Waterton and Glacier Working Toward Protecting Dark Skies

Waterton Lakes National Park in Canada and Glacier National Park in the United States already share a boundary and three joint international designations – International Peace Park, Biosphere Reserve, and World Heritage Site. Now the two parks are working on a fourth designation – International Dark Sky Park/Preserve. This joint effort recognizes the very dark skies found at the two parks and makes a commitment to protecting and preserving these high quality conditions.

If successful, this designation will be the first international dark sky preserve in the world and will be given in conjunction and with the approval of two organizations – the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) and the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC). The nomination process requires a long-term commitment to preserving dark skies and requires the parks to meet specific objectives. These include preservation or restoration of outstanding night skies, protection of nocturnal habitat, public enjoyment of the night sky and its heritage, and demonstration of environmental leadership by communicating the importance of dark skies to the general public and surrounding communities, and by providing an example of what is possible.

Dark night skies are environments undisturbed by light and air pollution. Dark night skies have natural, cultural, and scenic importance. Wildlife is impacted by light pollution because animals often depend on darkness in order to hunt, conceal their location, navigate, or reproduce. For nocturnal animals, light pollution also means habitat disruption. Additionally, many species have far more sensitive vision than humans. Plants are affected by artificial light because it disrupts their natural cycles. Dark night skies are also culturally important because they are a resource common to all cultures on Earth, and are a metaphor for countless myths and religions. They have inspired innumerable works of art, literature, and connections to the cosmos. Natural lightscapes, including dark night skies, are a scenic resource integral to many people’s Waterton-Glacier experience. Currently, two-thirds of Americans cannot see the Milky Way from their backyard, and if current light pollution trends continue, there will be almost no dark skies left in the contiguous United States by 2025. Many people seek national parks to experience this vanishing resource. Waterton-Glacier hopes to provide and preserve this important opportunity by meeting the requirements and objectives of Dark Sky Parks.

Aquatic Invasive Species Threaten Park Waters!

Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park is dominated by large fjord-like glacial lakes. For many visitors they are a primary destination. Boating, fishing, or just plain hanging out on the shore and skipping rocks consume many a relaxing hour and are the stuff of magical memories. We need your help to keep it that way.

On the surface things look fine, but in the past stocking of non-native fish changed the ecosystems of most park lakes. These fish out-compete native species for food and habitat. We need to prevent additional non-native species of animals or plants from accidentally being introduced, because each small change effects the overall health of park waters.

Now there is a new and serious threat. Imagine a future where going to your favorite rock-skipping beach, you find the shoreline matted with tens of thousands of small mussel shells, with everything cemented together in a sharp, smelly mess. Imagine once productive fish habitat wiped out by these new invaders. It’s not science fiction: impacts are already occurring in waters in the Great Lakes, eastern provinces and states, the prairies and plains, and more recently in the southwest United States.

Since the 1980’s freshwater zebra and quagga mussels have steadily advanced westward, presumably transported on trailered boats. In February of this year a mussel-carrying boat was intercepted at a marina on Flathead Lake. The boat had come from the southwest. Flathead Lake is just downstream from Glacier.

Protecting the waters of the Peace Park requires immediate action, both by the parks and by every boater. This summer Glacier and Waterton Lakes National Parks will step up their boat inspection and permit program. A permit to launch a boat in either park is mandatory. The regulations specific to each park are slightly different.

Regulations on obtaining a mandatory boating permit, specific to Glacier or Waterton Lakes National Park, are listed on the back page of this paper. It is imperative that all boaters comply with these regulations.
Welcome to Waterton Lakes National Park

A you trend through this distinctive landscape where the mountains meet the prairie, take time to explore and enjoy its natural features. No other national park in Canada protects so much within such a small place. Shaped by wind, fire and water, Waterton has over 250 species of birds, more than 60 species of mammals, 24 species of fish and 6 species of reptiles and amphibians. Because the open prairie oversee up mountain sides, you can enjoy spectacular vistas, carpeted by abundant wildflowers and peppered with wildlife such as deer, bighorn sheep, ground squirrels, birds and bears.

In Waterton, a combination of geography, topography, and mild, windy climate has created a wide variety of growing conditions within a very small area. Add to the effects of fire, floods, and avalanches and you end up with a varied landscape which provides homes for many plants and animals, as well as a wonderful place for you to visit.

Stroll along a beach, look into a firewery trail, paddle a canoe, tour the Upper Waterton by boat, hold a picnic, learn something new at an exhibit, spot a deer or bob, have a chilly dip in a mountain lake, or just kick back and relax. There’s lots to do here and you can enjoy it knowing that it will always be here.

When you’re heading out of the park, remember that Waterton is just one of 43 national parks, 167 national historic areas and 4 marine conservation areas that Parks Canada protects across the country, each representing a place, person or event that Canadians value and that are there for you to experience.

Ask the Interpreters!

Look for us on popular areas as you explore the park. We may have a crong or bear pelt that you can hold in your hands. We may have a story to tell, or a trail to recommend. Let us make the most of your visit!

