

WOOD BUFFALO National Park

Jan. 1981

Vol.1 No.2

**PARKS CANADA IS PLANNING
FOR THE FUTURE OF WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL
PARK AND WE NEED YOUR HELP.**

**PARCS CANADA SOLLICITE VOTRE COLLABORATION
AUX PLANS D'AVENIR QU'IL EST EN
TRAIN D'ÉLABORER POUR LE PARC NATIONAL
WOOD BUFFALO.**

**KENETAWAYMITINAN TA WECHENEAK OMA
KAWAY WEASCHEKIAK OCHE WOOD
BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK.**

This the second in a series of newsletters
from Parks Canada concerning the development of the plan.

SOME OF THE TOPICS THE PLAN WILL BE CONCERNED WITH ARE:

- management of the bison herd.
- park roads and trails.
- protection and management of the Peace-Athabasca Delta.
- Pine Lake recreational area.
- hunting and trapping in the park.
- settlements at Garden Creek and Peace Point.
- forest fire management.
- level and scale of development.
- access into or through the park.

You can help plan the park by making your views known, by providing us with information and by giving us your ideas on how these, and other issues could be resolved.



CET BULLETIN DE NOUVELLES
EST AUSSI DISPONSIBLE
EN FRANÇAIS.

TATO KANEHEYOWIK. ETAKWIN TANTOTAMIK OMA KA KISASINAHAMAK. ACHIMOASINAKIN KANTOTAMOWAWUK UNKIC KAKI WEHYACKIC AWUSPIC.

EYAKOMA AKITASOON. BOX 750, FORT SMITH N.W.T. XOE OPO, PHONE 872-2649.

EYAKOMA KASKOSCHCHIKIMAKAK-ACHCHIMOSASINAKAN UNSTUM KAKIMUSINAHAMAK.

NESWASKI KAWAY NOCHITATOW OMA KAWEASCHIKICHIC NEYAK OCHA W.B.N.P.

NEKAN ASINAHINAN ETA TAKAKWAYCHIKIMWIK TANSI TESI-WECHITASWIK EKWA NEWEHANANIC UNKIC TA WECHIKWIKWUK. IYAK MENA NEWETINAN TANIHI KAWAY PIMSAHAKIC.

KINTAWAYMKONAWOW KISTAWOW TA IMOTAMIC TANSI ESKWAYACH TISPAIK OMA KA WEASCHIKIC W.B.N.P. MAMKOSTINAN UNIHIC MISTAHAY KITITAKWAIC.

MENA NE MUSINAHINAN SKWIACH TANSI KIYAS KAPISPAIK. KIWIK EYAKO TAWECHIKWIK KISTAWOW TANSI TISI WECHIHIAK OMA KAKAWAY WEASCHIKIAK.

KAPISAPWASAHINAWOW MUSINAKUNS.

KISPIN KEPESAPWASAHIN ASAY KIWEHIWIN EKWASI KANOWITENAN KIWEHIWIN.

- KA ASAWAPATINAWOW ACHIMOUSINAKUNIC NIPACHIPCHIKUNA.

-KANTOTINAWOW PIKESWAKUNICK EKWA MAMOPIKIC KITOTNANAWOW. EKWA KA PIMUSINAKANAWOW. KIMAMOWPIKIC ACHIMOASINAKUNS TA SAPWASAYKATEWA. EKWANIC KASAWAPATINAWOW.

THE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

WHAT IS IT?

A management plan is a comprehensive set of guidelines that Parks Canada uses as a guide to administer the resources and uses of a national park. All such plans are approved by the minister responsible for Parks Canada.

Each plan is an expression of Parks Canada's policies for a national park, within the context of the surrounding region.

The plan provides information on the opportunities which are available to use and enjoy the

park and the degree and type of resource protection which is required.

The park management plan is prepared to guide the management of the park for a period of ten to fifteen years. However, Parks Canada will monitor the implementation of the management plan and will review the plan periodically.

Changes to the park plan will be approved by the minister responsible for Parks Canada.



THE PLANNING PROCESS

THERE ARE FOUR MAJOR STEPS IN THE PROCESS:

1. Deciding on the purpose of the park and its objectives.
2. Identifying important problems that have to be solved.
3. Deciding on different ways to solve the problems and reach the objectives.
4. Selecting the best overall plan.

PREPARING PARK PURPOSE & OBJECTIVE STATEMENTS

PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT

IDENTIFYING ISSUES & COLLECTING INFORMATION

PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT

PREPARING ALTERNATIVE PLANS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT

SELECTING A FINAL PARK PLAN

PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT

FINAL APPROVAL

The final park plan includes the park purpose statement and management objectives, the information and analysis resulting in the plan, and the plan decisions.

