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YOHO

NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

Management Plan

WORKING DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

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FOREWORD

RECOMMENDATIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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A VISION FOR YOHO NATIONAL PARK

Yoho National Park embodies the essence of the Rocky Mountains in an accessible and authentic heritage destination. Massive mountains, crowned with icefields and glaciers along the spine of the continent provide the stunning backdrop for some of the best alpine hiking, Nordic skiing and ski touring opportunities in North America. Iconic attractions, such as Takakkaw Falls, the Spiral Tunnels, and Emerald Lake allow Canadians and international visitors to experience the raw power and beauty of the landscape, and marvel at the way humans have interacted with it over time.

In Yoho, visitors will find the world famous fossils of the Burgess Shale, a showcase of stewardship, on-site experience and outreach. Rigorous protection, hands-on access, engaging exhibits at the bottom of fossil-bearing mountains, and an exciting virtual museum are hallmarks of managing these exquisite treasures. Visitors learn that the Burgess Shale sites, along with other exceptional places such as Lake O'Hara, are of such outstanding universal value that Yoho National Park is part of a huge World Heritage Site.

The human history that made this part of the Rockies an essential part of the history of Canada is protected and celebrated. Visitors feel the thunder of locomotives and are reminded of the history of tourism in Yoho; they smell the years of history in teahouses and huts as they follow the trails and paths of a century of visitors before them. Learning about places and people such as Kicking Horse Pass National Historic Site, Sir James Hector and the Palliser Expedition, the Twin Falls Tea House and the history of the community of Field is an important part of the experience of most visitors.

Fire continues to shape the park landscape. Visitors have opportunities through interpretive trails to witness the process of forest regeneration, and learn about the critical role that fire plays in ecosystem health and renewal. Yoho National Park also maintains its role as a key link in the regional ecosystem. Narrow river valleys in the park continue to provide critical movement corridors for wildlife, linking habitat in British Columbia and Alberta.

Canadians and international visitors continue to come and share a less crowded alternative where many have their own favourite, secret spots. New visitors delight in finding a Parks Canada interpreter welcoming them to key locations, telling the stories of Yoho National Park. New and returning visitors participate in a wide range of activities – from sight-seeing on the Trans-Canada Highway to backpacking in a remote, wilderness valley – that engage them in learning about and enjoying this heritage in ways that respect the need to protect it for all time. Through collaboration with others in the regional transportation system, visitors will have new transit options for getting to, and getting around in Yoho National Park.

During the winter, Field is a destination of choice for cross country skiers, ice climbers and snowshoers seeking a natural area to pursue their passion. Partnerships with local business and regional tourism organisations help to ensure that Yoho in the winter becomes less of a best-kept secret.

1. INTRODUCTION

The *Canada National Parks Act* requires that each national park has a management plan. These plans reflect the legislation and policies of the Government of Canada, and are prepared in consultation with Canadians. Management plans are reviewed every five years. This management plan will guide the overall direction of Yoho National Park for the next 10 to 15 years, and will serve as a framework for all planning and decisions within the park.

The management plan for Yoho National Park was approved in 2000. The 2000 Yoho National Park of Canada Management Plan has proven important, and effective, at improving the ecological health of the park and providing guidance for investments and decisions that support the continued relevance and attractiveness of Yoho National Park as one of Canada's premier national parks. The plan was reviewed in 2005, at which time it was found to still provide sufficient direction, so no amendments were required.

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 aim to ensure that management plans provide strategic direction, as opposed to specific prescriptive measures, and that they more effectively integrate the three key elements of Parks Canada's mandate: protection, visitor experience, and education.

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.

This second five-year review of the 2000 Yoho National Park of Canada Management Plan coincided with an opportunity to substantially update and reorganize the plan so that it is aligned with the new planning guidelines. This updated plan brings forward important policy direction for the ecological integrity of Yoho National Park and integrates it with new content intended to identify opportunities and strategic direction for visitor experience and education.

1.1 Management Plan Review Process

The seven mountain national parks – Banff, Yoho, Kootenay, Jasper, Mount Revelstoke, Glacier and Waterton Lakes – share many features and issues in common. Visitors travel among the parks, and stakeholders often have interests in several parks. Consequently, the management plans for the seven parks have been reviewed and amended concurrently, through a common process.

The management plans have been written with an overall mountain park vision and key strategies that often share common threads, reflecting the co-ordinated management approaches among the parks. The management plan also contains Area Concepts, in which detailed direction is provided for specific geographic areas of the park. The Area Concepts are presented in an integrated way to ensure that the three elements of the Parks Canada mandate are addressed in each part of the park.

1.2 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* (CNPA). The Park Management Plan provides strategic direction for a national park and is mandated by Section 11 of the *Canada National Parks Act*.

Strategic direction in the Park Management Plan, and 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, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas. Some examples include:

- 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;
- Field Community Plan, and Schedule 4 of the CNPA, which defines the boundary limits for the community of Field;
- Cultural Resource Management Policy;
- Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies.

The Parks Canada Corporate Plan 2009/10 – 2013/14 provides overall direction for the agency which must be reflected in park management plans. It includes the strategic outcome for the agency, which 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 future generations.

Parks Canada will achieve this outcome, in part, by developing new programs that respond to the evolving needs and expectations of Canadians. This direction is reflected in the content of this updated management plan.

The Parks Canada Agency is accountable for ensuring that management of each national park gives first priority to the protection or restoration of ecological integrity. This ensures that national parks will remain unimpaired for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generations. A primary tool in achieving this is the application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and Parks Canada's Policy on Strategic Environmental Assessment to ensure thorough, science-based consideration of potential environmental effects, and appropriate public review, in advance of any development, licensing and policy decisions. In addition, Parks Canada has specific obligations under the *Species at Risk Act*.

Parks Canada publicly accounts for its performance by preparing, every five years, a State of the Park report that provides a synopsis of the current condition of the park based on key indicators, and assesses performance in advancing the Agency's mandate.

1.3 Co-operative Planning and Management

Yoho National Park shares boundaries with Banff and Kootenay national parks. These parks, together with Jasper National Park, and three provincial parks in British Columbia (Mt. Assiniboine, Hamber, Mt. Robson) have been designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as the Canadian Rocky Mountains World Heritage Site. Other boundaries of Yoho National Park adjoin public land administered by the Province of British Columbia.

Given the shared importance of these parks as the core protected area in the Central Rockies Ecosystem, it is important that management strategies of the mountain national parks are coordinated and complementary. The 2009 review and updating of the Yoho National Park management plan was conducted simultaneously with reviews of its neighbouring national parks and with three other mountain national parks in southern Canada: Mount Revelstoke, Glacier and Waterton Lakes.

These seven mountain national parks share a common vision that aligns with, and frames, each national park's specific vision:

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 experience, shared initiative, meaningful learning, and mountain culture. 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.

Together, these national parks represent the Columbia Mountains and Rocky Mountains Natural Regions and are the result of the conscious choice of Canadians to preserve a large part of their mountain heritage in a natural condition, so that future generations can continue to be inspired by the kinds of experiences that Canada's mountain environments offer. Visitors, through-travellers, residents, and all Canadians benefit from and can contribute to this heritage. Dating back over 10,000 years, traditional use on these lands by Aboriginal people is evidenced by archaeological sites and cultural artefacts, as well as the oral traditions of Aboriginal communities. These parks also contain 15 national historic sites representing major themes in Canadian history.

While much of the direct management of Yoho National Park is the responsibility of Parks Canada, it is the advice and support of others that is critical to success. In collaboration with partners such as the Field Community Council, the Advisory Development Board, Canadian Pacific Railway, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Friends of Yoho National Park, and the Lake O'Hara Trails Club, along with the involvement of many Canadians in the development of the management plan, Parks Canada shares with others the leadership and challenge of managing this treasured place. Special events such as the 2009 centennial celebrations of Walcott's discovery of the Burgess Shale and the completion of the Spiral Tunnels are examples of how Yoho National Park can work collaboratively with partners to strengthen the delivery of Parks Canada's mandate today and into the future.

1.3.1 The Community of Field

The community of Field was established in the 1880s as a service centre for railway construction and maintenance. The community is a part of Yoho National Park, and is subject to the *Canada National Parks Act* and Regulations. It is administered by Parks Canada, with the collaboration of the Field Community Council. The federal government retains ownership of all land in the community (with the exception of land within the Canadian Pacific Railway right of way), and is the final authority on questions of planning, land use, development and environmental matters. Today Field is the main staging area for visitor experience in Yoho National Park.

Parks Canada, in partnership with the Field Community Council, completed a Community Plan for Field in 1999. This plan was reviewed in 2008-09, and several minor amendments are pending final approval.

1.3.2 National Historic Sites

There are three national historic sites within Yoho National Park. Kicking Horse Pass National Historic Site of Canada, Twin Falls Tea House National Historic Site of Canada, and Abbot Pass Refuge Cabin National Historic Site of Canada all have current management plans that were approved in 2007. Implementation of these plans will ensure the continued commemorative integrity of these sites, while direction in this Yoho National Park management plan will expand the relevance and reach of their programming and enhance their contribution to contemporary visitor experience.

2. IMPORTANCE OF YOHO NATIONAL PARK

Yoho National Park was established in 1886. It encompasses 1,313 km² representing the western slopes of the Main Ranges of the Rocky Mountains Natural Region. The park shares boundaries with Banff National Park to the east and Kootenay National Park to the south, and is an important component of the 23,069 km² Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site. The park includes three national historic sites, and the Kicking Horse River within Yoho National Park was designated a Canadian Heritage River in 1989.

Situated along the Continental Divide, the park is noted for its steep peaks, glaciers, cliffs, turquoise glacial lakes, waterfalls and turbulent rivers. The park protects important habitat within the alpine, subalpine and montane ecoregions. The park is home to a broad range of wildlife, including mountain goat, wolverine, westslope cutthroat trout, and grizzly bear. Unique features such as the thundering Takakkaw Falls, the sublime Lake O'Hara, and the exquisite fossils of the Burgess Shale are of world renown.

For thousands of years, the area that is now Yoho National Park was part of the traditional lands identified by the Ktunaxa (Kootenay) and Kinbasket (Shuswap) First Nations people. Archaeological evidence suggests the mountains were used primarily as seasonal hunting grounds and travel routes that were used periodically to cross the mountains to hunt bison on the plains east of the Rockies.

The more recent history of the park is linked to the development of the first national rail corridor linking the west with the rest of Canada, and the discovery of the world famous Burgess Shale fossil sites. In the 1880s, the Canadian Pacific Railway laid tracks through the Kicking Horse Valley and over Kicking Horse Pass, providing a vital link in the trans-continental railway. In 1909 the Spiral Tunnels were completed to lessen the rail grade through the steep Kicking Horse Pass. The Trans Canada Highway was also built through the Kicking Horse Valley, so that today Yoho remains a vital part of the national road and rail corridor through the Rocky Mountains.

Also in 1909, C.D. Walcott discovered unusual fossils near Burgess Pass. Subsequent investigations revealed several sites that have yielded a large collection of exquisitely preserved fossils. The Burgess Shale contains fossils from more than 150 species of marine organisms from the middle Cambrian period, 505 million years ago. It is now recognised as one of the most significant fossil localities in the world. The Burgess Shale was designated a World Heritage Site in 1981.

The dramatic landscape of Yoho National Park draws visitors from near and far who wish to experience the grandeur of the Rockies and the unique heritage attractions

within the park. Supported by the community of Field and many partners, the park welcomes visitors to a variety of outstanding year-round experiences.

3. PLANNING CONTEXT

Approximately 600,000 people per year visit Yoho National Park. Slightly more than 70% of these visitors are independent travellers, while the remainder are on commercial group tours. Visitors stop to explore the park and the community of Field, and to enjoy picnic areas, viewpoints, interpretive trails, and campgrounds. Visitors to the park participate most commonly in the activities of sightseeing (83%), walking (79%) and hiking a trail (70%)¹. Many other travellers pass through the park without stopping, and enjoy the spectacular scenery along the Trans-Canada Highway corridor as it passes through the Kicking Horse River valley.