Visitor Center

Let us make the most of your visit!

Discover Our Neighbors’ Cultural Heritage

This area holds special appeal for visitors interested in the culture of indigenous peoples. Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park lies per most of the Kutenai and Pikani Reserves in Canada and borders the Blackfoot Reservation in the United States. People of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, southwest of the United States. People of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, southwest of the United States. People of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, southwest of the United States. People of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, southwest of the United States.

The Akamina-Kishinena Provincial Park

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Accessibility

The Apgar and St. Mary Visitor Centers, the International Peace Park Pavilion, and the Cameron Lake Day Use Area are wheelchair accessible. A list of additional facilities and services, accessible to visitors with special needs, is available at Visitor Centres and entrance-stations throughout Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park.

Interpretive programs in Glacier National Park accessible by wheelchair include the Trail of the Cedars and the Running Eagle Falls Nature Trail in Glacier, and the Linnet Lake, Kootenai Brown, and Townsend trails in Waterton.

Visitors sensitive to altitude should be aware of the following park elevations:
- Lake McDonald: 3170 ft. 966m
- Logan Pass: 6640 ft. 2024m
- Many Glacier: 4900 ft. 1494m
- Swiftcurrent: 6000 ft. 1829m
- St. Mary Lake: 4700 ft. 1432m
- Two Medicine: 5100 ft. 1554m
- Waterton: 4200 ft. 1280m

International Park Hike

Join us in celebrating our 150th year of friendship and cooperative management by participating in an International Peace Park hike. These special hikes are held every Wednesday and Saturday (beginning June 10, and throughout July and August).

Starting at 10 a.m. from the Bertha Lake trailhead in Waterton Lakes National Park, this 2.5 km hill along the Waterton-Jasper Lake & Friendship ceremony as you cross the International Boundary on your way to Goat Haunt in Glacier National Park. Montana. Return to Waterton via boat.

A fee is charged for the return boat trip and advance reservations are recommended. The boat will have you back in the dock in Waterton by 6:30 p.m. Each hike is limited to 35 people, so you must preregister at either the Visitor Centre in Waterton (403-859-5135) or at the St. Mary Visitor Center (406-732-7790) in Glacier. Reservations are only accepted for the next scheduled hike (beginning on Saturday for Wednesday hikes; beginning on Wednesday for Saturday hikes).

Come prepared with a lunch, water, rain gear, jacket, hat. Wear sturdy footwear. The trail is not difficult, but you will be hiking most of the day. Bring money for the boat. Pets are not permitted.

The Waterton-Glacier Guide is a joint publication between Waterton Lakes National Park of Canada & Glacier National Park in the United States.
Whether you enjoy a relaxing stroll with an ice cream, a challenging hike, or an evening trip with friends, Waterton Lakes National Park offers a wide range of activities and adventures. Ask our staff for an experience designed with you in mind.

**SCENERY & WILDLIFE**
If scenery and wildlife appeal to you, drive one of the scenic parkways.
- The Akamina Parkway begins on the prairie and follows the Waterton Lakes chain to the village. Enjoy scenic views of the Waterton Valley and its wildlife.
- The Entrance Parkway begins on the prairie and follows the Waterton Lakes chain to the village. Enjoy scenic views of the Waterton Valley and its wildlife.
- The Akamina Parkway winds six kilometres through mountains to Cameron Lake, where exhibits describe life in the subalpine. Along the way, visit the First Oil Well in Western Canada National Historic Site, commemorating the beginning of the oil industry in Canada.
- Red Rock Parkway is the best place to experience Waterton's special mountain and prairie mix. Stop at the Native History exhibit to gain some insight into the lives of aboriginal peoples in this area. The 16-kilometre parkway is very narrow and may not be suitable for larger motorcycles.
- The Chief Mountain Highway links Waterton with our neighbour in Montana, Glacier National Park. Stop at the Waterton Valley Viewpoint to view the Waterton and Blakiston valleys, then continue on through the site of the 1897 Crowsnest Pass.
- Located just inside the park boundary, off Highway 6, the Bison Paddock loop road provides an opportunity to view these magnificent animals in their natural grassland habitat. For your safety, please do not get out of your vehicle.

**PICNICKING**
Picnic areas are great places to stop for a meal, or for a break to relax and enjoy the view. Many have level ground and accessible washrooms. Remember to keep “bears” at bay so wildlife don’t join your meal.

**INTERPRETER PROGRAMS**
If you’d like to learn more about the park, join us in the Falls Theatre near Cameron Falls and the Townsite Campground, or the Cranelll Theatre in the Cranelll Campground at 8:00 pm, throughout the summer. Or try a guided hike or hands-on activity. As you travel through the park, check out trail signs, roadside and day-use area exhibits.

