

2013-2014 Parks Canada Agency Report on Plans and Priorities

Additional Information on Parks Canada's Contribution to the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS)

The 2010-2013 FSDS continues to guide the Government of Canada's sustainable development activities. The government is currently consulting the public regarding the second three-year cycle of the FSDS (2013-2016). Once finalized, it will provide the basis for the 2013-2014 year end performance reporting.

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 the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.

Parks Canada's Vision

Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.

1. Parks Canada Sustainable Development Vision

The *Federal Sustainable Development Act* defines sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It states that the Government of Canada "acknowledges the need to integrate environmental, economic and social factors in the making of all decisions by government."

Sustainable development is central to Parks Canada's mandate and vision. It is ingrained in all aspects of the Agency's activities from establishing and conserving national parks and national marine conservation areas to designating and commemorating national historic sites. Parks Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's treasured natural and historic places remain unimpaired for the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Along with providing benefits to personal health and well being, national parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas create economic opportunities and provide valuable ecological services. The combined annual expenditures of Parks Canada and its millions of visitors make a substantial and widespread contribution to the Canadian economy, both directly through its facilities, locations and services, and indirectly in the surrounding communities through spending on accommodations, restaurants, and other tourism-related businesses. Parks Canada places contribute \$3.3 billion annually to the Canadian economy,

sustaining more than 41,000 jobs in hundreds of communities across the country. Visitation is crucial because it increases public awareness of our protected places and helps create life-long supporters of the vital work we do in conservation.

2. Agency Decision Making and Sustainable Development Practices

Managing Sustainable Development

Sustainable development involves the consideration of environmental, economic and social objectives in the development and implementation of public policies and programs. The needs of the present as well as the needs of future generations are also taken into consideration. Integrated decision making and a long-term approach to planning are defining characteristics of sustainable development and represent the key management challenges.

Parks Canada's mandate is composed of three elements: protection, education and visitor experience. In recent years, Parks Canada has pursued the integration of these three elements in the planning, design and delivery of its activities. For example, Parks Canada carries out active management and restoration projects in national parks. These projects are designed in a manner that ensures the conservation of natural resources, while enhancing visitor experience and learning opportunities. This integrated approach to the delivery of Parks Canada's mandate has strengthened the Agency's contribution to all aspects of sustainable development - environmental, social and economic.

Parks Canada's decision-making and sustainable development practices include collaborating with groups that share its values and have an interest in its work. The establishment of national parks and national marine conservation areas, for example, requires a high level of engagement on the part of provincial governments and Aboriginal peoples. The designation and commemoration of persons, places and events of historic importance equally demands the active participation of stakeholders, partners and community groups. The Agency recognizes that building and maintaining these collaborative relationships is essential to achieving its mandate of protecting and presenting Canada's natural and cultural heritage.

Moreover, Parks Canada promotes sustainable development practices by encouraging the use of analytical techniques that compare and integrate environmental, social and economic objectives and, that address multi-year or long-term concerns. For example, the Agency uses social science analytics, such as national polls, visitor surveys and socio-economic studies, and secondary research to understand and engage Canadians, particularly certain segments of the population (e.g. urban youth, new Canadians), in meaningful ways to ensure that its heritage places remain relevant for present and future generations.

Finally the Agency is engaged in several interdepartmental initiatives related to sustainable development, such as the Clean Air Agenda, Species at Risk, Federal Contaminated Sites and Greening Government Operations.

Strategic Environmental Assessments

Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is a systematic, comprehensive process of evaluating the environmental effects of a proposed policy, plan or program and its alternatives. Parks Canada has integrated SEA as part of its decision-making process and undertakes a SEA when a proposed policy, plan or program requires Cabinet or Ministerial approval and may result in important environmental effects, either positive or negative. The SEA identifies and mitigates any adverse environmental effects and enhances positive effects to support the achievement of FSDS goals and Parks Canada's expected results.

Consistent with the Government of Canada's commitment to strengthen the application of SEAs in the federal government, Parks Canada posts public statements on the internet for all completed SEAs (in conjunction with the public announcement of the initiatives assessed).

For additional details on SEAs please visit Parks Canada's website at <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/progs/eie-eia/itm3.aspx>.