WHO PREPARES THE PLAN

A planning team based in Fort Smith, N.W.T. works with Parks Canada staff, consultants, and the public to complete the work required for each stage of the process. The documents and material prepared as part of the planning process require the approval of senior Parks Canada management. The final management plan is approved by the minister responsible for

Parks Canada.

The planning team considers many different types of information in preparing the plan including your comments, the National Parks Act and Parks Canada Policy, information on park resources and the people who use them, park visitors and the issues and characteristics of the park region.



The Management Planning Team: Back row - Ian Church, Naturalist; Jim Johnston, Planner; Front row - Maureen Crowe, Public Participation Co-ordinator; Ray Whaley, Resource Conservation.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Since the national parks belong to all Canadians, you, the public, are invited to participate in the planning program. As shown on the diagram, you are provided at each stage of the process, with an opportunity to influence the development and

outcome of the plan.

A public participation co-ordinator has been appointed to encourage you to become involved and to assist you in making your views known. This co-ordinator is based in Fort Smith, N.W.T., and will work

closely with the planning team to ensure your views are considered in preparing the plan.

Comment from people throughout Canada and elsewhere as well as input from you who live in the region of the park will be solicited during the planning pro-

cess. The success of the management plan will depend to a large extent on your involvement and how well issues are discussed and resolved.

LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

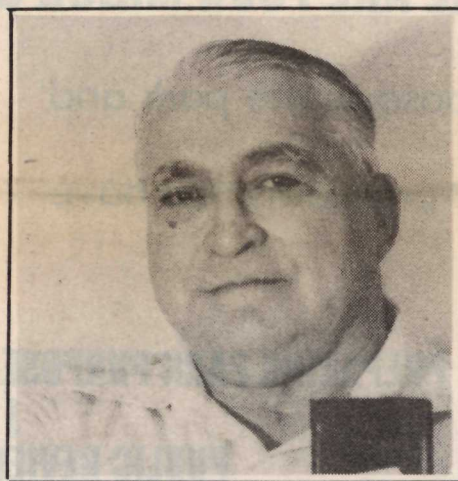
Individuals from communities in and around the park and from hunters' and trappers' organizations have been appointed to act as local co-ordinators. These people will ensure that local concerns are addressed by the plan and provide liaison between their community or group and the planning team.

These individuals are:

1. Fort Chipewyan - Hilda Lepine
2. Fort Smith - Rene Mercredi
3. Pine Point - Mary Jane Stewart
4. Little Red River Band including Garden Creek - Simon Nanooch
5. Wood Buffalo National Park Hunters' & Trappers' Association - Jackson Whiteknife
7. Fort Resolution - Yet to be appointed.
8. North Slave Trappers Association - Cathy MacDonald
9. Peace Point - Charlie Simpson



Hilda Lepine



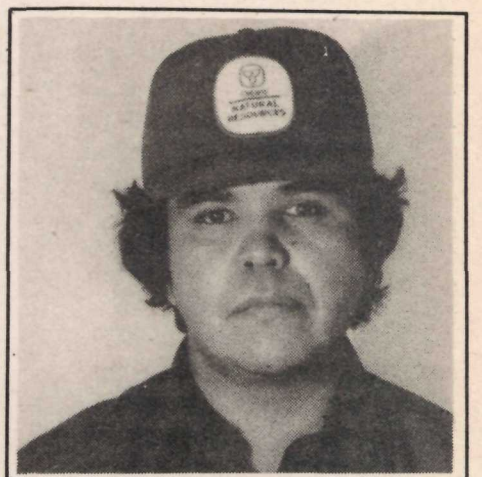
Rene Mercredi



Mary Jane Stewart



Simon Nanooch



Raymond Sonfrere

These people will ensure that residents receive and understand information about the planning program and they will also assist with public meetings and workshops and will periodically meet together with the public participation co-ordinator.

If you want specific information, have questions, concerns or suggestions see your local liaison officer or contact:

Maureen Crowe
Public Participation Co-ordinator
P.O. Box 750
Fort Smith, N.W.T.
XOE OPO
Phone: (403) 872-2649



Jackson Whiteknife



Cathy MacDonald

WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND DROP-IN CENTRES

- provide opportunities to ask questions, discuss issues, share information, present points of view and opinions.
- will be held in communities around the park and in designated larger centres at each stage of the planning program.
- times and places advertised prior to the meetings.
- records of proceedings kept and copies distributed to participants.
- for special meetings/workshops with specific groups or organizations contact the public participation co-ordinator.

DISCUSSION WITH PLANNING TEAM

- talk to the planning team. The team members are: Jim Johnston, Planner; Ian Church, Interpretation; and Ray Whaley, Resource Conservation.

Complete and mail the form on the last page of this newsletter for more information.