**BOATING**
If you like the water, whether on your own or guided by experts, try boating. The boat launch ramp is at the Lintlet Lake picnic site and at the village marina. (Motorboats are restricted to Upper and Middle Waterton Lakes.) A permit is now required to launch any motorized or trailerable boats. Hand-propelled boats like canoes or rowboats and flotation devices such as float tubes do not require a permit. Join the crew of the MV International for the two-hour international cruise of Upper Waterton Lake that leaves from the marina.

**Hiking**
Like to stay active? Try hiking some of our 200 km of trails. Begin by planning your trip. Take a free guided hike with a Parks Canada Interpretive guide, or go on your own. For your safety, remember to be prepared, check your knowledge, equipment and supplies to have a safe and enjoyable hike.

**BOATING**
If you like the water, whether on your own or guided by experts, try boating. The boat launch ramp is at the Lintlet Lake picnic site and at the village marina. (Motorboats are restricted to Upper and Middle Waterton Lakes.) A permit is now required to launch any motorized or trailerable boats. Hand-propelled boats like canoes or rowboats and flotation devices such as float tubes do not require a permit. Join the crew of the MV International for the two-hour international cruise of Upper Waterton Lake that leaves from the marina.

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**Cycling**
Cycling, but be aware of other traffic and strong winds. Parks are heavily travelled and without shoulders, so use caution. The Kootenai Brown multi-use pathway is perfect for families with tot-trailers and young riders in training. Red Rock Parkway is recommended in the spring and fall when the road is closed to motor vehicle traffic. Chief Mountain Highway has wide shoulders, but be prepared for some large hills. Bicycles can be rented in the village.

Mountain bike on four different trails: Akamina Pass, Snowbird, Cranelll Loop, and Wishbone. These trails are shared with hikers, horseback riders and wildlife. Please yield to them. To avoid unpleasant surprises, slow down and make noise with bells or voice when approaching blind corners.

**Horseback Riding**
Horseback ride, whether for an hour or a day. Most trails are open to hikers and there are guided trips available. Horse use guidelines are available from the Visitor Centre or Park Gate.

**Fishing**
Fish with the required national park fishing licence, which can be purchased at the Visitor Centre, campground kiosks, and other locations in the park. Be sure you read and understand the fishing regulations in relation to restrictions, limits, and closed waters.

**TOWNSITE**
Stay on the beaten path; explore the village. With the Townsite Loop trail, Cameron Falls, the International Peace Park Pavilion, the Heritage Centre, gift shops, restaurants, art galleries, bookstores, coffee shops, ice cream parlours, a gas station, tennis courts, playgrounds, a ball diamond and four churches—there’s lots to do! Nearby, play 18 holes of golf, surrounded by mountain splendor.

Many activities are suitable for visitors who have mobility challenges. If you are wondering whether an activity may be appropriate for you or a companion, please ask Parks Canada staff.

**Choose the Best Season**
Waterton’s character changes with the seasons. By understanding these seasonal cycles, you can plan your trip to best suit your interests.

- **Summer**
The most popular time to visit Waterton is July and August. The weather is generally warmest, dryer, and more dependable, and summertime offers the most opportunities. Over half of Waterton’s visitors come during these two months.

- **Fall**
Late summer and fall are particularly good wildlife viewing times, especially for black bear, elk and deer. The grasslands of the lower mountainous areas provide important food for wildlife, as well as open views which make them more visible. Ungulates such as deer, elk and big horn sheep migrate in the fall, so they are looking for their best. The most spectacular birding time is in late fall when large numbers of waterfowl migrate through the park.

- **Winter**
Winter is a time of quiet retreat. Facilities and businesses are limited, and include some accommodation, restaurants, and gift shops. Enjoy a variety of winter activities, such as snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, ice climbing and wildlife viewing. Be prepared for conditions ranging from warm and windy to extremely cold and deep snow. Strong winds can create poor visibility, ice conditions, and drifting snow on roads.
Festivals and family activities, storytelling and science exhibits, it’s all included with your park entry fee.

**WILDFLOWER FESTIVAL**
June 15-24
- Guided wildflower walks, hikes and educational programs, garden fair, art exhibits and workshops on photography, water colour painting and drawing.

**CANADA DAY**
July 1 Free Admission
- Celebrate Canada in Waterton Lakes National Park!
  - Free Admission

**July 21**
- Parks day
  - Festivals and family activities, storytelling and science exhibiting
  - Canada Day
  - Free Admission

**July 26**
- Waterton-glacier international Peace Weekend
  - Weekend features a variety of wildlife events.
  - Pow-wow featuring drumming, dancing and storytelling.
  - Saturday, July 26th – Sunday, July 27th
  - Waterton Community Centre

**Activities for Young Xplorers**
Starting June 29, 2012. Free with park entry!
Discover Waterton Lakes National Park through our Xplorers program designed for families with children aged 6 to 10. Pick up an Xplorer activity book from the Heritage Centre on Waterton Avenue, and complete as many of the activities as possible to receive a certificate and souvenir.

**Parks Canada Merchandise**
Bring home a unique souvenir, made by Roots Canada, that will provide lasting memories and inspiration for your next visit to Canada’s natural and historic treasures.
Stop by the Visitor Centre or Heritage Centre on Waterton Avenue to view the merchandise available for purchase or shop online at www.pc.gc.ca.

