Parks Canada Parcs Canada



Jasper

National Park of Canada

Annual Report 2011



Canada

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Volunteers re-route a trail away from an aspen stand.

Superintendent's Message

This year we are celebrating the Parks Canada centennial year, 100 years as a national parks service in Canada. The work of many thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of Canadians over the last hundred years has resulted in an incredible system of parks and historic sites that we can all be proud of.

In that context, I am especially pleased to highlight in this year's report the involvement of a multitude of partners—non-profit, governmental, institutional, commercial and Aboriginal people—in protecting and presenting Jasper National Park.

In the coming year, my staff and I look forward to continuing work with our many partners, to connect Canadians to their heritage places and to achieve mandate results in Jasper National Park. Together we will keep shaping and maintaining a legacy that will continue to inspire Canadians for the century to come.

Sincerely,
Greg Fenton
Superintendent
Jasper National Park

Également offert en français

Reporting on Implementation

The *Jasper National Park Management Plan is* a road map that directs Parks Canada's activities in Jasper National Park for the next 10 to 15 years.

The *Annual Report* summarizes our work from October 2010 to September 2011, and complements a public forum that provides interested Canadians with an opportunity to give Parks Canada feedback on its performance and assist in setting future priorities. This year Parks Canada will again hold public forums in Jasper and Edmonton.

Reports from previous years can be found on-line at:

http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/jasper/plan.aspx

Accomplishments in 2011

Jasper National Park's management plan contains seven key strategies that provide park-wide direction. The following sections report on achievements over the past year by key strategy.

Welcoming Visitors to Mountains of Opportunity

Attendance

Visitor numbers so far this year have been very similar to overall numbers last year. With the rainy weather, it is no surprise that camping was down a bit this year. Table 1 provides numbers for overall park visitation and campground use between January and September 2011.

Improving Facilities and Services

A number of projects initiated in 2010 were completed in 2011, including several major campground projects and new buildings at the Palisades Centre. Implementation of the Icefields Parkway Strategy and the Three Valley Confluence Trail Plan continue to be priorities for Parks Canada. Projects included:

- Development of a comprehensive sign plan for all trails (to be implemented as signs need to be replaced).
- Installation of a welcome sign in the parking area at the Icefields Centre.
- Improvements to the Toe of the Glacier parking lot at the Athabasca Glacier (e.g. levelling, adding more parking stalls, installing a visitor shelter).

Table 1. Visitor statistics

	Visitor Numbers						
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	% Change from 2009/10	2011/12 (Apr.–Aug.)	2011/12 projected
Attendance	2,054,877	1,867,059	1,870,332	1,916,677	2.5%	1,187,962*	1,930,866*
Camping	132,837	127,102	137,126	128,910	-6.0%	107,636	126,879

*Numbers are for independent travellers only and do not include commercial group numbers

Update on Implementation of the Three Valley Confluence Trail Plan

The *Three Valley Confluence Trail Plan* (the *Plan*) was the result of three years of collaborative discussion and planning through the Jasper Trails Project. The *Plan* sets out goals, objectives, key actions and strategies to improve both the ecological and recreational condition of the day-use trail network surrounding the town of Jasper. Implementation over the past year included:

(i) Enhancing communication and signage

- New map panels for 32 of 40 new trailhead kiosks. Each panel includes a way-finding map, trail descriptions and images.
- A new Mountain Biking Guide. The Mountain Biking Guide and last year's Day Hiking Guide incorporated new trails as recommended in the *Plan*.
- New way-finding and interpretive signage for Jasper's Easy Trail System. This includes an oblique, interpretive trail map of the valley placed at the Hazel Street trail kiosk.
- Yellow numbered diamonds, placed around the network by volunteers, to assist with way-finding.
- New painted crosswalks at numerous locations where trails intersect roadways.

(ii) Trail development and rehabilitation

- The construction of the final leg of Jasper's Easy Trail System through the Jasper Park Lodge/Trefoil Lakes area.
- Re-routing of a wildland trail out of a sensitive habitat and wildlife corridor by volunteers, with the assistance of the International Mountain Biking Association Trail Care Crew. This will allow for rehabilitation of the old route.
- Initiation of a temporary restoration closure along Signal Mountain. This will assist in the future rehabilitation of unofficial trails along the Signal shoulder, as recommended in the *Plan*. This step will contribute greatly to ecological goals and provide opportunities for the engagement of local trail user groups.

(iii) Volunteerism

The formation of the Jasper Trail Alliance as a subcommittee of the Friends of Jasper National Park. Their goal is to assist Parks Canada in creating and maintaining a vibrant and accessible trail network in Jasper National Park through plan implementation.

- Replacement of outdated panels in the Ice Gallery at the Icefields Centre with new interim panels. (The gallery will eventually be redeveloped.)
- Construction of new self-registration kiosks in all self-registration campgrounds.
- Installation of 35 new pointer and river signs along park roadways.
- Repairs to the dock at Leach Lake.
- Bridge construction on popular trails like the Overlander and Astoria (Tonquin Valley).

- A review of the level of service in wilderness areas. Parks Canada has reduced services in some low use wilderness areas of the park (e.g. North Boundary), in order to focus investments in more popular areas, such as the Skyline trail and the Tonquin Valley.

Interpretation

Jasper National Park's interpreters experimented with new themes and ways to deliver programs this summer. New programs, like Pond Pals (which allowed participants to try dip-netting and meet the cold water critters at Cottonwood Slough), guided visits to the MAPS bird banding station (see p. 17 for more information on MAPS), and Sidewalk Astronomy, introduced visitors to the park's incredible natural heritage. An Edible and Medicinal Plant Walk incorporated Aboriginal cultural content.

Parks Canada launched a new national program, Xplorers, in 40 different national parks and national historic sites across the country. An activity book challenged kids to solve puzzles and answer questions about the park. Children who completed at least six activities in the book were rewarded with a certificate and souvenir. Daily, hands-on activities at the Xplorers tent in Whistlers Campground introduced children to astronomy, wildlife, Aboriginal cultures and other themes.