LETTERS AND BRIEFS

- write down your comments and suggestions in a letter or a brief and forward them to Maureen Crowe, Public Participation Co-ordinator at P.O. Box 750, Fort Smith, N.W.T. X0E 0P0.
- people residing in local communities may obtain assistance in preparing their brief or letter from their local co-ordinator.

PURPOSE STATEMENT FOR WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK

Parks Canada's overall objective is to protect for all time, representative natural areas of Canadian significance in a system of national parks and to encourage public understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of this natural heritage so as to leave it unimpaired for future generations. The park purpose and management objective statements describe how each of the 28 national parks contributes towards that overall objective.

Presented here is a purpose statement for Wood Buffalo National Park. This purpose statement describes Parks Canada's view on the place of the park in the National Park System and in the South Mackenzie/Northeastern Alberta region. Your views on the park purpose statement are encouraged, since it, together with the management objectives, define the conditions or situations that the park planning process will attempt to achieve.

PARK PURPOSE

Wood Buffalo National Park protects for all time a natural area of Canadian significance representative of the Northern Boreal Plains, the Southern Boreal Plains and Plateau and the Northwest Boreal Uplands. The park, one of the largest in the world, lies astride the Alberta/Northwest Territories border and preserves an outstanding example of the northern boreal wilderness.

forms common in the seas of the Cretaceous period. Particularly abundant are fossil fish scales.

The Devonian limestone gypsums and evaporites of the northern boreal plains are evident in a number of areas and spectacular exposures occur through much of the park where caves have collapsed creating sinkholes. The park contains the most extensive gypsum karst area known in the world. Associated with this landscape is an unusual hydrologic regime. A number of species of bats and the red-sided garter snake are believed to be dependent on the karst formations for survival.

Protected within the park are vast salt plains. During dry times of the year salt mounds and ridges up to four feet high may occur. Native people, early explorers and missionaries stopped in this area to procure their salt. As well, the park protects the Peace-Athabasca Delta, one of the largest fresh water deltas in the world. The delta is an important nesting and staging area for waterfowl, supports a variety of fish populations, most notably the goldeye, and large numbers of muskrats, as well as large mammals including bison and moose.

The park supports a northern boreal forest of jack pine, aspen, spruce, tamarack, wet sedge meadows and extensive

muskegs influenced by surface water, and permafrost. Salt tolerant species flourish on the salt plains and in some areas, waters containing hydrogen sulfide gas surface as springs, providing habitat for unusual algae and bacterial colonies.

Originally set aside to protect the last remaining herds of wood bison, the park now protects a number of important wildlife values including most of the last remaining Alberta nesting sites of the endangered peregrine falcon, the nesting grounds of the endangered whooping crane, plus the largest free roaming herd of bison in the world. In addition, the park supports a number of wildlife species characteristic of the boreal forest, including moose, woodland caribou, wolves, black bear, and a large number of smaller aquatic and terrestrial mammals.

Little is known of this park's prehistory, however, stone artifacts found on old occupation sites show that native peoples have utilized this area for thousands of years.

The history of European man in the park region has passed through several phases including contact with natives; exploration and the fur trade; settlement and development of the northern transportation network; northern resource development; and conservation and resource protection

as exemplified by current park management. Artifacts such as flint implements and old occupation sites reflecting past activities can be found in the park.

Man's activities continue to be important in Wood Buffalo National Park. Local native people still pursue their traditional activities of hunting, fishing and trapping.

PUBLIC APPRECIATION AND AWARENESS

The park will encourage public understanding of the meaning and value of its natural and cultural resources. The boreal plains theme is an overall focus for interpretation, however, components of the park resource base provide individual opportunities for appreciation and understanding. The contact between the Canadian Shield and the interior plains provides opportunities to compare and contrast two major biophysical regions of Canada. The karst landscape not only provides insights into the formation and weathering processes of the interior plains bedrock, but also provides opportunities to gain an appreciation of the adaptations of individual species to the karst landscape. The conservation

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RESOURCES OF THE PARK

Located on the ecotone between the southern and northern boreal plains and the contact between the interior plains and the Canadian Shield, the park is primarily comprised of a vast and imperfectly drained plain underlain by sedimentary rock and covered by a multitude of meandering streams, shallow lakes and bogs.

Significant landform features found within the park include the Birch and Caribou Mountains. Their slopes are continually being eroded and in some areas the oversteepened slopes have slumped, exposing fossils of life



PUBLIC APPRECIATION & AWARENESS

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efforts made to preserve falcons, bison and whooping cranes emphasize the role National Parks play in protecting vital habitat, thereby enabling species threatened by the encroachment of man to survive. The vast waterways and wetlands of the Peace-Athabasca Delta which support thousands of staging waterfowl will promote an understanding of delta hydrology as well as the interdependence of the physical world and all life. Finally, the role that hunters and trappers play in the ecosystem is significant and instructive in that it was these resource based economies that provided the original impetus for the exploration and development of Canada. In time, these traditional life styles may survive only within parks and other conservation oriented areas where the ecosystems on which these economies are dependent, are also protected.