**GeofreakZ Geotrails Challenge**
Starting May 19 to October 12, 2012. Free with park entry!

**Waterton Natural History Association**
We provide information and advice on what to do in the park, as well as maps and trail guides. We also run the Moonlight Cruise (August 13) and a Silent Cruise (August 14) and on long weekends. Reservations for Townsite campground can be made at www.pc.gc.ca or call 1-877-737-3783. Reservations for Belly River campground are also available, however, some campsites may be less sheltered and removed from town.

**Camping In Waterton Lakes National Park**
Waterton has three campgrounds, each providing a unique experience and excellent opportunity to celebrate nature and explore the great outdoors. Campground locations, services, open dates and fees are indicated on the park map on page 12.

**WHAT IS GEOCACHING?**
Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunting game played around the world by adventure seekers equipped with GPS devices. The goal is to locate hidden caches, called geocaches, outdoors and then share your experiences online. People can use locations found on geocaching.com to locate caches.

**WHO GEOCACHES?**
People of all ages! Each geocaching find has a difficulty and terrain rating, 1/1 is easiest and 5/5 the hardest. This allows you to seek a geocache suitable for your ability and fitness level.

**WHAT DO YOU NEED TO GEOCACHE?**
A GPS device or GPS-enabled mobile phone with internet access. In addition, a membership with geocaching.com is recommended.

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Visit our Heritage Centre in the community, and check out our bookstore and displays.

**For more information**
1-403-859-5133
www.pc.gc.ca/baru

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**For more information**
1-800-568-4996
www.pc.gc.ca/baru
**Visit Planner**

**Interpretive Theatre Programs, Guided Hikes & Activities**

How long are you staying in Waterton? A few hours? A couple of days? Waterton’s team of Interpreters offers a variety of visitor programs during July and August. Programs, guided hikes, and family activities—these programs are all free with your park entrance fee. Check the schedule on the next page for days and times and the maps on page 3 and 4 for locations.

**New to nature?**

Do you want to go for a hike, but aren’t sure which trail is right for you? Are you excited to hike, but feel a little unsure? Do you know what to do if you see a bear? We have a couple of programs just for you!

**Bear Safety Brush-Up**

Join us in the Falls or Crandell Theatres in the morning to brush up on bear safety. Get a few suggestions for a suitable trail and, if you like, use this opportunity to find a hiking partner.

**Misguided Hikes**

Listen to Karen’s amusing stories about the mishaps of people on Waterton’s trails. As Karen says, “Prior planning prevents poor performance!” Prepare yourself properly for a hike in the park.

**Only have an hour to spare?**

- **Blakiston Falls Walk | Family Friendly**
  - EASY 2 km (1.2 miles) return
  - Look for a signing Interpreter at Rockslide Canyon
  - Join us for a walk in the park! This short stroll along the west shore of this subalpine lake provides scenic views of Mount Custer and Blackfoot Crafts & Stories | Family Friendly
  - 3 km (1.9 miles) return
  - Meet in the Crandell Theatre on the 1st floor at Crandell Campground
  - Join our Blackfoot Interpreters. Listen to stories, hang out by the fire, and make a small craft to take home with you.

**Visiting for a half day?**

- **Look, See, Play! | Family Friendly / Children Aged 12 & Under**
  - Follow Waterton Avenue past the campground to the last building on the left (Community Kitchen Shelter)
  - Look for a park vehicle and interpreter in the parking lot.
  - Come discover what makes Waterton unique through family games and activities near the lakeshore. New activities every day!

- **Geocache 101 | Family Friendly**
  - Meet the Interpreter at Waterton Heritage Centre on Waterton Avenue in the Townsite
  - Curious about what geocaching is? We’ll tell you about this global-wide treasure hunt! Want to try but don’t have a GPS? Sign out one of ours for free! Geocached and ready to go, come find out about the Waterton Geocache Challenge!

- **Blackfoot Crafts & Stories | Family Friendly**
  - Meet in the Crandell Theatre (1st floor at Crandell Campground)
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**Have a whole day? Try a longer hike**

- **Bertha Falls Walk | Family Friendly**
  - MODERATE 5.2 km (3.2 miles) return
  - Meet at Bertha Lake trail head in the Townsite
  - Brilliant flowers? Yes! Stunning scenery? You bet! A cascading waterfall to greet you at the end of your hike! Indeed! Join us for this guided walk along one of Waterton’s most popular trails.

**Visiting in Waterton Lakes National Park**

Volunteer programs in Waterton provide a range of opportunities for you to become directly involved with park management. By contributing your skills and energy, you can help accomplish important work in the park, and benefit from the chance to:

- **Learn about the environment:**
  - Curious about what geocaching is? We’ll tell you about this global-wide treasure hunt! Want to try but don’t have a GPS? Sign out one of ours for free! Geocaching allows you to select your own very special spot to visit, pick weeds, and protect wildflowers.

