



# SUMMARY REPORT

## *Annual Planning Forum for Jasper National Park of Canada*

Jasper: November 24, 2009

Edmonton: November 26, 2009

### 1.0 Introduction



The annual public planning forum for Jasper National Park provides an opportunity for Canadians and Parks Canada to discuss progress in implementing the park management plan and assist Parks Canada in setting future priorities. In the last three years, Parks Canada has taken the forum into Jasper schools to hear the views of local youth about Jasper's future. This year the forum also went to Edmonton to expand the opportunity for public involvement in the management of the park.

This year, the focus of the forum was on the review and update of the Jasper National Park Management Plan. Seven mountain national parks—Banff, Glacier, Jasper, Kootenay, Mt. Revelstoke, Waterton Lakes and Yoho—began reviewing and updating their management plans in March 2009. Over the spring and summer, Parks Canada staff discussed a variety of topics related to the park management plan review with interested Canadians and Aboriginal communities. The fall was spent drafting an updated plan. A newsletter highlighting proposed directions from the draft park management plan was circulated to our mailing list and posted on-line in early November. The draft plan was released for public review the week of the Planning Forum and is also available on-line. Links to both documents can be found at [http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/jasper/plan/index\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/jasper/plan/index_e.asp)

The Planning Forum in Jasper took place on November 24<sup>th</sup> at the Jasper Activity Centre, and for the first time, in Edmonton - on November 26 at the Delta South Hotel and Conference Centre. Approximately 40 people attended the Forum in Jasper. Eighty people attended in Edmonton. This report summarizes the proceedings of both planning forums.

#### Join Our Mailing List

Would you like to receive updates about the park management plan review, invitations to public events like the Annual Planning Forum and/or information about other upcoming opportunities for public participation?

If you answered "yes", please let us add you to our mailing list. Send your name and contact information (e-mail address, mailing address and daytime phone number) to [caroline.roy@pc.gc.ca](mailto:caroline.roy@pc.gc.ca)



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## 2.0 Planning Forum Proceedings

The format for the Forum was an open house with formal presentations. Participants could circulate among four different information stations and discuss a variety of topics with Parks Canada staff. Three stations – Healthy Ecosystems, Visitor Experience and Strengthening Aboriginal Relationships – provided information about key strategies that are highlighted in the park management plan review newsletter. The fourth station summarized key actions for six distinctive areas of the park. Copies of the draft management plan, newsletter and other factsheets were available for pick up.

Parks Canada made two presentations. Greg Fenton, Superintendent for Jasper National Park, discussed accomplishments and challenges from the past year in his address. Amber Stewart, Integrated Land Use Planner for Jasper National Park, provided an overview of the contents of the draft updated management plan. Summaries of these presentations are provided in the following section.

Following the presentations, the floor was opened to questions. Comment forms were provided at the door and could be filled out at the Forum or mailed back to Parks Canada following the Forum.

### 2.1 The Year in Review

Superintendent Greg Fenton shared key results that have been achieved over the past year, related to the protection of natural and cultural resources, facilitating quality visitor experiences and the provision of learning opportunities and open management. The presentation follows the format of the 2000 management plan.

#### How does Parks Canada use public feedback from the Annual Planning Forums?

Park managers consider your feedback when setting priorities and making business planning decisions. Comments about the draft park management plan will be considered as part of a larger record of public input that includes web-site and e-mail submissions, workshop proceedings, meeting minutes and other public participation activities. A report summarizing the public's comments on the draft park management plan and Parks Canada's response is being prepared and is expected to be available in Spring 2010.

#### *A Place for Nature*

- Progress continues to implement forest health and firesmart initiatives. Fire crews successfully managed the Mount Cumnock wildfire (1,400 ha), along with 10 other wildfires. Phase II of the FireSmart / Forest Wise Program was completed.
- The Jasper Three Valley Confluence Trails Plan was completed and approved; the Friends of Jasper is supporting implementation of the plan through a Trail Stewardship Program.



- Parks Canada continues to participate in the *Foothills Research Institute*.
- Species-at-risk work is focusing on southern mountain caribou and Haller's Apple Moss:
  - Results of caribou surveys in 2009 show that caribou numbers in the southern Jasper herd have declined by an estimated 30% from 2008.
  - New funding has been announced to support research, monitoring, communications and restoration of caribou in the mountain national parks.
  - A draft Conservation Strategy for Southern Mountain Caribou is being prepared with scientific review and will be made available to the public later this winter/spring.
  - In an effort to reduce the risk of wolves exploiting human-packed trails to hunt caribou, the Edith Cavell road and part of the Astoria Valley will be closed in early winter.
  - Parks Canada has prepared a draft recovery strategy for Haller's Apple Moss that will meet the requirements of the *Species at Risk Act*. A final draft will be posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry on or before June 30, 2010.
- Kinder-Morgan continued restoration work on the Trans-Mountain Pipeline twinning project, with projects such as the replacement of culverts with structures to improve fish passage.
- Parks Canada has launched new Prevention and Law Enforcement programs.

#### *A Place of Historical and Cultural Significance*

- A multi-year project to restore the Jasper Park Information Centre National Historic Site (e.g. roof replacement, foundation stabilisation and landscaping) has been completed.
- A new interpretive trail and viewing platform for Jasper House National Historic Site were constructed.

