

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

BANFF NATIONAL PARK ANNUAL PLANNING FORUM, NOVEMBER 12 &13, 1998

This document provides a summary of the key actions taken since April 1997 to implement the Banff National Park Management Plan, and the initiatives proposed for the next year. It is not a comprehensive listing of all activities. You are encouraged to review this document prior to the Planning Forum to be held at the Rocky Mountain Resort on November 12 and 13. The public Open House is from 3 to 8 pm on Thursday, November 12th. Parks Canada is particularly interested in receiving your input with respect to future priorities. If you have questions, comments or suggestions, please come to the Open House or send them to:

Parks Canada
Banff National Park
Annual Planning Forum
Box 900
Banff, AB
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Through the efforts of a cross-section of people and organizations, there has been considerable progress in implementing the management plan. There is still a significant amount to do. Our attention needs to be focused on those things that will bring the greatest benefit to the park.

The following document describes the more major initiatives taken to implement the management plan. It is organized according to the chapters and sections in the plan.

The following summarizes the key accomplishments:

- Restoration of the Cascade wildlife corridor by removing the horse corrals and bison paddock, closing a segment of the Minnewanka Loop road in winter, negotiating a date for removal of the Cadet Camp and closing the airstrip. Wolves have been seen using the restored corridor.
- A new sewage treatment system has been built for the Tunnel Mountain campground.
- Two wildlife overpasses over the Trans-Canada Highway have been completed.

- To improve habitat effectiveness, changes have been put in place in the backcountry to prohibit bicycling in the Bryant Creek area, and discourage use of the Hillsdale and Baker Creek Trails.
- A night-time voluntary closure of the eastern portion of the Bow Valley Parkway has been implemented to enhance habitat effectiveness and wildlife movement during the spring.
- An Advisory Development Board has been established providing the opportunity for public involvement in development applications.
- The Fairholme-Carrot Creek Benchlands Environmentally Sensitive Site has been established with the closure of trails to bicycling, the discouragement of use of many trails, and the closure of the Carrot Creek campsite.
- The Heritage Tourism Strategy has been developed and adopted as the official tourism strategy for the Town of Banff, Lake Louise and Banff National Park. A specific strategy for Lake Louise has been developed as part of the Community Plan.
- The Government has responded to the management plan recommendation for increased interpretation and educational facilities with the announcement in June 1998 of a new Environmental Education Centre in the Town of Banff.
- Principles regarding growth management, commercial development, appropriate use, eligible residency and no net negative environmental impact, have been outlined for the Town of Banff and Lake Louise.
- A concept for the Lake Louise Community Plan has been developed.
- Ski Area Management Guidelines have been drafted.
- A summer use assessment for Skiing Louise operations has been initiated.
- A user survey has been completed to assist in developing a human use strategy for the Skoki area.

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CHAPTER 3: A PLACE FOR NATURE

1. Research and Information Management (Park Management Plan (PMP) section 3.4)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Public Involvement: Input from the Banff-Bow Valley Study, various integrated research programs, Elk Advisory Group and the annual public 'Research Updates' influenced the establishment of research priorities.
- Peer Review: Peer review of research was strengthened by having researchers work through recognized universities. Several supervisory scientists presented their work at research update sessions.
- Indicators: Environmental indicators were selected and applied to the Terrestrial Ecosystem Model (grizzly bears, black bears, elk, wolf, lynx, moose, beaver, aspen and willow).
- Partnerships: Parks Canada is involved with others in a number of research and data management projects in the Central Rockies region including the East Slopes Grizzly Bear Project, the Central Rockies Wolf project, and the Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley. Support for research and monitoring has been provided by others such as the Town of Banff, TransAlta and Skiing Louise.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Public Involvement: Improve accessibility to the science program through enhancements such as the Parks Canada Internet home pages. Input from the annual planning forum will help design future research strategies. Continue the public research updates seminar series.
- Information Gaps: Work with the Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley and other land managers to identify gaps in information and develop an approach to address.
- Peer Review: There will be greater emphasis on publishing research results in peer-reviewed journals, and presenting them at conferences and meetings. A science advisory committee and/or annual science workshop will be considered to provide opportunities for public and peer review of science initiatives.
- Partnerships: Continue with the existing joint research ventures and explore opportunities for others such as a regional transportation study.
- Social Data: Improve processes for collecting and managing human use data.

2. Communicating the Need for Ecological Integrity (PMP 3.5)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- In partnership with the Whyte Museum and Friends of Banff, hosted the Research Updates Speakers Series and newsletter. Over 500 people attended.
- Communicated the ecological integrity aspects of various initiatives including: Middle Springs Wildlife Corridor, establishment of the Fairholme ESS, and the removal of bicycling from Bryant Creek.
- Included ecological integrity information in “Best of Banff” training.
- Summer interpretive programs covered a variety of topics stressing ecological integrity issues.
- Educational presentations and guided events were offered on park ecology, research and related topics.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Continue the Research Updates Series and produce a research newsletter twice per year.
- Look for additional opportunities to illustrate park research projects.
- Expand the internal Ecology Workshops to include various partners such as the Biosphere Institute and CREILG
- Incorporate ecological messages in staff training programs, provide more opportunities for staff involvement in research projects, and look at information and training for tour guides through the Heritage Tourism Strategy.
- Continue to upgrade communications related to implementing the management plan and how it links to ecological integrity and research.

3. Aquatic Ecosystems (PMP 3.9)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Fishing: An angler survey regarding barbed versus barbless hooks was conducted with support shown for use of barbless hooks only. A few areas have been closed to angling including the Fish Lakes and all tributaries and associated lakes in the Clearwater and Siffleur River Systems, excluding Isabella Lake. Agreements were developed with the Universities of Laval and British Columbia for a DNA genetic analysis.
- Restoration: A Cascade Creek Channel Habitat Assessment Project has been initiated with TransAlta Utilities, the University of Calgary and the Fisheries and Recreation Enhancement Working Group, to determine optimum water channel flows in Cascade Creek to support native fish species (bull trout, cutthroat trout). A test flow release is scheduled for October or November, 1998. The restoration of more natural flows for the Spray River is also being examined with TransAlta.
- Reintroduction of Native Fish Species in Moraine Lake: A preliminary investigation has been undertaken on Moraine Lake to determine the feasibility of removing exotic fish and reintroducing bull trout.
- Bighorn Lake Restoration: From July 1997 until September 2000, introduced (ie. non-native) brook trout are being removed from Bighorn Lake with gillnets. This is the first experimental

removal of non-native fish in the park. Brook trout, which were stocked in the lake, eliminated a number of species of invertebrates and changed the structure of algal communities. It is anticipated that removal of the trout will result in the lake recovering to close to its pristine, fishless condition. This study is being carried out by the University of Alberta with parks staff.

