experience. Their park experience provides renewal and an authentic connection to nature and local culture. Waterton’s small, centrally located community and road network provides an ideal opportunity for this type of “accessible wilderness” experience. Opportunities to enhance these experiences will be promoted in the Waterton, Cameron and Blakiston valleys, and within the community of Waterton.
- A “**Mountain Wilderness**” experience is for those with a strong affinity for the wilderness, and who are willing to fully immerse themselves physically in the park, engaging all their senses. Personal experiences may include long guided or unguided hikes and horseback trips in remote areas. The wilderness experience is enriched by information and opportunities which deepen the visitor’s relationship with the park and encourages helping with its care. The backcountry of all the park planning areas link with extensive multi-day wilderness hikes or horse trips in Glacier National Park or on adjacent provincial lands.

Increasing visitation will be undertaken within a framework of ecological integrity and high quality visitor experience opportunities. Initiatives will be integrated so that ecological integrity, visitor experience and learning objectives are achieved.

4.3.2 Direction

4.3.2.1 To facilitate characteristic visitor experiences and learning, Parks Canada will maintain, improve and promote outstanding visitor experiences. Specific opportunities will be provided within the different areas of the park.

- Apply a consistent visitor experience perspective through the trip cycle, from helping people imagine their trip to remembering their experiences.
- Work with partners to disseminate improved pre-trip information about opportunities and park programs.
- Develop new products and promotional activities focused on visitors seeking the following experiences:
 - Authentic experience and learning
 - No-hassle travel in safe, scenic settings
 - Rejuvenation and renewal in nature
 - Freedom and exciting outdoor activity
 - Exploration of personal/family history
- Continually re-evaluate and renew products and promotion associated with the following experience opportunities:
 - For “*View from the Edge*” – enhance vehicle-accessible frontcountry viewpoints and

picnic areas, and develop opportunities along the parkways that introduce the visitor to the park, with an invitation to explore further.

- For “*View from the Edge*” and “*Step into the Wild*” – work with stakeholders and partners to provide and improve opportunities for visitors looking for wilderness and learning experiences.
- For “*Step into the Wild*” and “*Mountain Wilderness*” – develop hiking, horseback day trip, and overnight opportunities.
- Develop interpretation and education programs that:
 - Communicate protection activities and results achieved by developing and promoting opportunities aligned with the three elements of Parks Canada’s mandate – protection of heritage resources, learning opportunities and visitor experience – to invite visitors to try new activities and broaden their national park experience.
 - Create volunteer opportunities to engage visitors and the public in ecological and cultural resource monitoring, restoration, protection and stewardship activities.
- Assess and adjust seasons and hours of park facility operation, in order to address visitor perceptions and needs, indicated in surveys, that there is a shortage of access to uniformed park staff.

4.3.2.2 Parks Canada will ensure that the park appeals to a broad cross section of the Canadian public by providing opportunities to attract youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians with a focus on Alberta and British Columbia markets.

- Engage Canadians who may shy away from “mountain parks” because they believe only wilderness adventure activities are available, and work with stakeholders and partners to improve existing opportunities and explore new activities.
- Actively seek out the interests of new markets and potentially introducing new activities/ events or adjust the existing offer to make it appealing to new and returning visitors.
- Respond to the changing demographics in southern Alberta by working with partners to expand our presence with new Canadians and urban audiences in order to inform them of appealing recreational opportunities in Waterton.
- Work cooperatively with commercial tourism providers to ensure a full understanding of the park’s total visitor population profile by sharing market information and to increase knowledge of the demographics, motivations and satisfaction levels of visitors.
- Seek an appropriate level of commercially guided opportunities on designated trails and in off-trail areas to encourage visitors to expand their experience to include an activity away from more developed park areas.

4.3.2.3 Parks Canada will explore development of “Mountain Wilderness” experiences with adjacent land management agencies, as this opens opportunities to extend and promote this type of visitor experience from Waterton into surrounding areas.

4.3.2.4 Parks Canada will plan mutually supportive visitor opportunities and resource management efforts, with a focus on a specific suite of visitor experiences for each planning area, such as “*View from the Edge*,” “*Step into the Wild*” and “*Mountain Wilderness*” based on analysis of social and natural science information and objectives.



4.3.2.5 Parks Canada will encourage partners and stakeholders to help present authentic natural and cultural heritage through innovative new programs, special events and community festivals.

- Improve the marketing of new and existing authentic, park-based visitor experiences and encourage special events, particularly in the shoulder seasons, such as cycling the Red Rock Parkway, bird counts, and festivals. Work with regional tourism agencies, the Waterton community and business community on joint marketing efforts.
- Consider new proposals for recreational activities, events and commercial services where they clearly support all aspects of the national park mandate. Subject all new recreational activities and events to the Recreational Activity and Special Event process at the national and local level, conducted in collaboration with stakeholders, the public and Glacier National Park (USA) using the following principles to guide discussion:
 - Respect natural and cultural resource protection goals
 - Facilitate opportunities for enjoyable and meaningful visitor experiences
 - Promote understanding and appreciation of natural ecosystems, Canada’s culture and history
 - Value and involve local communities
 - Respect the character of place

4.3.2.6. Review and update the park camping offer to increase visitor connections with the park, and to ensure appropriate services, programs and activities are available in the campgrounds (e.g. shelters, connections to key attractions, short trails).

- The three vehicle-accessible campgrounds will provide different opportunities:
 - Townsite Campground will offer a “View from the Edge” experience with the highest level of service, including showers, washrooms and RV hook-ups. Parks Canada will explore converting vacant heritage structures in the campground into a semi-primitive, roofed camping opportunity. This would include interpretation of the heritage significance of the structures and ensure their preservation.
 - Crandell Mountain campground will feature a “Step into the Wild” camping experience. A new tipi camping opportunity at Crandell Mountain Campground will be developed to provide a safe and convenient experience for visitors.
 - Belly River Campground will provide a vehicle-accessible, primitive “Mountain Wilderness” camping experience.

4.4 Setting Ecosystem Priorities and Showcasing Conservation Innovation

4.4.1 Objectives

- *Improve ecological integrity of the park while showcasing innovative conservation activities to achieve our goals.*
- *Approach conservation challenges as opportunities to engage a variety of interested stakeholders, to collaborate in implementing solutions, and to communicate rationales and needs to those affected.*

This strategy focuses on sustaining the critical analysis, creative thinking and innovation needed to resolve conservation challenges through adaptive management. This includes ensuring that regional stakeholders, park visitors and broader communities of interest are fully engaged when developing

new conservation solutions, and making conservation successes a part of the national park visitor experience and of the stories we tell the world. Maintaining natural processes and biodiversity is a key to the ecological integrity of the park. Park visitors, scientists, regional land managers and regional residents will be engaged in initiatives aimed at understanding and restoring the ecological processes that sustain the park's many ecosystems.

An important part of the area that Waterton protects is the Foothills Parkland ecoregion, which includes rare foothills fescue grasslands for which the park is notable. During the first five years of this new plan, Parks Canada will focus its efforts on protecting and restoring Foothills Parkland and Montane ecoregions. These areas receive about 95% of park visitors, have the most park infrastructure, and are the most affected by invasive plant species and exclusion of historic fire.

4.4.2 Direction

4.4.2.1 Parks Canada will carry out monitoring programs, data collection, and apply science to resolve conservation challenges through adaptive management, while engaging and involving interested stakeholders, park visitors, students, community members, ranchers and regional residents in these activities. The park will be recognized as an important benchmark area for the broader scientific community.

- The condition of the park's ecological health will be monitored over the long term, to assess the status and trend of the following indicators: native biodiversity, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, landscapes and climate.
- Conduct natural and social science research to improve understanding of complex issues and advance thinking about park management challenges and opportunities.

4.4.2.2 Parks Canada will expand, improve and demonstrate the use of environmental technologies such as renewable energy, waste composting, recycling and water and energy conservation in campgrounds, day use areas, and through development review, in other facilities.

4.4.2.3 Ecological processes will be managed so they continue to play their traditional role in shaping park ecosystems and in maintaining biological diversity at all scales.

- Parks Canada will reintroduce fire, restore disturbed areas of native grasslands, actively reduce invasive plants, communicate the importance of protecting native species and natural processes, and engage citizens in restoration activities.

4.4.2.4 Parks Canada will improve our understanding of the impacts of climate change on park ecosystems.

- Develop or modify management strategies and communication messages based on this information. Strategies will be coordinated with Glacier National Park and neighbouring agencies.

4.4.2.5 Parks Canada will assess lakes and streams for aquatic restoration, then set priorities and implement restoration efforts.

- Continue to communicate aquatic restoration challenges and opportunities to the public. Actions will be taken to restore the natural function and health of aquatic ecosystems, including eliminating or reducing populations of non-native fish species that pose a risk to native fish populations and aquatic communities if required.

4.4.2.6 Enhance ongoing research and programs relating to carnivores and ungulates, in cooperation with adjacent land management agencies and ranchers, to ensure the viability of these wide ranging populations in the shared ecosystem.



- Protect and manage bear and carnivore habitat:
 - Maintain natural landscapes that support healthy bear and carnivore populations, and provide opportunities for wilderness recreation.
 - Demonstrate leadership, and work collaboratively with managers of adjacent lands for the ongoing protection of grizzly and black bears and a functional ecosystem.
 - Provide educational programming and products to increase visitor understanding and respect for bear and carnivore ecology, and how to co-exist with large predators.
 - Minimise inappropriate bear-human interactions that lead to bear habituation, the risk of human-caused mortality, and human injury inflicted by bears.

4.4.2.7 Parks Canada will protect species at risk populations in the park such as the half-moon hairstreak butterfly and Bolander’s quillwort, and actively restore other sensitive species such as whitebark and limber pines and northern leopard frogs.

- Implement the recovery plans for Bolander’s quillwort and half-moon hairstreak butterfly.
- Implement proactive measures, in collaboration with stakeholders, that will help keep other species from being added to Canada’s list of threatened and endangered species.
- Share research and monitoring findings via the Internet with park visitors, educators and students, and others around the world.

4.4.2.8 Make conservation successes a part of the national park visitor experience and of the story we tell the world, so they influence thinking, personal decisions and lifestyles.

- Share the stories of park and citizen scientists widely in park publications and the Internet.