**Volunteer programs**

- **Wildlife Watcher projects**
  - Would you be interested in on-going volunteer opportunities or to sign up for volunteer updates? Contact:
  
  Judy McKeehan
  1-403-859-5107
  judy.mckeenan@pc.gc.ca
  www.pc.gc.ca/waterton

**Bear Safety Brush-Up**

The Canadian Rocky Mountains are home to both grizzly and black bears. You can run into a bear anywhere here, be it on a busy trail close to town, in a campground, or in the remote back-country. Bears generally prefer to avoid people. However, encounters between bears and people do occur. Knowing how to avoid a bear or how to act if you encounter one is the best way to safely enjoy the park. Watch this short video then ask the Park Interpreter any questions you have. You may even find a hiking partner.

**BEHIND THE SCENES**

As part of Parks Canada’s Centennial celebrations, 150 volunteers were recognized across the nation. Two of Waterton’s most dedicated volunteers Beth Zuck (left) and Linda Hunter (right) were recognized as volunteer champions for their contributions.

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- **Cameron Lakeshore Stroll | Family Friendly**
  - EASY 3 km (1.9 miles) return
  - Look for a signing Interpreter at Cameron Lake
  - A refreshing walk along the west shore of this subalpine lake provides scenic views of Mount Custer and Mount Fairview.

- **Blackfoot Crafts & Stories | Family Friendly**
  - Meet in the Crandell Theatre on the 1st floor at Crandell Campground
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**Volunteer programs**

- **Wildlife Watcher projects**
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  judy.mckeenan@pc.gc.ca
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**BEHIND THE SCENES**

As part of Parks Canada’s Centennial celebrations, 150 volunteers were recognized across the nation. Two of Waterton’s most dedicated volunteers Beth Zuck (left) and Linda Hunter (right) were recognized as volunteer champions for their contributions.
Tips to enjoy a safe visit and ensure that future generations have the chance to see wildlife that is truly wild.

1. Wildlife are attracted to roadways for food and for travel. To prevent collisions with wildlife, SLOW DOWN, be alert, and scan ahead for animals. If you spot an animal, look for others; they often travel in groups.

2. Store all food and food-related items inside a closed, hard-sided vehicle. Cooler, boxes, and cans are not bear-proof. If you leave food or garbage out where wildlife can get at it, you may start a process of habituation, where animals aggressively seek human food. Animals that become habituated often visit facilities in search of food. They may damage your property and can be dangerous.

3. Keep at least three bus lengths (30 metres/100 feet) away from large animals and at least 10 bus lengths away from bears. Deer and bighorn sheep may appear tame, but they may suddenly strike out with their hooves, antlers or horns.

4. If an animal approaches you, keep your distance. Keep the animal’s line of travel or escape route clear.

5. Entering wildlife by leading, reaching out or mimicking calls is illegal. It will cause them to lose their natural fear of people, and be more likely to become aggressive, which will put other visitors in danger.

6. Read the pamphlet “Keep the Wild in Wildlife” available from all Park facilities.

HELP KEEP OUR ANIMALS WILD & ALIVE.

Safe Travel in Bear Country

Bears are naturally wary of humans, and generally choose to avoid us. However, bears may at times threaten or attack people, especially if surprised.

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- Bears may at times threaten or attack people, especially if surprised. Leave the area or immediately and report it to park staff.

1. Act small. Resist the urge to get too big, reach out for, or call to a bear. Bears know your best chance of observing truly wild nature is to become as insignificant as possible — but stay safe. Retreat slowly if any animal approaches you or shows signs of aggression. Wildlife watching and photography are best done from a safe distance and from your car.

2. Wear the signs. Home your senses by focusing for tracking, watching for tracks or scat. Listen for bird song or scat eating. Flip a wildlife postcard and write the enjoyment of future generations.

Dog attacks can get at it, you may start a process of habituation, where animals aggressively seek human food. Animals that become habituated often visit facilities in search of food. They may damage your property and can be dangerous.

3. Don’t go it alone. Interpreter-led hikes are available, or if you go on your own, keep an eye on where you’re going and when you’ll be back. Travel with others and keep your group together.

4. Be prepared. Take along enough gear to keep you warm, safe and comfortable for your entire trip. Wear layers of clothing. It can vary any month of the year here. Wind can chill the body especially if you’ve been sweating, putting you at risk of hypothermia. Sunburn can be a major problem, particularly at higher elevations. Carry sunscreen.

5. Bug off! Few things will ruin a trip more quickly than a 50-foot cloud of horseflies. Avoid stings or bites by using insect repellent and not wearing scented lotions or perfumes.

6. Water. Though park waters are generally clean, harmful bacteria or parasites may be found in any untreated surface water. Carry water you can use from the park’s treated water sources or boil or filter all untreated water.

7. Cooking and Campfires. Use fuel stoves for safety and environmental reasons. Small, controlled campfires are allowed in designated places. Check fire hazard and wind conditions first.