3. Information on Parks Canada Implementation Strategies in Themes I-III of the FSDS 2010-13

Species at Risk

Implementation Strategy
5.1.7 Lead the development of national recovery strategies for species at risk that are found primarily on Parks Canada administered lands and waters.
Link to FSDS 2010-13 Goals and Targets
Theme III Protecting Nature
Goal 5 Wildlife Conservation: Maintain or restore populations of wildlife to healthy levels.
Target 5.1 Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Conservation: Population trend (when available) at the time of reassessment is consistent with the recovery strategy for 100% of listed species at risk (for which recovery has been deemed feasible) by 2020.
Link to Parks Canada Program Alignment Architecture
Strategic Outcome: Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
Program 1.2 Heritage Resources Conservation
Sub Program 1.2.1 National Parks Conservation
Sub Sub Program 1.2.1.1 Species at Risk
Description of the Implementation Strategy
Over half of Canada's endangered and threatened species can be found in the protected heritage areas administered by Parks Canada. Parks Canada will protect these species and their critical habitat in the Agency's heritage areas, and will support their recovery by leading the development and implementation of recovery strategies, surveying and monitoring their status, and conducting public education programs. Recovery planning is an obligation under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> .
Relationship with FSDS
The Government of Canada is committed to protecting natural spaces and wildlife, including species at risk. To promote stewardship activities that protect and restore threatened ecosystems and endangered species, the Government works in partnership with the provinces and territories, private industry, Aboriginal communities, conservation organizations, and individual Canadians. Animals such as bison and black-footed ferret have been reintroduced to restored habitats and brought back from near extinction, along with the Banff Springs snail, Blanding's Turtle, and the pink sand-verbena. By helping maintain and restore the integrity of ecosystems, the habitats necessary for supporting the health of species are conserved.
Expected Result
Parks Canada assumes its lead role in the development of national recovery strategies for 15% of federally listed species at risk.

National Parks Conservation

Implementation Strategy
6.1.12 Through active management and restoration initiatives address conservation challenges and demonstrate improvements in key indicators of ecological integrity in 20 of Canada's national parks.
Link to FSDS 2010-13 Goals and Targets
Theme III Protecting Nature
Goal 6 Ecosystem/Habitat Conservation and Protection: Maintain productive and resilient ecosystems with the capacity to recover and adapt; and protect areas in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
Target 6.2 Terrestrial Ecosystem and Habitat – Park Protected Habitat: Maintain or improve the overall ecological integrity in all national parks from March 2008 to March 2013.
Link to Parks Canada Program Alignment Architecture
Strategic Outcome: Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
Program 1.2 Heritage Resources Conservation
Sub Program 1.2.1 National Parks Conservation
Description of the Implementation Strategy
Parks Canada has responsibilities under the <i>Canada National Parks Act</i> to protect and conserve nationally significant representative natural areas on behalf of the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment and to ensure National Parks are maintained and made use of as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. National Parks Conservation includes maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity through: ecological research and monitoring to gain a better understanding of the state of health, natural ecological processes and biodiversity of parks; and the impact of stressors on ecosystems. Protection and conservation occurs through scientific research, planning, reporting, public consultation, negotiation with stakeholders and others to influence actions that occur on lands located adjacent to protected heritage areas, cooperative management agreements, adaptive management and restoration of ecosystem processes and biodiversity. Protection and conservation also occurs through specific activities such as prevention, law enforcement, and fire management.
Relationship with FSDS
Canadians value the health of the country's natural environment, and the Government of Canada recognizes that our social and economic well-being depends on its sustainability. Consequently, the Government of Canada is taking action and investing in conservation and protection of ecosystems and habitat.
Expected Result
Ecosystem conservation is improved through active management.

National Parks Establishment and Expansion

Implementation Strategy
6.1.13 Establish one new national park by March 2013; complete feasibility assessments for five other potential national parks and one proposed expansion.
Link to FSDS 2010-13 Goals and Targets
Theme III Protecting Nature
Goal 6 Ecosystem/Habitat Conservation and Protection: Maintain productive and resilient ecosystems with the capacity to recover and adapt; and protect areas in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
Target 6.2 Terrestrial Ecosystem and Habitat – Park Protected Habitat: Maintain or improve the overall ecological integrity in all national parks from March 2008 to March 2013.
Link to Parks Canada Program Alignment Architecture
Strategic Outcome: Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
Program 1.1 Heritage Places Establishment
Sub Program 1.1.1 National Parks Establishment and Expansion
Description of the Implementation Strategy
<p>This strategy involves the completion of the national parks system in accordance with the National Parks System Plan. Canada is divided into 39 distinct natural regions based on unique physiographic and vegetative characteristics and Parks Canada's goal is to have at least one national park representative of each natural region. The completion of the system will protect outstanding examples of Canada's natural diversity, and provide Canadians with opportunities to experience, understand and appreciate that diversity. Five steps are involved in the process to establish a national park: identify areas representative of a natural region; select an optimum national park candidate from the list of representative areas; assess the feasibility of establishing the proposed park through studies and consultations; negotiate new park agreements, including any that may be required with Aboriginal peoples or organizations; and formally establish the national park in legislation.</p> <p>Establishing national parks is essential to enhancing pride, encouraging stewardship and giving expression to our identity as Canadians, and involving Canada in the internationally shared objective of protecting the best of the world's natural heritage.</p>
Relationship with FSDS
Canadians value the health of the country's natural environment, and the Government of Canada recognizes that our social and economic well-being depends on its sustainability. Consequently, the Government of Canada is taking action and investing in conservation and protection of ecosystems and habitat.
Expected Result
National parks are created in unrepresented regions and some existing national parks are completed or expanded.