The one theme that links all the resource values of the boreal plains is water. Water dissolves the soft and sedimentary rocks of the karst area, water builds the delta and water is a major component of both whooping cranes and bison habitat; early transportation and commerce were based on water routes. The theme of water is present throughout the boreal plains influencing and linking all its elements, including man.

VISITOR USE AND ENJOYMENT

The park encourages appreciation and enjoyment of the resources it protects through limited and appropriate recreational activities. Hiking, nature study, buffalo creeps, and more traditional pursuits such as canoeing and camping are activities that best enable the visitor to appreciate and enjoy Wood Buffalo National Park. Visitors will experience the spirit and immensity that is synonymous with the northern boreal wilderness. They will be captivated by the sight of bison herds roaming on an unfenced range and have opportunities to gain an appreciation of man's historic and continuing role on the boreal plains. Each spring and fall, visitors can observe the spectacle of thousands of waterfowl congregating during their annual migration through the Peace-Athabasca Delta. Interpretation of the nesting grounds of the whooping crane in the park will enable visitors to gain an appreciation of species struggling to survive in a changing world, and to better understand the role that national parks fulfil in helping to save species from extinction. Working closely with northern residents, Parks Canada will encourage visitors to appreciate and understand the rhythm and inter-

relationships that exist in this boreal plains ecosystem.

The park will continue to provide residents of the neighbouring region and those within the park with opportunities to derive appropriate economic benefit. The man-land relationship represented by traditional resource harvesting techniques is an integral part of the park ecosystem, of value

both as a way of life as well as representing the adaptations of man on the boreal plains. In addition, co-operative efforts with agencies and private industry working on lands adjacent to the park will be undertaken to ensure a complementary approach to management of resources and provision of compatible facilities and services.

Tell us what you think of this purpose statement. Does it describe what you feel is the purpose of Wood Buffalo National Park? Does it include aspects which you feel are important?

The purpose statement is important because it tells what we want to achieve and serves as a target for the planning program. If the purpose is not acceptable then the plan will not be acceptable.

PLAN PRINCIPLES

These draft plan principles describe concepts important to planning and define the conditions or situations the final plan must strive to achieve. They also summarize specific management objective statements which are another important compo-

nent of the planning program. Do these draft principles describe conditions or situations which you feel are acceptable and appropriate for the future use of Wood Buffalo National Park?

1. Wood Buffalo National Park is an important component of the National Park System, representing the boreal plains natural region. Efforts will be directed at maintaining the wilderness character of the park, protecting its special features and resources and providing opportunities and facilities to permit public enjoyment of the park.
2. Wood Buffalo National Park contains a number of nationally and internationally significant resources. These resources will receive special recognition and protection and management procedures will be designated to ensure their long term protection.
3. Traditional resource harvesting activities will continue to be permitted subject to regulation and control. This activity will be maintained because such use existed before the park was created, constitutes a part of the local way of life and is of cultural value in portraying traditional relationships between man and the land.
4. Wood Buffalo National Park, despite its size, possesses few resources or landscapes with high potential. Because of its remote location, the park receives few visitors and demand for facilities is low. Recreational development and use will be provided for, in keeping with that low potential. Priority will be placed on those facilities and developments to which access is easy that result in minimal damage to the environment and with good use potential. Appropriate private sector involvement in providing visitor use opportunities will be encouraged.
5. Interpretive programs that help visitors appreciate and understand the park's nationally and internationally significant resources, wilderness character, history and continuing involvement of man with the land will continue to be an important part of the park program. Emphasis will be placed on contacting regional residents and park visitors.
6. Roads developed in the park will be carefully routed and designed to ensure protection of the park's natural features. They will be developed only when need can be demonstrated, when the development is complementary to the regional transportation network and when the access route can be shown to provide positive benefits which are greater than the financial, environmental and social costs of the project.
7. Regional developments, activities and undertakings compatible with the park's purpose and objectives will be encouraged. Efforts will be made to integrate the planning, development and operation of the park with the surrounding region so as to have a positive social, economic and physical impact.

THE PARK: REGIONAL SETTING, HISTORY AND ENVIRONMENT

REGIONAL SETTING

Wood Buffalo National Park lies astride the Alberta/Northwest Territories boundary and is located within the Northeastern Alberta/South Mackenzie Region.

This regional setting is one of both rapid change and enduring traditional activities.

To the south of the park, there are marked variations in lifestyle and economic conditions. Some communities, such as Fort Chipewyan, remain somewhat isolated and are still largely dependent on the traditional trapping economy. The Fort McMurray area is experiencing

an economic boom based on non-renewable energy resources. Rapid change may also occur to the north of Fort Chipewyan and adjacent to the park's eastern boundary if a major hydro project, now under study, is constructed.