The Wildlife Guardian program entered its second year in Jasper. The objective of the program is to provide visitors with information about the wildlife they are viewing and safe viewing practices, often at roadside wildlife jams. The wildlife guardians and other roving interpreters connected with many more visitors this year than in past years; upwards of 20,000 by mid-August.

Several partnerships with commercial operators continued. Senior interpreters delivered programs almost daily through the summer for Tauck World Discovery at Jasper Park Lodge. For the second year in a row, interpreters delivered a weekly riverside talk for guests and the public at Pine Bungalows. Parks Canada interpreters also delivered an on-board program for VIA Rail, between Jasper and Valemount.

The campfire programs at Wilcox and Wabasso campgrounds were popular with campers. This year Brewster Travel Canada bused guests to the campfire program at Wilcox Campground and provided an interpreter to assist with the program.



This year's team of interpreters

Dark Sky Preserve

On March 26, 2011, the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC) officially designated Jasper National Park a Dark Sky Preserve. The park is the eleventh Dark Sky Preserve in Canada and the largest in the world. Eight of the thirteen dark sky preserves are located in national parks and national historic sites.

The goal of the Dark Sky Preserve Program is to:

- promote the reduction of light pollution
- demonstrate good night-time lighting practices
- improve the nocturnal environment of wildlife
- protect and expand dark observing sites for astronomy
- provide accessible locations for the general public to experience the naturally dark night sky

Parks Canada staff have been working with local commercial operators and other businesses (e.g. Canadian National Railway) to increase awareness of what Dark Sky Preserve status means and how good night-time lighting practices can be adopted or maintained. In the next few years, Parks Canada will work with the RASC to carry out a light audit, which will look at ways to improve lighting.

A number of programs are supporting and celebrating the park's Dark Sky Preserve status. In partnership with Jasper Tourism, the park will hold its first Dark Skies Festival in late October 2011. The Star Party, one of the events commemorating the David Thompson bicentennial, showed the potential for astronomy events in the park.

Events, Festivals and Celebrations

Parks Canada and partners like the Municipality of Jasper, Friends of Jasper, Yellowhead Museum and Historical Society, and Jasper Tourism, put together another slate of amazing events including Jasper in January, Environment Week, National Aboriginal Day, Canada Day and Parks Day.

David Thompson Bicentennial

This year marked the 200th anniversary of David Thompson's trip through Athabasca Pass. A multitude of events marked Thompson's contribution to the exploration and development of Western Canada.



A voyageur entertains some youngsters at the Pelts n' Paddles Rendezvous.

Thompson, his men and dogs, arrived at Athabasca Pass on January 10, 1811. Two hundred years later, 30-odd hardy souls embarked on a commemorative ski trip to the pass. Travelling in groups of two or three, most made it to the pass and back in a week, braving bone-chilling temperatures and heavy snowfall towards the end of the outing.

They shared their stories a week later at the Fur Ball, held at the Jasper Activity Centre. Keynote speaker Bob Abrames (Voyageur Bob), regaled participants with tales of his travels as an authentic voyageur—with only with the supplies, clothing and tools available 200 years ago.

Thompson used the night skies to navigate and visitors and residents learned more about Thompson and astronomy at a Star Party in

February. Amateur astronomers were on hand with their telescopes at a secret location (Old Fort Point!) to show participants the night sky. The Royal Astronomical Society of Edmonton, the University of Alberta and Parks Canada provided activities and presentations for star gazers of all ages.

A summer event, the Pelts n' Paddles Rendezvous, celebrated David Thompson's connection to our voyageur heritage and the role that Aboriginal people played in the fur trade. It also marked the beginning of the Athabasca River Voyageur Canoe Brigade. Fifteen teams from Jasper, Hinton, Vernon, Moosejaw, Fort McMurray, Rocky Mountain House, Edmonton, Canmore and Fort Saskatchewan paddled voyageur canoes from Jasper to Hinton over three days. The event featured a David Thompson play, musical entertainment, historic and contemporary displays related to the fur trade, Aboriginal crafts, and other fun activities (e.g. fleche weaving).

Parks Canada Centennial

This year marked the Parks Canada centennial year, celebrating 100 years of national park service in Canada. The creation of our Parks service is a true Canadian achievement—we were the first country in the world to recognize the value and importance of building an exceptional system of natural and heritage places.

A century later, Canada is blessed with some of the last large wild places on earth, a living legacy to our children, their children and the generations to come.

This remarkable system, which includes Jasper National Park as one of Canada's most treasured places, is a proud representation of who we are as Canadians and the values that we share as a nation.

Marketing and Product Development

A new winter trails brochures is now in circulation. A new wildlife viewing brochure is on its way.

Parks Canada staff connected with recreational vehicle (RV) owners this spring in Edmonton, at the largest RV show in Western Canada. Parks Canada is investigating the feasibility of transforming Snaring Overflow into an RV-oriented campground to meet the growing demand for RV camping.

Recognize this view? Jasper's Sulphur Skyline hike was the flagship image in Travel Alberta's 2011 International Marketing materials, including web campaigns, vacation planner and print ads.



The view from the Sulphur Skyline Trail graces the 2011 Alberta Vacation Guide.

Parks Canada staff assisted with content development for the Jasper section of the first ever *National Geographic Guide to the National Parks of Canada*. The cover of the guide features Mount Edith Cavell and Cavell Lake.

Visitor Activities

Last year, Parks Canada concluded national assessments of several new recreational activities (e.g. non-motorized hang gliding & paragliding, canopy tours, via ferrata) to determine whether or not they may occur in Parks Canada's protected heritage places. The activities were selected for assessment based on interest expressed by the public, stakeholders, and individual national parks and national historic sites. National guidelines for the activities were approved by the Minister of the Environment in September 2010. Individual parks may now carry out local assessments of these activities to determine whether or not they may occur in that park and the conditions under which they may take place.

Banff and Yoho national parks conducted the first local assessment of a new recreational activity—interpreted, guided via ferrata tours—in November 2010. In response to feedback from that assessment, the mountain national parks (Jasper, Banff, Kootenay, Glacier, Mt. Revelstoke, Waterton Lakes and Yoho) have assessed and developed guidelines on a mountain-park-basis for all the nationally-approved activities, instead of carrying out individual local assessments for each activity.