- Louise Creek: Monitoring of Louise Creek is underway. Discharging water from the Chateau Lake Louise to Louise Creek has been discontinued.
- Identification of Environmentally Sensitive Areas in Riparian Zones: A three year project has been completed of the Vermilion Wetlands. Monitoring included herptiles, water fowl, water levels and human impact. A five year amphibian survey has been completed for the Bow Valley. Research was also undertaken to determine the effects of the TCH on aquatic environments and their fauna, and on harlequin ducks.
- Riparian Zones: CP Rail is putting in culverts under the railbed in Third Vermilion Lake to restore more natural water flows.
- Alluvial Fan Restoration: An inventory was undertaken of the alluvial and debris fans in the Bow Valley. These fans are being examined to determine the potential for restoration of more natural processes.
- Trans-Canada Highway Construction: Wetland habitat was constructed to compensate for wetlands lost during construction of the highway. A backwater area of the Bow River was opened to allow flushing of water through a bull trout spawning area.
- Species and Genetic Diversity: Three major areas of research have been undertaken with respect to the Banff hot springs snail (*Physella johnsoni*): snail and water temperature monitoring and analysis, snail reproductive biology, and water chemistry. This snail has been identified as “threatened” by COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada). A plan for recovery of the snail has been completed and will undergo review by experts. Protection efforts of surveillance, enforcement, and education have been put in place.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Fishing: It is recommended that Harrison Lake and Marvel Lakes be closed to fishing. Harrison Lake is one of the few bull trout lakes in the park. There are relatively few fish in the lake so it could easily be fished out. Marvel Lake contains a pure stock of cutthroat trout, although they are not native to that lake. It is important to protect this pure stock. A decision will be made with respect to barbless hooks to reduce fish mortality and encourage gentler fish handling techniques.
- Restoration of Cascade Creek and Spray River: Depending on the test flow results for Cascade Creek, discuss with TransAlta the opportunity to establish water flows suited to native fish species. A methodology will be developed to remove non-native fish in Cascade Creek.
- Reintroduction of Native Fish Species in Moraine Lake: An environmental assessment will be undertaken with respect to removing exotic fish and reintroducing bull trout.
- Bighorn Lake Restoration: Continue with the removal of brook trout and monitor the effectiveness. If necessary, the lake will be restocked with invertebrate species.
- Forty Mile Creek: Options to restore more natural water flows in Forty Mile Creek and the downstream wetlands will be evaluated to allow the creek to develop natural channel

- characteristics and associated vegetation.
- Riparian Zones: The Vermilion Wetlands will be included in the planning program for lands adjacent to the Town of Banff (see Chapter 8, item 5).
- Human Use Management: Consider undertaking a study to determine the level of human use of the Bow River. This would provide a baseline from which trends in use could be noted and could relate to the study of harlequin ducks.
- Alluvial Fan Restoration: Options for implementing changes to the Ursus Hole (Cascade Mountain) and Carrot Creek fans will be examined.
- Species and Genetic Diversity: Continue with research and monitoring of the Banff hot springs snail and implement the recovery program. Study the potential for flow-through aquaria to assist in reproducing snails.

4. Vegetation (PMP 3.10)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Planning: Vegetation Management and Fire Management Plans are being revised and will be available for public review in 1999.
- Education: Communication tools have been developed focusing on fire management, fire control, wildland/urban interface, prescribed fire, protecting communities from wildfires, ecosystem management, and smoke from forest fires. An education kit has been designed for integrating fire into the science curriculum for grades 4 to 6.
- Research and Monitoring: Research is being carried out in a variety of areas including: the effect of fire on vegetation attractive to grizzly bears; the ecology of whitebark pine, alpine larch, trembling aspen, and douglas-fir forests, and differences in the historic frequency of fire and forest fuel moisture due to the effects of terrain. Prescribed burns and a number of vegetation plots are being monitored.
- Prescribed Fires: Five prescribed burn plans were prepared for potential implementation. These include meadows in the Red Deer and Panther River Valleys, fuel reduction fire in the Spray Valley, meadow burns in the upper Cascade watershed, and a burn to regenerate whitebark pine near Dolomite Pass. The Hillsdale wildfire and poor weather for burning in the fall prevented implementation of all but the Dolomite Pass prescribed fire which burned 14 hectares. The total area burned in BNP during 1997 and 1998 from both wild and prescribed fires was approximately 514 hectares. A study is being developed to more closely examine the effects of prescribed burning on vegetation communities.
- Fuel Management: An environmental assessment of the proposed fuel break in the Carrot Creek to east park boundary area will soon be completed. Work may begin as early as February 1999. Other fuel management work may be initiated in the area of the Town of Banff and Lake Louise.
- Control of Non-native Plants: Control work has been done on the most invasive species that have the greatest potential to move into undisturbed habitat. These include Canada thistle along the TCH and Bow Valley Parkway, perennial sow-thistle along the TCH, and tall buttercup in a

number of backcountry areas. This was the first control work done in backcountry areas of the park.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Planning: Public discussion of revised Vegetation and Fire Management plans. Re-initiate integrated fire management planning for the Upper North Saskatchewan Watershed with the province of Alberta and local stakeholders.
- Education: Make pamphlets, brochures etc. on fire management readily available to interested public. Develop an information sheet on fire and whitebark pine forests.
- Prescribed Fires: The following prescribed fires are proposed for the near future, potentially 1999: Red Deer River Valley meadows (spring); Panther River Valley meadows (spring); Cascade River Valley meadows (spring or fall); Middle Spray River Valley lodgepole pine forest (spring or fall); and Icefields Parkway whitebark pine and spruce forest (fall). In future years, fires ranging in area from 50 to 600 hectares are proposed for the following: Middle Spray lodgepole pine forest; Upper Spray shrub meadows and spruce forest; Lower Cascade pine and spruce forest; Cuthead Creek lodgepole pine forest; Red Deer River lodgepole pine and spruce forest; Johnston Creek lodgepole pine forest; Baker Creek lodgepole pine forest; the Baker/Skoki area; and North Saskatchewan River montane meadows. Parks Canada is working with local colleges and universities to develop opportunities for hands-on training in ecosystem management in the area of fire. Post-burn data will be collected on the Dolomite Pass burn. An inventory of montane meadows in the Saskatchewan Crossing area will be conducted for future meadow restoration through prescribed burning.
- Fuel Management: Complete a Hazard Reduction Plan to reduce fuels in the forests immediately around Lake Louise.
- Control of Non-native Species: Continue control work on the same species as in 1998.