To the west of the park, the economy is more diversified and is based on agricultural activities, resource exploration and development, lumbering and trapping, and services related to the major transportation corridor to the Northwest Territories.

To the north of the park, local economies of towns, such as Fort Resolution, Hay River and Pine Point are based on renewable

and non-renewable resources, transportation and service industries. Fort Smith's economy is, however, primarily based on its role as a government service and educational centre. The northern part of the park lies astride many of the communication and transportation links that connect Fort Smith with other centres in the southern Mackenzie.

Consideration of other parks in the region is important in assessing the role that Wood Buffalo National Park should play. A variety of recreational facilities are presently provided by the Province of Alberta and

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REGIONAL SETTING

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the Government of the Northwest Territories and both governments are in the process of studying their park systems with a view to developing additional facilities. Wood Buffalo National Park, with its existing recreational opportunities will continue to play a major role in providing regional recreation and tourism facilities and services.

The recognition of all resources, current land use patterns, issues and the impact of the park on the region will be necessary to ensure proper integration of the park into the regional setting.

PARK HISTORY

Recent archaeological finds have indicated that the park area may have been inhabited as early as 10,000 years ago, or just after the retreat of the last glaciers from this area. These discoveries also indicate a continuous use of the area from the time the last glaciers receded.

In 1778, the first Euro-Canadian habitation occurred in the area when Peter Pond established a trading post along the Athabasca River. Before that time, traders did most of their trading through native middlemen, who obtained furs in regions such as the Wood Buffalo area and then transported them to distant trading posts. As competition increased, a growing awareness of the resources of the area, and the relatively easy water access possible via the rivers and lakes of the region, attracted explorers, traders, and then missionaries.

In 1870, the Dominion Government became responsible for the administration of Western Canada. One aspect of the new administration was the enactment of the Territorial Game Ordinance (1888), a provision of which prohibited the killing of wood bison. The act, however, was not effective since there was little enforcement. This situation was partially resolved in 1897-98 when Northwest Mounted Police posts were established at settlements in the Wood Buffalo region. The N.W.M.P., who enforced the Game Ordinance and policed miners bound for the Yukon, also obtained information about the bison range and herd size, which they estimated to be only a few hundred head. Based on this information, they recommended the establishment of a permanent bison sanctuary in the Wood Buffalo area.

In the early 1920's, additional surveys to assess the bison ranges, and to determine the size of the herds remaining were undertaken, primarily as a result of economic development pressures in the area. Efforts were renewed to establish a park, and on December 22, 1922,

Wood Buffalo Park, containing an area of 10,500 square miles, was created by an order-in-council.

The new park was placed under the jurisdiction of the Northwest Territories Branch of the Department of the Interior and the Agent for the Mackenzie District, headquartered in Fort Smith, was appointed Park Superintendent.

In 1925, the Government decided to transfer plains bison from Buffalo National Park in Alberta, to Wood Buffalo because of overcrowding in the southern park. While this decision was questioned by some naturalists, the transfer proceeded and by 1928 over 6,000 head of plains bison had been moved to the park.

The plains bison did not remain in the Hay Camp area, where they were released, but moved southward across the Peace River into the Peace-Athabasca Delta. This area was not in the park, so in 1926, a 7,000 square mile area south of the Peace River was added to the existing park.

Hunting and trapping activities were originally not addressed in the order-in-council which created the park in 1922. However, in 1926, when the park was enlarged, provisions were made in the order-in-council enabling the park superintendent to issue hunting and trapping permits allowing individuals who had previously hunted and trapped in the park area to continue this activity. The regulations have since been amended several times.

From the 1930's through to the early 1960's, various resource management and development activities were undertaken. These included furbearer habitat improvement and restocking programs, commercial fishing operations on Lake Claire, road construction, lumbering operations along the Peace and Athabasca rivers and an ongoing program of bison management. In addition, recreational facilities were developed and cottage lots surveyed at Pine Lake.

These activities were mostly undertaken in an attempt to create a stable economy and provide local economic benefit. These objectives were often not consistent with those for the National Parks system but were pursued since the administration responsible for the management of the park, had, as its chief task, the promotion and regulation of economic development in the north. Practices in Wood Buffalo were therefore unique in the National Parks system.

By 1959, the Government had become concerned about the peculiar position of the park within the National Parks system. Consequently, the administration for the park was transferred from the Northern Administration Branch to the National Parks Branch in October 1964. By April 1969, all responsibilities related to the park had been assumed by the National Parks Branch.

Since the park has been administered by the National Parks Branch and its successor Parks Canada, efforts have been made to bring operation, administration and management into conformity with accepted national park policy and practise. Services to park users have been expanded and improved, resource inventory and management programs have been undertaken and additional facilities have been developed for park visitors. Although changes have been made, a number of activities of long standing continue. One of the most significant of these is the continuation of traditional hunting and trapping activities by residents of the area whose ancestors were originally granted this privilege.