Visitors come to the park to experience the dramatic Rocky Mountain scenery and explore iconic destinations such as Lake O'Hara, Emerald Lake, the Yoho Valley and Takakkaw Falls. Four campgrounds are located along the Trans-Canada corridor, and semi-wilderness campgrounds are located at Lake O'Hara and Takakkaw Falls. While the park provides easily accessible, spectacular destinations at roadside, there are also more than 400 kilometres of hiking trails, mostly concentrated in the popular Yoho Valley, Emerald Lake and Lake O'Hara areas. More primitive trails and routes extend further into more remote backcountry areas where there is little human activity. Approximately 95 % of the park is declared wilderness, which provides outstanding wilderness recreation opportunities in areas with minimal facilities.

The majority of the park is within the alpine and subalpine ecoregions, with forests dominated by Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir, and meadows dotted with wildflowers above treeline. The park's location on the west side of the divide results in relatively high precipitation, which creates unique pockets of wet belt forest where typically coastal species such as devil's club, western red cedar and western hemlock occur. The lower elevation zones at the western end of the park, and in the valley bottoms of the main rivers are within the montane ecoregion, which is characterised by drier forests of Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, white spruce, and trembling aspen. This is the smallest ecoregion in the park, yet is the most important for biodiversity. It is also where most of the facility development has occurred, including most of the Trans-Canada Highway and Canadian Pacific Railway, the community of Field, and four front-country campgrounds.

Protected habitat within Yoho National Park provides a critical link between the Columbia Valley in British Columbia and Banff National Park. River valleys within the park, including the Ice River, Kicking Horse River, Amiskwi River, and Ottertail River

¹ IPSOS REID – Online Panel Composition Overview, ParksListens, March 2008.

provide important wildlife movement corridors. The Trans-Canada Highway, Canadian Pacific Railway and other developments in the valley bottoms can be impediments to the free movement of wildlife through these corridors. Also, due to the relative rarity of low-elevation montane habitat in the park, many animals migrate into adjacent lands during the winter. Parks Canada must work cooperatively with the British Columbia government to manage these shared wildlife populations.

Forest ecosystems have been affected by decades of fire suppression, and a recent population explosion of mountain pine beetle, a native insect in western pine forests. Prescribed burning is being used to restore fire to the forest ecosystem and to create a more natural vegetation mosaic of different age and forest diversity throughout the park. Prescribed fires and Fire Smart facility protection projects are also being used to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires.

Aquatic ecosystems have been affected by the development of transportation corridors, which sometimes act as barriers to fish passage, and the introduction of non-native fish species. Efforts are underway to restore natural aquatic connectivity, and to address the impacts of non-native fish. Recovery measures are being planned for the westslope cutthroat trout, a species that may soon be considered for designation under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.

Recent visitor surveys indicate that roughly one-third of park visitors are Canadian, one-third are from the United States, and one-third are from other international origins. Only 2% of visitors to Yoho come from British Columbia. Visitor use occurs predominantly in the summer, with 60% of visitors primarily engaged in sight-seeing. Recreational use is weighted toward day use for the purposes of hiking and cross-country skiing, however a significant amount of backcountry camping occurs relative to the small size of the park. Visitor satisfaction remains high, although congestion can be a problem at several of the most popular locations, notably Emerald Lake, Natural Bridge, and Takakkaw Falls.

The 2008 State of the Park Report rated the state of ecological integrity as fair and stable, cultural resource condition is rated as fair, visitor experience rated good and improving, and public education rated fair and improving. The report identified the following challenges and opportunities for the future:

- the need to reinvest in aging front-country infrastructure that has reached the end of its life cycle (e.g. campgrounds and day use areas);
- adjusting forest management strategies to respond to the effects of the mountain pine beetle;
- grizzly bear and other wildlife mortality related to highways and railways;
- incomplete cultural resource inventories; and
- restoring aquatic connectivity.

4. KEY STRATEGIES

Key strategies are the guiding concepts that define the approach Parks Canada takes to setting priorities, implementing actions and evaluating the success of park management. The following seven key strategies summarise the overall approach to achieving Parks Canada's mandate in Yoho National Park.

4.1 Showcases of Conservation Innovation

Conservation challenges associated with managing protected areas in a changing world are many and complex. Canada's mountain national parks have long been at the forefront of efforts to re-think and re-design the way in which people interact with protected landscapes. Parks Canada's mandated obligation to ensure that parks remain unimpaired for future generations, and the high value that Canadians attach to the ecological well-being and cultural heritage of their mountain national parks, focuses research attention, innovation and investment on conservation challenges that are shared with many other mountain landscapes in the world.

As part of a community of protected areas, Yoho National Park has benefited from experience gained in other places in Canada and the world, and from fresh thinking brought to the table by knowledgeable Canadians who share an interest in these special places. Beginning with a strong knowledge base, and working collaboratively with others, facilitates the development and implementation of creative conservation solutions that add value to visitor experiences and ensure that the natural and cultural heritage of the park is protected for generations to come.

The management of Yoho National Park is policy-based, and science-supported. Ecosystem science will provide insight and understanding related to the ecological health of the park, while also providing opportunities for visitor experience and collective learning through the engagement of stakeholders, park visitors and local community members. As our understanding of park ecosystems continues to evolve, research findings will continually be integrated into the stories shared with park visitors, stakeholders, and Canadians across the country.

This strategy focuses on:

- sustaining the critical analysis, creative thinking, and innovation that are needed to resolve conservation challenges through adaptive management;
- ensuring that community residents in Field, regional stakeholders, park visitors and broader communities of interest are fully engaged in the opportunities associated with the creation of new conservation solutions; and

- making research and conservation successes a part of the national park visitor experience and of the stories the park tells the world, so that they influence people's thinking and inspire hope.

Direction:

- Approach each conservation challenge as an opportunity to engage a diverse community of interested Canadians in sharing information, creatively imagining solutions, and collaborating to implement solutions that create new stories of conservation successes.
- Showcase emerging knowledge and understanding of the Burgess Shale by encouraging further research, and working with scientists, the Royal Ontario Museum, and others to create new, exciting exhibits and virtual experiences, and communicating current research to on-site visitors as part of the guided hiking program.
- Lead, or support, research activities that contribute to an increased understanding of park ecosystems, ecological processes, environmental change, and cultural resources.
- Encourage collaborative research or monitoring programs that engage as many interested Canadians as possible, while maintaining a high degree of scientific rigour.
- Participate in regional or national coordinated planning initiatives to help enhance knowledge sharing and improve decision making within the regional ecosystem.
- Design and implement conservation measures such as prescribed fires, reduced speed zones, historic building restoration, salvage archaeology, seasonal closures and trail relocations in such a way as to enhance experience and learning opportunities.

Indicators of Success

- Number of Canadians participating actively in park research and conservation programs.
- Number of new learning opportunities associated with research and conservation initiatives.

4.2 Accessible Mountain Experiences ... All Authentic, All the Time

Connecting Canadians with real and inspiring park experiences is integral to successful delivery of Parks Canada's mandate. A renewed focus on experiential tourism will set the stage for visitors to have the best experience possible in Yoho National Park. This effort will be evident in every program and activity, and in every aspect of service delivery.

As one of Canada's first national parks, Yoho has a long history of welcoming visitors. Whether seeking adventure and physical challenge amid the lofty peaks, or enjoying the breath-taking scenery and local culture as they travel through the heart of the park, Yoho has something to offer everyone. The size of the park and the range of year-round activities, combined with the integration of tourism and recreation with ecological and cultural heritage protection activities, offer both challenges and opportunities.

For those new to Canada, or those experiencing a Canadian national park for the first time, Yoho reveals compelling stories of exploration, discovery and derring-do that help to define our great country. For urban Canadians, the park offers contrast, renewal and rejuvenation. For the young, it provides discovery, social networking and adventure. No matter their background or interest, visitors will find in Yoho National Park the ability to create the experiences that are most meaningful and rewarding to them.

People with an interest in the park are not all the same. Informed by extensive demographic and psychographic information, product development and promotional activities undertaken by Parks Canada and its tourism industry partners will recognize these differences, and provide seamless delivery of opportunities that attract the attention and satisfy the needs of users with a wide array of interests and comfort levels.

“Welcome” will be a recurring theme, reflected in visitor infrastructure, local ambassadors, Parks staff and other service providers. Visitors will be welcomed not only to Yoho National Park, but to Parks Canada's entire family of protected areas and the diversity of Canada which these protected areas were established to represent.

Providing visitors with **“Opportunities to Participate”** is one way of encouraging meaningful and enjoyable visits that contribute to a sense of connection to the place. In collaboration with external representatives and stakeholders in both the environmental and tourism communities, and subject to an assessment process at the national and local levels, Parks Canada will consider proposals for new recreational, leisure and learning activities in Yoho National Park.

Like the other mountain national parks, the visitor experience strategy for Yoho National Park will support five types of engagement: the virtual experience; drive-through awareness; the view from the edge; a step into the wild; and mountain wilderness.

The first of these, the **“Virtual Experience”** is targeted to visitors with an interest in nature and mountains, anywhere in the world within reach of technology. For these virtual visitors, Yoho will provide brief, intense visual and/or auditory experiences delivered through technology or print media. For reluctant travellers, these experiences may be the visit; for others, they may be instrumental at the imagining/wishing stage of the trip cycle, and may provoke an actual visit. In addition to the Yoho web presence, a

dedicated Burgess Shale ‘virtual museum’, developed in collaboration with the Royal Ontario Museum, will cater to curious virtual travellers and those planning a physical visit.

Travellers who now journey through the parks without stopping are targeted in the next type of experience – **“Drive Through Awareness”**. To date, these visitors have been largely ignored, even though they represent a significant volume on the major transportation routes. These through-travellers present a tremendous opportunity for connection to place and environmental stewardship. Signs and digital media can help raise awareness of Yoho’s railway history. Although still primarily a visual experience, subtle interpretation will promote understanding of and support for the protection of this mountain landscape, and may provoke a return visit to experience the park in more depth.

Those who prefer to stay close to civilization and park communities, or stop briefly on their way to someplace else, represent the second highest volume visitor group. They may stop to snap a picture at Emerald Lake or Takakkaw Falls, enjoy a picnic, go for a short stroll, or take in a meal in Field or at an outlying hotel. For this group, improved and well-maintained infrastructure and engaging, informative interpretive programming will set the stage for a deeper connection to place, in which all of the senses are engaged. This **“View from the Edge”** experience will be particularly appealing for those seeking hassle-free travel, rejuvenation and relaxation, or freedom and excitement in outdoor settings.

“A Step into the Wild” experience is targeted to visitors who stop and stay in the parks for more than a few hours or overnight in more rustic accommodations, but do not venture physically or perceptually from civilization for too long. They may be staying in Field or one of the commercial lodges, day-hiking, or taking in a number of the attractions close to park roads. In winter this group may take advantage of the exceptional Nordic skiing and snowshoeing opportunities in Field and the Kicking Horse Pass area of the park. As winter sets in, the classic trails around Emerald Lake and between Emerald Lake and Field provide ideal skiing and snowshoeing opportunities supported by a range of high quality commercial accommodations and dining establishments.

This group may take advantage of commercial guiding and transportation services to stage further from the road in relative safety. Lesser in volume than the previous group, this group has more time for personal reflection, in-depth learning, and possibilities of memorable moments with wildlife. Their park experience will give them renewal, freedom and authentic connection to nature and mountain culture.

Visitors who seek **“Mountain Wilderness”** have an inherent affinity for nature or have gained skill and comfort through repeated outdoor adventure trips over time. These

visitors become immersed physically and perceptually in the natural environment, leaving behind at the trailhead the built human environment that dominates daily existence. Their carefully planned, intensely personal experiences may include long, challenging day hikes such as the Iceline, guided glacier travel on the Wapta Icefields, or lengthy, unguided backpacking trips into remote valleys. The already-strong connection of these visitors to the park will be maintained through the provision of off-site trip planning information and unobtrusive assistance, and when desired, contact with experts. They themselves will be encouraged to deepen their connection to place, as ambassadors or stewards, passing on their passion for Yoho to friends, family and colleagues.