5. Wildlife (PMP 3.11)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Communications: Published the brochure 'Keeping the Wild in Wildlife', pulling together information on how to behave in the park and around various animals. Friends of Banff continued the 'Living With Wildlife' program to educate visitors, residents and staff, and minimize wildlife habituation along the Bow Valley Parkway and in the Lake Louise area.
- Predator-prey Relationships: Various initiatives were undertaken to assist in restoring predator-prey relationships. Research on the importance of predation in maintaining elk populations was continued and public and scientific workshops were hosted to discuss methods to restore predator-prey relationships. Planning is underway to restore carnivore use in the golf course area.
- Human Use Management: Changes were made to human use in a number of locations to improve wildlife movement and habitat, including the Fairholme Bench, Bryant Creek, Hillsdale, Baker Creek, winter use of the north Minnewanka Road, and the Bow Valley Parkway. The

Bow Corridor Ecosystem Advisory Group, working with Parks Canada, the Town of Canmore, Municipal District of Bighorn, and the Province of Alberta, developed Wildlife Corridor and Habitat Patch Guidelines for the Bow Valley.

- Wolves: Wolf study continued with two packs (Cascade and Bow) monitored by radio-collars. Temporary closures were used to protect denning wolves.
- Wildlife Mortality: Transportation and Utilities Advisory Group identified methods to reduce wildlife mortality on the highways and railway. Canadian Pacific Railway undertook various initiatives to reduce wildlife mortality (see Chapter 6). Many holes in the TCH fence between the east gate and Banff were blocked off to discourage wolves from getting on the highway. Changes also were made to the one-way gates
- Wildlife Crossing Structures: Three wildlife underpasses were planted with trees to provide improved screening for wildlife use. Wildlife overpasses were closed to human use. TransAlta Utilities constructed a wildlife crossing over the Two Jack Canal which was immediately used by elk and will hopefully be accepted by wolves.
- Grizzly Bears: Continued the East Slopes Grizzly Bear Project. A refined habitat effectiveness model for Lake Louise, Skoki, Baker and Pipestone Carnivore Management Units (CMUs) has been developed to guide management decisions. An intensive radio-telemetry monitoring program was established for sub-adult grizzly bears in the Lake Louise - Skoki area. Parks Canada worked with the multi-governmental Rocky Mountains Grizzly Bear Planning Committee to assess grizzly bear habitat capability over a large area in the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia, Alberta and Montana. This group has initiated a multi-agency approach to mortality management, and population estimation. Temporary closures were used in response to grizzly bear activity.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Predator-prey Relationships: Introduce changes in the golf course area to restore or maintain secure habitat, such as closing the road in the winter to public vehicular use. Monitor wolf predation and movement of elk relocated from the Town (see section 6 on elk management).
- Grizzly Bears: Continue discussions with the Rocky Mountains Grizzly Bear Planning Committee with respect to establishing grizzly bear conservation areas to conserve inter-regional grizzly bear populations. Continue the East Slopes Grizzly Bear Project and support analysis of five years of data now available. Continue intensive monitoring of sub-adult and females bears in the Lake Louise-Skoki area.
- Human Use Management: Develop a human-use management strategy for the Skoki area. Initiate a human use strategy for the Moraine Lake area. Continue to advance the human use management strategy for the park (see Chapter 5, item 4).
- Wildlife Crossing Structures: Continue monitoring on wildlife crossing locations and structures along TCH.
- Bison: Begin to examine the most effective methods to re-introduce bison to the mountain parks. A workshop is proposed in future years that would pull together experts and stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and review available information. An environmental assessment and cost analysis will be required.

6. Elk Management (PMP 3.11)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- There are two key goals for elk management:
 - . Restore ecological processes in and around the town; and
 - . Reduce elk-human conflicts.
- A public workshop was held to discuss issues and concerns related to elk management.
- Research to determine movement patterns of elk collared both inside and outside the Town of Banff was continued.
- Parks Canada presented a proposal for elk management to the Elk Advisory Committee in June, 1998. Committee members endorsed the short-term actions, and expressed their commitment to future steps in the process. These include establishing scientific hypotheses for each action, and undertaking an environmental assessment and public review of proposed long-term actions.
- An objective of the proposal is to gradually reduce the winter elk population in the Town to 50 to 100 elk by spring 2003. The aim is to use natural processes, such as increased predation by wolves and bears, and enhance this by elk relocation as necessary.
- A second objective is to reduce elk-human conflicts by 75% from the 1998 conditions, by spring 2003. This will be done through relocating elk from problem areas, and increasing public education.
- In order to improve habitat on the golf course for wolves, the dog-sled operation is being relocated for 1998/99 to Tunnel Mountain.
- The golf course access road will be closed to public vehicular use from November 1 to May 1. Public use of the golf course area will be monitored. Parks Canada is working with CP Hotels to reduce winter activities in the golf course area.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Continue to work with the Elk Advisory Committee.
- Relocate 20 elk in 1998/99 to outside the Town and monitor their movement.
- Introduce improved education programs with tourism operators.
- Continue measures to encourage wolf use of the golf course. Reduce human use of the golf course during winter and after-hours. Evaluate the appropriateness of dog-sledding in the area around the Town of Banff.
- Encourage wolves to move through the eastern TCH wildlife underpasses by using bait or wolf scent.
- Use rail fencing (that allows wolves but not elk to cross) around a bait station to test methods to hold elk north and west of TCH fences.
- Depending on results of actions taken in the next year, a more intensive approach may be

needed. Each action will undergo environmental assessment and public review.

7. The Cascade Wildlife Corridor (PMP 3.12)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- The bison paddock and fencing was removed, the public horse corrals were relocated and rehabilitated and the airstrip was closed.
- The western side of the Lake Minnewanka Loop Road was closed to vehicle traffic in the winter.
- Previous wolf use of the Cascade corridor had been limited to a few crossings by lone wolves. In the spring of 1998 wolves of the Cascade pack used the corridor area intensively, killing a number of elk and a mule deer. They travelled the full corridor, including the lower slopes of Stoney Squaw Mountain. Use of the Cascade Corridor by wolves will help to restore natural predation on elk, which are using areas in and around the Town of Banff as a safe refuge in increasing numbers.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Cadet Camp to be removed and area rehabilitated.
- Winter closure of the western portion of the Lake Minnewana road will continue.