National Marine Conservation Area Establishment

Implementation Strategy
6.3.8 Complete feasibility assessments for two potential national marine conservation areas.
Link to FSDS 2010-13 Goals and Targets
Theme III Protecting Nature
Goal 6 Ecosystem/Habitat Conservation and Protection: Maintain productive and resilient ecosystems with the capacity to recover and adapt; and protect areas in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
Target 6.3 Marine Ecosystems: Improve the conservation of ocean areas and marine ecosystems by 2012.
Link to Parks Canada Program Alignment Architecture
Strategic Outcome: Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
Program 1.1 Heritage Places Establishment
Sub Program 1.1.2 National Marine Conservation Area Establishment
Description of the Implementation Strategy
This strategy involves the expansion and ultimate completion of the national marine conservation areas system in accordance with the National Marine Conservation Areas System Plan entitled Sea to Sea to Sea. Canada is divided into 29 distinct marine regions based on unique oceanographic and biological characteristics and Parks Canada's goal is to protect and conserve a representative example of each of the 29 regions. The completion of the system will protect outstanding examples of the diversity of Canada's oceans and Great Lakes and provide Canadians with opportunities to experience, understand, and appreciate that diversity. Five steps are involved in the process to establish a national marine conservation area: identify areas representative of a marine region; select an optimum national marine conservation area candidate from the list of representative areas; assess the feasibility of establishing the proposed marine conservation area through studies and, consultations; negotiate new national marine conservation area agreements, including any that may be required with Aboriginal peoples or organizations; and formally establish the national marine conservation area in legislation.
Relationship with FSDS
Canadians value the health of the country's natural environment, and the Government of Canada recognizes that our social and economic well-being depends on its sustainability. Consequently, the Government of Canada is taking action and investing in conservation and protection of ecosystems and habitat.
Expected Result
National marine conservation areas are created in unrepresented regions.

4. Additional Sustainable Development Activities

In addition to its core implementation strategies, Parks Canada contributes to sustainable development through additional activities such as the engagement of stakeholders and partners as well as the experience of the visitors.

Stakeholder and Partner Engagement

Activity
Parks Canada will provide increased opportunities for Canadians to be involved with Parks Canada places in activities they consider meaningful and relevant including consultations, open doors and an increasing array of volunteer activities.
Link to FSDS Themes
Theme III Protecting Nature
Link to Parks Canada Program Alignment Architecture
Strategic Outcome: Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
Program 1.3 Public Appreciation and Understanding
Sub Program 1.3.2 Stakeholder and Partner Engagement
Description of the Program
The support and involvement of Parks Canada's stakeholders and partners is essential to Parks Canada's program delivery and continued relevance. Parks Canada's stakeholders represent all sectors of Canadian society, and include individuals, groups and organizations that have an interest in the Agency's actions and direction. Stakeholders engage with Parks Canada through a wide variety of activities at all levels of the organization and in ways that are relevant to them, such as formal and informal consultation processes, and the national volunteer program. Stakeholder and partner engagement supports results in all program activities and leads to new or expanded opportunities for Canadians to discover and develop a sense of connection to their protected heritage places.
Relationship with FSDS
Canadians value the health of the country's natural environment, and the Government of Canada recognizes that our social and economic well-being depends on its sustainability. Consequently, the Government of Canada is taking action and investing in conservation and protection of ecosystems and habitat.
Expected Result
Stakeholders and partners are engaged in the protection and presentation of Parks Canada's administered places.

