



# RIDING MOUNTAIN

NATIONAL PARK  
OF CANADA

RIDING MOUNTAIN PARK

# EAST GATE REGISTRATION COMPLEX

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE  
OF CANADA

## *Management Plan*



Parks Canada    Parcs Canada

Canada



Riding Mountain National Park  
of Canada and  
Riding Mountain Park  
East Gate Registration Complex  
National Historic Site of Canada

*Management Plan*

October 2007

Visit the Riding Mountain National Park of Canada and Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site of Canada website at: [www.parksCanada.gc.ca/](http://www.parksCanada.gc.ca/)

*Cover photo: Birdtail Valley in Riding Mountain National Park*

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Parks Canada  
Riding Mountain National Park of Canada and Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site of Canada : management plan / Parks Canada.

Issued also in French under title: Parc national du Canada du Mont-Riding et Centre d'Inscription-de-l'Entrée-Est-du-Parc-du-Mont-Riding, plan directeur.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-662-43469-2

Cat. no.: R64-338/2006E

1. Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site (Man.)--Management. 2. Riding Mountain National Park (Man.)--Management. 3. Historic sites--Canada--Management. 4. Historic sites--Manitoba--Management. 5. National parks and reserves--Canada--Management. 6. National parks and reserves--Manitoba--Management. I. Parks Canada. Western and Northern Service Centre II. Title.

FC3364.R53P37 2006

971.27'2

C2006-980159-2



## Foreword



Canada's national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas offer Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast unique opportunities to experience and understand our wonderful country. They are places of learning, recreation and fun where Canadians can connect with our past and appreciate the natural, cultural and social forces that shaped Canada.

From our smallest national park to our most visited national historic site to our largest national marine conservation area, each of these places offers Canadians and visitors unique opportunities to experience Canada. These places of beauty, wonder and learning are valued by Canadians - they are part of our past, our present and our future.

Our Government's goal is to ensure that each of these special places is conserved.

We see a future in which these special places will further Canadians' appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of Canada, the economic well-being of communities, and the vitality of our society.

Our Government's vision is to build a culture of heritage conservation in Canada by offering Canadians exceptional opportunities to experience our natural and cultural heritage.

These values form the foundation of the new management plan for Riding Mountain National Park of Canada and Riding Mountain East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site of Canada. I offer my appreciation to the many thoughtful Canadians who helped to develop this plan, particularly to our dedicated team from Parks Canada, and to all those local organizations and individuals who have demonstrated their good will, hard work, spirit of co-operation and extraordinary sense of stewardship.

In this same spirit of partnership and responsibility, I am pleased to approve the Riding Mountain National Park of Canada and Riding Mountain East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan.

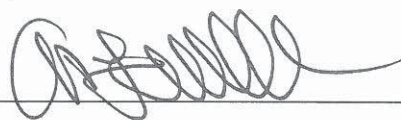
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Baird". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Baird  
*Minister of the Environment*



Riding Mountain National Park of Canada and  
Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex  
National Historic Site of Canada  
Management Plan

This plan has been recommended for approval by:



---

Alan Latourelle  
Chief Executive Officer  
Parks Canada



---

Greg Fenton  
Superintendent  
Riding Mountain National Park of Canada  
Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex  
National Historic Site of Canada