The mountain park guidelines build on and refine the national guidelines. They have been further tailored to reflect the unique context of Jasper National Park. Parks Canada will be inviting public comments shortly on provisional guidelines for new recreational activities in Jasper National Park.

New Canadians Learn to Camp

A unique partnership between Parks Canada, Brewster Travel Canada, Scouts Canada, OMNI TV, and the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers allowed 50 new Canadians to visit Jasper National Park for free and learn the fine Canadian art of camping! The participants, ages two to fifty-plus, were selected from 300 entrants who attend the Mennonite Centre. They spent the first day and night in the park at the Palisades Centre learning basic camping skills, trying rock climbing, and enjoying a campfire. The next night they put their new skills into practice, with the help of the Scouts, at Wabasso Campground. Transportation to and from Edmonton and a trip to the Columbia Icefields was provided by Brewster. OMNI TV filmed the weekend for inclusion in a documentary about connecting Canadians with nature. The documentary will air in 2012.

Visitor Safety

Public safety specialists responded to 320 incidents in the past year, including 20 technical rescues and 27 searches, providing medical aid to over 50 visitors and assisting approximately 145 more. They also assisted or played a leadership role in five search and rescues outside of the park.



Participants in the Learn to Camp program at the Palisades.

Avalanche control along park roadways, daily avalanche forecasts, work with the Canadian Avalanche Centre and public outreach kept staff busy during the winter.

Bringing the Mountains to People Where They Live

Palisades Stewardship Education Centre

The Palisades Centre continues to make solid progress towards its 2006 goal of leading the country in stewardship education, with a growing national and international reputation for excellence. The program's integration of natural science, mountain recreation and technology in immersive natural environments is proving to be truly engaging for adolescent youth. Approximately 1,100 students from over 20 schools participated in outdoor education programs at the Centre in the 2010/11 school year.

This year $2.3 million in upgrades and development were completed that included a new barrier free accommodation building (sleeps 24 youth and 2 chaperones), new equipment and storage, and electrical and sewer upgrades.

All core programs at the Palisades follow a three year progression from grade ten to twelve. This year the Winter Experience and Stewardship of Protected Lands courses ran for the first time at the grade eleven level with strong enrolment. Demand for the Water Experience course grew. Five courses were delivered this spring, including the first course in French (to a Franco-Albertan school from Bonnyville). Given the limited availability of courses, many schools are now booking three years in advance.

The New Canadians partnership program with Outward Bound is now in its third year. In 2010 the team offered a winter program that helped new Canadian high school students connect with their new home and their national parks.

In addition to offering outdoor environmental education opportunities, the Palisades Centre regularly supports national youth engagement initiatives (e.g. it will be this year's location for the Robert Bateman / Get to Know Unconference), youth programs in other parks and sites (e.g. Waterton, Mt. Revelstoke and Glacier national parks, Gulf Islands National Reserve) and provides a venue for other organizations offering youth programming. For example, the Palisades provided facilities and delivered programs with an environmental theme for the Camp Franco-éco, a week-long summer program for French Immersion and Francophone elementary school students.

Marmot Basin Learning Centre

Parks Canada instructors continue to deliver programming at the Marmot Learning Centre. The most popular program was the Avalanche Awareness lesson, but school groups could also take courses on how Jasper National Park fits into Parks Canada's system of special places, species-at-risk and emergency situations. The ski hill-based programs help raise interest in the Palisades outdoor education programs.



Students participate in an avalanche safety course at the Marmot Learning Centre.

Web-site

You may have noticed changes to Jasper's web-site over the past year. Trip planning information has been updated and other web-pages are now being tackled. A trial pilot using Twitter to provide winter updates about snow conditions and avalanche danger was very successful. Internet users can expect to see more new media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook) in the near future.

Celebrating History, Culture and the World Heritage Site

New interpretive panels have been installed at the Portal Lake day use area on Highway 16 just west of the park gate. This project with BC Parks will improve interpretation of Yellowhead Pass National Historic Site. A panel that tells the Aboriginal story is under development.



Maligne Lake Chalet, following restoration work

The grand opening of the Maligne Lake Chalet took place on August 13. The Chalet was built in 1925 by Fred Brewster as the central building in the Brewster's Rocky Mountain Camp, but fell into disrepair following the development of the road to the lake in the late 1960's. It was designated a recognized federal heritage building in 1987, which led Parks Canada to invest more than half a million dollars in the mid-nineties to protect and stabilize the building and adjacent structures from deterioration. Parks Canada entered into a unique partnering and licensing arrangement with Maligne Tours to continue the restoration and to bring new life to this important historic building. The Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Archives have helped to develop new interpretive exhibits that will relate the chalet's rich history to visitors and Jasper residents.

The Jackman House, a recognized Federal Heritage Building, is also undergoing restoration work through a partnership with the Jasper Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Jasper.

Parks Canada archaeologists spent just over two weeks in the field updating the park's *Archaeological Resource Description Analysis,* an inventory of archaeological sites. Five significant archaeological sites in the Willow Creek area were relocated. Archaeologists had not been able to find the sites since they were first recorded in 1970.

A team of researchers from Mt. Alison University carried out dendrochronology work which added new historical information about an important landmark in the park, the Moberly Lobstick tree. Located on the banks of the Athabasca River, the tree was believed to have been created by a local Métis to mark the meeting of Walter Moberly and Sir Sandford Fleming. However, the results of the dendrochronology show that the tree dates from 1911, 39 years after the meeting took place.

A patrol cabin in the Brazeau Valley, a recognized Federal Heritage Building due to its distinctive style, underwent significant restoration work. New flooring and new internal walls have stabilized the structure, which dates from 1961.

Athabasca Canadian Heritage River

A new report about the Athabasca River, prepared for the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS), is now available on-line at: http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/jasper/plan.aspx.

The Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS) is a national program that promotes river heritage conservation through the recognition of rivers deemed to be of outstanding Canadian value. A cooperative effort of federal, provincial and territorial governments, the CHRS promotes, protects and enhances Canada's river heritage, and ensures that Canada's leading rivers are managed in a sustainable manner.