Direction:

- Apply a consistent visitor experience framework throughout the trip cycle, from imagining/wishing to remembering, reinforcing that which is most authentic and inspiring about the Rocky Mountains.
 - Use traditional methods and new technology to target and attract key segments, enhance the visitor experience, and promote connections to place.
 - Give priority to the introduction of new **Virtual Experience** and **Drive-through Awareness** products.
 - Continually re-evaluate and renew products and promotion associated with **View from the Edge, A Step into the Wild** and **Mountain Wilderness** opportunities.
 - Position **View from the Edge** experiences at Emerald Lake, Takakkaw Falls, and Field as an introduction to the park and invitation to explore further.
 - Develop and promote services and facilities that invite visitors to move from one type of experience to another.

- Build on the success and strength of programs and services for visitors seeking authenticity and cultural exploration, as well as those seeking opportunities for recreation, relaxation and rejuvenation.
 - Work with Banff National Park and partners like the Community of Field, Tourism Golden, and the Friends of Yoho to re-direct visitors from busier areas to Yoho opportunities and experiences that align with their interests.
 - Use market-sensitive communications to convey the special nature of the park and engage visitors in the shared stewardship of the park.
 - Respond to the increased environmental sophistication of visitors by providing opportunities throughout the park to learn about and be involved in stewardship efforts in the park and at home.

- Continue to offer a range of recreational and leisure opportunities for visitors.
 - Both internal and external proposals for new opportunities will be considered.

- Discussion will be based on principles stemming from Parks Canada's mandate:
 - Respecting Natural and Cultural Resource Protection Goals.
 - Facilitating Opportunities for Enjoyable and Meaningful Visitor Experiences.
 - Promoting Understanding and Appreciation.
 - Valuing and Involving Local Communities.
 - Respecting the Character of Place.
- Assessments will take place in a workshop format; the chosen format could vary depending on the need for a timely decision, level of differing opinion and anticipated public reaction associated with the proposed activity.
- Improve the provision of online information, including links to partners' websites, so that visitors have access to a wide range of information for planning their visit.
- Develop and Promote Yoho as a Winter Destination
 - Maintain existing ski trail on the old 1-A highway, and the network of Nordic ski trails linking Field with Emerald Lake, and extending down the Kicking Horse River as far as the Otterhead valley. Maintain trails at current standard of 2-way classic skiing (double track set).
 - Maintain snowshoe trails at Emerald Lake and Emerald River.
 - Explore the possibility of converting the Emerald River trail into a combined track-set ski trail and snowshoe trail.
 - Investigate the feasibility of establishing warm-up shelters at key locations, such as Emerald Lake alluvial fan, Kicking Horse – Otterhead junction, the Great Divide day use area (old 1-A), and Lake O'Hara road.
 - Develop an aesthetically appropriate signage system for the network of winter trails, to allow visitors to make informed trail use decisions and to provide a more coherent feel to the ski trail network.
 - Collaborate with businesses and residents in Field to promote existing winter opportunities in the area.
- Develop product for markets identified as new or renewed priorities for the park:
 - Segmented by geography:
 - Regional market, with emphasis on the Columbia Valley, the Southern Interior, Calgary, and the Bow Valley.
 - Segmented by motivations/benefits sought:
 - authentic explorers,
 - cultural explorers,
 - cultural history buffs,
 - all types for the Virtual and Drive-Through experience.
 - Segmented by demographics:
 - urban Canadians, especially Albertans and British Columbians

- new (recently immigrated) Canadians
 - young Canadians under 20 years of age.
- Invest strategically and sufficiently in front-line services and park assets
 - Based on standards developed around experience types, develop a program to maintain an appropriate range of type Three, Four and Five opportunities
 - Improve the welcome and orientation at the west end of Yoho, providing a strong sense of arrival to the Rocky Mountain Parks and the World Heritage Site.
 - Investigate alternative fee collection methods such as mobile gates and remote pay stations.
 - Cluster multi-level opportunities in and around Takakkaw Falls, Emerald Lake, and the west end of Yoho.
 - Review frontcountry campgrounds, demand, camper expectations, and ecological considerations; make modifications to enhance camping experiences, maintain or improve ecological conditions, and gain operational efficiencies.
 - Explore the possibility of introducing new park users to camping with user-friendly walled tents with beds, firepit, lights and easy access located in the Kicking Horse or Monarch Campground. In the off season these facilities could be utilized by school groups for overnight camping excursions or day trips in conjunction with opportunities to learn with Park Interpreters and to partake in winter activities such as snowshoeing or cross country skiing.
 - Create promotions and events to provoke shoulder-season and winter visitation to activity nodes designed for intensive use (ex: Emerald Lake, Field).
 - Increase knowledge of market segments and measure success of promotional and programming efforts
 - Create a comprehensive profile of the park's total visitor population, and monitor trends and shifts in visitation.
 - Share market intelligence with municipal and commercial tourism providers.

Indicators of Success:

- At least 85% of visitors surveyed are satisfied, and at least 50% are very satisfied, with their experience.
- By March 2012, increase the number of visitors to the park by 6% above 2008-09 levels.
- Number of Virtual experiences developed/ introduced online and associated market uptake.
- Number of Drive-Through Awareness products developed/ introduced and associated market uptake.

- Increased proportion of drive through visitors who choose to stop.
- Increased % of Canadians who understand the importance of their national parks and Yoho National Park in particular.
- Increased % of Canadians who understand the importance of park stewardship, Parks Canada's role as park stewards and their own role as partners in stewardship.
- Increased visitation among target market segments.
- Increased winter use of the park.

4.3 Sharing Leadership in Environmental Stewardship

Sustaining the health of park resources and the quality of the facilities that support park experiences is a shared responsibility to which many Canadians have demonstrated commitment and passion. Parks Canada will actively engage stakeholders, community residents, park visitors and other volunteers in as many stewardship activities as possible, making the protection and management of the park an enriching source of meaningful experiences.

The culture of cooperative stewardship that has developed over time in Yoho National Park is reflected in the work of groups such as the Field Cross-Country Ski Club, the Lake O'Hara Trails Club, and the Friends of Yoho. Parks Canada will continue to support and encourage the participation of these and other groups in the cooperative stewardship of the park.

Direction:

- Continually expand and improve 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 built facilities.
- Encourage the development and/or use of alternative energy sources to improve efficiency, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with fossil fuel generation, in ways that minimise effects on natural and cultural features and visitor experience.
- Provide opportunities for people to share in the active stewardship of the park by participating in volunteer activities such as non-native plant control, citizen science initiatives, restoration activities, and trail stewards.
- Minimise effects on water quality of wastewater systems in the community of Field and in outlying commercial accommodations.
- Showcase to visitors and the broader Canadian public the environmental and cultural stewardship initiatives that Parks Canada and others are carrying out in the park. Recognize industry members and non-profit organizations that incorporate heritage tourism principles and environmental stewardship initiatives into their operations.

Indicators of Success:

- Number of volunteer projects supporting park stewardship efforts.
- Reduction in energy and water consumption at park facilities.
- Improvement in waste reduction from park facilities and the community of Field.
- Percentage of visitors surveyed who consider Yoho National Park is meaningful to them.

4.4 Celebrating the History and Culture of Yoho National Park

Yoho National Park is rich in human history and cultural traditions. The stories that help to define Yoho are inspired by early Aboriginal use, European exploration and fur trade, railway construction through the Kicking Horse valley and nation-building, the development of recreation and tourism – first associated with the railway and later the Trans-Canada Highway, the emergence of modern philosophies of nature conservation, and the unique communities of people who have come to call this area home. The rich cultural heritage of the park allows visitors to experience a vivid sense of the past and to personally connect with, and contribute to, this continuing human legacy.

This strategy aims to increase the profile of the rich, still-evolving cultural heritage of Yoho National Park. The national historic sites and cultural resources within the park will become integral to contemporary visitor experience and connection to place, integrating history, culture and ecology into the ways in which people experience and understand the unique heritage in Yoho National Park.

Direction:

- Conserve and restore significant cultural resources to ensure that these touchstones to our past remain intact, and contribute to the contemporary visitor experience.
- Strengthen the involvement of Aboriginal people in documenting and presenting their cultures and relationships to park landscapes, and renewing their spiritual and traditional associations with the land.
- Link the stories associated with historic resources and events to the broader park landscape and to contemporary visitor experiences.
- Work with local museums and heritage associations to strengthen their role in providing learning opportunities for visitors and to increase visitation to National Historic Sites in the park, mainly Kicking Horse Pass and Twin Falls Tea House.
- With Glacier National Park and community partners, explore and develop the concept of a railway heritage corridor connecting Kicking Horse Pass National Historic Site with Rogers Pass National Historic Site and the communities of Golden and Revelstoke.
- Enhance the profile and provide educational material about other cultural heritage sites such as the Kicking Horse Canadian Heritage River, historic buildings in Field,

patrol cabins in the backcountry, First World War internment camp, former base metal mines and lumber camps, and archaeological sites.

- In conjunction with partners, develop thematic information that encourages visitors to explore sites in the park that are associated with artists like Lawren Harris and J.E.H. MacDonald of the Group of Seven.

Indicators of Success:

- Improving trend in the condition of cultural resources
- Understanding – increased understanding of the historic places, people and events that help to define Yoho National Park.
- Outreach Education – new products developed that bring the stories of Yoho to audiences beyond park boundaries.

4.5 Bringing the Mountains to People Where They Live

This strategy is designed to extend the reach of Yoho National Park, through the popular media, modern technology and outreach programming, to bring current, lively and engaging content into homes, schools and communities so that Canadians can choose to make the Rocky Mountains part of their daily lives.

To promote an ongoing dialogue and lifelong passion for parks beyond our boundaries, Parks Canada brings the ongoing stories of mountain culture, science, recreation and park management to people who may not otherwise have an opportunity to learn about or become involved in our national parks and national historic sites.

An increasing number of Canadians live in urban centres, and more than one-fifth were not born in Canada. Yoho National Park will reach out to these audiences through innovative communications programming. Outreach initiatives such as environmental education programs at schools, extension events for special groups, and upgraded content on Parks Canada and partner websites will bring unique features of the park into people's homes and communities.

Direction:

- Target youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians with programming that links them to unique aspects of the park, such as the Burgess Shale, the Spiral Tunnels and related railway heritage.
- In collaboration with the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto, develop the premier website on the Burgess Shale, and investigate the potential to establish a Parks Canada presence in Toronto through the strong relationship with the ROM.

- Continually refresh and renew other content for an enhanced web presence that provides learning, sharing and experiential opportunities for Canadians and others so that they can experience the excitement of being “virtually there”.
- Collaborate with museums, zoos, botanical gardens and other institutions, as well as media outlets in the Columbia Valley, to deliver programs on unique features, places, events, and people in Yoho National Park.
- Collaborate with the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network and school boards in the East and West Kootenays to support the *Wild Voices for Kids* speaker series in the area schools, and increase the mountain park content in this program.
- Identify opportunities to develop partnering arrangements with the Town of Golden and other communities in the Columbia Valley that enhance mountain park outreach and education around restoration and conservation projects, such as fire, aquatic health, species at risk, and highway wildlife mitigation.

Indicators of Success:

- Outreach Education – new outreach products and programs developed and associated market uptake.
- Percentage of Canadians that appreciate the significance of Yoho National Park.

4.6 Managing Development

Its long history and popularity have resulted in Yoho having extensive development associated with roads, the railway, visitor infrastructure, utilities and the community of Field. Most development in Yoho is in valley bottoms, which include much of the most productive wildlife habitat. These developed areas provide critical staging areas that allow visitors to experience the unique areas of the park. However, if not managed carefully, development and associated activities can compromise the natural and cultural attributes of the park that are valued by Canadians and make possible the range of experiences available to visitors.