In bear country be loud and make noise!

Cyclists and Trail Runners

Your speed and quietness put you at risk for sudden bear encounters. Slow down through shrubbery areas and when approaching blind corners.

Tips to preventing injury

Waterston Lakes National Park is a wilderness area so there are hazards to any activity. Reduce your risk of injury by taking reasonable precautions.

1. Don’t go it alone. Interpreter-led hikes are available, or if you go on your own, keep an eye on where you’re going and when you’ll be back. Travel with others and keep your group together.

2. Wear sturdy shoes and watch your step. Most accidents in Waterton occur when people trip and fall. The risk is higher if you’re near waterfalls, streams or lakes because the area can be slippery and the water is very cold. If you’re in cold water can cause hypothermia and helplessness. Snowfields and avalanche deposits obscure trails and should be carefully crossed or avoided. Loose rock on some slopes and near steep inclines creates especially dangerous footing. Reduce the risk by staying on designated trails, stay away from edges and watch your children.

3. Pampers yourself. Take enough food and drinks to keep yourself safe and warm on the summit or the end of the trail is a great way to relax and take in the incredible views. It’s also a good way to test your gear and the back of your head and neck.

4. If a bear stalks you, or attacks at any time, it is your responsibility to know and respect park regulations. They are strictly enforced.

- In bear country be loud and make noise!

1. Act small. Resist the urge to get too big, reach out for, or call to a bear. Bears know your best chance of observing truly wild nature is to become as insignificant as possible — but stay safe. Retreat slowly if any animal approaches you or shows signs of aggression. Wildlife watching and photography are best done from a safe distance and from your car.

2. Wear the signs. Home your senses by focusing for tracking, watching for tracks or scat. Listen for bird song or scat eating. Flip a wildlife postcard and write

/feature/2017/waterton-glacier-guide-2017

Tips to enjoying a safe visit

Be aware of the potential for sudden bear encounters. Slow down through shrubbery areas and when approaching blind corners.

Beware the Brown-Eyed Beggar!

Who could resist those liquid brown eyes? That cold wet nose? Those expressive ears? And she’s obviously soooosoooo hungry! But don’t be fooled. When bear become accustomed to human food and touch, they lose their natural fear and become “habituated” to people. This causes problems for both them and us.

DEER THAT ARE FED BY PEOPLE LEARN TO AGGRESSIVELY BEEF FOOD. THEN THEY TEACH THEIR OFFSPRING.

A deer that lets you touch it or feed it is not afraid of you. When you run out of food, leaves, grass, popcorn, French fries, or whatever else you’re feeding it. It does not understand why the food source has dried up. It may strike at you, knock you down and trample you, demanding more food. Their hooves are very sharp and they have a powerful kick. This is especially dangerous to children, who are often caught in their parents’ hands out to have deer over them.

IF IT SMELLS LIKE FOOD, IT MUST BE FOOD. A deer that is fed human food will seek it out in the future, and may eat plastic bags, food wrappers and other garbage, mistaking it for food. Parks Canada veterinarian have found plastic bags and garbage tangled up in the intestines of dead deer.

NEVER APPROACH OR FEED DEER. PLEASE HELP US KEEP OUR WILDLIFE AND ENJOY THEM FROM A DISTANCE.

Dogs, both large and small, have been trampled and killed by deer in Waterton.

Does fawns are particularly aggressive in the spring. Keep dogs closely leashed and steer clear of all deer.

Cougars Caution

Cougars are not often seen because they are solitary, elusive and active mainly at night. They may be more active in areas that have habituated deer, like towns and communities. Avoid meeting a cougar by travelling in groups and making lots of noise. Keep children close to you. Free-roaming pets may attract and be attacked by cougars. If you encounter a cougar, immediately pick up small children. Face the animal, and retreat slowly while maintaining eye contact. If you are unable to remove the entire tick or the area becomes infected, or if a rash develops around the bite area, see your doctor immediately.

Tick Season

Tick bites can cause serious illness, although cases are rare. Avoid them by staying on trails and away from bunch grass and tall grass. Wear light-coloured clothing so you can spot them more easily. Tuck your pant-legs into your socks, so ticks won’t stay on top where you can see them.

If a tick is embedded, carefully remove it so that the mouth parts do not stay in your skin, and wash the area with soap and water. If you are unable to remove the entire tick or the area becomes infected, or if a rash develops around the bite area, see your doctor immediately.

Animal Jam

Seeing wildlife is such a vacation highlight that many people forget safety. That’s why we have policies to help keep both visitors and wildlife safe. You can help. If you see wildlife, watch it from a distance. Never stand or pull over onto the side of the road, keeping your two feet in the car. You may be called as an expert witness in future court cases.

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Restoring our Terrestrial Ecosystems

Have you spotted teams of park staff restoring the open grasslands, tearing up or spraying plant species? Perhaps you’ve encountered park employees surveying roadside vegetation or noticed small cages protecting pine cones? These are all signs of efforts the Parks Canada Agency is making to restore the health of terrestrial ecosystems, and to protect species at risk in Waterton Lakes National Park.