THE PARK ENVIRONMENT

Wood Buffalo National Park is a part of the northern boreal plains of Canada. There are four major landscapes in the park; the Peace-Athabasca-Slave Lowlands, the Slave Plain, the Cretaceous Uplands, and the Buffalo Lake Lowlands/Robertson Lake Uplands. Each of these different landscapes support somewhat different communities of plants and animals.

PEACE-ATHABASCA-SLAVE LOWLANDS

The deep, rich soils of the river valleys and floodplains of this landscape support sedge meadows, willow and alder thickets, mixed forests, black spruce muskegs and pure stands of white spruce. Adjacent to the rivers are old terrace remnants, levee deposits and sand plains with land features formed by the action of wind and water.

Special features include fossil beds on the Slave River, heavy oil seeps along the Slave and Athabasca rivers and gypsum cliffs along the Peace River. The valleys support high moose populations while the floodplain lakes and back swamps are excellent habitat for many furbearers and waterfowl.

The Peace Athabasca Delta is an intricate pattern of smaller coalescing deltas, shallow lakes, marshes, large sedge-willow meadows and old beach ridges. It provides much of the primary bison range in the park. The Sweetgrass area and the nearby Lake One area are major calving grounds. Wolves, the most important predator of bison, are also found in the delta. Waterfowl from the North American flyways converge on the delta. Most of the 227 bird species recorded in the park can be found there.

The variety of wetlands support very large populations of furbearers such as muskrats, mink and beaver.

The Salt Plains west and south

of Fort Smith, part of the Slave River Lowlands, are sloping aprons of saline earth bordered on the west by a limestone escarpment. In places where saline springs surface, crystalline salt mounds occur. The vegetation of the saline meadows found in this area is characteristic of maritime environments. Shore birds and waterfowl use the plains during migration.

SLAVE PLAINS

The Slave Plains is an area of glacial till deposits, dune fields and karst lands that extends in a narrow band from the park's northern boundary, through the centre of the park, to the Peace River. The surface sands and till soils support stands of jack pine and aspen which have been maintained largely as a result of fire. The numerous collapse sinkholes, caves, and underground rivers are a result of the limestone and gypsum bedrock being easily eroded by ground water. These karst features provide overwintering habitat for the red-sided garter snake and four species of bats.

Associated with both the Slave River Plains and the Slave River Lowlands is a large area of evaporation ponds and shallow alkaline sloughs. The area, in the northeast corner of the park, is the only nesting area for the endangered whooping crane. As such, it has international significance.

CRETACEOUS UPLANDS

Portions of the Cretaceous Uplands - the Caribou and Birch Mountains - lie inside the western and southern boundaries of the park. They have steep frontal slopes and incised valleys which are surrounded by extensive fans of shale and glacial gravels and soils. Streams such as the Whitesand River, McIvor Creek and Alice Creek flow down the shale slopes and cause their valley walls to slump. Lodgepole pine grows on the well-drained soils of the uplands. This represents an easternmost range extension of this species. In places, the lodgepole pine hybridizes with the jack pine.

On the plateau surfaces, small herds of woodland caribou are found. Moose are abundant in the muskegs and sedge meadows of the poorly drained lower slopes. Elk were transplanted into the Birch Mountains in the 1950's. Some may still survive. These rugged and isolated uplands also provide relatively undisturbed habitat for animals such as wolverine, otter and beaver.

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THE PARK ENVIRONMENT

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BUFFALO-ROBERTSON LAKES COMPLEX

This area is an undulating plain of muskeg, spruce forests, many small shallow lakes, areas of hummocky terrain, vegetated sand dunes, oriented ridges and other landforms formed by wind, water and glaciation. Its sandy

and silty soils are evidence of the former glacial lakes that once submerged this part of the park. The impervious shale bedrock and permafrost have resulted in poorly developed drainage systems. Surface runoff is trapped in the boggy lakes and saturated soils. In places, the higher relief

and sandy soils of the dunes create some local areas with good drainage.

Together these four landscapes exhibit a wide diversity of geological and geomorphical features. These, in turn, support equally diverse communities of plants and animals all of which

are now protected within the park.

The management plan must provide for the protection of these resources and features and indicate the appropriate ways that the resources of the park can be enjoyed and made use of by those who visit and use the park.

EXISTING PARK ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

INTERPRETATION

Parks Canada has a responsibility to provide information about national parks to the public in order to encourage them to use, appreciate and enjoy their parks. This involves providing information, welcoming visitors and undertaking interpretation and extension services.