Designated rivers must retain the heritage and integrity values for which they were originally nominated. Every ten years, Parks Canada reports to the board of the CHRS on the condition of the Athabasca River with respect to these values.

The report details major events, management actions, research and monitoring that have taken place in and around the river over the past 10 years. It also assesses the condition of the values for which the river was designated and concludes that there have been no significant changes to those values.

There have been slight improvements in several areas, notably water quality, aquatic connectivity, recreational facilities and supporting infrastructure, and interpretation of the river's human history. Appropriate tools are in place for managing recreational and other uses, and park policies support the maintenance of the river's ecological and cultural integrity and exceptional visitor experiences.

The Raising of the Two Brothers Totem Pole

It takes a lot of people, pulling together in many different ways to raise a totem pole...

On Saturday, July 16th, as part of Parks Day and Parks Canada Centennial Celebrations, Jasper National Park along with many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partners pulled together to raise the Two Brothers Totem Pole in Jasper.

It was an inspirational and historic celebration—a day that brought together more than 15 different regional Aboriginal communities in a celebration of their history and culture.

The celebration fused West Coast Haida culture with regional Aboriginal traditions and included two pipe ceremonies, a traditional Haida totem pole blessing and carvers dance, a totem pole transfer ceremony, a friendship ceremony, a traditional feast and a round dance. About 4,500 people attended the raising, 800 enjoyed the feast and 500 participated in the round dance.

The finished totem pole is approximately 13.7 metres tall and is painted in traditional Haida colours of red, black and blue.

A culture camp organized by Aboriginal communities at the Snaring Overflow Campground served as both a gathering place and a physical expression of traditional connection and solidarity.



Many hands helped raise the Two Brothers Totem Pole in Jasper.

To commemorate the event, Parks Canada also published *The Two Brothers - A Haida Story*. The book, illustrated by carvers Jaalen and Gwaai Edenshaw, tells the Haida story behind the Two Brothers Totem Pole: a story of a journey long ago from the west coast islands of Haida Gwaii to the Rocky Mountains and of an unusual connection between two very different places. The trilingual book was published in Haida, English and French.

Ensuring Healthy Ecosystems

Wildlife

With the late spring and extended period of snow in the alpine, early season bear feeding was concentrated in the valley bottom areas. Bears that frequented high visitor use areas that green up early, such as the golf course and outlying septic fields, required extensive hazing efforts in order to minimize habituation and prevent future human-wildlife conflicts. Buffaloberry bushes are being removed from Wabasso Campground this fall to reduce that area's attractiveness to bears.

There was also an increase in cougar activity and sightings adjacent to the Jasper townsite and outlying commercial accommodations. Remote cameras have captured numerous images of these animals this year. Pocahontas Campground was closed after a juvenile cougar killed a dog at a campsite.

Update on Woodland Caribou – A Species at Risk

Caribou conservation is a priority in Jasper National Park. On-going monitoring of the four caribou herds in the park, and of their main predators—wolves, is helping Parks Canada biologists and managers to implement and assess caribou conservation actions.

The goal of caribou conservation is to achieve populations that are stable or increasing. Currently the three herds found in the southern part of Jasper National Park are declining. To know whether our caribou are increasing, decreasing or remaining stable, we need to estimate their numbers every year.

How do we count caribou?

We have 4 methods for estimating caribou numbers.

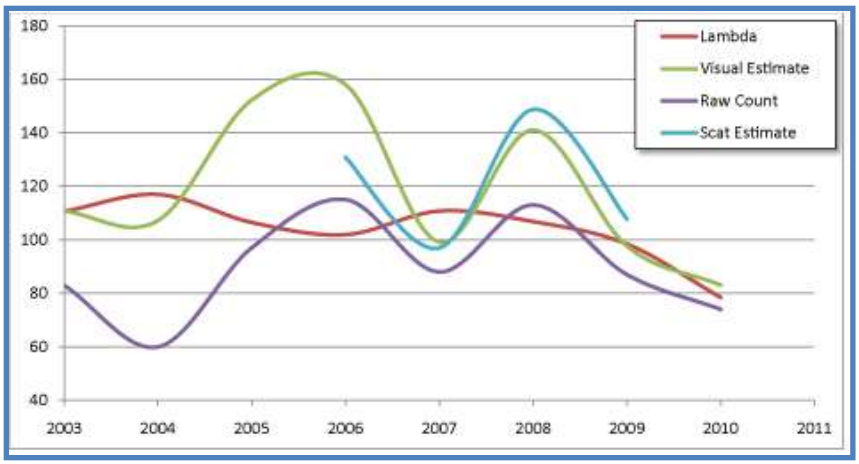
Raw Count: This is the number of animals actually seen during an aerial survey. The problem with this method is that it doesn't account for caribou not seen.

Visual Estimate: This method is an adjustment to the Raw Count, to account for caribou not actually seen – we use ratio of seen/unseen collars for this method.

Lambda: This method uses information from the monitoring of collared female caribou. It is simply the number of births minus the number of deaths.

Scat Estimate: We identify individuals using the DNA collected from caribou scat. The ratio of new to previously identified individuals in a scat collection gives us an estimate of the total number of caribou.

As shown in the graph on the following page, the different methods do not always give us identical information but having more than one method helps verify our conclusions. For example, all 4 methods indicate a recent decline (2008 to the present) giving us a high level of confidence that these results are accurate.



Population estimates for the three southern Jasper herds using four different methods.

Conservation actions update

Parks Canada's *Southern Mountain Caribou Conservation Strategy* outlines the threats faced by woodland caribou in the mountain national parks, and what actions Parks Canada will take to address them. To protect the declining caribou populations, some actions have already been implemented in Jasper.