4.5 History and Culture Within Contemporary Experience and Protection

4.5.1 Objectives

- *Link visitor opportunities to the rich cultural heritage of the park so that national historic sites and cultural resources in Waterton become integral to contemporary visitor experience and connection to place.*
- *Ensure the condition of the park’s cultural resources is maintained or improved, and increase the profile of the national historic sites and cultural resources in the park.*

By linking past and present, the park’s cultural resources help us appreciate and understand our origins and who we are as Canadians. Waterton Lakes National Park’s human history dates back at least 10,000 years. The park’s distinctive cultural heritage includes two national historic sites – Prince of Wales Hotel and First Oil Well in Western Canada – and encompasses close to 300 archaeological sites, 43,000 archaeological artefacts, 62 historic objects, and historic buildings including 19 recognized federal heritage buildings. This irreplaceable heritage is important in itself, and also for its combined contribution to the park’s significance and sense of place.

The stories that help to define this place are products of early and contemporary Aboriginal use, European exploration and boundary surveying, mining and exploration for oil. Waterton’s cultural heritage also includes the key characters that left their mark such as Thomas Blakiston, Kootenai Brown and Fredrick Godsal, the evolution of recreation and tourism from rustic family camping trips and horseback adventures to mountain biking and scuba diving, the evolution of Waterton’s unique community, and the fruition of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site. Park visitors can experience a vivid sense of the past and personally connect with, and contribute to, this continuing human legacy. Waterton Lakes National Park protects important cultural resources in large part by continually reinventing our relationship with them, while protecting their authenticity and historic character.

Aboriginal communities, park leaseholders, businesses, organisations and individuals all have an important role to play in maintaining the park's cultural environment and recounting its fascinating stories.

4.5.2 Direction

- 4.5.2.1 Parks Canada will collaborate with the Waterton Natural History Association, tourism partners, local museums and other regional cultural attractions to develop heritage-themed festivals and events, products and learning opportunities to increase interest in and visitation to national historic sites.**
- 4.5.2.2 Parks Canada will honour connections with our past and actively seek the involvement of Aboriginal people in documenting and presenting their cultures, stories and relationships to park landscapes.**
- Animate places where visitors gather to experience live theatrical performances, interpretation, special events and new media linking the history and national historic sites of the park to contemporary experiences.
- 4.5.2.3 Parks Canada will protect and communicate the park's irreplaceable cultural resources, including its built heritage, archaeological resources, historic objects and documentary records.**
- Complete the commemorative integrity statement for Prince of Wales Hotel National Historic Site of Canada and implement the Management Plan for First Oil Well in Western Canada National Historic Site of Canada in order to keep national historic sites alive and relevant while linking their stories to the broader park landscape and to contemporary visitor experiences.

4.6 Improving Infrastructure to Enhance the Park Experience

4.6.1 Objective

- *Maintain and/or improve park infrastructure to facilitate opportunities for visitor experience and to reduce environmental impact of park operations.*

4.6.2 Direction

- 4.6.2.1 Parks Canada will maintain or improve park infrastructure to facilitate opportunities for visitor experience and to reduce environmental impact of operations.**
- Operate roadways, culverts, utilities and the sewage treatment plant to minimize their impact on the landscape and waterways.
 - Continue to seek options to reduce the impacts of park operations.
 - Improve visitor orientation and information infrastructure.
 - Introduce a program to recapitalize Waterton community assets rated in poor or fair condition, and prevent further decline in the condition of remaining assets.
 - Redevelop the Red Rock Parkway as our first priority, followed by the Akamina Parkway.
 - Maintain Hay Barn and Marquis Hole roads at their current standard.
 - Develop road/highway maintenance plan which incorporates ecological challenges such as weed dispersal, roadside mowing and aquatic contamination.





Parks Canada, Anna Lee-Carswell

5. AREA CONCEPTS

5.1 The Waterton Valley

5.1.1 At Its Future Best

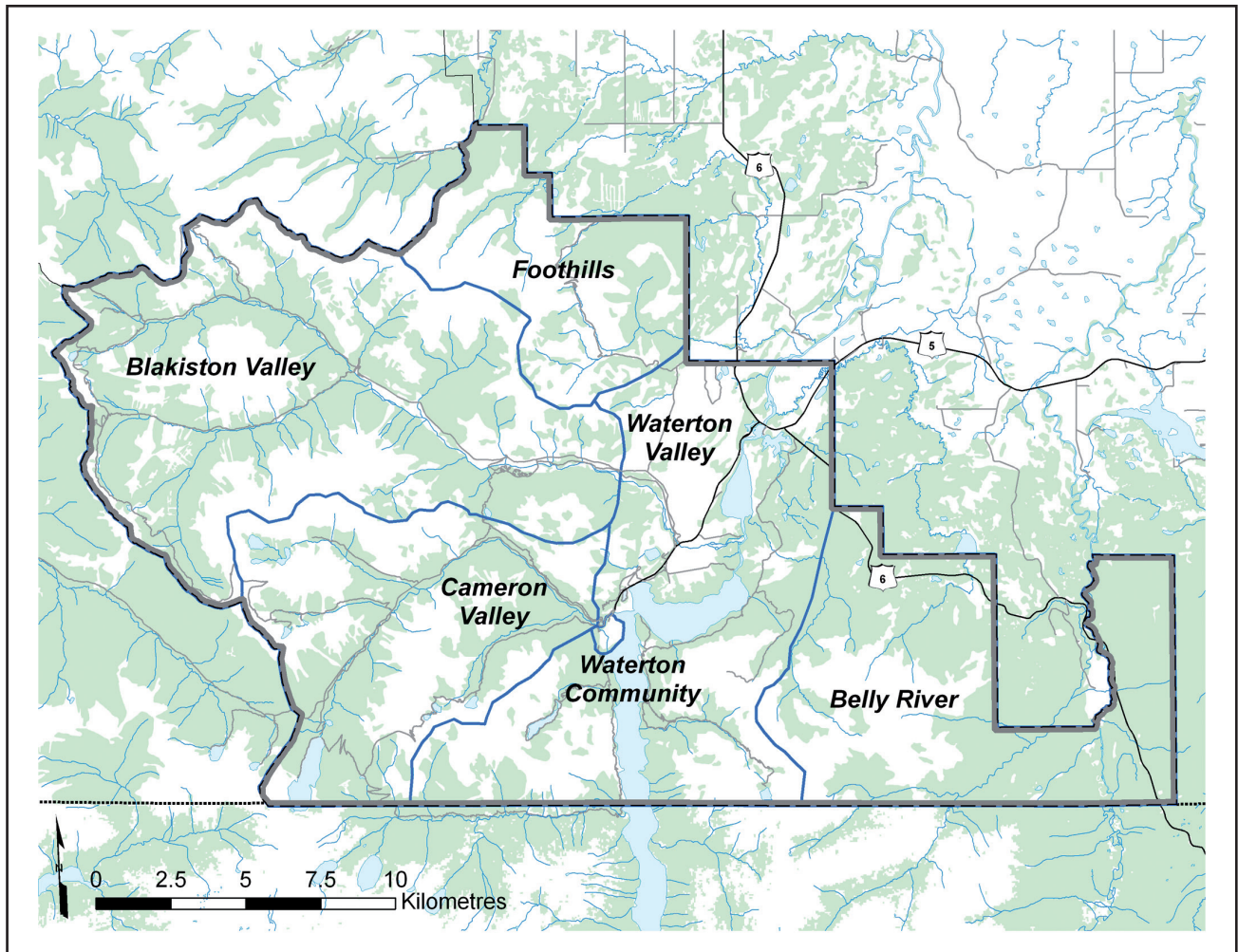
The Waterton Valley, with its signature views of rolling grasslands and sparkling Waterton Lakes embraced by colourful mountains, remains unchanged save for the natural effects of wind, water and fire. Sweeping native grasslands support wildlife and a tapestry of colourful native wildflowers. Once threatened animals such as the half-moon hairstreak butterfly, northern leopard frog and western toad thrive here. The Maskinonge provides a productive stopover for migrating ducks, geese and swans.

Visitors enjoy easily accessible outdoor land and lake-based recreational opportunities such as golfing, picnicking, fishing, scuba diving and boating. Rich and varied opportunities tempt visitors to walk, hike, paddle, cycle and drive “where the mountains meet the prairie”

and to learn about and contribute to protecting and caring for this extraordinary valley.

Visitors, both adventurous and timid, venture into the wild and scenic Upper Waterton Valley by trail, water and boat tours to experience, firsthand, the international Crown of the Continent ecosystem and the thrill of crossing an international boundary the way wildlife do, unencumbered by human regulation. Tales of Waterton's natural and cultural history bring the landscape to life, and honour its role as the Canadian side of the world's first international Peace Park and World Heritage Site.

Map 1: Planning Areas in Waterton Lakes National Park



5.1.2 Current Situation

The Waterton Valley has the highest concentration of visitor facilities, including the Entrance Parkway, Hay Barn and Marquis Hole roads, the community, the Waterton Lakes Golf Course, Camp Columbus youth camp, Alpine Stables, and popular trails. Much the park's operational infrastructure is also located in the Waterton Valley, including the Park Compound, Operations Building, bunkhouse and utility corridors.

As the most popular area in the park, the Waterton Valley is where the most focused presentation is made of the International Peace Park World Heritage Site themes as these are delivered at the Peace Park Pavilion in the community, park events and interpretation programs, and epitomized in signature views south from Waterton to Glacier National Park.

The Canada-U.S.A. International Boundary crosses the Upper Waterton Lake and a significant portion of the valley viewscape is located in Glacier National Park (U.S.A.), including the Goat Haunt Ranger Station. The Goat Haunt Ranger Station is the landing point for thousands of visitors touring the lake by boat, and a focal trailhead that provides access to Glacier National Park from Waterton Lakes National Park.

The range in elevations, varied habitats and the presence of water makes this valley ecologically rich and diverse. The park's largest expanse of foothills parkland, including native grasslands, carpets the northern sections of the Waterton Valley and a tongue of prairie extends north into the Blakiston Valley.

The Maskinonge wetlands represent some of the last remaining wetlands in southwestern Alberta. This area is an important waterfowl staging and nesting area and several rare, endangered or threatened bird species such as trumpeter swans, bald eagles and red necked grebes frequent the wetlands.

Many of the park's efforts at maintaining ecological integrity occur in the Waterton Valley. Aspen trees and invasive plants are encroaching and altering the native grasslands, and prescribed fire is being used in restoration. Many of the park species identified as being at risk can be found here, including the half-moon hairstreak butterfly, the northern leopard frog and the western toad.