Limits to development in Canada’s national parks were established in the late 20th century and early 21st century as a result of extensive analysis and public review and are prescribed within national park and community plans, national park zoning and land use agreements. Specific limits to community boundaries are registered within the *Canada National Parks Act*. A large area of Yoho National Park is legislatively protected as a declared wilderness area in order to preserve its natural character, and the unique opportunities associated with that character.

This strategy reaffirms the legislated limits to development in Yoho National Park, while modifying non-legislative limits to encourage creative approaches that enable more visitors to enjoy the park. The community of Field, OCAs and campgrounds are the key

staging areas for visitors. Careful design and development will enhance visitor experience, enhance and contribute to a strong sense of place, and minimize effects on ecological or cultural resources.

Direction:

- The boundaries of the Community of Field will remain consistent with those outlined in the official community plan.
- Outside of the community of Field changes to commercial accommodation will be subject to the 2007 Redevelopment Guidelines for Outlying Commercial Accommodations in the Rocky Mountain National Parks.
- Wherever possible, development will be directed away from montane and sub-alpine alluvial fans, wetlands, riparian areas, grasslands and narrow pinch-points in wildlife corridors; these areas will be priorities for ecosystem restoration activities and the application of measures to mitigate existing development.
- Visitor facilities in the park, such as campgrounds, day use areas and trails, may be modified or consolidated to enhance visitor experience and achieve ecological objectives. Any disturbed areas no longer required for facilities or infrastructure will be restored.
- No additional park land will be released for the development of commercial accommodation.

Indicators of Success:

- New development is balanced by restoration of disturbed land.

4.7 Ensuring Healthy Park Ecosystems

Visitors to Yoho National Park have an ideal opportunity to learn about the natural characteristics that are representative of the west slope of the Rocky Mountain Natural Region in ways that sustain this heritage for future visitors. Visitors find in the park intact ecosystems with all their component parts that are still governed by natural ecosystem processes. These healthy and evolving ecosystems support a range of nature-based recreational experiences that constantly attract new and returning visitors to the park.

While maintaining the ecological integrity of the whole park, Parks Canada will put an emphasis on the restoration and intensive management of those ecosystem processes and components that have the potential to yield significant conservation gains, or are rare or most vulnerable. Wherever possible, new visitor experience and learning opportunities will be incorporated into the management or restoration of these ecosystem features. Yoho National Park will focus its ecosystem management efforts on the areas described in the subsections below.

4.7.1 Maintaining and Restoring Ecosystem Connectivity

Mountain landscapes are fragmented by their very nature. The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, followed years later by the Trans Canada Highway, had the effect of increasing fragmentation by creating physical barriers to wildlife movement and introducing serious causes of wildlife mortality. Park management strives to reduce and minimise the impacts of these barriers, raise awareness among visitors and stakeholders of the challenges faced by wildlife, and to maintain conditions that allow animals to travel through the park landscape with minimal obstacles.

Direction:

- Maintain and restore secure wildlife corridors at global (y2y) and regional (eg: Beaverfoot – Kicking Horse – Amiskwi – Blaeberry) scales, and develop content and themes for inclusion in interpretive programs and visitor information in the park.
- Restore connectivity of streams and wetlands with an emphasis on repairing barriers to fish movement.
- Develop visitor nodes that profile stream connectivity and wetland restoration.
- Develop communication products for park visitors and external audiences that raise awareness of wildlife movement patterns, barriers to dispersal, and efforts to improve connectivity.
- Work with partners to reduce wildlife mortality on roads and railways within the park.

4.7.2 Grizzly Bears

Parks Canada, along with provincial partners in British Columbia and Alberta, has established a goal of maintaining a non-declining grizzly bear population in the Rocky Mountains. Grizzly bear habitat within this ecosystem is naturally fragmented by large areas of rock and ice. Roads, railways, communities and other developments also fragment some of the best valley-bottom habitat. Recent scientific research has shown that the grizzly bear population on the east slope of the Central Rockies Ecosystem has the lowest known reproductive rate for this species. The survival of reproductive females is the key factor affecting population persistence.

Grizzly bear research across North America has led to the development of key concepts and analytical tools that can be applied to effectively manage for grizzly bears. These include habitat security and maintenance of core reproductive areas. Parks Canada will apply these concepts, in conjunction with the most recent knowledge of bear habitat use and behaviour in the mountain parks, in order to ensure a sustainable, viable population

of grizzly bears, and provide visitors with the opportunity for wilderness travel in a landscape also occupied by bears.

Habitat security includes the consideration of physical habitat quality and levels of human disturbance within that habitat. Grizzly bear habitat is considered secure when the animals have a low probability of encountering humans, and can go about their activities with little human-caused disturbance. Areas with high habitat security are also likely to be high quality environments for wilderness recreation. Managing for habitat security will help to maintain grizzly bears, while also maintaining the unique character of place that contributes to visitor experience and enjoyment.

Parks Canada's focus on grizzly bears will aim to achieve several key objectives:

- Minimise bear-human interactions that may lead to habituation of bears;
- Prevent human-caused displacement of bears from prime food sources;
- Minimise the risk of human-caused mortality and human injury inflicted by bears;
- Maintain large, natural landscapes that provide opportunities for wilderness recreation, and support healthy bear populations; and,
- Demonstrate leadership, and work collaboratively with managers of lands within the Rocky Mountains for the ongoing protection of grizzly bears and a functional ecosystem.

Yoho National Park will continue to use habitat security as a key tool in managing for both grizzly bears and high quality wilderness recreation opportunities in the park's six landscape management units (see Appendix 1). Parks Canada will strive to maintain or improve habitat security in each of these landscape management units.

Direction:

- Eliminate sources of unnatural grizzly mortality, such as food attractants along the CPR line.
- Where potential significant conflict between grizzly bears and park trail users is identified, consideration may be given to relocating trails out of high-quality grizzly habitat and into settings that offer improved recreational experiences and aesthetics (eg: out of riparian areas and onto the slopes above where the trail tread is better-drained and the scenic views are improved). Off-trail travel by commercial groups may be restricted in high quality grizzly habitat, in order to minimise conflict and maintain habitat security. Educational messages will be used to discourage off-trail travel by independent travellers.
- Minimize risk to female grizzlies and to visitors by seasonally closing or controlling recreational use of areas important for feeding and travelling, minimizing food attractants, and educating visitors on risk management in bear country.

- Maintain wilderness recreation opportunities geared toward self-reliant travel with minimal infrastructure in areas with high habitat security.
- Work with adjacent land managers to maintain, and where possible improve, habitat connectivity through secure high quality corridors, allowing exchange between adjacent grizzly bear populations.
- Provide educational programming and products to increase visitor understanding of bear ecology, and of how to co-exist with bears.

4.7.3 Restoration of ecosystem processes

Parks Canada will place an emphasis on maintaining and restoring natural ecosystem processes that contribute to the evolution of park ecosystems. Fire, insects, wind disturbance, erosion and deposition will continue to influence the pattern and structure of park ecosystems, providing a diverse array of habitat for wildlife, and distinctive landscapes that enhance the experience of park visitors. Learning programs will communicate the important role that ecosystem processes play in maintaining healthy ecosystems. Active management initiatives, such as prescribed fires and ecosystem restoration initiatives, will incorporate opportunities for visitors to experience and learn about these critical ecosystem processes.

Direction:

- Use prescribed fires and carefully managed natural fires to achieve 50% of the long-term fire cycle and restore natural vegetation characteristics in all ecosystems, as detailed in the field unit Fire Management Plan (currently in draft form).
- Maintain predator-prey dynamics, in part by protecting the integrity of key wildlife movement corridors in the park, and by working with the Province of British Columbia to encourage maintenance of regional wildlife movement corridors linking the park with the Beaverfoot and Blaeberry valleys.
- Develop and implement an ecological restoration program for disturbed sites, such as old road alignments and depleted gravel pits. Identify two priority sites and implement restoration actions by 2014.

4.7.4 Protecting the Full Complement of Native Species

Yoho National Park is home to a diverse community of plants and animals. The opportunity to see some of the interesting wildlife and forest communities in the park, such as mountain goats and alpine larch forest, is a key factor that attracts many visitors to the park.

- Develop and promote new visitor experience opportunities by engaging anglers and other interested Canadians in activities to eliminate or reduce populations of non-

native fish species that pose a risk to native fish populations through displacement or hybridisation.

- Collaborate with stakeholders to implement proactive measures that will keep species from being added to Canada’s list of threatened and endangered mountain species.
- Prevent the introduction of new non-native species and control existing non-native species that are invasive, or harmful to native species.

Indicators of Success

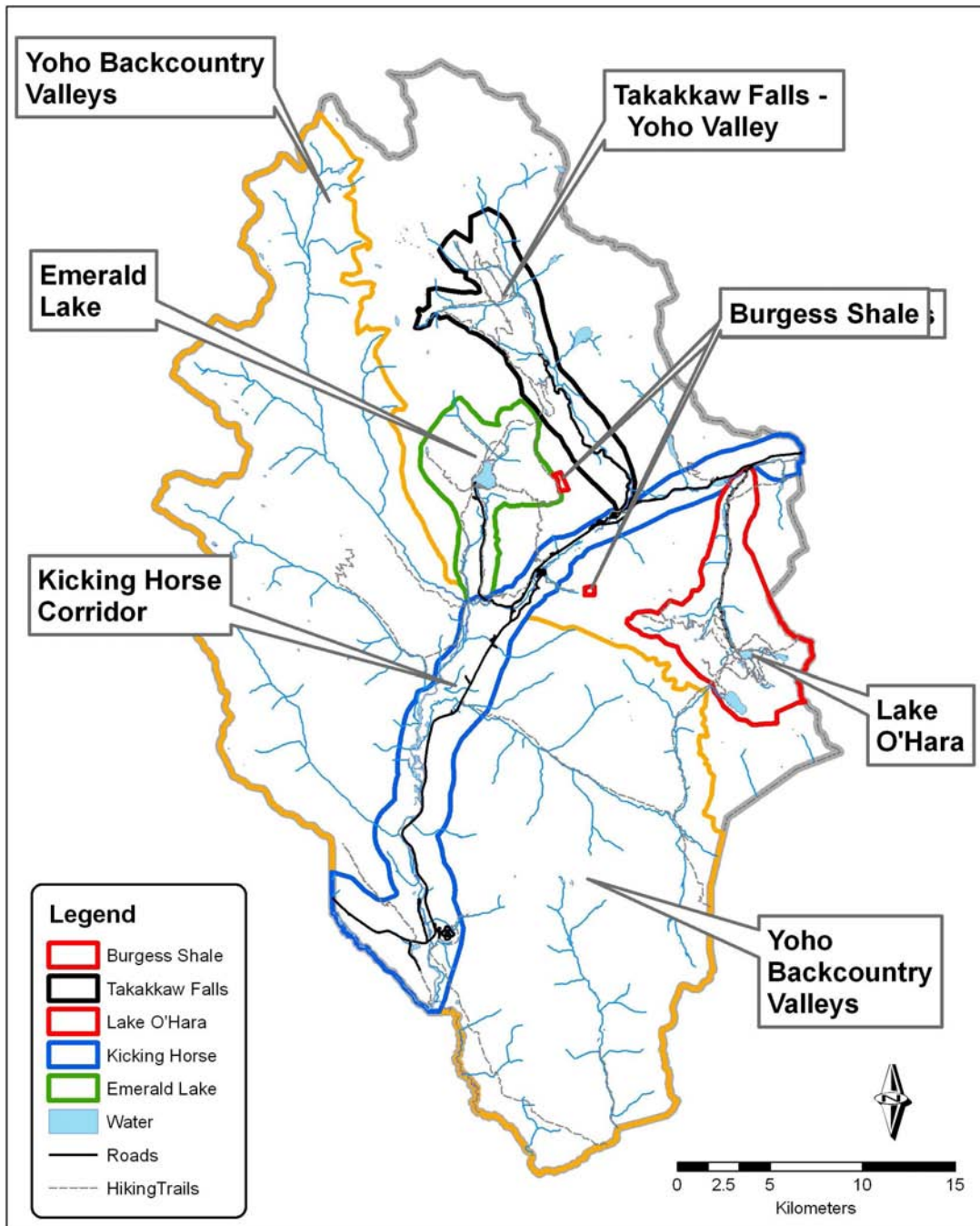
- The annual known, human-caused mortality of independent female grizzly bears shall not exceed 1.2% of the population, based on a 4-year running average.
- Maintain or improve habitat security in the park’s six landscape management units.
- At least 85% of visitors are satisfied, and 50% are very satisfied with their wilderness recreation experiences.
- Improved aquatic connectivity – number of barriers remedied.
- Increase in the percentage of natural fire cycle achieved, up to a target of 50%.
- Area of disturbed sites receiving restoration treatments.