8. Establishment of the Fairholme Environmentally Sensitive Site (ESS) (PMP 3.13)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- The Fairholme Range from the east park boundary to Lake Minnewanka has been established as an Environmentally Sensitive Site, in order to protect a secure area of montane habitat for wildlife. Since May 1998, human use in the area has been discouraged. The loop trails immediately around Johnson Lake remain open for hiking; all other trails in the area will no longer be maintained. Off-road bicycle use is prohibited.
- A wildlife crossing was built over Two Jack canal in spring 1998 by Trans-Alta Utilities. Monitoring of use, both animal and human, is ongoing.
- Carrot Creek campground has been closed and Carrot Creek trailhead facilities removed. Trees were felled at the beginning of the trail to discourage use.
- Signage has been provided at all entrance points indicating that the area is important wildlife habitat.
- Monitoring of trail use is in place.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Monitor use trends.
- Work with the sport climbing community to reduce or eliminate use in the Carrot Creek Canyon area.
- Monitor wildlife use to determine effectiveness of ESS.

9. Vermilion Lakes Wetlands (PMP 3.14)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Following discussions with Parks Canada, CPR is pursuing placing culverts under the track in Third Vermilion Lake. This will restore more natural water flows and will help stabilize the railbed.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Vermilion Lakes to be included in the area planning program to examine land use in the area surrounding the Town of Banff (see Chapter 8, item 5).
- Monitor the effects of the new culverts and modify or add as required.

CHAPTER 4: A PLACE OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Cultural Resource Management: A Cultural Resource Management Plan has been developed for the park. Commemorative Integrity Statements have been completed for the Cave and Basin National Historic Site (NHS), the Banff Park Museum NHS, and Skoki Lodge NHS. Agreement has been reached with the operator of Skoki Lodge with respect to restoration and maintenance. A visitors handbook has been developed for the Banff Park Museum, co-sponsored by the Friends of Banff, and interpretive media provided at Bankhead. Access and interpretive media have been improved for the Cosmic Ray Station NHS and the Sulphur Mountain Weather Observatory.
- Built Heritage: Significant progress has been made on the Built Heritage Resource Description and Analysis for the park. Three Federal Government buildings received a Recognized Status from the Federal Heritage Building Review Office (FHBRO). Stonework and conservation measures were completed on the Park Administration Building and grounds. Campgrounds and picnic areas were inventoried to identify heritage structures.
- Built Heritage in the Town of Banff and Lake Louise: Parks Canada has been involved in the establishment of the Banff Heritage Corporation for the Town. In June 1998, the Minister responsible for Parks Canada announced some ways in which Parks Canada would assist park communities in protecting heritage structures. These include: working with the Heritage

Corporation and interested leaseholders in the park to develop lease amendments to ensure the protection of built structures; examining the feasibility of exchanging lands to protect heritage structures; and providing support in-kind such as professional restoration advice. These principles also will be applicable in Lake Louise.

- Built Heritage in Lake Louise: A Built Heritage Resource Description and Analysis for Lake Louise has been completed. The Lake Louise Community Plan will identify strategies to protect and maintain important buildings and features.
- Archaeology: Archaeological work is being done in Lake Minnewanka at the Stewart Canyon outlet. The rise and fall of water levels is slowly washing away the site. Two archaeological sites in the Bow Valley were examined for identification of bone samples. The Dormer Plateau was surveyed for potential pre-historic sites, and the Saskatchewan Glacier area was surveyed for historical sites. Work continued at the Ya-Ha-Tinda ranch outside the park to identify archaeological sites.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Cultural Resource Management: Complete a Commemorative Integrity Statement for the Cosmic Ray Station NHS, and Abbott Pass Hut Refuge Cabin NHS. Complete a Conservation and Maintenance Plan for the Cave and Basin NHS. Monitor the implementation of the Maintenance Plan for Skoki Lodge NHS. Improve protection and building conservation measures for the Banff Park Museum NHS. Improve visitor facilities and interpretive media for the Cascade Gardens.
- Built Heritage: Continue work on the Built Heritage Resource Description and Analysis. Complete the maintenance work for the Park Administration Building and grounds. Further develop strategies and incentives in cooperation with the Town of Banff, to protect heritage structures. Submit buildings for review by FHBRO on a priority basis.
- Built Heritage in the Town of Banff: Continue to support the work of the Banff Heritage Corporation.

CHAPTER 5: A PLACE FOR PEOPLE

1. A Place for Heritage Tourism (PMP 5.2)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Heritage Tourism Strategy: The Heritage Tourism Strategy was adopted as the official Tourism strategy of the Town of Banff, Lake Louise and Banff National Park. The Strategy seeks to foster the awareness, appreciation, enjoyment, understanding, and stewardship of the natural environment and local culture of the Canadian Rockies, and to preserve Banff National Park as a sustainable tourism destination. Under the auspices of the Banff-Lake Louise Tourism Bureau, an ongoing Heritage Tourism Council has been established. The council has identified a workplan outlining a number of projects. A video promoting the importance of the Heritage

Tourism Strategy is being developed. A new staff orientation program, the Best of Banff, was delivered to 500 employees over the summer. Heritage tourism themes were incorporated into advertising and promotional materials. Presentations on local nature and culture are being encouraged as part of all conferences held in the park. An accreditation program for guides is being developed with the Mountain Park Heritage Interpretation Association.

- Lake Louise: As part of the Lake Louise Community Plan, a heritage tourism strategy has been developed with business operators. It is consistent with the Banff appropriate use framework.
- Partnerships: Parks Canada is working with its tourism industry partners to develop new packages, programs and services based on the natural, historical and cultural heritage of the park. Parks Canada is working with local businesses and tour operators to expand the Heritage Passport Program for Banff's national historic sites and the Whyte Museum.

Priorities for the Next Year

- As members of the Heritage Tourism Council, the following priority projects will be implemented: offer winter and summer versions of the 'Best of Banff' program; offer Level III Accreditation Program for Interpretive Guides; establish an annual Awards Program and fund-raising dinner for the fall of 1999; and, participate in the Society of American Travel Writers Annual Convention in October, 1999.

2. Awareness and Education (PMP 5.4)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- A staff orientation program was delivered.
- 650,000 copies of the Visitor Guide were distributed to visitors in the mountain parks.
- Development of the new "Keep the Wild in Wildlife" brochure greatly enhanced the communications of wildlife messages to visitors and residents.
- Friends of Banff enhanced the level and quality of programming of the FM Radio System.
- With the support of the Friends of Banff, free campground theatre programs, guided walks and historic site tours were offered.
- In June, as part of the new protection measures for the national parks, the Minister for Canadian Heritage announced the establishment of Canada Place in Banff, and a major environmental education centre focusing on sustainable communities and the management and protection of ecological integrity of national parks.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Offer winter and summer versions of the 'Best of Banff' training.
- Publish winter and summer editions of the Visitor Guide to Mountain Parks.
- Develop and implement the initial phase of Canada Place. It will be located in the Administration Building and will bring to Canadians a larger presentation of Canada's Heritage. It will provide opportunities to expand our knowledge of Canada, and explore the diversity of Canada as exemplified in its people, art, music, festivals and folklore.