In many ways, the Waterton Valley's expanse of critical habitat is the ecological core of the park and provides visitors, who may be less likely to travel to more remote areas of the park, with unparalleled "View from the Edge" and "Step into the Wild" wildlife viewing opportunities, particularly of bears and elk. Visitors enjoy day hikes, particularly on the Bertha Falls, Bear's Hump and Crypt Lake trails. The park's warmest swimming is found at Marquis Hole and Emerald Bay, while cycling is available along the Entrance Parkway and on designated trails.

The visitor's sense of arrival, welcome and orientation could be improved by better communicating the programs and opportunities available in the park. Outside of the local region, the park's winter opportunities are not well known.

5.1.3 Objectives

- *Protect the area's signature "where the mountains meet the prairies" views, natural processes, and threatened species in ways that encourage visitors to learn about and enjoy the area, and contribute to its conservation.*
- *The sense of welcome and orientation to the park is improved.*
- *The range and quality of recreational opportunities is enhanced.*

5.1.4 Key Actions

- Improve the entrance gate area to create a positive sense of welcome and arrival.
- Develop a multi-purpose trail between the park gate and the community linking existing features such as picnic areas, improved interpretive displays outlining the features of this important area,

and improved accessibility to beaches at Hay Barn and Marquis Hole. The trail will be located within the Zone IV road corridor, primarily on previously disturbed areas, and will provide visitors with scenic “View from the Edge” vistas of the Middle and Lower Waterton Lakes.

- Investigate the feasibility of locating a new visitor centre at a site along the entrance road across from the Lake Linnet/Middle Waterton Lake day use area. This site will improve access for visitors, provide a positive welcome and sense of arrival, and mitigate impacts on the wildlife corridor in the area of the current visitor centre.
- Better communicate to visitors the daily event and interpretation opportunities provided by the park and partners.
- Work with business owners, tourism providers and the community of Waterton to refine and improve visitor opportunities, with an emphasis on presenting the story of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site.
- Ensure the natural processes of fire, flood, avalanche, erosion and deposition continue to shape the valley:
 - Whenever possible, avoid manipulation of dynamic natural processes (e.g. flooding, shifting of streams, deposition) on the active alluvial Blakiston Fan. The Hay Barn and Marquis Hole roads will be maintained to a standard consistent with this action.
 - Designate areas of the Blakiston alluvial fan as environmentally sensitive sites to protect rare and sensitive habitat, while leaving existing road corridors, the Alpine Stables and the Camp Columbus youth camp unaffected.
 - Ensure that invasive plants are identified and controlled, particularly on native grasslands, and restore disturbed sites.
 - Re-establish a self-sustaining population of northern leopard frogs.
 - Implement species at risk recovery plans for half-moon hairstreak butterflies.

Review current management of the Maskinonge wetlands Zone 1 Area to ensure its ecological and cultural importance is communicated to visitors and to promote appropriate waterfowl viewing opportunities.

Retain and repair the Bison Paddock and associated infrastructure, and consider an expansion of the winter paddock to reduce grazing impacts. Improve the existing overlook and interpretive displays to deliver additional messages about bison and their ecological role.

Review the current state of the Wishbone Trail to identify possible changes that would improve habitat security and visitor experience opportunities, and reduce potential conflicts between visitors and bears. The Wishbone Trail will be closed to mountain bikes beyond the junction with the Vimy Trail to reduce potential conflicts between wildlife and park users.

Review and improve communication to visitors about the park’s full range of recreational opportunities available in the Waterton Valley during the fall and winter seasons.

Increase shoulder season visitation by promoting fall wildlife viewing in the Waterton Valley, in a manner that respects wildlife habitat and minimizes effects on the elk herd.



5.2 The Community of Waterton

5.2.1 At its Future Best

Visitors appreciate the leisurely pace of the Waterton community. While initiatives to revitalise the community into the future are encouraged, the low density, small scale, historic character of the village is respected. It is a festive and active place in the summer months, quiet and more relaxed in the shoulder seasons, and nestled down for rest and renewal in the winter months. The community is emblematic of Canadian culture reflecting southern Alberta's history, has a friendly and engaging small town nature, demonstrates environmental stewardship, and presents a safe base from which to experience opportunities in other areas of the park.

The community is the park's focal point for information, interpretation, events and activities, particularly those relating to the Waterton-Glacier Peace Park World Heritage Site. Programs that illustrate the park's nature, history and culture appeal to multicultural and multigenerational audiences.

5.2.2 Current Situation

The Waterton community is the gateway to broader national park experiences and virtually all visitors enter it at some point during their visit. The community is the park's centre for information and interpretation, celebrates international peace and cooperation, and demonstrates ongoing efforts towards achieving environmentally sustainable development. During the summer season, the community provides a variety of services and accommodation to visitors. In the shoulder and winter seasons, the range of services is reduced and visitors have commented that they would enjoy additional services and conveniences at that time.

Popular tourism features located in the community include the Peace Park Pavilion, beaches and picnic areas, the Townsite trail loop, Cameron Falls, the Falls Interpretive Theatre and interpretive exhibits, and trailheads for Bertha Falls/Lake and the Lakeshore Trail to Goat Haunt Ranger Station in Glacier National Park. The community also offers commercial accommodation and the campground, several stores and restaurants, the Waterton Heritage Centre, and opportunities to rent bikes and tour the lake by boat from the local marina.

While all market segments visit the community, it is most important to visitors who seek 'softer' national park experiences. Returning visitors, often with family connections or history in the park, demonstrate strong feelings of community ownership.

Surveys report that while visitors enjoy the timeless, nostalgic character of the community, better maintenance of public and private facilities would improve their overall experience. Significant improvements to community infrastructure have been made through reinvestment in the main commercial streets, however additional work is required.

A wildlife corridor passes through the community. Abundant deer and sheep use the area for grazing and to avoid predators, which results in extraordinary opportunities to view wildlife. Visitor interaction with wildlife, particularly deer, is not safe or ecologically sound, and leads to further habituation and human-wildlife conflicts.

5.2.3 Objectives

- *Revitalize the community in ways that maintain and respect the low density, small scale, and historic character of the village.*
- *Maintain the friendly and engaging small town nature of the community which reflects southern Alberta's history, and demonstrate civic leadership in environmental stewardship.*

- *The community continues to be the park's focal point for information, interpretation, events and activities, particularly those relating to the Waterton-Glacier Peace Park World Heritage Site, and provides a base from which to experience opportunities in other areas of the park.*

5.2.4 Key Actions

- Continue to work with the business community and others to support the organization of special events, particularly those events that bring people into the park during the spring, fall and winter.
- The Waterton community's existing limits to development will be maintained and community boundaries will not expand. Commercial development will be permitted only within the commercially-zoned area and commercial floor area will not exceed established limits.
- Ensure that new development and re-development proposals will fit within the community plan and clearly support and advance all three elements of Parks Canada's mandate – protection, experience and learning.
- *The Waterton Community Plan 2000* will continue to guide the Waterton community within the context of this management plan and the Canada National Parks Act and Regulations. The community plan will be updated to reflect the direction of this park management plan. The updated community plan will consider both aesthetic improvements and services to visitors in all seasons by:
 - Improving the critical role for visitors at the "View from the Edge" level of experience who desire a perceptually safer, more comfortable national park experience. The community will be a staging area for visitors, particularly for independent travellers, going further into the park for "Step into the Wild" and "Mountain Wilderness" national park experiences.
 - Improving its use as the focal point for interpretation and other communications activities and programs. Programs will be created for multicultural and multigenerational audiences that focus on the park's nature, history and culture.
 - The Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site Designation will be a common unifying theme in creating new visitor opportunities.
 - Improving visitor information and wayfinding in the community by creating improved signs to inform visitors of points of interest and services.
 - Improving facility appearance and landscaping standards.
 - Improving outdoor gathering places and washrooms.
 - Encouraging common seasons and hours of operation for park businesses.
 - Working with commercial operators in the park to identify and develop opportunities for additional staff housing in the community.
- Work toward a community model of environmental stewardship and sustainability in collaboration with commercial operators, cottagers, Improvement District #4, the Community Association, the Waterton Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Association, the Leaseholders Association and the Community Green Team.
- Maintain and monitor wildlife corridors around the community, and incorporate advice from the Waterton Community Deer Advisory Group for ways to reduce human-wildlife conflicts, particularly with deer.
- Operate the Townsite Campground at the highest level of service in the park at the "View from the Edge" level of experience. The campground will not be expanded; redevelopment within the boundary of the campground, aimed at improving the camping experience, will be undertaken.
- Improve visitor washrooms, parking and interpretive media at Cameron Falls.
- Continue phased upgrades of community sewer, water, roads and sidewalks.



5.3 The Blakiston Valley

5.3.1 At its Future best

The Blakiston Valley best encapsulates Waterton's diversity, expressed by native grasslands, fragrant evergreen forests, alpine meadows and all the species that depend on those habitats. Wildlife uses the area extensively as they move unimpeded through this major valley. The prairie and mountain landscape of the valley continues to richly reward visitors with a range of opportunities - from viewing wildlife and vibrant wildflowers, to visiting cultural sites, to camping and activities such as mountain biking, scrambles and hikes that range in length from easy to challenging.

Travelling the winding, undulating Red Rock Parkway is a unique driving experience on a route that follows the landscape rather than imposing itself upon it. As the major destination in the valley, Red Rock Canyon is a key gathering place for sightseeing, photography and short walks. It also serves as a staging point for extended hikes, mountain biking and horseback trips, where visitors follow historic routes across the great divide that have been in use for thousands of years. The Blakiston Valley maintains its relatively undeveloped character, while providing essential infrastructure to support safe, comfortable experiences for visitors to immerse themselves in this unparalleled southern Alberta landscape.

5.3.2 Current Situation

The Red Rock Parkway is the most popular drive in the park as it provides easy access to the Blakiston Valley, picnic areas, interpretive opportunities and the Red Rock Canyon day use area. The Parkway is currently closed to motorized traffic in the winter. The Blakiston Valley has incredible scenery, significant pre and post contact Aboriginal cultural sites, hiking, biking and wildlife viewing opportunities. Mount Blakiston, the highest mountain in the park, dominates the viewscape.

The Crandell Campground provides vehicle accessible, unserviced campsites. Visitors use the campground as a base for further explorations in the valley.