Facilitated predator access is one of the key threats identified for woodland caribou in Jasper National Park. To address this issue, a seasonal closure of the Cavell Road was started in the winter of 2009/2010. The closure, from November until February 15th of each year, aims to prevent wolves from using packed trails to access caribou habitat during times of deep snow. The road reopens in late winter when the snowpack is usually more compact and packed trails offer less of an unnatural advantage. In 2009/2010, our monitoring showed that although wolves still accessed the closure area, their travel rates were much slower in deep, unpacked snow. In 2010/11, when the snow was deep, no wolves used the area until the closure was lifted—then, within 10 days of reopening the Cavell Road for winter use, a wolf pack travelled up the packed trail and killed a caribou. This is a good indication that the closure is effective.

Small population effects is another of the key threats identified. When populations become too small, they are more likely to continue declining, and any natural or random event could wipe them out entirely. Two of the four herds found in Jasper National Park have less than 10 animals. Without help these herds may be extirpated.

Jasper National Park biologists will continue to monitor woodland caribou populations, and Parks Canada will be implementing further actions to reduce the key threats faced by caribou in the park.

What can you do?

Learn more about woodland caribou in Canada and take action to support their recovery. To start you can visit the *featured species* section of the Species at Risk pages on the Parks Canada website (www.pc.gc.ca/speciesatrisk) for up-to-date information and useful links.



Photo: Mark Bradley

Vegetation

With all the rain this summer, it was a great year for wildflowers. Unfortunately, it was also a great year for weeds. Non-native species that were not previously high priorities for control work, such as mustard and tufted vetch, invaded some locations to such an extent that the non-native plant crew re-prioritized their summer's work to address these new infestations. Some species that are already high priorities for control efforts have spread to new locations. For example, toadflax was spotted on many open slopes near the community of Jasper, areas that are not typically colonized by weeds because they are relatively undisturbed.

It is not all bad news in the world of weeds—fewer plants are coming back up at priority sites that have been repeatedly treated by Parks Canada's non-native plant crew. The crew spent 248 person-days pulling invasive plants this year and 10 days monitoring trails for new infestations.

Their efforts were supplemented by contracts to address infestations around the Waste Transfer Station and along the sewer line between Whistlers Campground and the Town of Jasper, the work of the Highways department, who mowed Canada Thistle along Highway 16, and the efforts of volunteers.



A member of Jasper's fire crew uses a Terratorch to ignite vegetation at Vine Creek.

For the fourth year in a row, Jasper Park Lodge staff spent a day with the Parks Canada non-native plant crew pulling weeds around the lodge–an area that was hit hard by weeds this year. Junior Forest Rangers participated in the work at Jasper Park Lodge and another restoration project behind the Southview Co-op. The Municipality of Jasper continues to provide financial support to the non-native plant program.

Fire Management and Forest Health

This spring, Jasper's Fire Management Team augmented fireguard work from the past four years at the Vine Creek Prescribed Burn unit. The crew burned a further 30 hectares in preparation for ignition of the 725-hectare unit, located 20 km north of the town of Jasper on the slopes of Mount Greenock.

This fall, the fire management team worked to restore a number of backcountry meadows in the sub-alpine by reintroducing fire.

Cooler, wetter weather this summer allowed Jasper's fire management staff to lend their expertise to other parks and agencies, including Wood Buffalo National Park (multiple fires), the province of Ontario, and the province of Alberta.

After 13 years of hard work, Jasper's FireSmart/ForestWise Program has come to an end. This past winter, a contractor finished thinning the few remaining areas of forest near town as part of this community protection and forest restoration project. A number of strategic wildfire control lines upwind of town were also constructed.

Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper are now focussing on reducing the risk of wildfire within the community. Residents are encouraged to obtain a FireSmart hazard assessment, which will help them identify corrective actions to reduce the risk posed by wildfire to their homes and businesses.

Species-at-Risk: Haller's Apple Moss

Haller's Apple Moss is a cryptic plant that is known from only a handful of sites in British Columbia and Alberta. It is also a species-at-risk and Parks Canada is the lead agency responsible for recovery planning.

Parks Canada is testing a new methodology for monitoring and reporting on the status and trend of Haller's Apple Moss for the *State of the Park Report*. A consultant has established monitoring plots for two populations of the tiny moss and has collected a first set of measurements. The measurements will be repeated every five years. If all goes well, other parks can adopt a similar approach to monitoring and reporting on species-at-risk.

Aquatics

Volunteers angle for Bull Trout

Jacques Lake, located in the Rocky River valley, was closed to fishing ten years ago to act as a benchmark to provide information on the characteristics of unexploited bull trout populations. Jacques Lake bull trout were first studied during June and July 2004. This July and August, volunteer anglers participated in a mark / recapture study. On their first day, volunteers caught and measured 50 bull trout, marked them by removing the adipose fin, and then released them.

Two days later the volunteers fished again, this time recording whether their catch was marked or unmarked. This information provided a rough population estimate of between 250 and 300 adult fish in the lake. The volunteers were interested to find that, based on their own catch data, they were able to catch 20-25% of the adult fish in the lake during a single day's fishing. This brought home to everyone the vulnerability of bull trout populations to fishing pressure as well as the value of establishing benchmark populations.

Amphibian monitoring

This spring 27 people, most of them volunteers, spent three weeks conducting 179 visits to 59 amphibian breeding ponds in the park.

Jasper National Park is home to five species of amphibians: the Wood Frog, Spotted Frog, Boreal Chorus Frog, Long-toed Salamander and Western Toad, listed by COSEWIC as a species of special concern. During surveys, participants learned to identify amphibian adults, their calls and eggs.

This program has three goals:

- to gather data that will provide insights into the long-term health of park wetlands and feed into the State of the Park Report,
- to determine if amphibian species ranges are expanding, contracting or staying relatively constant, and
- over time, to build a constituency of knowledgeable volunteers who understand and appreciate the dynamics of wetland communities and support their preservation.



An amphibian monitoring program is providing information about the distribution of five species.

Law Enforcement

Parks Canada's Law Enforcement program continues to focus on enforcement and prevention activities to ensure the safety and enjoyment of Park visitors and the protection of resources.

Prevention initiatives have resulted in a decrease in illegal roadside camping and bush parties, and curbing risky behavior at Horseshoe Lake. Unusually cool summer weather resulted in fewer campground disturbance issues and fewer charges at day use areas for open liquor and rowdy behaviour.