5. AREA CONCEPTS

5.1 Lake O’Hara

5.1.1 Future Best

Nestled amidst the high peaks of the Continental Divide, Lake O’Hara is renowned for its stunning mountain scenery, classic alpine hikes and great winter skiing conditions. Visitors find here a landscape little changed from the time when the Canadian Pacific Railway built the Wiwaxy Cabin (1912) and later the Elizabeth Parker Hut (1919), to accommodate the first commercial visitors to the area. The area features numerous high alpine turquoise lakes nestled amidst towering peaks of the Rocky Mountain Main Ranges composed predominantly of massive, cliff-forming quartzite and limestone. Stands of fragrant subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce give way with increasing altitude to alpine larch, and then to open alpine meadows dotted with wildflowers during the short summer season. Mountain goats and marmots frequent the rocky slopes and ledges, and grizzly bears travel through the area that provides an important link between the Ottertail Valley and Kicking Horse Pass. The golden glow of the larches is a feature attraction for visitors in the autumn. Abundant moisture ensures fine skiing conditions in winter, and the elevation provides for the earliest and latest season ski touring in the park.



Map 1 - Area Concept Summary

Map 1: Area Concept Summary

At Lake O'Hara, visitors find an area rich in alpine history. High above the lake, on the boundary of adjoining Banff National Park, sits Abbott Pass Refuge Cabin National Historic Site of Canada. The historic trail network features impressive stonework and expansive views of the surrounding alpine landscape. The trail network provides access to all of the key features in the area, offering rewarding experiences for people of various ages and skill levels while helping to protect the fragile alpine environment. Visitors to the area pursue hiking, climbing, skiing, photography, drawing, painting, or simply relaxing amidst the splendour of one of the jewels of the Canadian Rockies. Controlled access ensures that visitors enjoy a peaceful experience without large crowds, and that the area retains room for wildlife to use and move through important habitats.

5.1.2 Current Situation

Seasonal closures on the McArthur Valley route, and voluntary trail restrictions on Mount Odaray are in place to reduce bear-human conflict, and to allow grizzly bear movement through these key travel corridors.

The historic Wiwaxy Cabin and Elizabeth Parker Hut, now operated by the Alpine Club of Canada, continue to offer rustic accommodation to new generations of hikers, climbers and skiers in a beautiful alpine meadow a short walk from the lake. This facility can accommodate 24 overnight hut users.

The elegant Lake O'Hara Lodge, and the Parks Canada campground with 30 sites complete the suite of available accommodation. *Le Relais* day shelter, operated by the Lake O'Hara Trails Club, provides information and refreshments for visitors. There is also a Parks Canada patrol cabin at the lake.

The 11-kilometre gravel road to the lake is closed to private motor vehicles and bicycles. An unlimited number of visitors may access the area on foot, ski, or snowshoe. During the summer a shuttle bus operates with a quota and reservation system allowing up to 42 day-users plus overnight campers and guests staying at the ACC hut to be transported to the lake. A separate shuttle bus provides access for the guests of the lodge.

5.1.3 Key Actions

- Maintain the existing controlled access system, including unlimited walk-in access, shuttle bus access with quota in summer, and unlimited ski and snowshoe access in winter. Bicycles and private motor vehicle access will not be permitted.
- Investigate possible ways to improve the shuttle bus and reservation system.
- In association with partners, continue to provide a range of overnight accommodation at Lake O'Hara. Overnight capacity will not be increased.

- Use seasonal closures in the McArthur Valley and voluntary trail restrictions on Mount Odaray to reduce bear-human conflict, and to allow grizzly bear movement through these key travel routes.
- Maintain the current trail system, consistent with Parks Canada trail standards, historic techniques, and aesthetics. Use local stone (quartzite and limestone) as the primary trail building material.
- Review, and where necessary update communication material to explain the importance of access restrictions in helping to create outstanding visitor experiences and to protect significant wildlife habitat.

5.1.4 Indicators of Success

- High satisfaction among visitors to Lake O'Hara.
- Visitors demonstrate a strong understanding about the rationale for access controls.

5.2 Takakkaw Falls – Yoho Valley

5.2.1 Future Best

One of the main destination areas in the park, Takakkaw Falls and the Yoho Valley provide an exciting experience for visitors travelling independently, or as part of a tour group. Advance information about the road and the landscape it traverses creates a sense of anticipation and curiosity in visitors as they enter the valley. On the dramatic scenic drive along the Kicking Horse and Yoho rivers, travellers pass between the limestone cliffs of Mount Ogden, and the lush sub-alpine forests and avalanche slopes of Mount Wapta, negotiating a unique set of switchbacks en route. At Takakkaw Falls, visitors are immediately greeted by an impressive view of one of the highest waterfalls in Canada. An easy trail provides access for all to a viewpoint near the base of the falls.

For visitors seeking a deeper connection to the park, the falls are only the beginning of a premier hiking trip into the backcountry of the Yoho and Little Yoho valleys, or into the Emerald Lake basin. Challenging day hikes and overnight trips are supported by several backcountry campgrounds or historic roofed accommodations. Feature attractions include the Iceline trail, the Twin Falls Tea House National Historic Site, the historic Stanley Mitchell Hut, and the numerous waterfalls found throughout the valleys.

The Takakkaw Falls walk-in campground provides 35 peaceful, scenic campsites for those wishing to linger near the falls, or link to backcountry campsites further up the valley. Most of the sites in the campground provide a view of the falls, and their sound is ever present. This campground provides an easy introduction to semi-wilderness camping, and a good base from which to mount more rigorous trips into the backcountry of the Little Yoho Valley.

5.2.2 Current Situation

The falls are the feature attraction for day use visitors. There is a picnic site with views of the falls, and a washroom facility adjacent to the parking area. A short, paved walking trail leads across the Yoho River to a viewpoint near the base of the falls.

The day use area is also the departure point for a number of spectacular day hikes and multi-day hikes into the backcountry of the Yoho and Little Yoho valleys, or over Yoho Pass into the Emerald Lake basin.

The campground is walk-in only, with wheeled carts provided so campers can easily load their gear the 400m to the site. There is a small hostel located a short walk from the falls. The Laughing Falls, Twin Falls, and Little Yoho backcountry campgrounds collectively offer 26 campsites for those on overnight excursions. The Stanley Mitchell Hut accommodates 26 people in summer, and 22 in winter. The Twin Falls Tea House can accommodate 15 overnight guests.

There are also two day use areas located along the Yoho Valley Road – Meeting of the Waters, at the confluence of the Yoho and Kicking Horse Rivers, and the Upper Spiral Tunnel viewpoint. Periodic maintenance of vegetation is required in order to ensure that trees near the tunnel portal, or at the viewpoint itself do not obscure the view of the tunnels. The view of the river confluence at the Meeting of the Waters is partially obscured by trees.

In the winter the area is a prime destination for ski touring into the Stanley Mitchell Hut. The Yoho Valley road is not ploughed in the winter, adding an extra 13 km to the ski trip into the valley.

A narrow wildlife corridor runs through the Takakkaw Falls – Yoho Valley area that provides an important link between Kiwetinok Pass and Sherbrooke Creek.

5.2.3 Key Actions

- Upgrade trailhead information to communicate the full range of opportunities that can be pursued from Takakkaw Falls.
- Upgrade the day use area, trails and bridges.
- Confine development around Takakkaw Falls to the existing developed footprint in an effort to retain sufficient habitat to allow wildlife movement through this narrow pinch point.
- Investigate options to position the Takakkaw Falls campground as a way to introduce inexperienced visitors to backcountry camping, taking people from “Step into Wilderness” to “Mountain Wilderness” experiences.

- In conjunction with these introductory camping experiences promote this opportunity with outdoor supply and retail companies to increase awareness of this program.
- Use selective tree trimming and removal to improve views at the Meeting of the Waters and Spiral Tunnel Viewpoint day use areas. Conduct periodic trimming and clearing in order to maintain these views in future years.
- Work with Canadian Pacific Railway to maintain open views around the portals of the Spiral Tunnels so that they remain visible from the day use area.
- Increase visitor awareness of the unique character of the valley before they embark on the Yoho Valley Road.

5.2.4 Indicators of Success

- Upgraded infrastructure at day use area.
- High degree of satisfaction of visitors using the Yoho Valley road.

5.3 Emerald Lake

5.3.1 Future Best

The Emerald Lake area introduces visitors to an iconic alpine glacial lake with an easy, accessible shoreline trail and viewing areas. It also serves as a breathtaking introduction to more challenging day hikes or backcountry trips amidst the mountains of the President Range. Visitors can hike from this day use area to several rewarding destinations such as the Wapta Highline and Burgess Pass, Hamilton Lake, Emerald Basin, or over Yoho Pass to Takakkaw Falls and the Yoho Valley.

After leaving the Trans Canada Highway, a short scenic drive offering impressive views of the President Range for drivers heading north, (and the Ottertail Range when returning south) brings visitors to one of the classic destinations of the Canadian Rockies. The lake and shoreline area provide peaceful opportunities for walking and paddling, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Transportation is managed so as to minimise impacts on lakeside experiences. The more adventurous can set off into the park's backcountry, while those seeking leisure can relax or dine in the Emerald Lake Lodge.

Local and regional visitors enjoy a special relationship with this area, returning frequently to reconnect with this important part of their community. All-season trails for hiking, biking and skiing provide linkages between Emerald Lake and the town of Field.

5.3.2 Current Situation

The Emerald Lake Lodge is situated on an old, wooded moraine at the south end of the lake. The lodge provides luxury accommodation and fine dining. The lodge includes two restaurants that are open to the public.

The day use parking area is located at the edge of the lake with no visual buffer separating traffic from people enjoying the lake. Vehicle noise can be heard across the lake. During the busy summer season the parking area can be congested and too small to accommodate all of the vehicles.

Staff accommodation and overnight parking for lodge guests is located off-site, approximately one kilometre south of the lake. Guests are shuttled from this parking area to their rooms on a diesel bus, and luggage is transported with gas-powered golf carts, causing frequent noise disturbance that can be heard on the far side of the lake.

In the winter, ski trails are track set on the old horse trail on the west side of the lake, around the alluvial fan at the back of the lake, and along the “connector trail” that links Emerald Lake to the Tally-Ho trail between Field and the Natural Bridge. The connector trail has not been constructed for summer use.

The lakeshore trail and Emerald River trail are used for snowshoeing in the winter. The Emerald River hiking trail is seldom used in the summer.

Other visitor facilities include washrooms, and Emerald Lake Sports – a quaint gift shop and concession that rents canoes and rowboats in summer and cross-country skis and snowshoes in winter.

The lakeshore trail includes an interpretive exhibit on the Burgess Shale, including a spotting scope that can be used to view the quarries on Fossil Ridge. The World Heritage Site plaque for the Burgess Shale is also located here.

Emerald Lake is the most popular day use area in the park. Visitors include independent travellers, and a large component of commercial travellers arriving on tour buses. Vehicle congestion and visitor crowding around the lakeshore occur frequently during the busy summer season.

Many local residents of Field frequent the lake, which is a popular place to ski, hike, paddle and fish. The Tally-Ho bike trail links Field with the lower part of the Emerald Lake road.