Visitor Experience

Activity
Parks Canada will facilitate a diverse range of opportunities in Parks Canada's protected heritage places for visitors to learn about, experience, and enjoy the spirit, wonder, and awe of Canada's network of heritage places.
Link to FSDS Themes
Theme III Protecting Nature
Link to Parks Canada Program Alignment Architecture
Strategic Outcome: Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
Program 1.4 Visitor Experience
Description of the Program
"Visitor experience" refers to a visitor's interactions with Parks Canada in the context of their visit to a national park, national historic site, or national marine conservation area. This program supports the opportunities provided for more than 20 million person visits that are made annually to Parks Canada's protected heritage places. The visitor experience is the sum total of a visitor's personal interaction with the protected heritage place that helps them create meaning and establish connection with the place. The visitor experience program facilitates opportunities for enjoyment and learning, leading to a sense of personal connection and the continued relevance of Canada's protected heritage places for Canadians.
Relationship with FSDS
<p>Canadians are proud of the nation's rich and diverse natural heritage. Canada is a steward of many globally significant ecosystems, including 30% of the world's boreal forests and 20–30% of freshwater wetlands. Nature and natural ecosystems clean the air we breathe and the water we drink, support the food we grow, and play a critical part in maintaining our general well-being. Canadians themselves value nature and spend more than \$11 billion annually on nature-related activities such as bird watching and canoeing, creating approximately 215,000 jobs (Statistics Canada, 2000).</p> <p>Relevant and memorable visitor experiences based on quality services, activities, and programs, in conjunction with passionate and knowledgeable staff, help inspire and nurture a sense of personal connection among Canadians and ensure the continued relevance of Canada's heritage places for the country as a whole. The Government of Canada understands the importance of protecting nature for current and future generations of Canadians.</p>
Expected Result
Visitors at surveyed locations feel a sense of personal connection to the places visited.

5. Clean Air Agenda Programming

Activity
Understanding climate-driven ecological change in Canada's North over the next five years by using a combination of remote sensing techniques and working with park co-operative management boards to assess how ecological integrity and traditional land use may be affected by climate-driven changes in northern national parks.
Clean Air Agenda Theme
Climate Adaptation
Clean Air Agenda Program Name
A-3: Understanding Climate-Driven Ecological Changes in Canada's North
Link to Parks Canada Program Alignment Architecture
Strategic Outcome: Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
Program 1.2 Heritage Resources Conservation
Sub Program 1.2.1 National Parks Conservation
Description of the Activity
Parks Canada contributes to the understanding of climate-driven ecological change in Canada's North by consulting with park co-operative management boards, conducting process-based ecosystem mapping, and completing scenarios modeling and reporting to help communities understand the risks to important country food, recognize the need for adaptation, and discuss options for action. Parks Canada also links key drivers to changing ecosystem composition and structure and discusses how these changes might impact other ecosystem components (such as caribou and other species) and the ecological integrity of parks. This activity supports communities in assessing the risks as well as opportunities arising from climate change, and provides them with options for adapting.
Expected Outcome of the Program
The expected outcome for the program is that potential impacts of climate-driven ecological change on park ecological integrity and traditional lifestyles are reduced because co-operative management boards for all Arctic national parks will have a knowledge system in place that will provide relevant and timely information on park ecological change to facilitate proactive decision making. This outcome will be achieved through the following actions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of unique, process-based terrestrial ecosystem inventories that link key climate drivers to the distribution, structure and composition of tundra ecosystems, and to identify valued ecosystem components. • Based on consultations with Inuit co-managers, discuss potential changes to valued ecosystem components, e.g., caribou, ptarmigan, berries, that support traditional land-based lifestyles. • Based on consultations with park managers and biologists, discuss potential changes to valued ecosystem components effecting park ecological integrity, e.g., new species migrants, impacts on park iconic species, accelerated disturbance rates and intensities, that inform proactive management decisions, and identify adaptation options, risks and opportunities.
Expected Achievements of the Activity for 2013-14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Parks managers and aboriginal partners in Western Arctic and Nunavut are consulted. • Ecotype mapping for Aulavik, Kluane and Ukkusiksalik National Parks is completed. • Draft climate change vulnerability assessments for Wapusk and Ivvavik National Parks are completed.
Planned Spending for 2013-14
Total of planned spending for 2013-14: \$480,000

6. Additional Information on the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

Information on Parks Canada's contribution to the FSDS Theme IV – Shrinking the Environmental Footprint – Beginning with Government, can be found in the Greening Government Operations table in Section III of this document.

For complete details on the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy please visit Environment Canada's website at

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/dd-sd/default.asp?lang=En&n=C2844D2D-1>.