- Begin to implement the awareness and education initiatives of the Lake Louise Community Plan.
- Continue to implement the Heritage Tourism Strategy.

3. Frontcountry Visitor Accommodation Outside the Communities (PMP 5.5)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- In June 1998 the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Secretary of State (Parks) announced that steps would be taken to manage commercial development in outlying areas of the park. A one-year moratorium was placed on all commercial accommodation development outside of park communities. The panel, which was announced on October 21, 1998, will recommend the principles to guide the nature, scale and rate of future development in these areas. The panel will report its recommendations in June of 1998 to the Secretary of State (Parks).

Priorities for the Next Year

- The panel to review OCAs will complete its work by June 1999.

4. Effective Human Use Management (PMP 5.6)

The objective of this initiative is to manage human use when necessary to ensure the ecosystem continues to support viable populations of carnivores (wolves and bears).

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Improve Habitat Effectiveness: Various actions were taken to improve habitat effectiveness including: various seasonal road closures (see Chapter 6), ending the maintenance of the Hillsdale trail, decommissioning the upper portion of the Baker Creek Trail and removing a campsite, establishing the Fairholme Bench ESS, re-establishing the Cascade Wildlife Corridor, securing the Middle Springs Wildlife Corridor and removing bicycle use from the Bryant Creek area. A monitoring program has been put in place for the Hillsdale trail, and the Fairholme ESS to determine the level of use. Presentations were made to a wide variety of groups to explain the significance of improving wildlife habitat and security areas and how the targets for habitat effectiveness in the management plan were developed. All people hiking with the Skyline Hikers received a presentation on habitat effectiveness.
- Data Management: The model originally developed for the Bow Valley Study which relates habitat effectiveness for carnivores to levels of human use, has been further refined. The East Slopes Grizzly Bear Project (ESGBP) with the University of Calgary continues to contribute to our knowledge of the grizzly bear population and needs in the area.
- Skoki Area: An exit survey was conducted of commercial and non-commercial visitors to the Skoki Valley from July to September. The survey was designed to improve visitor estimates and demographic information, identify travel patterns and examine visitor preferences for management options to limit Skoki hikers. It included representation from both day and

overnight visitors. The survey results will be used to assist in preparing a human use strategy for the area. Grizzly bears in the Skoki area were also studied to determine how they select habitat.

- Bryant Creek. Habitat security and effectiveness targets for all carnivore management units (CMUs) were established in the park management plan. In order to begin improving habitat effectiveness in the high human use area of Bryant Creek, use of mountain bikes was curtailed in the summer of 1998. The decision to prohibit mountain bikes was chosen as a way of limiting both day-use volume and disturbance to wildlife in the area. Mountain bikes enable people to travel farther in a short period of time into backcountry areas, in effect “shrinking the wilderness”, and reducing secure habitat for large carnivores. Prohibiting mountain bikes will significantly reduce human use in the Bryant Creek area. In 1997, mountain bikers represented approximately 60% of users in the area. Fact sheets, newspaper articles and signage were used to advise users. Volunteers were used to educate visitors and monitor use in the Bryant area during the summer. Trail counters and videos also were used for monitoring. Discussions have begun with other users (Trail Riders and Skyline Hikers) on future restrictions for the Bryant area.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Improve Habitat Effectiveness: Determine priority areas for managing human use. Discuss options with stakeholders. Continue to develop a model for managing human use in the Skoki area. Continue public presentations on this issue to gain greater public understanding.
- Data Management: Continue to support the ESGBP. The habitat effectiveness model will be further refined incorporating new information as available.
- Skoki Area: Continue studies of grizzly bear usage of the area and complete a human use management strategy.
- Bryant Creek: Evaluate the use levels in the summer of 1998 and begin to evaluate changes in habitat effectiveness. Reduce group size for other users in the Bryant (Trail Riders and Skyline Hikers). Continue to monitor human use and utilization of habitat by carnivores

5. Ski Areas (PMP 5.8)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Ski Area Management Guidelines: Draft ski area management guidelines have been prepared by a contractor with input from Parks Canada and the ski areas. The draft guidelines are being forwarded to the panel established by the Secretary of State (Parks) in October, 1998 (see Chapter 5, item 3) for public review.
- Skiing Louise Summer Use: Work is underway to prepare a summer use management strategy for the ski hill. Skiing Louise has worked with Parks Canada and the East Slopes Grizzly Bear Project to identify the impact of summer use on grizzly bear habitat. The objective is to determine if there are significant impacts and if they can be reduced. A contractor has been selected to assist in preparing the summer use assessment and will be contacting stakeholders in

the near future.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Ski Area Management Guidelines: The draft Ski Area Management Guidelines will undergo public review. The panel will facilitate public input and based on this input make recommendations to the Secretary of State (Parks) by June 1999.
- Skiing Louise Summer Use: Background information will be consolidated to ensure all information is considered in the evaluation. The summer use assessment will be completed. Stakeholder involvement will occur over the coming months.

CHAPTER 6: TRANSPORTATION (including Utilities)

1. Ground Transportation (PMP 6.1)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Transportation and Utilities Advisory Group: A Transportation and Utilities Advisory Group was established in February 1998. Participants represent various businesses who operate linear utilities within the park such as TransAlta and Telus, the Canadian Pacific Railway, major tour operators such as Brewsters and Laidlaw, environmental groups and others. The group identified a number of issues to address including: ecological implications of highways, ecological implications of the railway, implications of operating utilities within the park, communications and public education along park roads, and the recapitalization of roads and highway facilities. Projects initiated by this group include: identifying ways to reduce wildlife mortality along the railway; the development of self-guiding interpretive routes along the Bow Valley Parkway and the Lake Minnewanka Loop; and the development of a booklet for tour guides outlining appropriate behaviour.
- Power Demand: The demand for power in the future has been estimated based on existing park and community plans. The existing systems and agreements are anticipated to be adequate to meet demand. The use of 'green power' is being investigated.
- Canadian Pacific Railway: CPR has been working with Parks Canada and the Transportation and Utilities Advisory Group to address a number of issues including: reducing grain spills, improving wildlife mortality reporting, improving the reporting of grain spillage, reducing vegetation attractants to wildlife, experimenting with techniques to scare animals off the tracks, and implementing wider snow plowing in specific locations to provide an improved escape route for wildlife.
- Bow Valley Parkway: The voluntary night closure of the road from Johnston Canyon, to the east entrance to the Parkway, was initiated from March 1 to June 25, 1998. The route of the Jasper-Banff relay was changed so this section of the Parkway would not be used. The opening dates of campgrounds in the area were modified to support the closure. Information on

road usage during this period was collected through traffic counters, observations and surveys conducted for 12 days. Traffic data that was gathered is complicated by the additional closure restrictions that resulted from the 'Hillsdale Fire'.

- Lake Louise Transportation Study: A contract has been awarded to develop options to address parking and circulation issues in Lake Louise. Data collection occurred in the summer of 1998 to determine patterns of vehicle movement. A final report is expected by April 1999.
- Lake Minnewanka Loop Road: The western section of the loop road was closed to vehicle traffic in the winter.
- Public Transit to Facilities on Sulphur Mountain: The Town of Banff Transportation Study considered the potential for public transit to the Upper Hot Springs area. The Sulphur Mountain area will be included in the planning program for lands adjacent to the Town of Banff (see Chapter 8, item 5).
- Reducing Wildlife Mortality on Highways Outside the Park: Parks Canada worked with Alberta Transportation and Three Sisters staff to develop an approach for a wildlife underpass and fencing on the TCH east of Canmore.
- Wildlife Underpasses and Overpasses: The two wildlife overpasses in Phase IIIA were completed and fenced. A study has been initiated to evaluate wildlife crossing structures which go under or over the Trans-Canada Highway. The study looks at the frequency of use by various wildlife species, and will identify the characteristics that influence the level of use. The study also looks at the factors that contribute to wildlife mortality.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Transportation and Utilities Advisory Group: Implement many of the recommendations that have been developed, in particular, reducing wildlife mortality on the railway track, the development of two self-guiding interpretive routes, and preparation of a guidebook for tour operators.
- Bow Valley Parkway: Continue the program of voluntary closure. Improve installations of traffic counters to ensure data collected for full period of closure. Strengthen communications, in particular signage, to ensure all parkway motorists receive prior information. Design a more in-depth survey to assist in improving implementation. Analyze traffic use and wildlife information.
- Lake Minnewanka Road: Continue winter closure with improved signage and gates.
- Canadian Pacific Railway: Continue to work with CPR to put in place the proposed wildlife mitigations.
- Transportation Study: A study of ground transportation issues to the year 2010 will be initiated. The focus of the study is outlined on page 53 of the management plan. Parks Canada would be interested in any suggestions you have for this project.
- Lake Louise Transportation Study: Public consultation on the options will take place in the spring of 1999. An implementation strategy will be developed.
- Highway 1A: Highway 1A from Lake Louise to the Great Divide picnic area will be closed to traffic starting the summer of 1999.

2. Air Transportation (PMP 6.2)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- The airstrip is closed and is available for emergency and diversionary landings only, as is any suitable site in an emergency.
- The National Parks Aircraft Access Regulations are being enforced, requiring the Superintendent's prior permission to use the airstrip.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Parks Canada will continue to participate in processes to address the increasing number of fixed and rotary wing flights over the park, the Bow Valley and adjoining region.
- Legislation and initiatives from other jurisdictions regarding overflight restrictions will be reviewed. Possible options and alternatives will be explored.

CHAPTER 7: A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY

In June, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced some specific measures to be applied to communities within national parks. The Federal Government will introduce amendments to the *National Parks Act* which will include the setting of legal boundaries for communities, the establishment of permanent caps on commercial development and the statutory responsibility to use a no net negative environmental impact principle.

1. Town of Banff (PMP 7.2)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- The Town of Banff included a number of important principles in the Community Plan including:
 - strict architectural guidelines, including height restrictions;
 - a new business licencing regime to ensure that appropriate use occurs;
 - a measurement regime to ensure adherence to no net negative environmental impact;
 - an annual growth rate to limit the pace of permitted development;
 - a residential cap below that established in the Park Management Plan; and
 - actions to preserve built heritage.
- Parks Canada is taking steps to reduce the potential for new commercial development to 350,000 square feet.
- In order to address the concerns of Canadians, to protect the ecological integrity of Banff, and in recognition of its status as a World Heritage Site, other actions are being taken including:
 - protection of environmentally sensitive montane lands, resulting in the reduction of the

size of the Town by 85 hectares or 17.4%;

- greater learning opportunities for Canadians through the establishment of the new Environmental Education Centre and Canada Place; and

- new administrative guidelines to ensure that residential properties are occupied only by people who need to reside in the park for reasons of employment.

- A new Community Plan for the Town of Banff has been prepared and submitted to the Minister of Canadian Heritage for approval. An Environmental Overview of the plan has been completed.
- Section 7.2 of the Park Management Plan was amended in June of 1998 to reflect the Minister's direction regarding issues such as growth management, no net negative environmental impact, environmental stewardship, heritage conservation, and the town boundary. Section 5.7.2 item 2 was deleted.
- Appropriate Use: An appropriate use framework has been developed (see Chapter 8, Section 3).
- Eligible Residency: Efforts are underway to undertake an annual review of 5% of all lessees in the park to ensure compliance with the residency requirements outlined in the National Parks Regulations. Proposed regulatory changes are being pursued to enable Parks Canada to better enforce the eligible residency requirement.
- No Net Negative Environmental Impact: The principle of no net negative environmental impact was established by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and will be adopted in all national park community plans.
- Class Screening: A class screening, under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, for routine projects conducted in the town has been completed.
- Environmental Stewardship: initiatives are being looked at to reduce greenhouse gases. A CO-2 pilot project is being considered.

2. Lake Louise (PMP 7.3)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Community Plan: Most actions in the Management Plan are being addressed through the Community Plan (formerly titled *The Lake Louise Development and Use Framework*). A concept for the Community Plan has been prepared in collaboration with the Lake Louise Advisory Board. The concept outlines: principles for achieving ecological integrity, protecting cultural resources, character and socio-economic well being; a strategy for addressing staff housing issues; build out of commercial development; defining basic and essential services; and overall improvements to the area. This concept was presented to the public in the summer of 1997. A Heritage Tourism Strategy, and Appropriate Use Guidelines have been developed in consultation with the Lake Louise Advisory Board and commercial operators. On May 15, 1997, the Secretary of State (Parks) announced principles for Lake Louise on further commercial growth, staff housing, cumulative impacts and capacity of infrastructure. These included the reduction of the ceiling in overnight visitors staying in commercial accommodation

from 3500 to 3100; the application of the no net negative environmental impact principle; and that no new commercial accommodation operations would be permitted. On June 26, 1998 the Minister for Canadian Heritage announced direction to guide the completion of community plans and a moratorium on commercial expansion until the Community Plan is completed. Three options for growth were recently presented to Advisory Board representatives. These will be reviewed publicly over the next few months.

- Housing: A review has determined that housing is needed for approximately 240 staff who currently live elsewhere and improved housing is required for about 280 staff who live in Lake Louise in crowded or poor conditions. A housing strategy has been developed and endorsed by the Lake Louise Advisory Board.
- Transportation: A contract has been let to address parking and circulation issues.
- Chateau Meeting Facility: The proposal for 81 new guest rooms, meeting facilities and a replacement dining room has received conditional approval. The project was reviewed in the context of the management plan, policy, the results of public consultation and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. An extensive set of mitigations has been identified to ensure the development has no negative environmental impact. The facility will play a major role in providing educational and interpretation material on the heritage values of the area to all hotel guests.
- Cost Recovery of Municipal Services: The provision of sewer, water and garbage collection services is now fully cost recovered. The Lake Louise Utility Board has played a major role in shaping the introduction of cost recovery of municipal services.
- Removal of the Trailer Court: Options for replacement housing for trailer court owners have been addressed as part of the housing strategy. A review of the sewer and water lines in the trailer court area indicates there is no need for extensive repairs.
- Harry's Hill: A review of the impacts of Harry's Hill indicates that there is a one kilometre wide wildlife corridor between Harry's Hill and the ski area parking lots. This area is used by all species of wildlife to move along the north side of the Bow River and there is minimal contact with humans. Since the closure of the Niblock pits, previous problems with grizzly and black bears have disappeared. The review indicated that maintaining Harry's Hill as a residential area with minor infilling would not pose a problem. This information was presented as part of the Community Plan public consultation open houses. Parks Canada has provided a housing site in the area for medical and day care staff.
- Governance: Discussion have taken place with respect to developing a new charter to guide community involvement in the management of the hamlet. This charter will be an interim measure until a new governance model is put in place.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Community Plan: The plan is being completed based on the principles outlined. The options of commercial growth will be presented to the public to obtain additional input with an open house being held this winter. The plan will be finalized and forwarded to the Minister for approval. The Lake Louise Advisory Board will continue to be encouraged to help finalize the plan. Parks Canada will continue to work with the Lake Louise Advisory Board and head lessees to

- address housing issues.
- Transportation: Public consultation on the options will take place in the spring of 1999. An implementation strategy will be developed in the summer of 1999.
- Chateau Meeting Facility: A building permit will not be issued until all appropriate mitigations and conditions are in place.
- Cost Recovery of Municipal Services: Phase in cost recovery of other municipal services by April 1, 2000.
- Removal of the Trailer Court: Encourage housing to be developed as outlined in the housing strategy and encourage trailer court owners to take advantage of new opportunities. Apply terms and conditions of licence of occupation once new housing opportunities are available.
- Governance: Finalize interim charter and continue discussions on the governance model.

CHAPTER 8: A PLACE FOR OPEN MANAGEMENT

1. Annual Planning Forum (PMP 8.2)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- The park management plan indicates that an annual Round Table will be held to examine the progress toward implementation of the management plan, and seek input on future initiatives.
- The planning forum to be held on November 12 and 13, 1998, is the first of its kind. The intent is to hold a similar or modified forum in the late fall, in future years.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Parks Canada is interested in hearing your comments about the forum. Did it provide the information you wanted and the opportunity for discussion and input? What suggestions would you have for the annual planning forum in the future?

2. Development Review and Approval Process (PMP 8.3)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Parks Canada has modelled its Development Review Process on the municipal process. The new process is more streamlined, consistent, and transparent. It comprises of two main approvals: a development approval and building permit approval.
- An Advisory Development Board (ADB) was established with seven members from the public. This volunteer Board has the responsibility of reviewing private and public development applications for Banff, Yoho, and Kootenay National Parks to ensure they are appropriate and meet the requirements of the *National Parks Act*, regulations and national park management plans. The Board then forwards its recommendations to the park superintendent.

- There are improved opportunities for public participation through the establishment of the ADB. In the past 15 months the Board has reviewed 21 development applications.
- ‘Sunset clauses’ have been included in the process to limit the period during which approval is valid: development permit approvals are valid for twelve months and building permit approvals are valid for six months.
- The public is notified of the park superintendent’s decisions on development applications with an advertisement in local newspapers.
- A formal development appeal mechanism is in place.
- The Development Review Process has been harmonized with the environmental assessment process.
- A new standardized building inspection process has been implemented.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Continue to improve the Development Review Process and allow public participation and access to development applications and decisions made within National Parks.
- Review and update ADB Terms of Reference.
- Address concerns raised by the ADB (i.e. review and update OCA guidelines, Ski Area Guidelines, and Redevelopment Guidelines for Hostels).
- Continue to enhance the communications between Parks Canada, the public, Town of Banff, and business operators and/or developers.

3. Appropriate Use (PMP 8.4)

The intent is to introduce processes for evaluating the type and level of use so that it better reflects the Parks Canada mandate and policy, addresses increases in use and incorporates public involvement.

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Discussions have been held between the Town of Banff, Lake Louise and Parks Canada regarding how appropriate use criteria could be applied. The intent is to develop a working model for the Town which can then be applied to decisions about business licenses for other areas of the park.
- New business license applications and development proposals will be considered if it can be demonstrated that they are appropriate in the Town of Banff or in Lake Louise and the national park and World Heritage Site setting. Appropriate development and use will be implemented through:
 - appropriate wording in the Community Plans;
 - amendments to the business-license bylaw;
 - changes to internal approval processes dealing with development and business-license approvals; and
 - as required, changes in the National Parks Regulations such as need-to-reside definitions and prohibitions of any specific activities.

- New business-license applications in the Town of Banff, in Lake Louise and elsewhere in the park will be required to meet a test of appropriateness. The test will reflect the following principles:
 - need to be located in the park;
 - contribution to a vibrant Heritage-tourism industry;
 - required community service;
 - permissible park activity; and
 - not a value-added production of products or services to be sold elsewhere.
- Existing businesses that do not meet the revised appropriate-use screening will be permitted to continue. However, expansion applications, which would trigger review under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) or that constitute a full change in existing commercial usage, would have to meet screening criteria.
- New development and redevelopment which triggers CEAA would undergo an Appropriate Development screening reflecting the following principles:
 - projects must not result in a population for the communities greater than that set out by the Minister of Canadian Heritage;
 - projects must be within limits established in the Town of Banff Land-Use Bylaw, park zoning, and relevant restrictions in the Lake Louise Community Plan;
 - projects must be within established growth rates;
 - required residential development must be in tandem with new commercial development;
 - projects must commit to environmental stewardship practices;
 - projects must be fully mitigated in accordance with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act; and
 - businesses within the development must meet the appropriate business-license test.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Parks Canada will incorporate the appropriate development and use criteria from the Banff Community Plan into the community plans for all national park townsites.
- Ensure application of the appropriate development and use criteria.
- Work with the Town of Banff in implementing the commitments contained in the Community Plan.

4. Regional Coordination (PMP 8.5)

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Parks Canada supported the establishment of the Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley, located in Canmore. The Institute is dedicated to enhancing the understanding of ecological integrity as it pertains to the Bow Valley watershed. In 1997, the Institute developed a listing of all relevant publications related to ecological integrity of the Bow Valley.
- Parks Canada currently chairs the Rocky Mountains Grizzly Bear Planning Committee, which

includes the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, Montana, the United States Parks Service and Parks Canada.

- Parks Canada is a member of the Bow Corridor Ecosystem Advisory Group (BCEAG) which is chaired by the Province of Alberta and includes membership from the Town of Banff, Town of Canmore, and Municipal District of Bighorn. The BCEAG has worked on a number of region wide projects in the last year including wildlife corridor management, fire management, and coordinated mapping of information.
- The Central Rockies Ecosystem Interagency Liaison Group (CREILG) has continued to play a coordinating and information sharing role in the Central Rockies of Alberta and British Columbia.
- Parks Canada provided input into a number of initiatives in the surrounding region including the design of wildlife crossing structures for the TCH east of Canmore, the Recreational Policy Review for Kananaskis Country, and the identification of wildlife corridor and habitat patches in the Bow Valley east of the park.
- Parks Canada is a major supporter of the Eastern Slopes Grizzly Bear Project (ESGBP) (see Chapter 3, item 5).

Priorities for the Next Year

- Continue involvement and support for the Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley in its work to identify information gaps, disseminating information and facilitating research.
- Continue involvement in the BCEAG, CREILG and Rocky Mountain Grizzly Bear Planning Committee.
- Continue to support and provide leadership to the monitoring of trends in the grizzly bear population in the Eastern Slopes area of the Central Rockies through the ESGBP.

5. A Planning Process for Lands Adjacent to the Town of Banff

Priorities for the Next Year

- The park management plan indicates that an area plan will be developed for Sulphur Mountain, including the adjacent sections of the Spray and Sundance Valleys. The plan also proposes an area plan for the Vermilion Lakes Wetland area and changes in human use for the golf course area.
- Rather than undertaking separate planning exercises, it is proposed that one planning program be conducted for lands in the area adjacent to the Town. The recommended planning area includes six sub-units or areas: the Vermilion Wetlands area, Fenland-Indian Grounds wildlife corridor, the Tunnel Mountain-horse corrals-Pinewoods area, the Cave and Basin-Middle Springs area, the Banff Springs golf course-Spray River area, and the Sulphur Mountain area. The planning program would incorporate the lands within the Montane ecoregion adjacent to the Town of Banff that are most closely linked to the Town and its residents and users. The proposed boundary incorporates key ecological factors (e.g. sensitive sites, wildlife corridors) and recreational opportunities in the area immediately surrounding the town. Linkages between

the planning area and the town, and with areas further from the town such as the Norquay and Johnson Lake area will be critical.

- In the planning process, broad goals for the region will need to be developed as well as more detailed planning for the six sub-areas.
- Issues which will need to be addressed include: cultural heritage, sensitive sites, montane vegetation, aquatic and riparian areas, wildlife, trail use (pedestrian, bike and horse), traffic and parking, other built facilities and infrastructure, heritage tourism and appropriate use, heritage presentation, environmental management and regional implications.
- It is proposed that a public advisory group be established to help guide the planning program, refine issues, develop and explore options and prepare recommendations. These recommendations would be discussed in a public forum.
- Parks Canada is interested in receiving your comments about the proposed planning program, the issues to be addressed, and the process suggested.

CHAPTER 9: A PLACE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

1. Environmental Management

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- A variety of actions were taken to reduce and prevent pollution including: eliminating PCBs from Parks Canada operations, registering all petroleum storage tanks, initiating a hazardous materials inventory, and completing a contaminated sites inventory.
- A remediation program was completed for the Bankhead area relative to coal tar.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Develop an action plan for the Environmental Management Program identifying targets and resources.
- Re-establish a ground water monitoring program at contaminated sites.
- Focus on development of communication strategies with respect to the activities of others operating within the national parks.

2. Tertiary Sewage Treatment

Key Accomplishments Since April 1997

- Tunnel Mountain: An improved sewage treatment system was built for the Tunnel Mountain campground.
- Lake Louise: The Lake Louise Wastewater Treatment Plant was upgraded. The biological treatment process was upgraded to meet effluent targets in the management plan for Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD₅), Nitrate (NO₃), Nitrites (N) and Ammonium nitrite (NH₃N). Based on initial findings, phosphorous concentrations have been reduced to negligible amounts. Chlorine will no longer be used to disinfect wastewater. A new ultra-violet treated effluent disinfection system is being used.
- Town of Banff: The Town's wastewater treatment plant will be upgraded in the next two years.
- Phosphorus: A study has been initiated with the University of Alberta to identify sources of phosphorus and the impact on the rivers of the mountain parks.
- Monitoring: Parks Canada undertakes bacteriological sampling at 20 locations on the Bow River twice annually.
- Water Conservation in Lake Louise: Water meters have been introduced. Water conservation is a requirement of the Chateau Lake Louise water permit.
- Targets in the Management Plan: The target for Dissolved Solids was an error and has been amended to indicate Suspended Solids. The target for Fecal coliform is under review to determine if it is achievable.

Priorities for the Next Year

- Lake Louise: Ensure Lake Louise Wastewater Treatment Plant has the necessary capacity for the permitted growth.
- Communications: Once research results are available on phosphorus sources, a communication program to reduce the input of phosphorus, will be developed.
- Monitoring: Methods are being researched by which backcountry campsites, lodges and Parks Canada's backcountry facilities could be monitored regularly.
- Water Conservation in Lake Louise: Water conservation is being pursued as a requirement for obtaining a development permit.

You are encouraged to attend the Open House for the Banff National Park Annual Planning Forum any time from 3 to 8 pm

on Thursday, November 12th, 1998, at the Banff Rocky Mountain Resort. Parks Canada staff will be available to answer questions and discuss your concerns. If you cannot attend the Open House, comments can be submitted to:

Parks Canada
Banff National Park Annual Planning Forum
Box 900
Banff
Alberta T0L 0C0

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.