Non-Native Plants

Non-native plants threaten the health of these ecosystems. These plants do not naturally occur here. They arrive as escaped ornamental plants, in hay or soil moved from one area to another, or simply on the undersides of a vehicle entering the park. Non-native plants that have no local predators can spread and displace native plants and the ecosystems that depend on them for food and cover. For example, the half-moon hairstreak butterfly is an endangered species listed in Canada’s Species at Risk Act, which relies on native lupine plants as both the nectar source and food source for its larvae. If unchecked, invading non-native plants can displace native plants including lupine and threaten the survival of the half-moon hairstreak butterfly. Ask at the Visitor Centre about opportunities for volunteering at weed pull events like the Kingwood

Boobs near the end of July, or for a chance to help park ecologists detect and map infestations along trails in the backcountry. Parks Canada invites you to take part in protecting the environment. Every time you visit the Park, ask yourself if you may be transporting plant material, seeds, or insects from other areas. Be sure and here, local firewood only, ensure lashing beads and camping gear are free of mud and seeds, and give your car a wash before going into any protected area.

Geocaching

Geocaching is a fun activity where you use GPS to find hidden treasure all over the world. There are GPS devices available at the Waterton Lakes National Park Visitor Centre. Geocaching instructions and GPS units are available at geocaching.com.

Park Entry Fees

Park entry and camping fees help pay for maintaining visitor facilities such as roads, viewpoints, trails, picnic areas, and less obvious water, electrical and natural gas systems. Fees also support visitor services, interpretive theatre programs, guided walks, wildlife and maintenance teams.

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You can help protect species at risk and one each at Many Glacier and Two Medicine Campground, accommodate parties of 9-24 people. The fee is $50.00 for the 4-6 campsites and $5.00 per person, per night after that. The group campsites at St. Mary may be reserved and is an additional $3.00.

Hiker-Biker Campsites

Campsites for bicyclists and hikers are available. Ongoing hiker-biker use of these sites means that use by hikers and cyclists may cause short delays of up to no more than 30 minutes. Please allow additional driving time.

Backpacking

Permits for backcountry camping are required and are available at the listed locations. Permits are issued no more than 24 hours in advance and are not issued after 4:00 pm. There is a $5.00 charge per person per night charged. Reservations are not required. Permits are valid for 5 days at a time and are renewable. All camping equipment and food must be out of the backcountry 24 hours before the permit expires. Campers are required to leave a campsite sanitary. Ten group sites at Apgar, and St. Mary. The $30.00 fee is charged per visit. Visitors entering the backcountry at Goat Haunt or Belly River must obtain a permit at the Waterton Lakes National Park Visitor Centre

Glacier National Park

“Just across the border, Glacier National Park forms the other half of Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. Together, with Waterton Lakes National Park, these two parks formed the world’s first international peace park and continue to be models of cooperation, partnership, and ecosystem management.”

Concession Services in Glacier National Park

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Climate Change in the Crown of the Continent

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time. The impacts of a rapidly warming world may affect every aspect of life on earth. As the earth’s temperature continues to rise, many plant and animal species increasingly face rapid adaptation, migration, or even extinction. Our national parks demonstrate how warming temperatures are changing the environment and may provide a refuge for plant and animal species. They help us to understand the extent of climate change, how to mitigate its effects, and how to protect our natural and cultural treasures for the enjoyment of our children and grandchildren.

Glaciers are responsible for the sculpted peaks, hanging valleys, and azure lakes that inspire park visitors. However, glaciers provide much more than scenery. They are an integral part of the ecosystem, especially during dry periods and provide cold water for streams during the hottest days. In 1850, there were an estimated 196 glaciers in the park. Today, there are 25, all in Glacier. Scientists predict (at current rates of warming) these remaining glaciers will disappear by 2020.

Mountain snowpack has also declined as a result of warming temperatures. Due to changing precipitation and seasonal patterns, snow is more often replaced with rain resulting in earlier spring runoff and a decrease in water availability in dry months. This will mean a greater flood potential, and an increase in water temperature in aquatic ecosystems. This trend is expected to have major consequences for aquatic species.

One population of bull trout migrates more than 150 miles from Flathead Lake to spawning streams in Canada. All bull trout require clear, cold water and deep gravel-bottom streams to reproduce and survive. The Crown of the Continent is one of bull trout’s last strongholds, especially in Glacier. Montana’s Swan Valley, and the transboundary Wigwam and Flathead rivers. Scientists are concerned about the ability of bull trout to survive the long-term impacts of climate change.

Alpine meadows are expected to change rapidly over the next several decades. These high altitude meadows provide habitat for an incredible array of new species such as pika, mountain goats, and grizzly bears. In addition to less water availability in alpine meadows, the longer growing season is allowing growing season to climb in elevation, decreasing the alpine habitat these species depend on.