5.3.3 Key Actions:

- Redevelop parking area to create a setback from the lakeshore, and create a visual and noise buffer between vehicles and visitors on the lake, lakeside trail and viewing areas. Engage a landscape architect to design an appropriate solution.
- Encourage Emerald Lake Lodge to use electric vehicles for passenger and luggage shuttles in order to restore quiet conditions to the lodge and lake.
- Upgrade trailhead information at the lake to encourage visitors to explore beyond the scenic lakeshore, and to provide sufficient details about the longer hikes to enable hikers to be properly prepared.
- Improve trail connections between Field and Emerald Lake by exploring the potential to upgrade existing trails to create loop-trail options for skiing, hiking and mountain biking.
- Work with partners to increase the profile of cross country skiing and snowshoeing opportunities, through promotion and special events.

5.3.4 Indicators of Success

- Improved satisfaction of visitors at the lake.
- Trail improvements completed between Emerald Lake and Field.
- Increased use of Emerald Lake in the winter season.

5.4 The Burgess Shale

5.4.1 Future Best

The Burgess Shale area provides strong security and protection for globally significant fossils, while ensuring opportunities for outstanding educational hikes guided by scientific experts, and broad ranging interpretive hikes guided by skilled Parks Canada interpreters. Visitors to the sites experience a sense of awe at standing amidst one of the most important fossil localities in the world. State-of-the-art virtual tours, digital media and off-site exhibits provide an opportunity for those not able to undertake the challenging hike to the fossil sites to experience the fascinating story of early animal life preserved in these Cambrian rocks.

5.4.2 Current Situation

The Burgess Shale planning area includes all known locations of Burgess Shale-type fossils within Yoho and Kootenay national parks. These rocks outcrop at fairly high elevations throughout the high peaks of the Rockies along the Continental Divide. The main sites are the Walcott and Raymond Quarries on Fossil Ridge between Mount Field and Mount Wapta above Emerald Lake, and the Trilobite Beds on the southwest face of Mount Stephen. In addition to these key sites, there are approximately fifteen additional recorded sites containing Burgess Shale type fossils in the two parks.

The Burgess Shale fossils are of international significance, consisting of more than 150 species of remarkably preserved marine animals from the middle Cambrian period, 505 million years ago. The most extensive palaeontological research and collection efforts on the Burgess Shale were undertaken by Charles D. Walcott of the Smithsonian Institution (1909 – 1925) and the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) (between 1975 and 2000). The ROM and others continue to investigate and there remains considerable scope for new discoveries and increased understanding of the Burgess Shale fauna and its geological setting. It is recognised as one of the most significant fossil sites in the world, and was designated a World Heritage Site in 1981. Protection and presentation of the sites and fossil collections is an international obligation. The Burgess Shale rocks and fossils are vulnerable to theft and vandalism (graffiti), and to abrasion caused by rocks shifting under people's feet. For these reasons, Burgess Shale sites in Yoho and Kootenay are protected as Zone I areas and visitor access to the two main sites is closely controlled. Visitor access to the Walcott Quarry and Mount Stephen Trilobite Beds is permitted only on guided hikes led by Parks Canada or the Burgess Shale Geoscience Foundation.

Visitors attending the guided hikes tend to be highly educated and keen to learn about this important part of earth history. The challenging nature of the guided hikes means that participants must be fit and capable of hiking in steep terrain. A much broader cross section of visitors is exposed to the Burgess Shale through interpretive exhibits located at the Field Visitor Reception Centre, and at Emerald Lake.

5.4.3 Key Actions:

- Complete and implement the Burgess Shale Management Framework (currently in draft form).
- Continue to maintain restricted and closed areas around the Walcott Quarry and Mount Stephen Trilobite Beds, and evaluate other sites to determine if additional closures are required to protect fossil resources.
- Monitor visitor satisfaction with guided hikes to the Walcott Quarry and Mount Stephen Trilobite Beds.
- Maintain association with the Royal Ontario Museum, and develop links with other global research institutions and individuals, as appropriate.
- With partners, develop digital media products that help to convey the importance of the Burgess Shale to off-site audiences.
- Encourage scientific research on Burgess Shale sites, particularly those that have been less studied. Conduct peer review of all Burgess Shale research proposals as part of the Parks Canada Research and Collection Permit System.
- Permit fossil excavation on Fossil Ridge and Mount Stephen as part of legitimate scientific research only if it can be demonstrated that the research questions cannot be answered using existing fossil collections, and research is supported by peer reviewers.

5.4.4 Indicators of Success

- High visitor satisfaction with guided hikes.
- Park visitors leave with a greater understanding of the Burgess Shale and its importance.
- Increased Burgess Shale website visits and information downloads.
- Research publications that advance knowledge of the Burgess Shale.

5.5 The Kicking Horse Corridor

5.5.1 Future Best

The Kicking Horse Corridor is a key link in a continuous east-west journey through the mountain parks, featuring opportunities to explore and learn about Canada's history in transportation and mountaineering. From Kicking Horse Pass National Historic Site at the BC-Alberta border, visitors travel along the valley of the Kicking Horse Canadian Heritage River to the west end of the park. Stories are told at stops along the route, as well as through electronic media for those not wishing to stop.

Visitors find an area rich in cultural resources. The Kicking Horse Pass National Historic Site includes an evocative cultural landscape, with many tangible historic resources, such as remnants of the original rail grade, a trestle, the Spiral Tunnels, a stone bake oven and archaeological sites. Remnants of historic mining operations can still be seen on the slopes and cliffs of Mount Field and Mount Stephen. The Deer Lodge cabin – the first warden patrol cabin built in the park – is an important historic structure located near the west end of the park.

As the park's anchor community, the town of Field (see section 5.7), with its locally owned shops, restaurants, inns and guest houses, provides opportunities to mingle with the locals and learn about the rich history of the area. The Visitor Reception Centre provides engaging exhibits on the Burgess Shale and other park features, and trip planning information for park visitors. The active railway yard in the community and the interpretation viewpoint overlooking the famous Spiral Tunnels fascinate railway buffs.

Active recreational users (hikers, campers, mountain bikers, ice and mountain climbers, cross-country skiers, and paddlers) all appreciate the staging services provided in the town of Field, or at the numerous day use areas and campsites along the corridor.

5.5.2 Current Situation

Two outlying commercial accommodations are located within this area: West Louise Lodge, and Cathedral Mountain Lodge.

All of the park's four front-country campgrounds are located along this corridor: Kicking Horse (88 sites), Monarch (44 sites), Chancellor Peak (62 sites), and Hoodoo Creek (30 sites). Field is the focal point for park information, roofed accommodation and services, and also includes several heritage buildings.

Day use areas along the corridor include the Spiral Tunnels viewpoint, the Great Divide (accessible by foot, bike or ski on the old 1-A road), the Natural Bridge, Finn Creek and Faeder Lake picnic areas, and Wapta Falls access road. With the exception of a small parking area at the Natural Bridge, none of these areas are maintained or cleared of snow in the winter.

Along this route are trailheads for several other popular day hikes, including two historic fire lookouts (Mount Hunter and Paget Peak), Sherbrooke Lake, Wapta Falls, and the Hoodoos trail. Trailheads for several potential multi-day trips into backcountry valleys are also located along this corridor.

The Kicking Horse River can be paddled from Kicking Horse Campground to Field, and from the Amiskwi confluence below Natural Bridge to Chancellor Peak campground, but there are no formal put-in locations accessible to the public. A gravel road providing access to a former put-in location below the Natural Bridge has been closed to motor vehicles.

The Kicking Horse Corridor contains the majority of the montane habitat in the park and provides important winter range for ungulates. It is also an important wildlife movement corridor linking the Beaverfoot Valley with the Amiskwi and Blaeberry valleys to the north, and the Bow Valley to the east. This movement corridor is constricted by topography and built facilities around Field and at the base of the Field Hill near Monarch and Kicking Horse Campgrounds. Other special features include the Leancoil Marsh, Ottertail wetlands, Deerlodge pond, and the Hoodoos.

As this is the main travel corridor through the park, it is used by all types of visitors, including those who drive through without stopping, those who stop briefly to picnic or sightsee, those who stop to camp or stay in roofed accommodations, day users who are pursuing a range of recreational activities, and backcountry travellers.

5.5.3 Key Actions

- Improve sense of arrival at east entrance, and link with the Kicking Horse Pass National Historic Site.

- Develop and implement a communication strategy to raise the profile of cultural heritage along the corridor, including more prominent signage for Kicking Horse Pass National Historic Site.
- Consolidate facilities as old infrastructure is updated, redeveloped, or relocated, in order to provide a wider range of opportunities at single locations.
- Review frontcountry campgrounds, demand, camper expectations, and ecological considerations; make modifications to enhance camping experiences, maintain or improve ecological conditions, and gain operational efficiencies.
- Consider re-opening the old 1-A highway to vehicle traffic (no buses or large RVs due to space limitations) from the Lake O'Hara road to the Great Divide day use area at the boundary with Banff National Park.
- Extend the open season for selected day use areas.
- Consider ways to provide access for canoes and kayaks to the Kicking Horse River below the Natural Bridge.
- Renew the Natural Bridge day use area, including new washroom facilities and updated interpretive exhibits.
- At the western entrance, improve the sense of arrival to Yoho National Park, the Kicking Horse Canadian Heritage River, and the Canadian Rocky Mountains World Heritage Site.
- Consider new experience at Leancoil Marsh, such as a boardwalk and viewing platform area.
- Maintain natural habitat in critical pinch points within the Kicking Horse wildlife corridor, specifically around the town of Field, and around the Monarch, Kicking Horse and Chancellor Peak campgrounds.
- Create visitor experience opportunities to observe and learn about prescribed fires in conjunction with burns planned in the valley (ex: Mount King and Ottertail junction), as well as completed burns (ex: Hoodoos (2003)).

5.5.4 Indicators of Success

- Visitor satisfaction with sense of arrival, and facilities throughout corridor.
- Awareness of the significance of Kicking Horses Pass and other heritage features in the corridor.

5.6 Yoho Backcountry Valleys

5.6.1 Future Best

The long, forested valleys of western Yoho provide unique opportunities for remote wilderness adventures. Hikers, mountain bikers, snowshoers and skiers experience a sense of solitude, and remoteness in valleys where crowds are seldom seen. Old fire roads provide a solid base for biking and skiing. Low levels of human use mean that wilderness travellers have a greater possibility of seeing wildlife such as moose, or

bears. The natural sounds of wind in the trees, running water, or simply silence provide a refreshing contrast to the busy highway along the main corridor in the park.

5.6.2 Current Situation

Yoho National Park contains several long, forested river valleys with little infrastructure development. The Ice River, Amiskwi, Ottertail, and Otterhead valleys contain old fire roads that are now used as biking and hiking trails. The Porcupine Valley has an old, disused trail in its lower reaches, and is otherwise undeveloped. A backcountry campground exists within the Ottertail valley at the junction with McArthur Creek. These valleys will be maintained without additional permanent facilities in order to provide remote, uncrowded wilderness experiences that allow visitors to experience solitude and physical challenge requiring self-reliance. Minimal infrastructure and low levels of use will ensure that these valleys continue to provide a high degree of habitat security for grizzly bears and critical wildlife movement corridors that link with the Beaverfoot, Blaeberry, Kicking Horse and McArthur river valleys.

5.6.3 Key Actions

- Maintain existing, basic trails (former fire roads) that allow access on foot, bicycle, and horseback. Use signage and trail maps to indicate where certain uses may not be supported due to trail characteristics, or ecological or visitor experience concerns. Only basic trail maintenance involving the periodic removal of fallen trees and encroaching vegetation will be undertaken.
- Maintain existing designated campsites in the Ottertail River valley at McArthur Creek.
- Permit random, no-trace camping in the Ice River, Otterhead, Amiskwi and Porcupine valleys.
- The Porcupine Creek watershed will remain undeveloped.
- Evaluate commercial horse use on a case-by-case basis, considering visitor experience and ecological objectives, and potential impacts on habitat security, vegetation, trail characteristics, and other users. Use a license of occupation to enable approved commercial horse use, in order to control location, timing, frequency, and other issues related to horse stock management.