Wildlife uses the Blakiston Valley as a significant movement corridor between valleys within and outside of the park, although park roads and development can influence their movement and behaviour. Foothills fescue grasslands and rare plants such as moonworts, whitebark and limber pine grow in the valley. Ungulates inhabit the area and in turn, they attract predators such as bears and cougars into the Blakiston valley. One of the park's two known Bull trout spawning grounds is located in Blakiston Creek.

Archaeological sites reflecting use by pre and post contact cultures are present throughout the area, including ancient bison jumps, drive lanes and tepee rings. Present day trails follow routes used by Aboriginal peoples for over 10,000 years. These routes were also used by early explorers and settlers travelling through the Blakiston Valley.

5.3.3 Objectives

- *Maintain the relatively undeveloped character of the valley, in which facilities and the parkway follow the landscape rather than impose upon it.*
- *Improve and expand visitor opportunities, enhance wildlife movement, and protect sensitive species.*

5.3.4 Key Actions

- Create arrival and interpretation nodes at start of the Red Rock Parkway and at Red Rock Canyon that provide visitors with orientation and information to ensure they have a safe, enjoyable and memorable experience.



- Improve the Red Rock Parkway road surface, while retaining its current winding character to present a “*View from the Edge*” opportunity.
 - Improve pull outs at scenic points and interpretive opportunities.
 - Consider actions to improve cycling opportunities, particularly regarding safety.
- The Crandell Mountain Campground will offer campers a semi-primitive experience at the “*Step into the Wild*” level. A new tepee-based camping opportunity will be developed as a soft entry to camping for visitors who are less experienced or who would like the convenience of a tent already in place.
- The day use area at Red Rock Canyon will be redeveloped to:
 - Improve washroom facilities.
 - Improve parking and vehicle circulation.
 - Renew signs and interpretive media.
- Promote the Blakiston Valley as an area for wilderness and overnight hiking, and improve information for back country users.
- Collaborate with Aboriginal people and interested groups such as the Waterton Natural History Association to develop visitor opportunities to experience the historic routes (e.g. South Kootenay Pass) in the valley that were used by Aboriginal peoples and early explorers.
- Promote shoulder season cycling and walking on the Red Rock Parkway.
- Use prescribed fire to maintain key habitats such as grasslands and sagebrush, improve distribution of whitebark and limber pine, manage fuel build-up, and protect facilities.
- Actively manage the impact and distribution of non-native plant species. Continue to protect Bull trout spawning habitat, and investigate ways to reduce the threat of introduced fish on the Bull trout population.
- Improve trail conditions and way-finding signs on problematic trails/routes. Improve hiking connections to the Castle Special Place.



5.4 The Cameron Valley

5.4.1 At Its Future Best

The mix of subalpine snow forests, alpine meadows and lakes endures in the Cameron Valley. The distinctive sound of Clark's nutcrackers feeding on whitebark pine seeds still echoes among its mature evergreen trees. Visitors understand and appreciate that rare plants such as Bollander's quillwort exist in the valley. Grizzly bears, lynx, wolverine and other large mammals move freely through the valley's important wildlife corridors. Lush avalanche slopes sweep steeply from the surrounding peaks to the lake, providing essential international and interprovincial grizzly bear habitat.

The valley appeals to all visitor groups and offers many intriguing experiences. Visitors take pleasure in hiking, boating, fishing, skiing, snowshoeing and ice climbing, as well as sightseeing in spectacular mountain scenery. The Cameron Valley is the focal point for winter visitors as a range of cross country skiing and snow shoeing opportunities are available on trails winding through a true snow forest to the continental divide and beyond. Summer is the time to enjoy picnics and cultural sites, marvel at the peak to prairie views of the Carthew-Alderson trail, paddle Cameron Lake, relax amidst tall fragrant beargrass flowers and see bears, river otters and moose in their natural habitat. Vehicle-based opportunities appeal to visitors who seek the Cameron Valley's rich mountain, lake and waterfall scenery. More knowledgeable backcountry visitors also find abundant opportunities to experience mountain wilderness.

5.4.2 Current Situation

In many other Rocky Mountain locations, sub-alpine lakes and snow forest are challenging to access. Here in the Cameron Valley, they are easily accessible at the end of an extraordinary scenic drive. This high elevation area supports plants that are unique to the park and region, including some at the edge of their range such as beargrass and Bolander's quillwort. The Cameron Valley's upper end is the continental divide and it experiences the highest snowfall in the park. This makes the Cameron Valley the focal point for the park's best, most consistent winter recreational opportunities.

The Akamina Parkway is a 15.2 km scenic route through the Cameron Valley that leads to numerous trailheads and the major day use area at Cameron Lake. The Akamina Parkway is narrow and steep in places, and this can result in challenging winter driving conditions as snow storms are frequent and the road may be icy. The road is closed beyond the Little Prairie picnic area in early winter and this serves as a trailhead for skiing and snowshoeing.

Using the parkway, visitors are able to access trailheads, picnic areas and the First Oil in Western Canada National Historic Site. With vehicle access, "*View from the Edge*," "*Step into the Wild*" and "*Mountain Wilderness*" levels of experience are available.

Cameron Lake is set in dense evergreen forests where some of the park's largest and oldest trees have grown in response to the lush moisture that spills over the continental divide from Pacific coast weather systems. The lake is crossed at its southern end by the Canada-U.S.A. International Boundary. Above the lake, cairns on Forum Peak mark the meeting of the international boundary with the Alberta-British Columbia provincial boundaries. Avalanche slopes sweep steeply from the mountain peaks to Cameron Lake and these slopes provide high quality grizzly bear habitat.

Cameron Lake offers boating and fishing opportunities in an environment less subject to winds, as compared to the park's main valley. To maintain the lake's quiet, traditional character, only non-motorized boats are permitted.

5.4.3 Objectives

- *Improve the quality and awareness of the area's year-round recreational opportunities in ways that promote increased understanding and protection of its unique ecological and cultural resources.*
- *Cameron Valley will be the focal point for visitor use during the winter with enhanced and expanded recreational opportunities.*

5.4.4 Key Actions

- Work with partners to communicate the area's recreational opportunities, natural and cultural features, and safe practices using a variety of media.
- Continue to provide non-motorized recreational opportunities at Cameron Lake. Fishing for non-native species will be permitted.
- Improve the road surface and signs along the parkway; assess and enhance all trailheads where required.
- Address safety and ecological concerns associated with parking congestion at the Akamina trailhead. Work with British Columbia Parks to improve visitor experiences and coordination of ecological projects between Akamina-Kishinena Provincial Park and Waterton Lakes National Park.
- Restore whitebark pine at Summit Lake and elsewhere in the area. Bolander's quillwort populations will be maintained and restored, and restoration programs will be communicated to visitors.
- Improve information and interpretation of the area's unique snow forest and vegetation such as bear grass and Bolander's quillwort.
- Work with Glacier National Park and the Province of British Columbia to protect and interpret grizzly bear habitat in the area.
- Monitor the effectiveness of wildlife movement corridors.
- Improve information and promotion of winter recreational opportunities, as well as safe practices, in the following ways:
 - Investigate additional cross country skiing and snow shoeing opportunities including the possibility of expanding the existing Cameron ski trail to create an additional loop which follows the former telephone line from Little Akamina Lake.
 - Assess Crandell Lake backcountry campground as a node to support winter use through development of warming huts and washrooms, and promoting it to visitors as a soft, accessible, "*Mountain Wilderness Experience.*" This route will also be managed to provide cross country skiing access to the upper Blakiston valley.
 - Improve cross country skiing track setting and signs to reduce conflicts between snowshoers and skiers.
 - Consider winter events such as loppets and snowshoe races as a means to grow winter visitation.
 - Assess winter guiding activities to improve their management.
- Encourage private sector hiker shuttles and guided hikes.
- Maintain mountain biking opportunities into Akamina-Kishinena Provincial Park.
- Assess improve trails and, interpretive media and picnic opportunities at the First Oil Well and Oil City sites.



5.5 The Belly River

5.5.1 At Its Future Best

The Belly River area is imbued with an atmosphere that feels as though one is in a landscape unchanged from the past. Wetlands soften the landscape, attracting abundant birds and wildlife to its healthy montane and subalpine environments. Mountain goats and bighorn sheep regularly traverse the mountain slopes in the subalpine and alpine, and elk can be found in the side valleys.

Visitors travelling the highway from Glacier National Park feel welcomed as they take in a scenic drive rich in natural and Aboriginal history.

The campground and other services are simple and traditional as they reflect the area's wilderness character. While most visitors enjoy sightseeing and the learning opportunities available along the Chief Mountain Highway, the more adventurous can discover wilderness experiences further from the road. Strong links with Glacier National Park are evident on the landscape as shown by healthy wilderness habitat and travel corridors for wildlife.

5.5.2 Current Situation

Compared to other areas of the park, human presence in the Belly River area is sparse and sporadic, which supports the high quality of the habitat. A major travel corridor for wildlife travelling between Glacier National Park and the Waterton Valley, this habitat is excellent for bears, wolves and other carnivores, as well as mountain goats, bighorn sheep and elk. Bull trout habitat is healthy and supports major spawning beds. The Sofa wetlands have a diverse number of avian and aquatic species. Rare flowers such as Jone's columbine can be found on the flanks of Sofa Mountain, but invasive plants, particularly knapweed, are an ongoing management challenge.

The Chief Mountain Highway, the route for visitors from Glacier National Park, transects the area and the Blood Timber Limit is enveloped by the park on three sides. Highway signs from the south do not communicate to visitors that they are entering the park and the national park presence at the border crossing is not well defined.

The focus in the Belly River area will be on providing "View from the Edge" and "Step into the Wild" experiences. In that sense, the Belly River area will appeal to many visitor types. Many of the visitors who enjoy the Belly River Area are repeat visitors from the local region, who have an internal focus, and are knowledgeable about the park.

Routes in the area are less travelled and offer a wilderness experience. Hiking opportunities such as Vimy Ridge and the Sofa cirque are used by more adventurous visitors. The Sofa Mountain fire and prescribed fires present important interpretation opportunities.

The smallest and least developed road-accessible campground in the park is located in the Belly River area. The campground has the only group camp in the park, making this area popular with families. The group camp generates a steady demand for the campground.