Offences that resulted in prosecution included illegal camps, illegal fires, campground disturbances, off-road driving and other infractions. One incident involved multiple charges for possession of prohibited weapons. Park Wardens in Jasper have been actively involved through the year in several major investigations involving resource protection issues. Jasper National Park Wardens also provide law enforcement support to other national parks across the country as needed.

Fostering Open Management and Innovation

Research and Monitoring

Research and monitoring are critical to the successful management of national parks. Parks Canada has an active monitoring program in Jasper National Park, where a set of 27 measures are used to assess the state of ecological integrity in a *State of the Park Report*, produced every five years. Programs to collect data for two of those measures are described below, and one long-term program, Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS), that is part of a continent-wide effort, is highlighted on the next page.

Ecological monitoring

Parks Canada, in cooperation with the University of Montana, is evaluating two different tools for grizzly bear monitoring: remote cameras and DNA-analysis of hair collected from rub trees. The objective is to learn more about the status and trend of grizzly bear populations. (The remote cameras may also be used to monitor other species.) Approximately 30 cameras were paired with rub trees (trees that bears use regularly as scratching posts); the two techniques will be compared to see which could be adopted for longer-term monitoring.

Parks Canada carried out a monitoring program for invasive non-native plants along trails. The program will be repeated every three years.

Social science

One of the most important pieces of social science research to be conducted in the park since 2003's Patterns of Visitor Use Survey took place this summer. The Visitor Information Profile (VIP) is a survey that gathers data about visitors: demographics, satisfaction with various aspects of the visit, learning and connection to the park. Close to 1,500 visitors participated in the survey. The data will be collated and analyzed over the winter of 2012. The results will be used to improve Parks Canada programs and facilities and report on the condition of visitor experience in the next *State of the Park Report*.

From 2008 to 2010, social scientists monitored trail counters and cameras and surveyed hikers to gather baseline data on trail use, activity types, visitor demographics and satisfaction with the hiking experience.



A Varied Thrush is released from the Pyramid Lake bird banding station.

Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship

On six mornings during the summer, Parks Canada staff and volunteers brave mosquitoes and mud to band songbirds at the back of Pyramid Lake. Pyramid Lake is one of 500 locations across North America where birds are captured on their breeding grounds using mist nets and then banded. Parks Canada staff collect data from the captured birds, such as age, reproductive status and general condition and then release them.

The data is sent to the Institute of Bird Populations in California, where institute employees collate and analyze data from all the stations and publish research and monitoring results in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Their analyses provide critical information relating to the ecology, conservation, and management of North American landbird populations, and the factors responsible for changes in their populations. The data also contribute to the assessment of native biodiversity for Jasper National Park's *State of the Park Report*.

The Pyramid Lake station was established in 2004. Its longevity is due in large part to the efforts of volunteers from the community of Jasper. What makes them get up at four am to hike through the woods in the dark and set up the nets as day breaks over Pyramid Lake? "That's the best opportunity to see our wonderful feathered friends we have in the park and to find out more about them." *Gord Ruddy, Jasper Resident*

Several notable things happened this year at the station. Three species—Gray Jay, Black-Pole Warbler and Varied Thrush—were caught for the first time ever. A seven-year-old Swainson's Thrush (that's old in bird years!) was also captured. And, for the first time, park interpreters led guided hikes to the banding station, so that visitors could learn about birds and ecological monitoring.

The majority of hikers surveyed (95%) hiked 10 km or less during their outing and 95% reported that the trail they chose met their expectations. Forty-one percent of hikers were Canadian, followed by Americans (21%) and then international visitors (37%). Park trails met the expectations of 95% of the hikers surveyed.

Regional Work

Parks Canada continues to participate in several regional initiatives, including the Foothills Research Institute and the Yellowhead Ecosystem Group.

Jasper Youth Summit on Sustainability

The park management plan contains direction to involve a broader cross-section of Canadians in park management and decision-making. To this end, Parks Canada collaborated with the Jasper High School to offer a three-day youth conference in April.

This was the fourth year for the youth summit, which takes place at the Palisades Centre in Jasper National Park. This year, 55 students attended from Jasper, Grand Cache, Edson, Evansburg and Canmore, Alberta, and from Revelstoke and McBride, British Columbia.

Parks Canada offered a number of concurrent sessions to raise awareness of the relationship between sustainability and park management, and to set the stage for an in-depth discussion with participants about how to increase youth involvement with the park. Parks Canada specialists and partners, such as the Friends of Jasper, Municipality of Jasper and Aseniwuche Winewak Nation, offered sessions to students on topics ranging from ecological restoration and wildlife management to the role of volunteers and traditional knowledge in Jasper National Park.



Students watch as Fire Management Specialist Dave Smith demonstrates prescribed burning techniques.

Please Stay Engaged!!

One way to stay abreast of opportunities to be involved in planning initiatives in Jasper National Park is to join our management planning mailing list. To join the mailing list, please send the following information to amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca with the header "Please add me to the Management Planning mailing list":

- Name
- Organization
- E-mail address
- Mailing address
- Language of preference (English or French)

Strengthening Aboriginal Relationships

The Jasper Aboriginal Forum and the Upper Athabasca Valley Elders Council are the major venues for multilateral collaborative work with over 20 different Aboriginal communities and organizations. Recent topics of discussion at the Aboriginal Forum have included: identification of a cultural site for traditional ceremonies and cultural teachings, protocols for the raising of the new totem pole, and the development of a local and regional Aboriginal commemorative exhibit or pavilion.

Two Aboriginal groups, Bighorn Chiniki First Nation and the Upper Athabasca Valley Elders Council signed agreements covering Aboriginal passes, bringing the number of groups who are using the pass to three. The Aboriginal pass allows members of Aboriginal communities with historic ties to Jasper National Park to enter the park free of charge to participate in ceremonies and reconnect with the park. National Aboriginal Day celebrations featured the teachings, cultural demonstrations, interpretive displays and crafts of the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation from the Grande Cache area.