5.6.4 Indicators of Success:

- Stable use of backcountry valleys.
- High satisfaction among backcountry users.

5.7 The Community of Field

5.7.1 Future Best

The community of Field is a model of a safe, self-sustaining mountain village that respects the ecological and cultural importance of its natural park setting. Field is a model of excellence in environmental stewardship. It is a place that values the quality of life of its residents and the satisfaction of visitors. Residents are proud to share their special place in Yoho National Park. Visitors and residents appreciate the tranquil beauty of Field, where the natural landscape dominates the visual experience. Residents welcome their role in protecting the park for future generations and in helping visitors learn about the park.

In Field, residents and visitors can enjoy a mix of small commercial operations that meet their basic needs and support the national park experience. Owners are committed to providing high quality, personalized service. An eclectic mix of small scale homes and buildings define the village's unique architecture. Select heritage buildings are protected while the style of new buildings reflects the natural surroundings. The history of the railway and of past logging and mining activity is well interpreted, as are the ecological values of the area. Field is a place that reflects natural park values and which supports the well-being of residents and of visitors to Yoho National Park.

Summer visitors hike classic trails to spectacular mountain vistas, while climbers test themselves on classic mountain terrain, both in winter and in summer. In winter, visitors and locals alike take advantage spectacular cross country skiing adjacent to the community.

5.7.2 Current Situation

Field is located on alluvial fan at the base of Mount Stephen in Yoho National Park. Surrounded by high, steep-sided peaks, the village is at the confluence of Stephen Creek and the Kicking Horse River. The village is bounded on the east by Stephen Creek, on the north by the Trans-Canada Highway, and on the south by steep, forested slopes. The ability of wildlife to move through the region, including through the community of Field, is the one of the most important ecological issues in the Kicking Horse Valley.

Limits to commercial growth, zoning, and boundaries have been established for Field. The Field Community Plan allows for an increase of 3,030 square meters of commercial space, which includes a hostel, a new lodge, as well as expansion of the current lodge. Total future commercial development will be 5,055 square meters.

The village consists for the most part of modest, single-family detached houses. Commercial development is limited.

Most of the heritage buildings in Field are privately owned. An inventory of all heritage buildings has been completed, and lessees are encouraged to protect this heritage.

The population of Field has shifted over the years, in response to changes in the mining, forestry, railway and tourism industries, from a high of over 400 to a current low of approximately 250 people. The declining population has had an impact on affordability in certain areas, such as utility fees. Zoning issues restrict the economic viability of the community.

Few programs exist in Field to help visitors and residents become aware of their location within Yoho National Park.

5.7.3 Key Actions

- Expand the range of interpretive opportunities, including stories about the area's ecological and cultural heritage.
- Rezone certain areas of the community to shift commercial opportunities from areas where commercial potential no longer exists.
- Use approved character, sign, site and landscape guidelines to ensure the style and scale of Field is maintained.
- Maintain a Parks Canada administrative centre in the community.
- Work with the regional school board to ensure continued operation of the school in the community.
- Aggressively pursue the release of residential and commercial lots in Field.

5.7.4 Indicators of Success

- At least 85% of visitors are satisfied and 50% very satisfied with their visit
- Affordability in Field has improved.
- The school continues to be in operation.

6. TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

The Trans-Canada Highway bisects Yoho National Park, from Kicking Horse Pass at the Alberta-British Columbia border, to the west gate 25km east of Golden. The primary purpose of the highway is to efficiently move people and goods, but it also provides important opportunities for people to experience the park. Park visitors use the highway and other roads to gain access to the wide array of available facilities and opportunities. Other travellers may never leave the road or rail corridor, yet still enjoy a sightseeing experience. Park roads lead from the highway to Takakkaw Falls, Emerald Lake, and Lake O'Hara, allowing visitors to travel deeper into the heart of the park.

Utility corridors provide essential and stable energy and communication services for communities in and around the park, and for outlying commercial accommodations. An overhead power transmission line was constructed from Golden to the community of Field along the Trans Canada Highway and CP Rail right-of-way in 1997.

Transportation and utility infrastructure must be carefully managed to minimise potential impacts on natural and cultural resources. These impacts may include terrestrial and aquatic habitat fragmentation, wildlife mortality, environmental contamination, disturbance of cultural resources, and aesthetic impacts. Parks Canada will continue to work with transportation and utility partners in order to provide safe and efficient travel and utility corridors, and to mitigate potential impacts on visitor experience, ecological and cultural resources associated with this infrastructure.

6.1 Key Actions

- Integrate highway fencing and wildlife crossing structures into all future twinning projects, and consider its application when upgrading other roads in significant wildlife habitat. Provide educational opportunities for visitors.
- Continue to work with CP Rail to reduce grain spills on the railway that serve as attractants to bears and other wildlife, and explore other solutions to address wildlife mortality along the tracks.
- Replace dysfunctional culverts in order to restore aquatic connectivity for fish and invertebrates.
- With partners develop best practices for managing potential contaminants, including procedures for minimising road salt application near sensitive aquatic ecosystems, and spill response protocols for hazardous materials.
- Prepare a long-term gravel extraction plan for the mountain national parks to support future highway and road requirements.
- Where gravel sources are identified within wilderness areas, begin the process of changing the wilderness boundaries through an amendment to the *National Parks Declared Wilderness Area Regulations*.
- Restore all depleted gravel pits to appropriate functioning ecosystems. Include future ecological restoration costs in estimates for highway construction and recapitalization. Apply these funds to ecological restoration of depleted gravel sources and old disturbed sites, in accordance with a long-term restoration plan.
- Permit changes to the existing system of utilities where there is a clear and demonstrable need, significant environmental benefits will result, and aesthetic effects will not diminish the visitor experience.
- Proposals to establish towers for wireless communications will be considered. Changes to the boundaries of designated wilderness areas may be required.
- Identify opportunities to enhance and cluster roadside camping and day use areas in anticipation of future twinning of the Trans Canada Highway. Integrate opportunities with highway twinning planning.

6.2 Indicators of Success

- Reduced wildlife mortality on railways and roads.
- Reduction in the number of dysfunctional culverts on waterways.
- Water quality meets standards.
- Reduction in area of disturbed sites.

7. ZONING AND WILDERNESS AREA DECLARATION

7.1 The National Park Zoning System

The zoning system is an integrated approach used to allocate land and water use in a national park. The zoning plan is an important management tool that helps to support the park vision by directing development and visitor use levels to compatible areas of the park, while ensuring that rare, sensitive or exceptional ecological and cultural resources are protected.

The zoning plan for Yoho National Park is illustrated in Figure X, and the individual zones are described below. The following minor changes have been made to the zoning plan found in the 2000 Park Management Plan:

- the boundaries of the Ice River Zone I area have been modified to more accurately reflect the limits of this geological feature; and,
- the Ottertail Flats wetland, and Leancoil Marsh, formerly designated as environmentally sensitive sites, have been converted to Zone I areas.

7.1.1 Zone I – Special Preservation

The Zone I designation applies to those areas of the park that are among the very best examples of the features that characterise the natural region, or that support outstanding or rare ecological or cultural features. This zone may also be used to protect areas that are too sensitive to accommodate facility development or large numbers of visitors. Preservation is the primary objective. Motorized access is not permitted. Zone I areas in Yoho National Park include the Ice River Igneous Complex, the Burgess Shale fossil sites, the Ottertail Flats and the Leancoil Marsh wetlands.

The Ice River Igneous Complex is the largest igneous intrusion in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. This igneous rock unit contrasts sharply with the typical sedimentary rocks that comprise the vast majority of the Rockies. Even compared to other igneous rocks, the Ice River complex is of relatively unusual composition, consisting of alkaline rocks such as nepheline syenite, pyroxinite and carbonatite. Blue sodalite, an uncommon

mineral often sought by collectors, has been quarried from the complex just outside the park boundaries.

The Burgess Shale fossil sites, described in section 5.4, are also designated as Zone I areas. These include all the known Burgess Shale fossil sites within the Stephen and Burgess Shale Formations in Yoho National Park.

The Ottertail Flats and Leancoil Marsh are relatively low elevation, montane wetlands. This is an uncommon ecosystem type in the central Rocky Mountains, and these are the two best and largest examples in the park. The boundary for the Ottertail Flats Zone I areas includes the entire wetland portion along the Kicking Horse River south of the Amiskwi River confluence to Chancellor Peak Campground, excluding the Canadian Pacific Railway corridor (and a 100m buffer adjacent to the rail corridor).

7.1.2 Zone II – Wilderness

Zone II wilderness includes large areas of natural landscape preserved in a wilderness state. These areas provide visitors an opportunity to experience nature with minimal human intrusion or built facilities. Public motorised access is not permitted.

Most of Yoho National Park is designated Zone II, to ensure that large representative landscapes are maintained. Visitor facilities may include trails, bridges, backcountry campgrounds, alpine huts and backcountry patrol cabins.

7.1.3 Zone III – Natural Environment

Zone III areas are managed as natural environments that provide a range of visitor opportunities, often supported by facilities of a basic and rustic nature. Public motorised access is not permitted, however snowmobiles may be used to set nordic ski trails, and both helicopters and snowmobiles may be used to service backcountry facilities. Facilities within Zone III areas in Yoho National Park include the Takakkaw Falls campground and day use area, Whiskey Jack hostel, Lake O'Hara Lodge, Elizabeth Parker Hut, and the Emerald Lake winter Nordic trail area.

7.1.4 Zone IV – Outdoor Recreation

The Zone IV designation is applied to areas that provide a wide range of visitor activities, supported by frontcountry facilities and park roads. Public motorised access is one of the primary characteristics of these zones. Zone IV areas in the park include the Trans Canada Highway and Canadian Pacific Railway corridors, park roads, the front-country campgrounds, and main day use areas.

7.1.5 Zone V – Park Services

Zone V includes those areas of a park where there is a concentration of services and built facilities. The community of Field is the only Zone V area in the park. The Zone V boundary incorporates the community boundary established in the *Field Community Plan*, and cemetery, water reservoir, and wastewater treatment plant.

7.1.6 Environmentally Sensitive Sites

This designation applies to small areas that are sensitive to development, and which require special protection. Two areas within Yoho are designated as environmentally sensitive sites:

Wapta Marsh – a relatively high elevation montane wetland located in Kicking Horse Pass. Montane wetlands are rare features in the Rocky Mountains west slope.