Grizzly bears and other wildlife freely traverse multiple ownerships and the international border. The transboundary North Fork Flathead Valley is a critical wildlife corridor. British Columbia and Montana have taken the initial steps to ban mining and gas drilling, an all too frequent plunder of our remaining wildlife pathways. As the climate warms and plant communities change, these animals need the freedom to roam in search of suitable habitat.

While some impacts of climate change are inevitable, park managers work with neighboring communities and agencies to give fish and wildlife a better chance to adapt. Fortunately, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park lies at the core of the greater Crown of the Continent ecosystem in Alberta, British Columbia, and Montana, a place where animals can still move freely across borders.

The region’s natural diversity of species and habitats helps buffer the impacts of rapid change. Scientists have developed guiding principles to promote resiliency to warming climate.

Glacier and Waterton Take a Closer Look at Bats

Imagine looking for fist-sized animals that fly only at night, roost during the day in the darkest hiding places they can find, and make sounds (that are inaudible to the human ear). Imagine finding this at night in the rugged, mountainous terrain of Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, and you realize the exciting challenge Glacier’s wildlife personnel encountered last July when they initiated a year bat inventory and monitoring study. Why study bats? Bats are an integral part of the park’s ecosystem.

They play critical roles in controlling insects such as mosquitoes and spruce budworm, which is responsible for many of the red-nosed, dead or dying trees along the Going-to-the-Sun Road above Rising Sun and other places. It is estimated that the U.S. agricultural industry saves up to $50 billion a year because of the thousands of tons of insects bats eat every night. Bats also provide food as a prey species for other animals such as hawks and owls.

The loss of our bat populations would cause a ripple effect throughout our ecosystem. Prior to 2011, formal bat surveys had never been conducted in the park and, as a result, our knowledge of bats in Waterton-Glacier was nearly nonexistent. Recent developments, however, have made learning about our bats critical. Bat populations are threatened by wind energy, for example. Not all bats hibernate, but migrate instead to survive the winter. Wind farms with the wrong design or in the wrong location are deadly for migrating bats.

Of even greater threat is a new disease called White-nose Syndrome (WNS), which is decimating hibernating bats in eastern North America. The disease is called White-nose Syndrome because of the white fungus that grows on the noses and wings of affected bats. Since its discovery in a New York cave in 2006, WNS has caused the death of over 5.7 million bats of nine different species and has spread to 20 states and 4 Canadian provinces. The disease is expected to spread west. According to biologists, WNS has caused “the most precipitous declines in bat populations ever documented in North America.” Bats infected with WNS suffer from serious metabolic imbalances and make the tiny fat deposits during hibernation, causing them to deplete essential fat reserves needed to survive the winter. Infected bats also emerge too soon and can be seen flying around in winter. These bats usually freeze or starve to death.

Right now the only way to slow the spread of WNS is to close caves and mines. You can help stop the spread of WNS by following core closure and permit procedures, educating your friends and coworkers about WNS (www.batcon.org), reporting any late winter bat activity or unexplained bat deaths to biologists, and following updated distribution protocols between states (http://www.wfs.gov).

If you find yourself outside in the park around dusk this summer, you may see signs along trails directing visitors to bat surveys in the immediate area. In cooperation with a renowned Canadian bat biologist, Glacier’s biologists use mist netting and acoustic techniques to detect and study bats. Mist netting allows us to collect baseline data on species-specific acoustics, body size, age, gender, reproductive status, and genetics. Most importantly, netting allows us to assess bats for signs of WNS. Thus far, no signs of WNS have been detected. Secondly, we use acoustic techniques to detect flying bat species and determine which bats overwinter in the park and which migrate elsewhere. The immediate goal of the project is to inventory bat species and their habitats in the park. Thus far, we have learned that nine bat species live in Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. Our long-term goal is to establish a monitoring program to better understand the possible impacts to bats from WNS, in case the disease comes to Glacier. The study was made possible by the generous support of the Glacier National Park Fund.
Motorized boats and trailered watercraft, such as sailboats, will need an NPS AIS inspection and launch permit. Other watercraft will need a self-certification form (available at ranger stations, visitor centers, backcountry permit offices, and at many boat launches). The signed form should be kept on the boaters person or in the vessel.

- Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, a new permit will be required upon entry into the United States.
- A full inspection will be required for each boat. Inspections may take upwards of 30 minutes. Boaters should plan on additional time for inspections.
- To qualify for a permit, boats must be clean, drained and thoroughly dry (including bilge areas and livewells) on inspection.
- Boats with internal ballast tanks or other enclosed compartments that exchange water with the environment, that cannot be readily opened and fully inspected are prohibited within Glacier National Park.
- Boats that fail to pass the inspection will be denied a permit. Boaters may re-apply for a permit after the boat is thoroughly cleaned, drained and dried.
- Boats found with certain infestations of aquatic invasive species may be quarantined until they can be fully decontaminated.
- Depending on the infestation, this may take up to 30 days.
- Boaters on Waterton Lake must comply with permit and inspection requirements of Waterton Lakes National Park.