5.5.3 Objectives

- *Retain the area's wilderness character and enhance opportunities so visitors feel they are in a landscape unchanged from the past.*
- *Improve the sense of arrival for visitors entering the park from the United States and enhance visitor awareness of the area's educational and recreational opportunities.*



5.5.4 Key Actions

- Review the pullouts, picnic areas and viewpoints on the Chief Mountain Highway for improved visitor communications, safety and interpretation opportunities. Install signs on the Chief Mountain Highway at the park boundary.
- Develop and implement a communications strategy to increase awareness of visitor experience opportunities and services among visitors crossing the border.
- Continue to work with the Kainai on issues of mutual interest associated with the Blood Timber Limit, and discuss opportunities with Aboriginal people about developing cultural programs in the Belly River area.
- Implement plans for prescribed fire in the valley to restore Montane habitat.
- Monitor carnivore use of this ecologically important area.
- Manage the Belly River area to provide a wilderness backcountry experience. No new trails will be developed and this will assist in maintaining secure habitat.
- Clearly communicated opportunities in the Belly River area (e.g. camping, wildlife watching, fishing and paddling the Belly River) to visitors.
- Investigate opportunities to promote cycling during the shoulder seasons.
- Promote the Belly River Campground as a vehicle-accessible introduction to a primitive camping experience in a “*Mountain Wilderness*” experience setting. Consideration will be given to separating parking from the campsites to encourage the wilderness atmosphere. The campground will be available to regional school and youth groups as a setting for learning, tours, special programs, events and authentic park-based activities.
- Develop an interpretation plan for the Belly River area.



5.6 The Foothills

5.6.1 At Its Future Best

The Foothills area represents a distinctive, tranquil opportunity for visitors to experience solitude in a place that is rarely visited. As the land transitions from dry ridges to open, windswept prairie, hikers and equestrians travel through native grasslands, shrublands, aspen groves, and limber pines. Bears, bighorn sheep and elk are frequently in the area, and eagles are seen riding winds along the ridges. Park trails and services in the area are few, creating an opportunity for visitors seeking a primitive wilderness experience to immerse themselves in a secluded, special place.

5.6.2 Current Situation

Compared to other areas of the park, the Foothills area is remote and reveals less evidence of human presence. The foothills rough fescue grasslands are recognized as an environmentally sensitive site in Waterton Lakes National Park as these grasslands form a narrow band that stretches along the plains and foothills from southern Alberta into Montana. They provide habitat for several prairie species such as tailed grouse, badgers, and thirteen-lined ground squirrels. Significant wildlife populations may be found in the area. The fescue grasslands provide critical winter range for elk and important spring range for mule deer and sheep.

Most users are drawn from the region and the area is popular with equestrians. With its remoteness and lack of roads, the Foothills area appeals to visitors who embrace “Mountain Wilderness” experiences.

5.6.3 Objectives

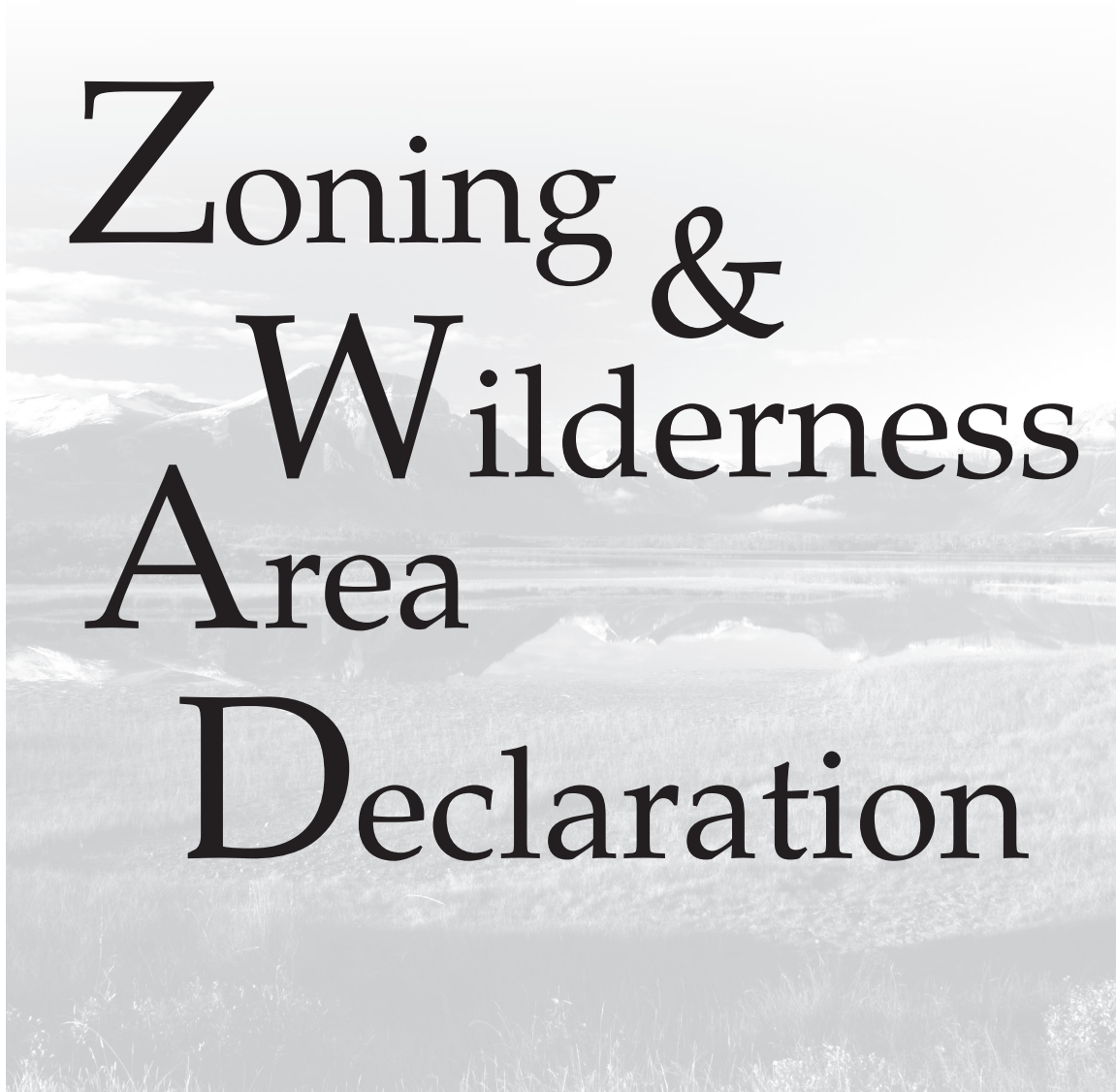
- *Provide a distinctive, tranquil opportunity for visitors to experience solitude and a primitive wilderness experience.*
- *Promote equestrian opportunities in keeping with the area’s ecological sensitivity and wilderness experience objective.*

5.6.4 Key Actions

- Manage the Foothills area to provide “Mountain Wilderness” experiences. Opportunities for equestrians will be promoted here. The remote wilderness experience will be protected, trails maintained at their current state, and no new facilities will be developed. Prescribed fire will be used to promote habitat restoration.
- Communicate the qualities of the Foothills area through communication programs that encourage activities in keeping with the wilderness character of the area.
- Highlight the area to independent visitors as an early season hiking and equestrian opportunity.
- Maintain fences that delineate the park boundary as a means of controlling stock access.







Stephen Harrington

6. ZONING AND WILDERNESS AREA DECLARATION

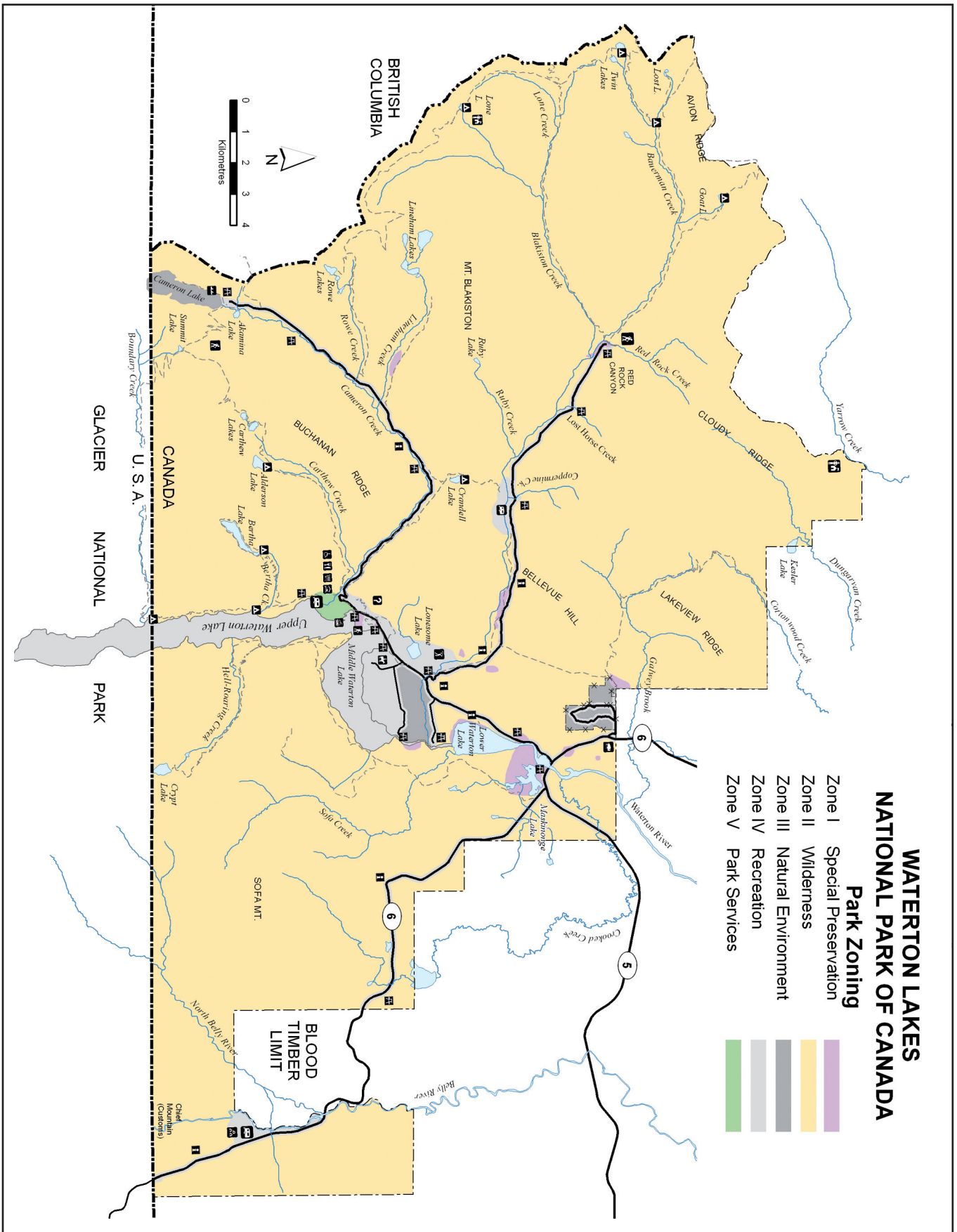
6.1 National Park Zoning System

The zoning system is an integrated approach to the classification of land and water areas in a national park. Areas are classified according to the need to protect the ecosystem and the park's cultural resources. The capability and suitability of these areas in providing opportunities for visitors is also a consideration in making decisions about zoning. The zoning system has five categories, which are described in *Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies* (1994).