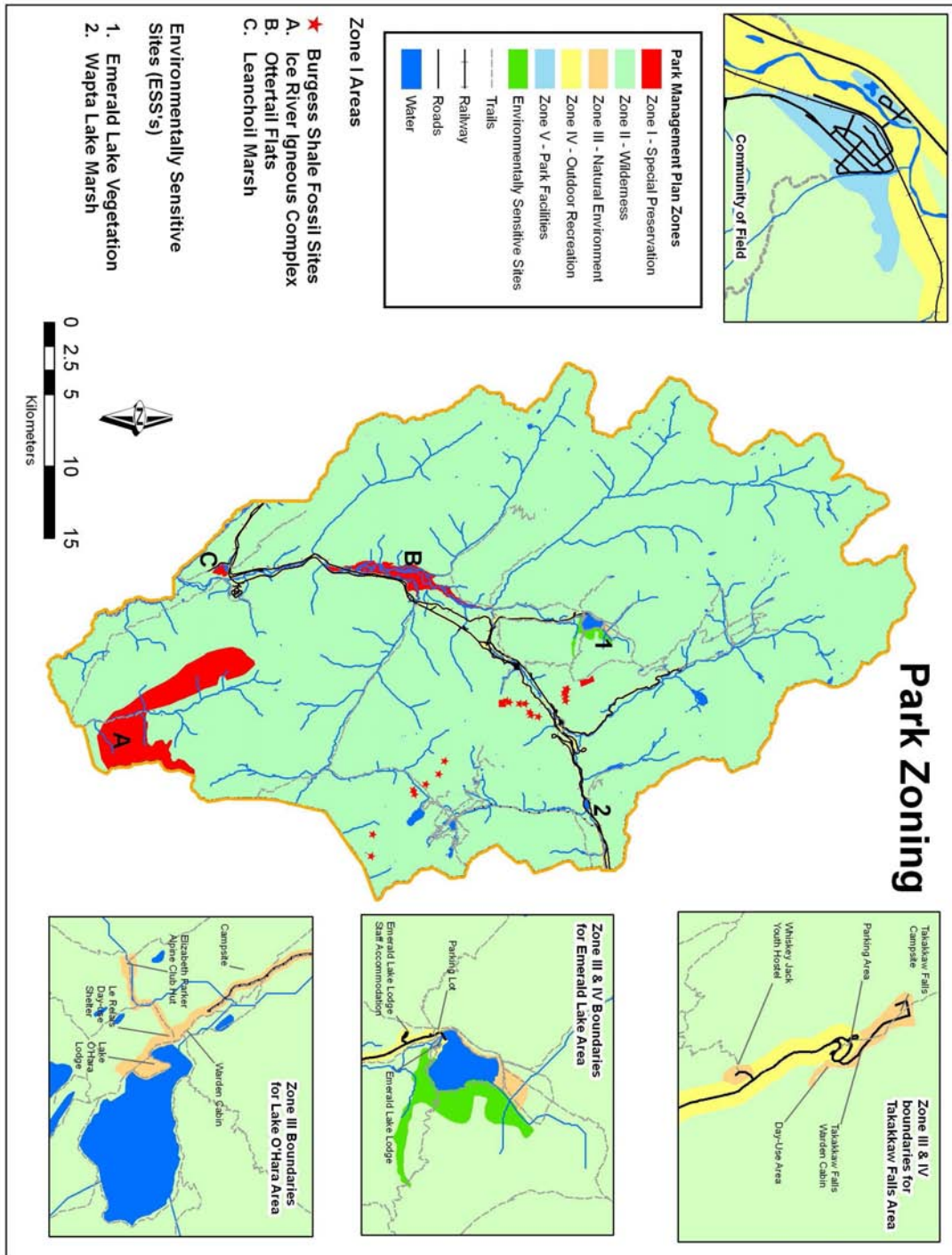
Emerald Lake vegetation – The moist microclimate around Emerald Lake supports vegetation communities unique to the mountain parks. Western hemlock, western red cedar, western yew, and grand fir are found in this habitat. Several plants that occur here are found nowhere else in the park.

7.2 Declared Wilderness Areas

Lands within national parks may be legally declared as wilderness areas under section 14 of the *Canada National Parks Act*. Declared wilderness areas demonstrate Parks Canada's commitment to Canadians that the wilderness character of these places will be respected and protected for the long-term.

Within a wilderness area, no activity that would alter the wilderness character of the place will be authorised. Infrastructure will be of a rudimentary nature, such as hiking trails and backcountry campsites. Motorised access is not permitted, except as may be required for park management purposes.

In October 2000 the majority of Yoho National Park was declared to be wilderness areas within the national park under the *National Parks Wilderness Area Declaration Regulations*. Some minor adjustments to the established wilderness area boundaries may be required in future years to accommodate gravel extraction needs for highway maintenance, and to support the establishment of mobile communications infrastructure.



Map 2: Park Zoning Map

8. MONITORING AND REPORTING

8.1 Condition Monitoring

Condition monitoring aims to measure the general state of park ecosystems, cultural resources, visitor experience and education programming. A number of key measures are tracked and rolled up into broad indicators and trends, which are reported in State of the Park Reports.

The following indicators will be used in the next State of the Park Report, scheduled for completion in 2014.

Ecological Integrity:

- Native Biodiversity
- Climate and Atmosphere
- Terrestrial Ecosystems
- Aquatic Ecosystems
- Regional Landscapes

Cultural Resources:

- Resource Condition
- Selected Management Practices

Visitor Experience:

Note: Some of these national level indicators are still under development.

- Connection to Yoho National Park
- Attendance
- Visitor Satisfaction
- Learning
- Activities and Services
- Visitor Safety

Public Education:

Note: These national level measures are still under development.

- Appreciation
- Understanding
- Outreach Education
- External Communications

9. SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- to be completed with final draft –

10. SUMMARY OF PRIORITY ACTIONS

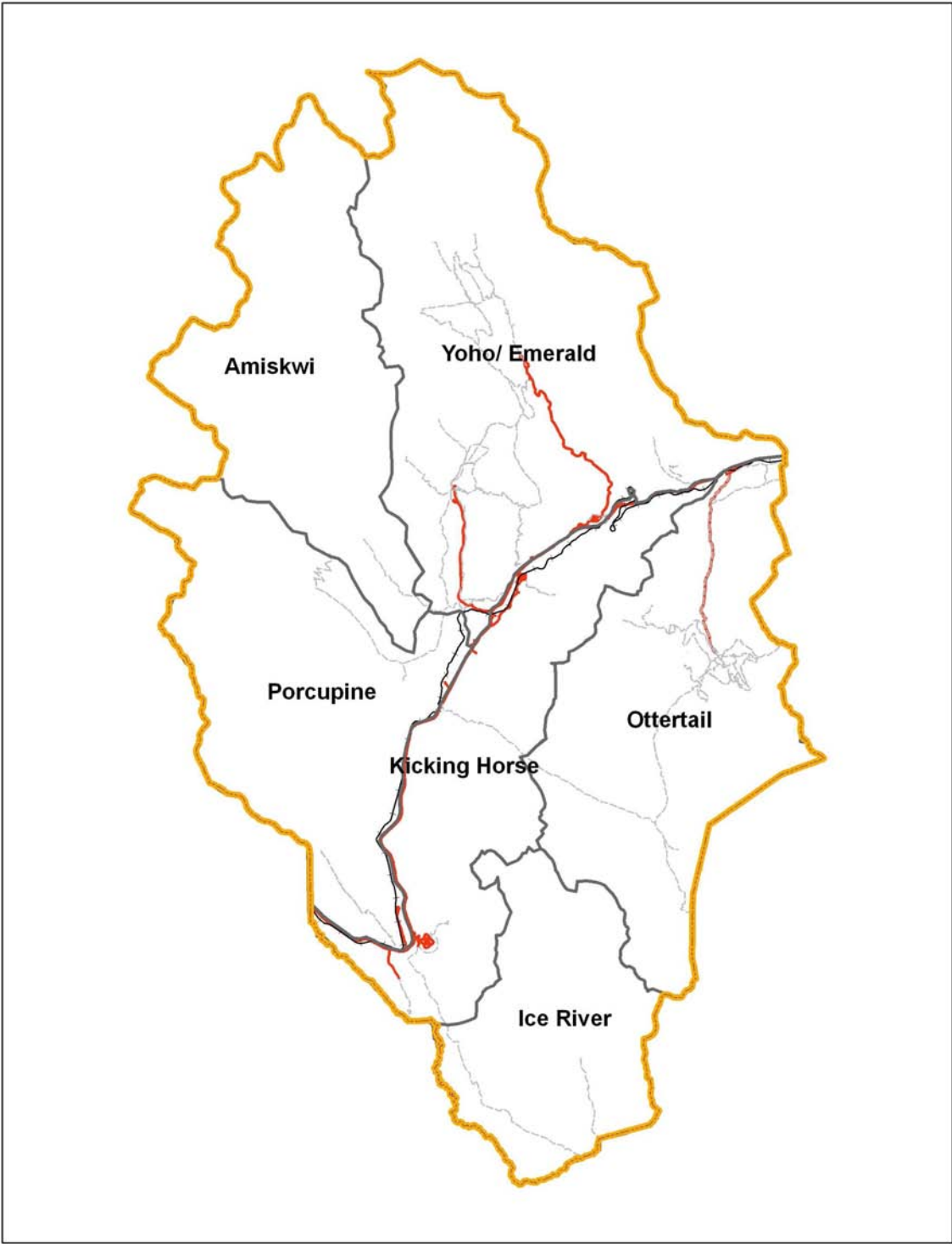
Key Strategy or Area Concept	First 5 Year Actions
Key Strategy	
Showcases of Conservation Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new Burgess Shale virtual products and continually update interpretive messages based on current research. • Build experience and learning opportunities into the planned prescribed fires for Mount King and Ottertail valley.
Accessible Mountain Experiences – All Authentic, All the Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new virtual and drive-through experience products. • Consider proposals for new visitor experience opportunities that support Parks Canada’s mandate. • Improve on-line pre-trip information. • Increase promotion of Yoho as a winter destination. • Target priority market segments. • Invest strategically and sufficiently in front-line services and facilities.
Sharing Leadership in Environmental Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand use of environmental technologies in campgrounds and day use areas. • Encourage alternative energy sources in built facilities. • Involve volunteers in stewardship activities such as non-native plant control, and ecosystem restoration.
Celebrating the History and Culture of Yoho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and restore significant cultural resources, as resources permit. • Work with partners to develop concept of heritage railway corridor between Kicking Horse Pass and Rogers Pass national historic sites. • Enhance the profile and interpretation of significant cultural resources in the park.
Bringing the Mountains to People Where They Live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians with content linked to the unique aspects of the park. • Work with the ROM and Canadian Heritage to develop the Burgess Shale virtual museum. • Support <i>Wild Voices for Kids</i> program and increase mountain park content.
Managing Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain growth limits for Field, and continue to implement the Redevelopment Guidelines for Outlying Commercial Accommodations. • Focus new development outside of ecologically sensitive areas. • Restore disturbed sites no longer required for facilities.
Ensuring Healthy Park Ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore connectivity of streams and wetlands. • Work with partners to reduce wildlife mortality. • Use prescribed fires to restore fire to the landscape.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an ecological restoration plan for disturbed sites. • Control or eliminate non-native, invasive species.
Area Concepts	
Lake O'Hara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate ways to improve the reservation and bus system. • Maintain controlled vehicle access and quota system. • Maintain trail system to Parks Canada standards.
Takakkaw Falls – Yoho Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade Takakkaw Falls day use area, trails, bridges and trailhead information. • Explore feasibility of establishing a learn-to-camp program at Takakkaw Falls. • Increase visitor awareness of the unique character of the valley before they travel up the Yoho Valley Road.
Emerald Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelop parking lot to reduce the impact of vehicular traffic on the lakeshore experience. • Improve trail connections between Field and Emerald Lake.
Burgess Shale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain association with the ROM, and convey current research to visitors on-site, at exhibit in the park, and through virtual media. • Monitor visitor satisfaction with guided hiking programs. • Encourage scientific research, particularly on less well known sites.
Kicking Horse Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the sense of arrival at both east and west entrances. • Review campgrounds and day-use areas, and modify or consolidate to improve visitor experience and ecological conditions. • Renew the infrastructure at the Natural Bridge. • Create visitor experience opportunities to observe and learn about prescribed fires.
Yoho Backcountry Valleys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain existing trails to basic wilderness trail standards, allowing access on foot, mountain bike or horse. • Maintain existing campground at McArthur Creek, and permit random camping in Ice, Porcupine, Otterhead and Amiskwi valleys.
Community of Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the range of interpretive opportunities. • Rezone areas to shift commercial opportunities from areas where commercial potential no longer exists. • Ensure the style and scale of Field is maintained. • Ensure continued operation of the school. • Aggressively pursue the release of residential and commercial lots in Field.

APPENDIX 1 – GRIZZLY BEAR HABITAT SECURITY ESTIMATES BY LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT UNITS

Landscape Management Unit	% < 2500m elevation not secure due to human use	% < 2500m elevation not secure due to small patch size	Secure habitat below 2500m elevation (%)
Ice River	5	0	95
Ottertail	28	2	70
Kicking Horse	28	1	70
Yoho/Emerald	39	6	55
Porcupine	15	2	84
Amiskwi	1	0	99

Note: areas > 2500m elevation are mainly rock and ice, and therefore do not provide secure habitat.



Map 3: Landscape Management Units in Yoho National Park