SUMMARY REPORT
Jasper National Park of Canada Annual Public Forum
Jasper: November 4, 2010
Edmonton: November 9, 2010

Background

The annual public forum for Jasper National Park provides an opportunity for Canadians and Parks Canada to discuss progress in implementing the park management plan and for Canadians to assist Parks Canada in setting future priorities. In addition to a forum in Jasper, Parks Canada took the forum to Edmonton for the second year in a row, to hear Edmontonians’ views about the park. Jasper High School students participated actively in the Jasper forum, creating an entertaining ten-minute video about the new park management plan.

Forums over the last two years have focussed on the review and update of the park management plan, approved in June 2010. This year the forums provided an overview of key achievements in 2010 and explored two topics in more detail: caribou conservation and visitor experience.

Thirty-two people attended the public forum in Jasper, which was held at the Jasper Activity Centre. Approximately twenty-four people attended the forum in Edmonton at the University of Alberta. This report summarizes the proceedings of both forums.

Planning Forum Proceedings

Both forums were evening open houses, at which participants could pick up handouts, read posters, talk to Parks Canada staff and watch videos about Jasper National Park. Formal presentations started at 7:00. Following the presentations, the floor was opened to questions from the audience. Comment forms were provided at the door.

Join Our Mailing List!!

Would you like to receive a copy of our Annual Report, 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 (organization name if applicable, e-mail address, mailing address) to amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca

Freshly paved parking lot at Mount Edith Cavell—one of many projects completed in 2010
Summary of Parks Canada Presentations

A Year in Review

Park Superintendent Greg Fenton shared key results from the past year, and their relationship to the new park management plan. Highlights included:

• facility and infrastructure upgrades (e.g. Mount Edith Cavell road and trails)
• the expansion of the Palisades Stewardship Education Centre
• the tour of the Jasper Totem Pole to communities in Alberta and British Columbia
• completion of the trail and viewing platform for Jasper House National Historic Site
• work to recover species-at-risk and control non-native plants
• work with Aboriginal communities to develop an Aboriginal Pass, identify ceremonial sites and increase cultural programming
• the completion of the park management plan and community plan

Caribou Conservation

Parks Canada wildlife biologists Mark Bradley (in Jasper) and Layla Neufeld (in Edmonton) provided a fascinating look at woodland caribou, a species-at-risk in many parts of Canada, including Jasper National Park. They covered caribou ecology, the five threats facing caribou in the park and what research and monitoring have told us about the effectiveness of ongoing and potential caribou recovery actions. Parks Canada is preparing a draft caribou conservation strategy that will soon be available for public review.

Visitor Experience

Manager of Visitor Experience Pam Clark talked about the reasons for a renewed focus on park visitors. Research shows that Canadians are becoming more and more disconnected from nature, with negative consequences for health and well-being. The park offers urbanites a unique opportunity to reconnect with nature, through compelling scenery, exceptional wildlife viewing, a variety of trails, engaging winter activities and an authentic community. Parks Canada is testing out new ideas, such as cottage tents in Whistlers campground and a Camping 101 course to initiate inexperienced campers, while maintaining fundamentals like friendly, knowledgeable staff and up-to-date infrastructure.
Jasper High School Presents...

Student members of the Jasper Sustainability Club spent 250 hours putting together an entertaining video that provided a youth perspective on the new park management plan. The video follows “Forrest Stump” as he travels through the park meeting various characters along the way. Forrest learns eight “lessons”, starting with the value of involving Jasper’s youth in hands-on management projects and ending with the importance of creating future leaders for the park.

Thank you Geoff Dick, Andrea Thomas, Andre Blanchette-Dube, Theresa Westhaver, Heidi Schaefer, Elsa Tokunaga, Chris Gil, Vanessa Buck and Adam Robb for all your work on the video!!

Questions and Answers

The following topics were discussed during the question and answer sessions at the forums:

Caribou
- potential relocation of caribou from other locations to augment herds in the park
- predator management in relation to caribou recovery
- effect of weather and climate change on caribou

Visitor Experience
- ecological impacts of increased visitation
- opportunities for mountain biking in the backcountry and along the Icefields Parkway
- replacement of damaged and outdated wayfinding signs
- collection of trail use data
- measuring visitor connection with the park
- the relationship between pricing (e.g. park fees) and visitation
- promotional methods for attracting visitors
- differentiation of mountain parks from one another based on unique characteristics
- improving the equestrian offer in the park

Education and Outreach
- the Palisades Centre: purpose and role
- Jasper Institute courses

Transboundary Management
- work with provincial land managers to manage transboundary impacts
- working relationship with Canadian National Railways
Other Feedback

Comment forms submitted at and following the forum addressed a variety of issues (e.g. concerns around introducing new activities to the park, interest in a central winter location for cross-country skiing).

In general, the format, location and time seem to suit most participants. There were several suggestions for ways to increase attendance, such as a Facebook site and direct invitations to outdoor recreation groups.

Topics for Future Discussion

Participants identified a number of topics that they would like Parks Canada to discuss at a future forum:
• backcountry tourism management (e.g. trails, ACC huts, commercial lodges—Tonquin)
• the relationship between expanding visitation and ecosystem conservation
• invasive plants, rare plant protection
• biodiversity—rare plants, use of fire in management, population trends of wolves and other animals, monitoring effects of climate change with Alberta Plantwatch
• carrying capacity (e.g. managing large groups and overall numbers in backcountry areas)
• managing impacts (e.g. mountain bike trail deterioration)
• new activities: understanding pre- and post-effects on wildlife, vegetation and other ecological indicators
• outreach programs outside the park (e.g. school presentations, WEB, cross-Canada shows)
• more details about measuring visitor experience
• review of performance measures and targets
• work with Aboriginal groups

Need More Information? Contact us by phone or e-mail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greg Fenton</td>
<td><a href="mailto:greg.fenton@pc.gc.ca">greg.fenton@pc.gc.ca</a></td>
<td>780-852-6171</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawn Cardiff</td>
<td><a href="mailto:shawn.cardiff@pc.gc.ca">shawn.cardiff@pc.gc.ca</a></td>
<td>780-852-6108</td>
<td>Manager, Planning &amp; Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Bradley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mark.brady@pc.gc.ca">mark.brady@pc.gc.ca</a></td>
<td>780-852-6105</td>
<td>Conservation Biologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam Clark</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pam.clark@pc.gc.ca">pam.clark@pc.gc.ca</a></td>
<td>780-852-6193</td>
<td>Manager, Visitor Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amber Stewart</td>
<td><a href="mailto:amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca">amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca</a></td>
<td>780-852-6147</td>
<td>Land Use Planner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>