



Ski Area Guidelines

Backgrounder: Mountain National Parks

A Need for Change

In 2006, the Environment Minister released revised Ski Area Management Guidelines for Canada's national parks. The guidelines set out how Parks Canada and ski areas will work together to address the needs of the ski areas while ensuring ecological integrity and quality national park experiences. The updated management plans need to reflect these new guidelines.

Background

- Skiing, the expectations of skiers and national park policies have changed considerably since long-range plans were approved for Lake Louise, Sunshine Village, Mount Norquay and Marmot Basin in the 1980s.
- *Ski Area Management Guidelines* and individual site guidelines provide ski areas with flexibility and certainty while protecting ecological integrity.
- There have been no decisions made about expansion.

Ski Area Management Guidelines

- First published in 2000, *Ski Area Management Guidelines* were refined in 2006 to improve ecological integrity, reflect the full scope of Parks Canada's mandate and address the concerns of communities, ski areas, tourism associations and environmental groups.
- The refinements respect the intent of the original guidelines.
- The primary goal for the management of ski areas is to achieve long-term land use certainty that:
 - maintains or restores ecological integrity
 - contributes to memorable visitor experiences and educational opportunities
 - provides ski area operators with clear parameters for business planning in support of an economically-healthy operation
- Managing ski area growth is similar to the approach to growth management in national park communities and outlying commercial accommodations (OCAs).

Site Guidelines

- Site guidelines will shape new long-range plans by outlining possible initiatives, and the conditions and broad parameters for development and use.
- Approved site guidelines for each ski area will:
 - set permanent, negotiated limits to growth, and permit balanced development within those limits
 - establish clear parameters that maintain the ecological integrity of Banff and Jasper national parks
 - guide the ski area's contributions to memorable visitor experiences and opportunities to learn
- Decisions about individual development proposals, including summer use, will only be made through long range plans¹ and the application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA). Detailed planning, environmental analysis, and public participation will be required.

¹ Some projects may be advanced prior to a long-range plan if they meet specific criteria as outlined in the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*

- The preparation of site guidelines involves the public, park stakeholders and Aboriginal groups at various stages. Public feedback is carefully considered to understand issues of concern, gauge support, and to strengthen content where needed.
- Marmot Basin is the first ski area to complete site guidelines, which were approved in January 2008.

Future Directions

Parks Canada welcomes public comments on the following proposed direction for the revised management plan.

Use Parks Canada's *Ski Area Management Guidelines*, and site guidelines and long-range plans for individual operations to guide all future ski area management in national parks, including summer use.