#### *A Place for People*

- Parks Canada has made significant progress in improving infrastructure, facilities and programming to support quality visitor experiences and learning opportunities through the reinvestment of park fees.
- Additional funding through the Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan supported important infrastructure projects including improvements to the Icefields Parkway, Edith Cavell Road and Highway 16, and facilities at the Palisades Stewardship Education Centre.
- A pilot program was launched to offer a new camping opportunity—cottage tents in Whistlers campground.
- The Palisades Stewardship Education program





continues to grow and reached more than 400 students from 20 different schools with exciting new programs.

- Partners continue to play a critical role in the development and delivery of Palisades programs; several new partnering agreements have been established or are in the works to support this important program.
- A five year review of the River Use Management Guidelines is underway.

### *A Place for Community*

- Three highlights of a very productive partnership with the Municipality of Jasper are: the completion of a draft Jasper Community Sustainability Plan, continued work on initiatives related to environmental stewardship and plans to continue FireSmart work around the community through funding secured by the Municipality from the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta.

### *Strengthening Aboriginal Relations*

- Collaborative work with Aboriginal communities continues through the Aboriginal Forum and the Council of Elders of the Descendants of Jasper.

## **2.2 Management Plan Review**

Amber Stewart presented an overview of the planning process and progress:

- The management plan is the road map for delivering Parks Canada's mandate. It is the main public accountability document for Jasper National Park.
- A management plan is required for every national park and national historic site under the *Canada National Parks Act*.
- The existing plan contains strong and relevant direction, particularly about the protection of natural and cultural resources. Other areas, such as visitor experience, Aboriginal interests and external relations, need to be strengthened.
- The draft park management plan has a new format that begins with an updated vision for the park.
- The main contents of the plan are contained in seven key strategies and six area concepts.
- The key strategies provide overarching direction for the whole park.
- The area concepts identify key actions for distinctive areas of the park that will improve resource protection, visitor experience and public awareness and understanding.
- An overview of each of the seven key strategies was provided (more detailed information can be found in the newsletter or draft park management plan).
- The area concept approach was illustrated using the Edith Cavell & Highway 93A area (more detailed information can be found in the newsletter or draft plan).
- Park zoning is largely unchanged from the 2000 park management plan.
- Most of the park (97%) was declared a wilderness area under regulation several years ago.
- Minor adjustments to Declared Wilderness Areas may be required in future to facilitate proposals that would support all aspects of the Parks Canada mandate, such as renewable





energy to replace the use of fossil fuels or firewood in the backcountry or new communications infrastructure.

- Several sections of the plan are still under development (e.g. the section on monitoring and reporting, and the strategic environmental assessment).
- The public review period for the plan closes on January 8, 2010, after which time the draft plan will be revised.
- The finalized plan will be submitted to the Minister for approval and tabling in Parliament in Spring 2010.

## 2.3 Questions and Answers

Following the formal presentations, Greg Fenton, Superintendent for Jasper National Park and his staff fielded questions from the audience. The following topics were discussed:

- background on Aboriginal engagement
- protecting Aboriginal burial sites
- reviewing progress in implementing the management plan
- processes for engaging Canadians in park planning and management
- results of the Trans-Mountain Pipeline project
- Parks Canada's work with Canadian National Railway
- target to increase visitation
- priorities for improving visitor experience
- progress towards establishing a hostel in the Jasper townsite
- innovative approaches to accommodation
- increasing interpretive services
- eliminating park fees in order to connect with youth
- Parks Canada's strategy to protect caribou
- parameters around new recreational activities
- re-listing of the Jasper airstrip for recreational aviation
- angling and aquatic ecosystems
- policy on mountain bike use
- gravel extraction
- adjustments to Declared Wilderness Areas



## 3.0 Next Steps

Over the next few months, Parks Canada staff will be reviewing public comments and revising the draft park management plan. A document summarizing the public comments regarding the draft park management plan will be available later this winter.



## 4.0 Stay Informed and Involved

The annual planning forum for Jasper National Park provides an opportunity to express your opinions in person and share your views with others. The planning forum is only one venue where we share information. Parks Canada provides information on topics of interest through our website ([www.pc.gc.ca/jasper](http://www.pc.gc.ca/jasper)), mailing list, special events, and other communication tools.

We welcome your suggestions for how we can improve the annual planning forum. E-mail your thoughts to Amber Stewart, Land Use Planner for Jasper National Park at: [amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca](mailto:amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca)

## 5.0 Need More Information?

### Contact us by e-mail or phone:

Greg Fenton	<a href="mailto:greg.fenton@pc.gc.ca">greg.fenton@pc.gc.ca</a>	780-852-6171	Superintendent
Shawn Cardiff	<a href="mailto:shawn.cardiff@pc.gc.ca">shawn.cardiff@pc.gc.ca</a>	780-852-6108	Manager, Land Use Planning & Policy
Amber Stewart	<a href="mailto:amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca">amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca</a>	780-852-6147	Land Use Planner
Steve Otway	<a href="mailto:steve.otway@pc.gc.ca">steve.otway@pc.gc.ca</a>	780-852-6186	Manager, Resource Conservation
Pam Clark	<a href="mailto:pam.clark@pc.gc.ca">pam.clark@pc.gc.ca</a>	780-852-6193	Manager, Visitor Experience
Greg Deagle	<a href="mailto:greg.deagle@pc.gc.ca">greg.deagle@pc.gc.ca</a>	780-820-2118	Aboriginal Liaison Office
Marci Dewandel	<a href="mailto:marcia.dewandel@pc.gc.ca">marcia.dewandel@pc.gc.ca</a>	780-852-6109	Media Relations Officer