6.1.1 Zone I - Special Preservation (2% of the park)

Zone I lands deserve special preservation because they contain or support unique, threatened or endangered natural or cultural features, or are among the best examples of the features that represent a natural region. Preservation is an important consideration. Motorized access and circulation is not permitted. Resource sensitivity is the key consideration in designating Zone I areas.

Map 2: Zones in Waterton Lakes National Park



The Maskinonge Wetlands

The Maskinonge wetlands contain some of the few remaining wetlands in southwestern Alberta. This area is an important waterfowl staging and nesting area. Several rare or threatened bird species such as Trumpeter swans, Hooded mergansers and Red-necked grebes frequent the area. Two significant archaeological sites on the shores of Maskinonge Lake have been included in the Zone I designation.

Lineham Discovery Well

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recommended the Lineham Discovery Well, the first oil well in Western Canada, as a national historic site on May 17, 1965. The site is marked with a plaque which commemorates the “First Oil Well in Western Canada.”

Archaeological Sites

There are approximately 250 known archaeological sites in Waterton Lakes National Park, dating back almost 11,000 years. Zone I designation is applied to the most significant of these sites.

6.1.2 Zone II - Wilderness (83% of the park)

Zone II contains extensive areas that are good representations of a natural region and that are conserved in a wilderness state. The perpetuation of ecosystems with minimal human interference is the key consideration. Zone II areas offer opportunities for visitors to experience the park’s ecosystems and require few, if any, rudimentary services and facilities. In much of Zone II, visitors can experience remoteness and solitude. Motorized access is not permitted. Most of the park will be managed as Zone II. Zone II areas cannot support high levels of visitor use and facility development. Facilities are restricted to trails, backcountry campgrounds and patrol cabins. Sections of the park will continue to have no facilities.

Declared Wilderness is a form of protection, roughly synonymous with Zone II, that is extended to large expanses of the park. Declared Wilderness prohibits any activity that is likely to impair the wilderness character of those areas. These areas are surveyed and through an Order in Council, the identified land becomes part of the *National Parks Wilderness Area Declaration Regulations*, and a legislative constraint is placed on development. This plan confirms existing boundaries of Zone II areas.

Only those activities are allowed which are required for: park administration; public safety; provision of basic user facilities including trails and rudimentary campsites; the carrying on of traditional resource harvesting activities where authorized; and in exceptional circumstances, access by air. Boundaries of declared wilderness areas generally conform to that of Zone II. Minor variation may result from the inclusion of Zone I areas or from the requirement to produce a legal survey.

6.1.3 Zone III - Natural Environment (6% of the park)

In Zone III areas, visitors experience the park’s natural and cultural heritage through outdoor recreational activities that require minimal services and facilities of a rustic nature. Zone III applies to areas where visitor use requires facilities that exceed the acceptable standards for Zone II. Motorized access is limited and controlled. Rigorous protection is required because of the area’s ecological and aesthetic importance.

Zone III areas include Cameron Lake and the Bison Paddock.

6.1.4 Zone IV - Outdoor Recreation (8% of the park)

Zone IV accommodates a broad range of opportunities for understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the park’s heritage. Direct access by motorized vehicles is permitted. In Waterton Lakes, Zone IV includes a 200 m right-of-way along major park roads, picnic areas, viewpoints, trailheads, parking areas, the golf course, and the Belly River and Crandell Mountain campgrounds. Zone IV also includes the Upper and Middle Waterton Lakes to accommodate motorized access.

6.1.5 Zone V - Park Services (less than 1% of the park)

The community of Waterton is the sole Zone V area in the park. *The Waterton Community Plan 2000* provides direction for land use and development in the park.

6.1.6 Environmentally Sensitive Sites

The Environmentally Sensitive Sites (ESS) designation applies to areas with significant and sensitive features that require special protection. Unlike Zone I areas, ESS can accommodate higher levels of controlled visitor activity. The ability to adequately protect resources through other designations (e.g. Zone II) is another important criterion in identifying environmentally sensitive sites.

Parks Canada will develop and implement area specific guidelines that reflect the high priority placed on protection of these areas. Area specific guidelines will determine the appropriate level and type of visitor use, as well as resource management strategies. The guidelines will reflect the high priority placed on protection of these significant areas.

The foothills rough fescue grasslands are recognized as ESS in Waterton Lakes National Park. These grasslands form a narrow band, stretching along the plains and foothills from southern Alberta into Montana. Waterton Lakes National Park contains the only example of this type of grassland protected by the Canadian national parks system. They provide habitat for several prairie species such as sharp tailed grouse, badgers, and thirteen-lined ground squirrels. Fescue grasslands provide critical winter range for elk and important spring range for mule deer and sheep.



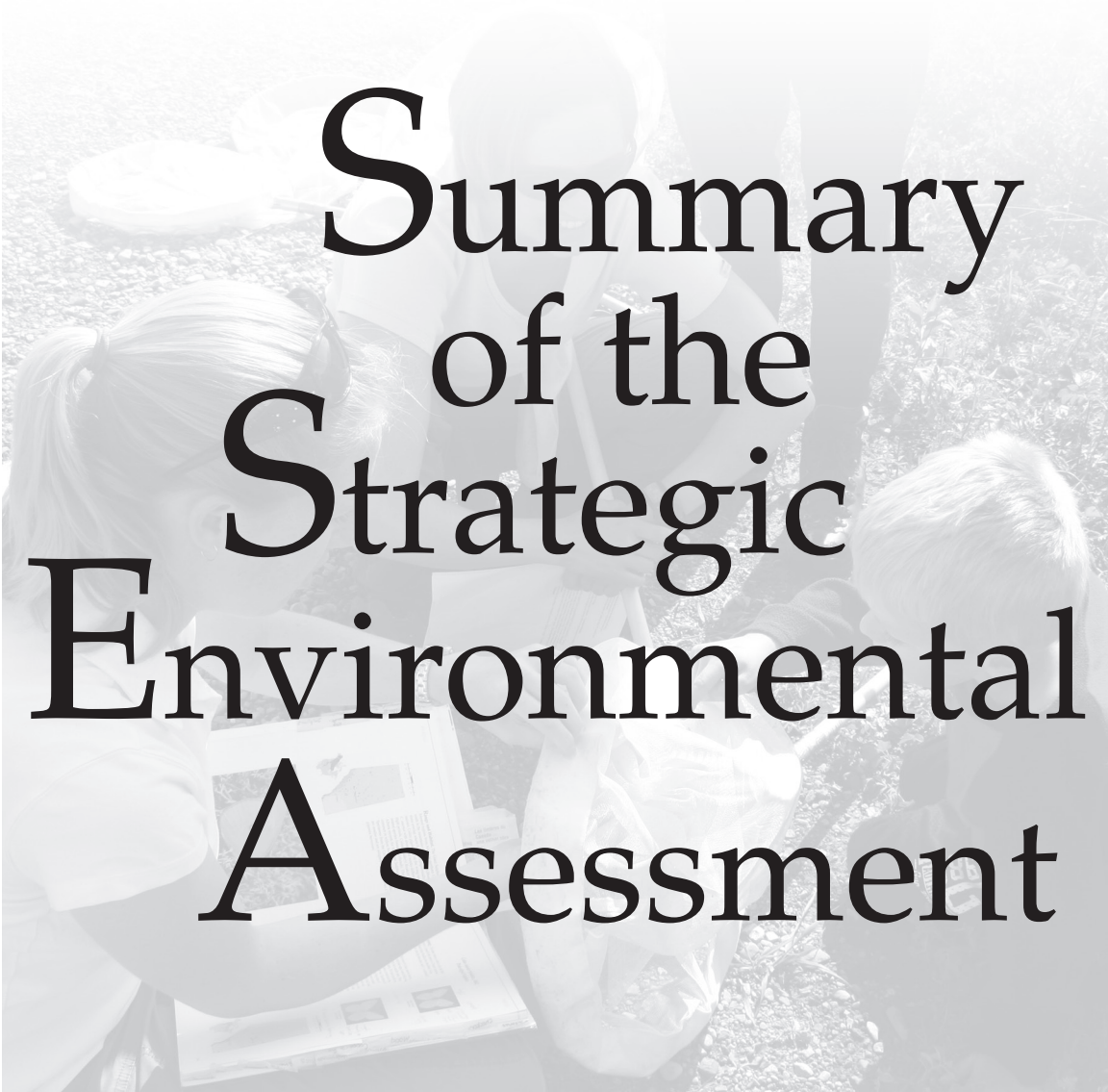


Lorne Fitch

7. MONITORING AND REPORTING

Parks Canada monitors the effectiveness of this management plan by tracking key performance indicators related to the park ecosystems, cultural resources, visitor experience and education programming. A set of quantitative measurements underlies each indicator. Management performance is evaluated against either a prescribed trend or target for each measure.

The indicators of management performance that will be evaluated in the next SOPR, scheduled for completion in 2013/14, are shown in Annex 1.



Summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment

Parks Canada, Anna Lee-Carswell

8. SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The following is a summary of the *Waterton Lakes National Park of Canada Strategic Environmental Assessment of the 2010 Management Plan*.

In accordance with *The Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals (2004)*, a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) was integrated into the *Waterton Lakes National Park Management Plan (2010)*. The SEA was conducted during the development of the management plan as an integrated, iterative process, to allow for adjustments to be made in the plan to enhance positive effects, to avoid or reduce potential negative (including cumulative) effects, and to identify potential measures to mitigate negative effects.