At Wood Buffalo National Park the naturalists supply information to the public to enable them to properly plan and prepare for their visit. To provide on-site interpretation, a system of simple displays is being developed at each of the park's major entrances and at places of heavy visitor use. Trails have been constructed and other potential trails are planned which will provide opportunities

for visitors to enjoy and learn about the park on their own.

Interpretive programming is designed both to make people aware of park resources and related issues and to provide visitors with opportunities to explore or experience the park and its resources. Evening slide talks are offered in Fort Smith, Fort Chipewyan, and at the Pine Lake campground. "Bison creeps", guided hikes, canoe trips, caving adventures, winter camping and special children's events all provide the public with the opportunity to appreciate the park and its resources first hand. The park interpretive staff also provides a school extension program during the winter in local communities. The Parks Canada volunteer program provides local residents

with the opportunity to assist in the interpretation program.

Providing information and services to help visitors and the general public appreciate and understand national parks is an important activity in Wood Buffalo National Park. The management plan must establish the broad objectives for interpretation and provide guidelines for this activity for the future.

VISITOR FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Wood Buffalo National Park provides a variety of outdoor opportunities for visitors to enable them to enjoy and understand the natural environment of

the park.

Access is an integral component of visitor use and enjoyment. Existing park roads include N.W.T. Highway 5 connecting Fort Smith with the Mackenzie highway system; the park loop road, connecting Fort Smith and points in the park; and the Parson's Lake road. This latter road is the original park access route and connects the loop road with Highway 5. An unimproved road provides access to Garden Creek on the Peace River, by way of Alberta Highway 58 and Fort Vermillion. Road conditions reflect the wilderness character of Wood Buffalo National Park and are not high quality scenic routes.

The Athabasca River, Lake Atha-

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VISITOR FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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basca and the Peace Athabasca Delta, the Slave River and the Peace River all provide power boat opportunities while some of the smaller shallow streams can be used by canoes. Many of the streams in the park do not provide good canoeing opportunities because of their sluggish flow, meandering channels and general inaccessibility.

Trails have been developed in the Salt River and Pine Lake areas to provide opportunities for park visitors who wish to explore the park on foot.

Commercial accommodation is available in most of the towns surrounding the park. The park itself provides a thirty-six site campground and group camp at Pine Lake. Associated with this development is a day use area, an interpretive theatre and display building, a boat launch and seventeen privately owned cottages situated on lots leased from Parks Canada.

Several other day use sites and way side stops are located along the loop road. A new site off highway 5 at Klewi Lake was completed in 1980.

Recently, several individuals in Fort Smith and Fort Chipewyan have started businesses that offer

outfitting and guiding services to the public. These operators, who are licensed and regulated by Parks Canada, can provide specialized services and experiences such as boat and dog team tours.

Many different types of visitors use the park. They may be regional residents using the recreational resources of Pine Lake or they may be European tourists who have travelled long distances to experience wilderness and view the wildlife resources protected by the park. The management plan must be developed so as to provide the best combination of services and facilities to permit different types of visitors to experience and enjoy the park while still protecting park resources.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION

The warden service is responsible for managing and protecting the natural resources of the park, ensuring the safety of park visitors and enforcing the regulations pursuant to the National Parks Act.

In national parks, natural resource management are those activities directed toward the maintenance or modification of

the natural resources of the park to achieve a particular objective of preservation or use. The natural resource management process involves collection of information on which to base decisions, objective setting and preparation and implementation of resource management plans.

The park warden service is responsible for many aspects of this process. They identify, initiate and participate in resource studies which provide information on the park, summarize and analyse this information and identify and assign priorities to resource management problems and concerns. The warden service also participates in the preparation of resource management plans and is primarily responsible for implementing these plans. Undertaking surveys and patrols to assess the success of the resource management plans, to determine the environmental affects of park developments and to identify environmental problems is also carried out as part of the resource management process.

The park wardens also co-ordinate the application of the federal environmental assessment and review process (EARP) at the park level. This involves screening activities and projects to determine their environmental

affects and preparing environmental evaluations.