Approximately 20 cultural use permits were issued covering a variety of traditional spiritual and ceremonial activities including sacred fires, ceremonies and traditional spiritual practices like vision quests.

Parks Canada has identified three potential options for a cultural site and has invited communities to visit them and provide their feedback. Elders from Sucker Creek First Nation came to the park to look at the options this spring.

A community-generated, interpretive plaque describing the historic, spiritual Aboriginal connection to Jasper National Park now forms the cornerstone of an eventual Aboriginal Pavilion in downtown Jasper. The plaque was created to mark the raising of the new Totem Pole.

A Métis heritage presenter was hired to deliver interpretive programs with a focus on medicinal and edible plants, cultural demonstrations (e.g. traditional hunting methods) and bushcraft.

Managing Growth and Development

Sustainable Housing

In 2008 Parks Canada decommissioned a single family staff accommodation unit within the townsite and released, through lottery, four lots. The Park obtained special permission to retain a portion of the release fee in order to develop ten units of seasonal staff accommodation and decommission four old seasonal staff units. The project commenced in 2010 and was completed, on budget, in the fall of 2011. The net result was 5 new staff units replacing 5 older units, 5 additional seasonal staff units, four lots available in the town for public residential use and an improved mix of seasonal versus year round parks accommodation.



Laura Vinson and Dave Maritineau perform on National Aboriginal Day.

Caribou Creek Housing Corporation will complete the construction of 19 affordable housing units in November 2011. They have obtained a development permit for an additional 45 affordable housing units.

Institutional Development

Parks Canada facilitated a land exchange between the RCMP and the Municipality of Jasper to accommodate a proposed library addition. The proposed Library redevelopment includes renovation of the existing building (347 m^2) and the development of a 1,375 m^2 addition. This $7.5 million project is being funded with $3 million allocated from the Federal Build Canada Grant, a $4.2 million Municipal Sustainability Initiative Grant, and $300,000 from local fund-raising.

Alberta Education has announced funding for the development of a new Junior / Senior High School in Jasper. After a municipal plebiscite provided community support for a land transfer enabling the new school to be built on municipal land, Parks Canada put into place the process to facilitate the exchange. A development permit application is expected in January 2012 and the target completion date for the build is August

2014, with demolition of the existing school and rehabilitation of the site to commence in the fall of 2012.

In response to a request for new public washroom facilities from visitors and the local tourism authority, Parks Canada committed $225,000 to the development of a new public washroom. The washroom will be located in the downtown area and features components that will decrease environmental impacts (e.g. motion-activated taps, toilets and lights). The Province of Alberta has committed the remainder of the funding ($345,000) through two provincial grants.

Commercial Development & Growth

No new commercial development in the community was completed in 2010. In May, three applicants were awarded a total of 2,400 m^2 of development through the Commercial allocation process. This was the fourth consecutive year where the combined proposed development did not trigger the lottery process.

New development since 2001	3755 m^2
Maximum new commercial development (2001 *Jasper Community Land Use Plan*)	9290 m^2
Percentage of total new development utilised	40.4%

Development Review

Parks Canada issued 41 development permits within the Municipality of Jasper between September 14, 2010 and September 15, 2011. During the same time 24 building permits were issued. The total development value was $4.9 million.

The Planning and Development Advisory Committee has met 7 times in 2011 with two additional meetings planned before year end. To date 34 applications have been heard: 23 discretionary use requests and 11 variance requests.

Outside the town boundary, an additional three significant projects were issued permits for a total development value of $6.5 million, the majority of this figure attributable to the demolition, replacement and relocation of ski lifts at Marmot Basin. The other two major projects were the addition of commercial accommodation units at Alpine Village and renovations to the Maligne Lake Chalet by Maligne Tours.

Environmental Stewardship

Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper jointly fund the Jasper Environmental Stewardship Program. The program advances stewardship programs and public awareness strategies to improve environmental sustainability in the community of Jasper.

Recycling in campgrounds

Recycling in Whistlers, Wapiti, Wabasso and Pocohontas campgrounds became a lot easier for campers in the 2011 season. The Environmental Stewardship program funded the placement of collection bins in every washroom building, along with improved signage and communication.



New van promotes campground recycling

The addition of 47 new outdoor recycling bins, donated by Alberta Beverage Container Recycling Corporation (ABCRC) as part of their Community Champions program, increased the collection of beverage containers dramatically.

Parks Canada partnered with local Rocky Mountain Recycling to collect, haul and sort beverage containers. A new dedicated recycling van aids with operations and promotes recycling with its distinctive 'We recycle / Nous recyclons' message. The van was paid for in part by funding from the Toronto Dominion Friends of the Environment Foundation.

Towards Zero Waste (TZW) events

Sustainable event planning minimizes waste going to the landfill and captures valuable resources for recycling and composting. At every opportunity, public events in Jasper are planned using TZW standards and best practices.

For example, a Rent-a-Plate program was introduced at this year's Canada Day Pancake Breakfast in Jasper. People paid a $3 deposit to use a plate and received the deposit back when they returned the plate. This annual event is well attended by both residents and visitors. Out of 1,200 breakfasts served, 630 people rented plates and 570 brought their own foodware. The breakfast showcased how event waste can be greatly reduced.

Jasper Local Food Society

The environmental stewardship program supports and contributes to organizations such as the Jasper Local Food Society. The Jasper Local Food Society is a grassroots organization with a passion for promoting sustainable food.

In 2010 they coordinated:

- a cooperative community garden with 24 raised bed plots
- school gardens
- a garden-share program that linked residents with gardens with willing gardeners.
- a weekly summer Farmer's Market in Jasper

The community garden grew to 50 plots in 2011.



Jasper's community garden at its new location on Connaught Drive

Public outreach events like Environment Week, Earth Day and Waste Reduction Week continue to promote sound environmental practices among Jasper residents.

Parks Canada continues to manage 39 contaminated sites, including 9 new site assessments, geophysical work, risk assessments and groundwater monitoring at over 40 existing monitoring wells. Parks Canada staff responded to and cleaned-up 29 spills, including motor vehicle collisions, grain spills, toxic chemicals.