Many aspects of the management plan are specifically intended to result in positive ecological and cultural resource integrity, and are in fact woven into many of the key strategies. For example, the key strategy *Setting Ecosystem Priorities and Showcasing Conservation Innovation* contains three themes which

can be viewed as strategic desired outcomes for Waterton Lakes National Park that will result in positive effects:

- *Maintaining and restoring ecosystem connectivity*
- *Restoration of ecosystem processes*
- *Working to protect the full complement of native species*

This key strategy focuses on efforts to protect and where feasible restore ecosystems. A number of desired outcomes or ecological objectives have been outlined in the SEA that mirror the conditions required for a healthy ecosystem. It is anticipated that successful implementation of plan directions and key actions will be accomplished through the collaboration between park management, resource conservation specialists, project managers, and stakeholders. Zoning commitments that designate large wildlife areas will contribute to protection of a wide range of species.

Valued Components

Identifying the valued components of relevance to the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the management plan for Waterton Lakes National Park is central to understanding the environmental impacts of management strategies and actions. The key valued components include native biodiversity, climate and atmosphere, aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, regional landscapes, and cultural resources.

Wildlife

Habitat loss and fragmentation, as well as wildlife habituation, displacement and mortality all have effects on populations within the park and on regional lands. Waterton Lakes supports a high population of elk in the valley that can influence the condition of the grasslands. While Grizzly bears are present in the park, Waterton Lakes does not offer complete home ranges. Parks Canada will take a regional approach to Grizzly bear management as well as continue research on predator prey relationships. The park continues to manage for identified species at risk and species of special concern.

Aquatic

Historic fish stocking, stream bed manipulation, flood plain disturbance and transportation development has impacted aquatic ecosystems. Parks Canada continues to look at opportunities to restore connectivity, reduce non-native fish populations, and protect riparian areas.

Vegetation

Past management practices and current disturbances have lead to non-native plant infestations and a loss of fescue grasslands. The management plan highlights priority vegetation types found in the Montane ecosystem as areas for potential restoration. Reference is made to using fire as a restoration tool and managing for forest health. Environmental effects on native vegetation populations will be positive with active non-native plant control.

In order to ensure that impacts from increased visitation and increased facilities do not cause important cumulative effects to wildlife and aquatic ecosystems, and that vegetation communities remain unique and productive, the desired outcomes for ensuring healthy ecosystems were considered during the development of the management plan, and should be used to guide the future decision making processes:



Desired outcomes for ecosystem connectivity

- *Terrestrial habitat connectivity is maintained and where feasible restored.*
- *Natural flow regimes, water quality, aquatic connectivity are maintained and where feasible restored.*
- *Long term patterns of ungulate behaviours, distribution and abundance is restored.*

Desired outcomes for natural processes

- *Maintain ecological processes with regard to fire and forest health, and maintain natural function where possible.*
- *Maintain and where feasible restore native vegetation that reflects long term ecosystem function and natural range of variability.*
- *Ensure predator-prey dynamics reflect natural levels.*
- *Alluvial processes are allowed to occur naturally and associated landscape features remain productive habitats.*

Desired outcomes for biodiversity

- *Prevent the further introduction of non-native plant species and reduce current infestations.*
- *Viable wildlife and fish populations and the habitat that sustains them are maintained.*
- *Human caused mortality of priority species is reduced and reproductive success is not diminished.*
- *Maintain natural range of variability in riparian areas regarding composition, structure, quantity and function of native communities.*
- *In wetland areas, maintain natural levels and patterns of surface and subsurface hydrological flow.*

Climate

Climate was identified in the SOPR as an indicator for ecological integrity as it plays a fundamental role in shaping the park ecosystem. The plan acknowledges deficiencies in understanding the impacts to plant and species distributions. In cooperation with other agencies, Parks Canada will continue to monitor potential climate changes and develop management strategies to help protect ecological integrity, and will consider the following desired outcome:

- *Maintain or improve current activities and facilities so they do not contribute to climate change.*

Cultural Resources

Past development, future activities, and natural degradation of sites may further impact cultural resources either through on-the-ground change or loss of knowledge. The following desired outcomes were considered during the development of the management plan, and should be used to guide the future decision making processes:

- *Maintain with minimal disturbance the distinguishing features of cultural and archaeological resources and ensure that there is no loss of information, knowledge, or records.*

In addition, key strategies 'History and Culture within Contemporary Experience and Protection' describe several key directions that are expected to result in positive environmental and cultural resource effects.

Such results include a greater knowledge of ecosystems, ecosystem restoration and monitoring, and greater connections between Canadians and the park to encourage support for park management. The *'Connecting – Reconnecting'* strategy encourages delivering knowledge of the natural and cultural attributes Waterton Lakes to communities and schools outside the national parks.

A number of key strategies and area concepts describe opportunities for enhancing visitor experience (including facilitate learning opportunities, visitor satisfaction and personal connections to nature and history). For example, *'Providing Opportunities for Unique and Inspiring Visitor Experiences'* provides the framework for visitor experience in the park. Key directions provide the basis for creating new park facilities, improving existing infrastructure, or inviting more visitors on the landscape. Growth in visitation to the park needs to be carefully managed to avoid adverse environmental effects. Measures that are important to managing visitation include:

- Integrated delivery of management plan strategies as intended in the plan.
- Continued consideration and incorporation of all ecological objectives during management deliberations and implementation of decisions. Limits to growth are established (*The Waterton Community Plan 2000*). Conducting and facilitating ecological and social science research and monitoring programs to better understand park ecosystems, human dimensions, and relationships with visitor use.

Residual impacts are environmental effects that are not acknowledged by the management plan and therefore will remain impacts in the park. These impacts are related to habitat security, wildlife corridors and water quality.

Wildlife Movement

The Bison Paddock is located within the Foothills area concept and according the management plan backgrounder, the facility is located within a wildlife corridor. The paddock and associated handling facilities are affecting wildlife movement. At this time the paddock will remain as a visitor bison viewing opportunity.

- Recent research identified that the presence of moving vehicles on Marquis Hole Road effected elk movement and behaviour during the rut season. The management plan will maintain visitation levels in this area for view opportunities, and disturbance to elk will continue to be monitored.

Contaminated Sites

- Although Parks Canada has implemented some site remediation and monitoring, some contaminated sites still remain in the park. Failing to remediate sites of concern could impact the quality of ground and surface water. The plan needs to have clear commitment on addressing these sites to ensure that water quality remains unimpaired.

There are a number of stressors throughout Waterton Lakes National Park that contribute to the challenges in maintaining ecological and cultural integrity. The following is a list of key stressors that at times may influence desired outcomes:

- The main valley bottom in the park - the Waterton Valley - has intense human activity.
- The community of Waterton and transportation corridors bisect the major valleys.
- Management practices that have altered the natural range of ecosystem variability.



Although Waterton Lakes National Park covers a diverse landscape and supports a number of different wildlife species, the park is subjected to regional influences which affect transboundary natural resources. Parks Canada managers go beyond the park boundaries to liaise with external stakeholders and provincial agencies as a way to integrate common goals. The following stressors may be impacting features within the park, although these stressors may be beyond Parks Canada's control:

- Industrial, recreational, and hunting activities on regional landscapes adjacent to park boundaries that directly or indirectly impact shared wildlife populations, aquatic resources, and vegetation communities.
- Changes in climate that impact wildlife and vegetation distributions, fresh water flows and natural disturbance processes.

The management plan maintains support for limiting development within the Waterton community, and outlying commercial accommodations. Key directions continue to support restoration activities and adopting best management practices to reduce the footprint of operational activities.

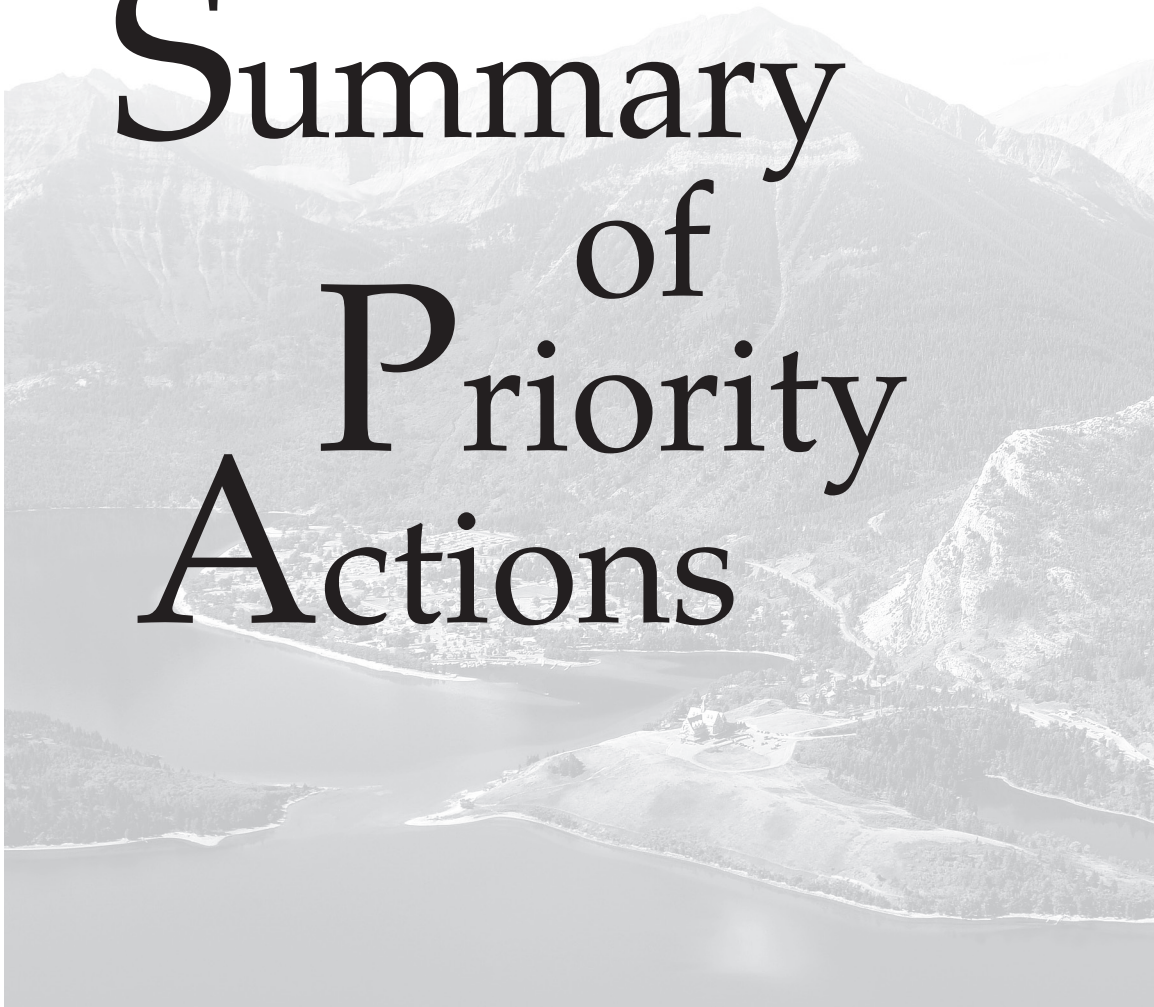
Key directions and key actions are expected to result in positive environmental and cultural resource effects. Such results include a greater knowledge of ecosystems, ecosystem restoration and monitoring, and greater connections between Canadians and the park to encourage support for park management. Specific planning will need to be structured to address outstanding issues and residual impacts.

The management plan describes strategic directions that will be implemented over the course of the next 5-15 years. Monitoring programs will also provide information that can be used to assess the outcome of actions in the plan. Should impacts be detected, adequate management tools are available to implement mitigations that will avoid, reduce, or counter negative impacts.

Some of the initiatives described in the plan are conceptual in nature and will require further assessment under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* when the specific project proposals have been developed. The required mitigation, surveillance and follow-up will be developed when the proposals are subject to project specific environmental assessments. It is anticipated that these projects will be developed in such a manner as to accomplish all of the strategic desired outcomes noted in the management plan and elaborated in this Strategic Environmental Assessment.

In conclusion, the management plan is likely to result in many positive environmental effects. Residual impacts have been identified with regards to wildlife movement for the Bison Paddock and Marquis Hole. As well, Parks Canada needs to continue to monitor and remediate contaminated sites to ensure water quality remains unimpaired. These residual impacts can be reduced by implementing Parks Canada's commitment to managing for ecological integrity as the first priority.

With careful planning, it is possible to implement the directions and key actions outlined in the Waterton Lakes National Park Management Plan (2010) in a way that will not result in any notable incremental or cumulative negative effect on either physical or cultural resources.



Summary of Priority Actions

Parks Canada

9. SUMMARY OF PRIORITY ACTIONS

Parks Canada will focus its efforts in the first five years of this plan on the Waterton Valley, Waterton Community and Blakiston Valley planning areas, while moving forward in all areas of the park as outlined on the next page:

Related Key Strategy / Area Concept	First 5 Years Actions
KEY STRATEGY	
Connecting – Reconnecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase external relations capability with youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians. • Create Aboriginal Advisory Committee. • Expand Waterton Lakes National Park web presence.
Celebrating the World’s First International Peace Park and the World Heritage Site Designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the communication of messages about the Peace Park and World Heritage Site designation in the park.
Providing Opportunities for Unique and Inspiring Visitor Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review services and products with a view to attracting youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians. • Package and improve communication of shoulder season and winter opportunities. • Develop a promotions/marketing plan for the park and implement it with local and regional partners.
Setting Ecosystem Priorities and Showcasing Conservation Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess park water bodies for aquatic health. • Implement fire plan to restore native grasslands and reduce invasive plants. • Implement species at risk recovery plans. • Improve understanding of climate change.
History and Culture Within Contemporary Experience and Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create better understanding of park history. • Improve interpretive media and market the national historic sites. • Actively involve Aboriginal people in commemorating their history and culture within the park.
Improving Infrastructure to Enhance the Park Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurface the Blakiston Parkway. • Develop a road maintenance plan.

Related Key Strategy / Area Concept	First 5 Years Actions
AREA CONCEPTS	
The Waterton Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate actions to create a positive sense of welcome and arrival at the entrance gate. • Improve State of the Park ecological indicators associated with the fescue grasslands and Blakiston fan. • Complete multi-use trail from community to the park entrance. • Investigate the feasibility of locating a new visitor centre along the entrance road across from the Lake Linnet/Middle Waterton Lake day use area.
The Community of Waterton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to improve the key role the community plays as the focus for park visitors. • Update the community plan. • Review community campground for improvements to visitor services. • Initiate phased infrastructure upgrades. • Initiate improvements to the Cameron Falls day use area.
The Blakiston Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelop visitor related facilities in the Blakiston Valley including road surface and interpretive media. • Improve visitor experiences at Crandell Campground with a tipi camping opportunity. • Redevelop Red Rock day use area.
The Cameron Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and promote cross-country skiing opportunities. • Communicate winter and shoulder season opportunities. • Address parkway infrastructure issues.
The Belly River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the welcome and orientation focus at park entrance.
The Foothills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate early season hiking opportunities.

ANNEX 1 Performance Measurements

PA1. Heritage Resource Conservation	
Indicator: Regional Landscapes	
Measure	Target
Area of disturbance by type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of the long-term fire cycle is achieved through wildfire and prescribed fire
Landscape composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reverse the decline of native grassland areas in the park
Landscape fragmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective wildlife corridors are maintained within the ecosystem
Indicator: Terrestrial Ecosystems	
Measure	Target
Areal extent of human footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease disturbed area, by at least 20%, from 1999 benchmark through restoration with native plants by March 2014
Non-native plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce, by at least 30%, the distribution and density of priority non-native plant species along highway corridors
Exotic pathogens (white pine blister rust)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trend of whitebark and limber pine populations moves from declining to stable by March 2014
Indicator: Aquatic Ecosystems	
Measure	Target
Surface water chemistry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality parameters in the Waterton and Belly rivers are within legislated guidelines
Aquatic connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective aquatic corridors are maintained
Amphibian occupancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No decline in species richness across sentinel sites



ANNEX 1 Performance Measurements

PA1. Heritage Resource Conservation	
Benthic invertebrate diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquatic invertebrate community remains within reference condition
Lake fish community index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native species richness and abundance is maintained within Waterton Lakes system
Stream fish community index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No increase in number and distribution of non-native species
Indicator: Native Biodiversity	
Measure	Target
Avian species richness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of native species is maintained within the natural range of variation
Avian productivity and survivorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of native breeding bird species is maintained within the natural range of variation
Grizzly bears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grizzly bears are secure and stable within the regional landscape • No human-caused grizzly bear deaths within the park
Wildlife mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of elk and large carnivores killed on park roads are reduced from long-term average
Selective ungulate monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elk, sheep and goats are secure and stable within the regional landscape
Carnivore monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carnivores are secure and stable within the regional landscape
Indicator: Climate and Atmosphere	
Measure	Target
Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase understanding of precipitation trends to inform analyses of ecological parameters

ANNEX 1 Performance Measurements

PA1. Heritage Resource Conservation	
Air temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase understanding of air temperature trends to inform analyses of ecological parameters
Growing degree days (number of days above freezing between March 1 and October 31)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase understanding of growing degree days trends to inform analyses of ecological parameters
Indicator: Species at Risk	
Measure	Target
Bolander's Quillwort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain populations at existing locations within range of natural variation • Recovery strategy will be complete by March 31, 2011
Half Moon Hairstreak butterfly <i>Note: Recovery Strategy lead is Environment Canada</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical habitat in WLNP will be identified by March 31, 2011
Species at Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new species require listing
PA2. Cultural Resource Management	
Indicator: Resource Condition	
Measure	Target
Landscapes and landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain stable condition of features
Archaeological sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain good condition of sites
Objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain good condition of objects
Buildings and Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete inspection of priority heritage buildings by 2013/14



ANNEX 1 Performance Measurements

PA3. Public Appreciation and Understanding	
Indicator: Involvement of Public, Stakeholders and Partners	
Measure	Target
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the percentage of Canadians (particularly educators and students, new Canadians and youth) who are aware of Parks Canada’s national system of protected areas by end 2014/14 • Increase the percentage of Canadians (especially target audiences) who are aware of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park UNESCO World Heritage Site, by end 2013/14 • Increase the percentage of Canadians who are aware of science findings from Waterton Lakes National Park, by end 2013/14
Learning and Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the percentage of Canadians (especially target audiences) who learn about the heritage of Waterton Lakes National Park, and understand that Parks Canada protects and presents Waterton Lakes National Park on their behalf, by end 2013/14
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new volunteer and citizen science opportunities by end 2011/12, leading to increased participation in science- and stewardship-related activities by end 2013/14. • Increase the percentage of stakeholders and partners that support the protection and presentation of Waterton Lakes National Park, and who feel they can contribute to its management, by end 2013/14 • Establish protocols with local First Nations for their engagement by end 2010/11, and increase First Nations’ participation in, and contribution to, Waterton Lakes National Park, by end 2013/14

ANNEX 1 Performance Measurements

PA 4. Visitor Experience	
Indicator: Promotion and Market Research	
Measure	Target
Visitation (last reported = 373,257)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitation increases 2% per year for the next 5 years
Indicator: Enjoyment/Satisfaction	
Measure	Target
Enjoyment and satisfaction with visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2011, on average 92% of visitors at surveyed locations are satisfied with their visit • By 2011, on average 60% of visitors at surveyed locations are very satisfied with their visit
Indicator: Learning (interpretation)	
Measure	Target
Learned from experience and active participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2011, on average 60% of visitors at surveyed locations consider that they learned about the heritage of the park • At least 50% of visitors understand, appreciate and support the value of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site • There is active participation by Aboriginal people in the delivery of Aboriginal cultural programs
Indicator: Connection to Place	
Measure	Target
Personal connection to places visited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2011, on average 85% of visitors at surveyed locations consider the place meaningful to them



ANNEX 1 Performance Measurements

PA5. Community of Waterton and Throughway Infrastructure	
Indicator: Through Highways	
Measure	Target
Condition of highways 5 and 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No closure of through highways due to asset condition • Condition of 60% of through highways is maintained
Indicator: Management of the community of Waterton	
Measure	Target
Asset condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of 75% of assets is maintained • Condition of 25% of assets rated as fair or poor are improved by March 2013
Indicator: Asset Condition	
Measure	Target
Asset condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 65% of Parks Canada’s public facilities are in good condition