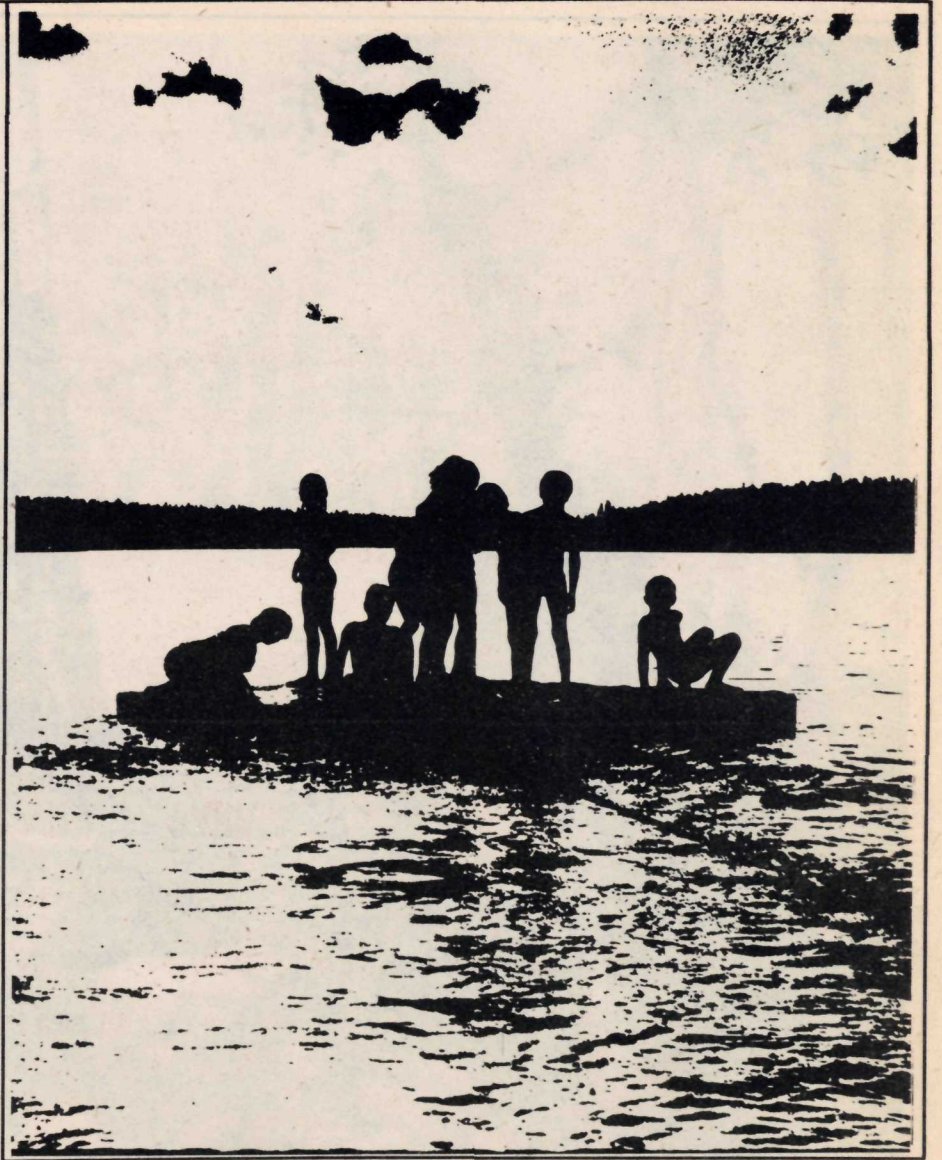
The warden service co-ordinates a public safety program by identifying hazards, disseminating safety information, overseeing a registration system for back country users, carrying out search and rescue operations when required and reviewing the activities and programs of licensed guiding operations. A forest fire control operation, which is part of the warden service, also contributes to public safety.

Enforcing regulations pursuant to the National Parks Act is an ongoing responsibility. These regulations include those governing fishing, camping, back country use, fire permits, plus numerous other activities. Of particular importance is the enforcement of the Wood Buffalo National Park game regulations to ensure control of resource harvesting activities.

Natural resource values are the basis on which Wood Buffalo National Park was established and maintaining the integrity of these resources is an important responsibility. The management plan will formalize objectives and furnish guidelines for activities associated with resource conservation and provide general guidelines for resource management planning.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- Complete and mail the card at the bottom of this page. Your name will then be on our mailing list and we will keep you posted on the planning program.
- Watch for the next newsletter. It will provide information on issues or problems for which solutions will be found during the planning program.
- Review the material in this newsletter so you are familiar with the planning and public participation programs and the park: its history, resources, regional setting and existing park activities and services. Review the park purpose and plan principle statements and comment on this material.
- Public meetings will be held in January, February and March for you to express your views. Exact times and places will be advertised prior to the meeting. Watch for notices.



- Put your comments in a letter or brief and send it to the public participation coordinator.
- After the public meetings, another newsletter will be prepared and distributed outlining what happened at the meetings and what comments were made in letters and briefs.

What are your ideas? For more information clip and mail this card to:

Avez-vous des idées? Pour de plus amples renseignements, découpez cette feuille et faites-nous-la parvenir.

Tansi kitetiniawow? Kapisapwasahinnawow oma kespín kinotekiskitinawak:

WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK
P.O. BOX 750
FORT SMITH, N.W.T.
XOE OPO

I want to help
plan the park.

Je suis intéressé(e) à aider
à la planification du parc.

Notiwechiswean oma kaway
waschikik ocha WBNP.

Name/Nom/Niweeon:

Address/Adresse/Akitasoon:

Language/Langue/Neheyawin:

English

Français

Neheyawin