Marmot Basin Wildlife Research

Marmot Basin and Parks Canada are collaborating on two important wildlife studies that will contribute to future plans for Jasper National Park's popular ski area. The studies focus on mountain goats and caribou, species of special interest because of their sensitivity, distribution and population status.

The research will be used in the long term planning process set out in the Marmot Basin Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use, approved by Parks Canada in 2008.

Over the next five years, Marmot Basin will prepare one or more long range plans to establish the ski area's development priorities. An objective and scientifically sound assessment of how proposals in a long range plan may affect mountain goats will require information about goat habitat, movement and their use of the Marmot Basin area. A three-year field study program to gather this information began this summer.

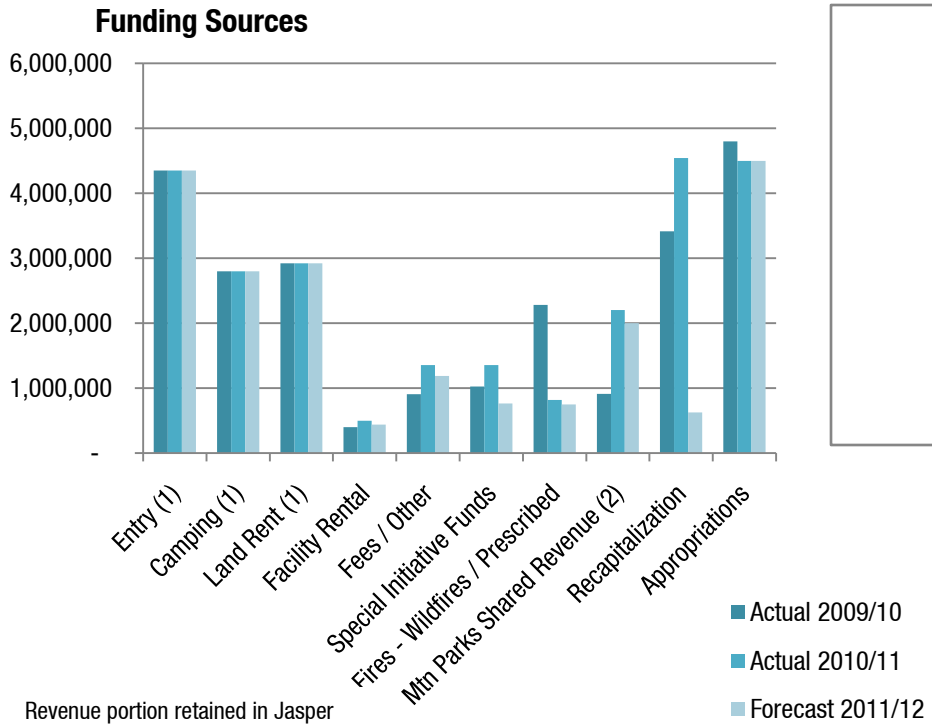
A separate study, a caribou risk assessment, will assess the potential risk to caribou that would arise if Parks Canada were to consider any future ski area development proposals in the Whistlers Creek drainage portion of a renegotiated and reduced leasehold area. The assessment will also inform decisions for managing off-piste skiing and other human uses in the Whistlers Creek drainage.

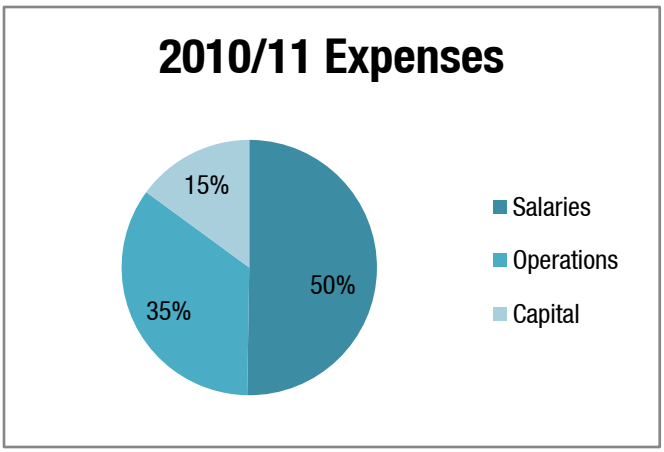
Parks Canada and Marmot Basin are committed to ensuring that recognized and independent researchers conduct the work, and that the resulting research findings are available to the public for review and comment. Dr. Steeve Côté from Laval University is the research lead for the goat study. The final study results will be available in 2014. Dr. Fiona Schmiegelow, of the University of Alberta, will lead a team to conduct the caribou risk assessment. Findings are expected within two years of the risk assessment commencing.

Summary of Financial Expenditures

Table 2. Alignment of Spending with Program Activity and Government of Canada Outcomes

Program Activity	2009/10 Actual (in 000s)	20010/11 Actual (in 000s)	2011/12 Forecast (in 000s)	Alignment to Government of Canada Outcomes
Heritage Places Establishment (PA1)	-	-	-	Vibrant Canadian Culture and Heritage/ Clean and Healthy Environment
Heritage Resources Conservation (PA2)	7,412.9	4,959.2	5,700.0	Vibrant Canadian Culture and Heritage/ Clean and Healthy Environment
Promote Public Appreciation and Understanding (PA3)	1,580.5	1,760.0	1,950.0	Vibrant Canadian Culture and Heritage/ Clean and Healthy Environment
Quality Visitor Experience (PA4)	11,090.4	13,557.3	7,600.0	Vibrant Canadian Culture and Heritage/ Clean and Healthy Environment
Townsite and Throughway Infrastructure (PA5)	3,103.4	3,386.2	3,300.0	Safe and Secure Communities/ Clean and Healthy Environment
Internal Services	3,547.7	5,519.7	5,200.0	
Total	**26,734.9**	**25,703.2**	**23,750.0**	





(1) Revenue portion retained in Jasper
(2) Revenue managed by Mountain Parks and redistributed for specific projects

We hope you have found this year's *Annual Report* informative. For more information on anything you have read, please contact Amber Stewart, Land Use Planner for Jasper National Park, at (780) 852-6147 or amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca