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*Kootenay National Park of Canada*

# 2003 IMPLEMENTATION REPORT



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## Introduction

Parks Canada is pleased to release the second implementation report for the 2000 *Kootenay National Park of Canada Management Plan*. The management plan guides the overall direction of the park. The objectives of the management plan are to:

- Set out a vision for the future
- Preserve and strengthen the ecological integrity of the park in a way that integrates ecological, social, and economic values
- Promote high quality visitor experiences based on the park's ecological and cultural heritage
- Establish clear limits to development associated with appropriate activities
- Support Parks Canada's initiative to renew heritage presentation and
- Involve others in protecting the shared ecosystem

### Annual Review

Direction is provided in the plan for Parks Canada to establish a process for the annual review of the plan. The review process allows the public and stakeholders to learn about and evaluate Parks Canada's progress in implementing the plan. If you have any concerns or comments, please let us know. Contact information is found at the end of this introductory section, on page 3.

### Five Year Review

Under the *Canada National Park Act*, a management plan must undergo a review every five years. Since the management plans for the four contiguous mountain parks, (Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, and Yoho), and Waterton Lakes National Park, address similar issues and affect many of the same stakeholders and park users, the five plans will be reviewed at the same time. The review of the *Kootenay National Park Management Plan* in early 2003 did not indicate the need for any amendments. The next review of this plan, in 2008, will be done in conjunction with that for Yoho, Jasper, Banff and Waterton Lakes national parks. This will bring the mountain parks plans under the same review cycle.

## First Nations

The management plan contains important direction concerning ongoing work with neighbouring First Nations to protect and present Aboriginal heritage. In addition, Parks Canada is participating in negotiations with the Ktunaxa Nation as part of the British Columbia treaty process. This involvement will continue to be a priority in coming years.

## Implementation Report

This Implementation Report highlights key activities undertaken by Parks Canada to achieve the vision for Kootenay National Park:

*Kootenay National Park of Canada is a symbol of Canadian identity and pride, recognized within Canada and around the world as an ecologically diverse place. It is a place where complex land use and development challenges are managed in ways that allow nature and natural processes to flourish and evolve. It embodies a rich record of natural and cultural heritage that is respected and celebrated by all who know about, live in, and visit this special place. The park is accessible to the public and supports a range of opportunities that are based on national park values and that foster understanding, enjoyment and support. It is managed as a protected area that works in harmony with others beyond its boundaries to sustain ecosystems in the regional landscape. Canadians and international guests appreciate the ecological and cultural importance of the park to the region, the country and the world.*

## Key Themes

The goals, objectives and actions in the management plan comprise the direction that supports this vision for Kootenay National Park. Key themes identified in the management plan summarize this direction. These themes are used throughout this document to summarize the specific direction contained in each chapter in the plan, as described in Using This Report, below.

### Using this Report

The remainder of this report will describe the activities undertaken in Kootenay National Park in 2003. These activities are organized by the main chapters in the management plan:

- A Place For Nature
- A Place Of Historical, Cultural, and Significance
- A Place for People
- Transportation and Utilities
- A Place for Open Management
- A Place for Environmental Stewardship

This report will focus on key areas of activity undertaken in the past year in support of the vision for the park. While this report focuses on the highlights, it is important to remember that much was done in the past year in support of many other topics not discussed here. Please feel free to contact us if you are interested in a topic that is not discussed in this report.

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## A Place For Nature

### **Key Management Themes:**

*The park is a living example of the way in which nature is protected while appropriate kinds and levels of human activity are welcomed.*

*The park contributes to a healthy and sustainable region.*

*Natural systems and their component native species are free to function and evolve. The park supports and is supported by the natural systems of the region around it.*

Principles of precaution and adaptive management are exercised when potentially significant adverse effects on the ecosystem are uncertain.

Success in implementing management plan actions is measured against established targets.

- The summer of 2003 was an exceptional fire season throughout southern British Columbia. Seven wildfires were recorded in Kootenay National Park (KNP), of which five were ignited by lightning, one was ignited by people, and one was a prescribed burn. The lone prescribed burn was a spring meadow burn that self-extinguished well within the planned area.

It was a series of three lightning-caused fires that ignited in the Vermillion Valley on the evening of July 31, 2003 that ultimately resulted in 17,400 hectares being burned in this part of KNP. These three fires, which ignited at the same time as another two fires in the Bow Valley, challenged fire managers to prioritize resource allocations carefully. Two of the three Kootenay fires, Tokumm and Verendrye, were located in relatively remote areas and grew steadily in the first 24 hours.

Management actions to contain the Tokumm and Verendrye fires saw limited early success due to the exceptional weather pattern affecting southern British Columbia. Despite the efforts of over 150 personnel (some from as far away as Newfoundland), over 15 helicopters, and assorted heavy equipment, the fires continued to grow throughout much of August. This resulted in road closures and road delays as well

as limited losses of Parks Canada facilities such as backcountry trail bridges. These fires also contributed to regional smoke loads experience by all of Western Canada.

The fires were eventually contained by developing a carefully placed guard, using heavy equipment and an industrial sprinkler system, in Vermillion Pass. This guard was then used to anchor a strategic burn operation that removed fuels between the fire front and the guard. The operation was highly successful as it significantly limited the potential for the fires to further threaten values at risk.

The two fires eventually were drawn together in an attempt to minimize the threat to the Kootenay Parkway (Highway 93 south). The end result was an area burned of 17,400 hectares, which amounts to approximately 12% of the land base of Kootenay National Park.

Overall, these fires are an important part of the ecological processes that shape Kootenay National Park. The Vermillion Valley is comprised of vegetation types that rely on fire for renewal and maintaining a variety of habitat types. Relatively infrequent, high intensity forest fires historically affected this area.

- Restoration work continued at Redstreak benches in KNP. This restoration project exemplifies adaptive management where management actions are taken, and then monitoring is used, in this case, to document bighorn sheep and ground squirrel response. Changes to our management approach will be made, as necessary, as additional restoration is done with new information.
- The Redstreak Restoration Communication Strategy was implemented as part of restoration effort to: 1) restore the role of fire and 2) protect park facilities and the community of Radium Hot Springs.
- Kootenay National Park collaborated in the first year of a whitebark pine/white pine blister rust inventory, in conjunction with Yoho, Jasper and Banff national parks, the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation and Selkirk College.
- The non-native plant program continued focussing on control of Spotted Knapweed.
- Bighorn sheep ecological research has begun and is addressing knowledge gaps in the following areas:
  - Location & timing of seasonal habitat use

- Identification of critical habitat features, such as lambing ranges and mineral licks
- Identification of key migration corridors, which could be future restoration priorities
- Measurement of bighorn response to restoration activities at Redstreak
- Parks Canada continued activities for the management of species at risk:
  - Actively supported the Parks Canada Species at Risk (SAR) education program and participated in multi-agency efforts in SAR research, monitoring, developing recovery strategies and implementing recovery plans.
  - Contributed to badger recovery program, which included augmentation of the East Kootenay population with badgers from Montana.
  - Undertook an inventory of a snake called the rubber boa. This inventory project will likely lead to a small research project in 2004 to learn more about critical habitat for this species.
  - The Westslope cutthroat trout may be listed as a species at risk. In anticipation, Parks Canada began an inventory and assessment of this native fish.
- Parks Canada also took steps to protect the Westslope cutthroat trout by implementing interim measures to require a zero possession limit for this species. A permanent regulatory change for a zero possession limit is proposed. Consultation on this proposal will continue in 2004.
- The harlequin duck monitoring program, started in 1995, continues. The program was reviewed in 2003 to improve the monitoring protocols for increased statistical rigour. These changes should improve our baseline information for future management actions.
- The long-term grizzly bear monitoring program continued to examine reproductive and survival rates as well as following the life histories of individual female bears to gain further insights into observed concerns with reproduction and bear health.



### **Indicators of Ecological Integrity**

Indicators represent components of the ecosystem that are either sensitive to change, or that reflect overall ecosystem health. By comparing the health of an indicator to a target or a desired level, we can assess progress in achieving the park's goals for ecological integrity.

This approach is directly linked to the *State of the Parks Report*, which identifies three areas for assessing ecological integrity: biodiversity, ecosystem function, and stressors. The indicators listed in the management plan represent a preliminary assemblage of suitable indicators for Kootenay National Park. The intent is to refine the indicators and update the list in the management plan in the future.

Progress on many of the actions contained in the Status box is also described elsewhere in this document.

As part of a national initiative Kootenay National Park is working toward the development of an updated process for monitoring and reporting on ecological integrity, visitor experience and heritage presentation. The initial focus of this review is to formalize a monitoring program that will be based on 6-8 indicators for ecological integrity. Until these indicators are finalized, the original indicators from the management plan will be used.

Indicator	Target	Status
<b><i>GEOLOGY AND LANDFORMS</i></b>		
Burgess Shale	Development of a plan for protection of fossil locations within two years.	Management framework expected to be developed in the next two years
Disturbed sites	Rehabilitate one site per year.	Priorities are identified in the disturbed sites inventory. Rehabilitation ongoing in Sinclair Canyon.
<b><i>AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS</i></b>		
Native fish species	A) maintenance of native fish in park waters. B) reintroduction of priority native species. C) self-sustaining reintroduced stocks.	Bull and cutthroat trout spawning and telemetry work was completed during the past year in Banff and Kootenay national parks. A cooperative mountain parks initiative to assess lakes, rivers and analyse genetic material is being developed. Annual work plans will identify the sites to be targeted during each year of the program.
Degree of naturally occurring connectivity between water bodies and wetlands	Connectivity restored where appropriate.	Baseline work has been initiated. Work continues but active restoration has not yet occurred. Bull trout monitoring identified the blockage of fish movement by a highway culvert on Owen Creek. Passage was re-established through the construction of a rock riffle/weir.
Percent distribution of non-native fish stocks that compete with native stocks	Reduction in the distribution of non-native species where they compete with native species.	Locations and targets to be identified. Work is ongoing with respect to classifying and identifying benchmark aquatic systems. Data collection for this indicator is occurring coincident with research and monitoring related to native fish species.

Indicator	Target	Status
<b>VEGETATION</b>		
Long term average fire cycle	50% of estimated long term fire cycle or approximately 175 ha annually through prescribed burns and natural fires.	This target was far exceeded in 2003 as a result of the Tokumm and Verendrye fires. These fires resulted in approximately 17,400 ha burned.
Area occupied by open forest, montane meadows and young forest stands	Acceptable targets for the amount and distribution of these vegetation communities will be defined within 3 years.	The extent of all stands is declining due to the lack of wildfire. Targets will be incorporated into the Fire Management Plan which is likely to be written over the next year.
Extent of non-native plant populations	Develop site specific targets within one year.	Overall non-native plant management program exists, site specific strategies completed for numerous species. Limited control operations occurred in 2003 due to the impacts of the fires season on access to the sites and available personnel.
Area of grassland in the montane ecoregion	Reversal in the decline of grassland.	Further work required to quantify desired increase in grassland area. Prescribed burn program in place with one area treated with prescribed fire in KNP during 2003. Specific objectives will be identified in the fire management plan.
Regional forest management	<p>In cooperation with BC ministries of Forests &amp; Sustainable Resource Management, develop indicators for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- changes to the proportion and distribution of habitat types</li> <li>- changes to the rate of successional change</li> <li>- fuel reduction, fire guards, and landscape restoration along shared boundaries</li> </ul>	Interagency discussions continue to work towards landscape level forest management objectives that respect and compliment the differing mandates of provincial crown and federal national park lands.

Indicator	Target	Status
<b>WILDLIFE</b>		
Vulnerable, sensitive, threatened and endangered species	Strive to maintain the presence of nationally and provincially listed species.	Formal regional grizzly bear monitoring and research programs have concluded. Collared bears that use KNP continue to be monitored opportunistically by park staff.
Grizzly bear habitat effectiveness	Maintain and improve habitat effectiveness (HE) targets.	There have been no major changes to current HE in most landscape units. Initiatives such as the implementation of OCA redevelopment guidelines and restoration in Sinclair Canyon will contribute to improved HE in Sinclair and Hawk LMUs.
Grizzly bear habitat security	Identify internal habitat security targets within one year. Work with managers of adjacent land to identify and manage regionally significant security areas.	Security targets have been prepared, but further work is needed to determine how to implement these targets in a meaningful way.
Grizzly bear linkage zones	Strive for effective internal and regional linkage zones.	Grizzly bear linkages have been considered during development of the Golden Backcountry Recreation Access Plan. Implementation of the plan is proceeding.
Habitat connectivity for large carnivores	Implement strategies for the park within five years. Work with surrounding land managers to manage regional wildlife corridors.	Most critical corridors have been identified. Work with the province of BC, OCA operators and rehabilitation work in Sinclair Canyon will improve habitat connectivity.
Large mammal highway and railway mortality	Work towards a 25% reduction in mortality along transportation corridors.	Highway mortality monitoring continues. Little work has occurred to establish baseline wildlife population data in order to assess the impact of highway related mortality. The impact to populations and species viability may be more informative than absolute mortality numbers.

Indicator	Target	Status
<b>WILDLIFE (CONTINUED)</b>		
Annual grizzly bear mortality	< 1% annual human-caused mortality within the park.	There were no grizzly bear mortalities in KNP this year.
Songbird diversity	Presence of all native species.	Some baseline monitoring has occurred pursuant to previous prescribed burn programs, but no new data was collected in 2003.
Elk and mountain goat population demographics (recruitment rates, density, and cow-calf ratio)	Establish population trend for the two species within 5 years.	Aerial and ground-based mountain goat surveys and roadside elk counts were completed during 2003. Population trends not yet developed.
Habitat effectiveness targets (wolf) and habitat suitability models (lynx)	Establish suitability model for lynx within five years. Establish habitat effectiveness targets for wolf and lynx within 5 years.	Field research, analysis and reporting is ongoing. Final suitability model and HE targets not yet defined. Low intensity wolf monitoring is ongoing; habitat effectiveness targets are yet to be developed. Lynx research has concluded with final habitat suitability model currently being developed.
Wildlife/human conflicts	Reduce the number of human/wildlife conflicts.	Ongoing problem wildlife program in place.

## A Place Of Historical and Cultural Significance

### ***Key Management Theme:***

*Understanding the value of our national parks is a part of being Canadian.*

*Education and awareness about the values of the national park, ethics of stewardship, natural and cultural heritage and services are provided both within and beyond the boundaries of the park.*

- Parks Canada owns Kootenae House National Historic Site in the Columbia Valley. Ground penetrating radar was used in 2003 as a first step towards further detailed archaeological work.
- The fires in Kootenay National Park destroyed the Alpine Club of Canada's Fay Hut. The Alpine Club and Parks Canada are now working on steps for appropriate commemoration of the site and location of a replacement facility.
- The same fires also burned over known pre-contact sites in Kootenay. The loss of surface vegetation from fire can lead to increased erosion, surface exposures and disturbance of known and yet undiscovered sites.
- Parks Canada continues to work in partnership with the Ktunaxa Kinbasket Tribal Council, the Friends of Kootenay and Bighorn In Our Backyard in the development of exhibits at the Radium Visitor Centre. Interpretation of Aboriginal heritage is an integrating theme. The project is being implemented in phases, according to funding availability. For the second year, the project received funding support from the Parks Canada Aboriginal Heritage Presentation Innovation Fund. Three major exhibits were completed in 2003:
  1. Cultures in Contact - presents a timeline of events of historical significance to the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket.
  2. Spirituality Wall - inspires a sense of wonder and respect for the land and its people.
  3. Anatomy of the Land - a topographic model - presents the Aboriginal significance of regional landscape features.

- Parks Canada archaeologists undertook an assessment of campground upgrades at Helmet Creek and an assessment of the planned Split Peak prescribed burn. A small pre-contact campsite was found in the Split Peak area, but is unlikely to be affected by the planned fire.
- Restoration work on the spa at the Radium Hot Springs pool was completed this year. The reintroduction of the spa service that was provided in the 50's and 60's ensured that the integrity of the historic character of this classified heritage building was maintained. In addition, necessary structural repairs and insulating work was carried out to bring that section of the building to current standards. Restoration work on the pool hallways are currently underway with an expected completion date in May 2004.
- Welcome banners depicting historic photos of Radium Hot Springs pool entitled "Soak in some History" were set up at the pools to remind visitors of the historical aspect of this resource.

## A Place For People

### **Key Management Themes:**

*The park is a living example of the way in which nature is protected while appropriate kinds and levels of human activity are welcomed.*

*The park contributes to a healthy and sustainable region.*

*Natural systems and their component native species are free to function and evolve. The park supports and is supported by the natural systems of the region around it.*

*Principles of precaution and adaptive management are exercised when potentially significant adverse effects on the ecosystem are uncertain.*

*Success in implementing management plan actions is measured against established targets.*

- From January to December of 2003, a major survey of visitors took place in Yoho, Kootenay, Jasper and Banff national parks. Parks Canada, the Alberta Government, and partners in the tourism industry collaboratively funded this research. Motorists were surveyed to determine where they visited, for how long, their expenditures, and their satisfaction with each service. Thousands of surveys have been returned and a summary report will be completed early in 2004. This information is used to calculate attendance, examine impacts at various day use nodes, highlight areas of concern for visitors, and inform human use management decisions.
- Parks Canada lifted the business licensing moratorium in the mountain parks and implemented a process to ensure guiding activities are well managed and contribute to visitor experiences that are aligned with park management goals.
- Front-line staff continued to be the face of Parks Canada for the thousands of visitors in Kootenay National Park:
  - Provided visitor reception, orientation and trip planning information to 8036 people through the visitor centers in Radium and Kootenay Park Lodge.



- Delivered 65 campground programs, 32 roving programs, and 8 special field tours promoting environmental awareness and understanding to a total of 6320 people.
- Developed and delivered the Heritage Tea event, a historic display of Radium Hot springs Pool, attended by 50 people
- With partners, Kootenay National Park brought the Mountain Park Heritage Interpreters Association (MPHIA) training and accreditation program to guides-in-training at College of the Rockies' Adventure Tourism Business Operator class in Golden. Capacity has been built and College now has integrated MPHIA interpretive training and accreditation into marketing of their program.
- Parks Canada facilitated sustainable tourism through Discover Kootenay, an educational program delivered to businesses (54 participants), and participation in Columbia Valley Tourism Alliance, Radium Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce, and Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce.
- Staff worked with other partners in the co-ordination and delivery of Wild Voices for Kids to 3000 students in 2003.
- Parks Canada continued its commitment to the Wonder of Water initiative directly and indirectly (through partnerships) with programs such as Junior Naturalists, Living with Wildlife, Wild Voices Speakers Series, and Community SPLASH.
- Through a series of special events, festivals, a speakers series, and other special initiatives, Parks Canada and its partners reached over 7,000 Columbia Valley neighbours and visitors with messages about ecological and cultural history of the national parks.
- Parks Canada completed upgrades to the drinking water supply at Marble Canyon Campground, which permitted reopening of this campground to the public. The campground was affected by the fire season in Kootenay.

- Marble Canyon day-use area was closed due to the loss of some facilities during the fire, and is expected to remain closed during the 2004 season.
- Selected backcountry areas that were closed due to fire-related safety issues were reopened as soon as possible to facilitate winter recreation. Warning and advisory signage was developed and installed for visitors travelling in burned-over areas.

## Transportation And Utilities

### **Key Management Themes:**

*The park is available to all Canadians and international guests who wish to participate in a diverse range of appropriate activities. They treat the park with respect. The quality of the natural environment and services provided is fundamental to the visitor experience.*

*Federal, provincial and municipal authorities cooperate in protecting and managing the regional ecosystem. To achieve this, they nurture cooperation with businesses, organizations, and open, accountable, and responsible decision-making.*

- The Western Asset Management Service Centre, which is responsible for highway maintenance in Kootenay National Park, has implemented the use of pre-wetting technology and is using this technique with two sander units in Kootenay. Studies suggest sodium chloride applications can be reduced by 20% when pre-wetted with magnesium chloride and that applications of sanding material can be reduced in frequency when pre-wetted with magnesium chloride. This could reduce the amount of sodium chloride used on highways and reduce the volume of sanding material extracted from park gravel pits.
- Parks Canada chairs the Kootenay Parkway Standing Committee, which is comprised of the major companies using park roads. This committee provides a means of communication with these companies to discuss and manage issues as they arise.
- The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) and other partners including Kootenay National Park participated in the research and testing of a wildlife detection system on the Kootenay Parkway (Highway 93 south). This system is intended to warn drivers when wildlife are near the highway through the use of an infrared detection system. The test in Kootenay is complete and ICBC may be undertaking additional testing in other locations. Researchers indicated that with further refinement, the system has good potential for efficiently warning drivers of the presence of wildlife.

## A Place for Open Management

### **Key Management Themes:**

*The park contributes to a healthy and sustainable region.*

*Federal, provincial and municipal authorities cooperate in protecting and managing the regional ecosystem. To achieve this, they nurture cooperation with businesses, organizations, and open, accountable, and responsible decision-making.*

*Parks Canada anticipates regional pressures and prepares for them well in advance.*

- The Ktunaxa and Shuswap nations have identified Kootenay National Park as part of their traditional territory. As part of the federal government negotiations team, Parks Canada is participating in treaty negotiations with the Ktunaxa Kinbasket Treaty Council and the province of British Columbia.
- Parks Canada undertook a five year review of the *Kootenay National Park Management Plan* in early 2003, as required by the *Canada National Parks Act*. The review did not indicate the need for any amendments. The next review of this plan, in 2008, will be done in conjunction with reviews in Yoho, Jasper, Banff and Waterton Lakes national parks.
- Parks Canada in conjunction with BC Ministry of Sustainable Development developed Vegetation Resource Inventory mapping which is being used in Landscape Planning programs by both agencies.
- Parks Canada, along with land management agencies of adjoining lands, developed integrated and multi-jurisdictional Geographic Information System (GIS) databases. These databases have been used to support a wide variety of human and natural science research as well as the decision-making process.
- Parks Canada staff participated in the development of the British Columbia's Golden Backcountry Recreation Access Plan. The plan, developed by a diverse group of British Columbia-based stakeholders, outlines where motorized access is and is not permitted, including areas adjacent to Kootenay National Park.

- Parks Canada continued working with adjacent land managers in a variety of committees, processes, and reviews. This includes provincial ministries and agencies of British Columbia, forestry industry, and non-government organizations.
- To consolidate infrastructure and avoid costly maintenance, Parks Canada is pursuing discussions with the Rocky Mountain School Board for leasing the Radium school and relocating staff from the administration building near Redstreak Campground to the community of Radium Hot Springs. Should discussions be successful, the Redstreak administration building would be demolished and the area restored.
- Parks Canada became a member of the Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture, a partnership of government agencies, First Nations, non-government conservation organizations, universities, industry and landowners united in support of a common mission: *Working together to maintain, enhance, restore and manage habitat for the benefit of wildlife and people in the Canadian Intermountain.*

## A Place For Environmental Stewardship

### **Key Management Themes:**

*Understanding the value of our national parks is a part of being Canadian. Education and awareness about the values of the national park, ethics of stewardship, natural and cultural heritage and services are provided both within and beyond the boundaries of the park.*

*A healthy economic climate, based on the heritage values of the park, contributes to national, provincial and local economies. Appropriate businesses evolve and operate along aesthetically pleasing and environmentally responsible lines. Innovative ideas, designs and technology related to education, transportation, waste management, and other infrastructure are emphasized when providing services.*

*Principles of precaution and adaptive management are exercised when potentially significant adverse effects on the ecosystem are uncertain.*

- Parks Canada completed the upgrades to drinking water infrastructure for Redstreak campground, Radium Hot Springs pool, the Parks Canada maintenance compound at McKay Creek, and the commercial accommodation in Sinclair Canyon.

## Management Challenges

- Aging infrastructure combined with a previous reductions to capital budgets represents one of Parks Canada's primary challenges in many national parks, including Kootenay. Parks Canada needs to manage this reality by focussing available financial and other resources in high priority areas. Priorities will be based on public and occupational health and safety, reducing or managing environmental effects, and levels of visitor use. This reality may necessitate adjusting the services provided in Kootenay National Park, as well as consolidating infrastructure. Park users, including residents, will be consulted before actions is taken.
- Parks Canada is actively working toward reducing the negative effects of decades of fire suppression. Weather, available resources, and existing development affect our ability to address this situation. Vegetation management activities will continue, using a variety of means to protect park facilities and restore ecosystems.
- The fires in Kootenay in the summer of 2003 left a legacy of a changed landscape and ecological renewal in the Vermilion valley. These fires also affected visitor facilities such as frontcountry campgrounds, bridges and backcountry campsites. Burned areas may also pose a higher risk for backcountry travellers at certain times. Parks Canada will address these issues in a coordinated manner as resources allow.
- Wildlife mortality on the Kootenay Parkway (Highway 93 south) continues to be a concern.

## **Priorities for 2004 and 2005**

- The vegetation management program includes two prescribed fires in Kootenay National Park in 2004. Both are relatively small in size: the Redstreak burn is part of the ongoing project to restore open forest/grassland on the south end of Kootenay National Park; a 60 hectare burn in Crooks Meadow in the Kootenay valley will contribute to the restoration and maintenance of historically open meadow areas.
- A study to document the traditional use of Kootenay and Yoho national parks by the Ktunaxa First Nation is planned for 2004. This work will assist in the protection and presentation of the Ktunaxa culture in Kootenay.
- Over the next two years, Parks Canada will take the steps necessary to reopen day use areas and other facilities affected by the 2003 fire season, to the degree that funding allows.
- Parks Canada continues to seek funding to make improvements to infrastructure in Sinclair Canyon including potable water improvements, sewage systems, and high-voltage electrical systems.
- Pending successful discussions with the school board, Parks Canada's administrative offices will be relocated.