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	IV
1.0 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 ROLE OF RMNPC IN THE NATIONAL PARKS SYSTEM .....	2
1.2 ROLE OF EAST GATE NHSC IN THE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE SYSTEM .....	2
1.3 ROLE OF RMNPC INTERNATIONALLY .....	3
2.0 PLANNING CONTEXT .....	5
2.1 REGIONAL SETTING .....	5
2.2 PLANNING IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT .....	7
2.3 MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES .....	9
3.0 PARK VISION: OUR DESIRED FUTURE STATE .....	11
4.0 A PLACE FOR NATURE: MANAGING FOR ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY .....	13
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	13
4.2 CURRENT STATE OF RMNPC ECOSYSTEMS .....	14
4.3 RESEARCH, RESTORATION AND ACTIVE MANAGEMENT.....	16
4.4 MANAGEMENT OF BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS .....	18
4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM .....	19
4.6 MONITORING AND REPORTING .....	20
5.0 A PLACE OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: MANAGEMENT OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE AND OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES .....	21
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	21
5.2 CURRENT STATUS.....	22
5.3 RIDING MOUNTAIN PARK EAST GATE REGISTRATION COMPLEX NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE .....	22
5.4 CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CRM) STRATEGY .....	24
5.5 ANISHINABE HERITAGE .....	25
5.6 FEDERAL HERITAGE BUILDINGS .....	25
5.7 75 <sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF RMNPC.....	25
5.8 MONITORING AND REPORTING .....	26
6.0 ENGAGING CANADIANS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING .....	27
6.1 INTRODUCTION.....	27
6.2 CURRENT SITUATION .....	27
6.3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY .....	28
6.4 ENGAGING SCHOOLS .....	29
6.5 HERITAGE PRESENTATION .....	29
6.6 MONITORING AND REPORTING .....	30
7.0 A PLACE FOR PEOPLE: OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISITOR EXPERIENCES .....	31
7.1 INTRODUCTION.....	31



7.2 CURRENT SITUATION .....	31
7.3 FACILITATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISITOR EXPERIENCES.....	32
7.4 HERITAGE TOURISM .....	33
7.5 TRAILS, CAMPGROUNDS AND DAY USE SITES .....	34
7.6 LAKE AUDY AREA .....	35
7.7 PUBLIC SAFETY .....	36
7.8 MOTORIZED ACCESS .....	36
7.9 MOUNT AGASSIZ SKI AREA .....	38
7.10 CLEAR LAKE BASIN .....	38
7.11 PUBLIC INFORMATION.....	40
7.12 MONITORING AND REPORTING .....	40
<b>8.0 A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY: WASAGAMING .....</b>	<b>41</b>
8.1 INTRODUCTION.....	41
8.2 CURRENT STATUS OF WASAGAMING.....	42
8.3 RESPONSIBLE GROWTH MANAGEMENT .....	43
8.4 STEWARDSHIP .....	43
8.5 MUNICIPAL SERVICES.....	44
8.6 MONITORING AND REPORTING .....	44
<b>9.0 THROUGHWAYS AND UTILITIES.....</b>	<b>45</b>
9.1 INTRODUCTION.....	45
9.2 THROUGHWAYS - HIGHWAYS #10 AND #19 .....	46
9.3 UTILITY CORRIDORS AND COMMUNICATION TOWERS.....	47
9.4 MONITORING AND REPORTING .....	47
<b>10.0 ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS.....</b>	<b>49</b>
10.1 INTRODUCTION.....	49
10.2 PARK ASSETS AND OPERATIONS.....	49
10.3 NON-SCHEDULED LANDS .....	50
10.4 REALTY AGREEMENTS.....	50
<b>11.0 A PLACE FOR OPEN MANAGEMENT: STRATEGY FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION .....</b>	<b>53</b>
11.1 INTRODUCTION.....	53
11.2 CONSULTING ON PLAN IMPLEMENTATION .....	53
11.3 A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH.....	54
11.4 STRENGTHENING CAPACITY .....	55
11.5 MONITORING AND REPORTING .....	56
<b>12.0 PARK ZONING AND WILDERNESS DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>57</b>
12.1 INTRODUCTION.....	57
12.2 PARK ZONING .....	57
12.3 DECLARED WILDERNESS .....	59
<b>13.0 SUMMARY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>ANNEX 1 – GLOSSARY OF TERMS .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>ANNEX 2 - INDICATORS AND TARGETS.....</b>	<b>67</b>

TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: REGIONAL SETTING..... 6

FIGURE 2: RIDING MOUNTAIN REGION ..... 8

FIGURE 3: WATERSHEDS AND CONSERVATION DISTRICTS ..... 16

FIGURE 4: RIDING MOUNTAIN PARK EAST GATE REGISTRATION COMPLEX NATIONAL  
HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA ..... 23

FIGURE 5: CAPITAL ASSET PRINCIPLES ..... 34

FIGURE 6: LAKE AUDY AREA ..... 35

FIGURE 7: AERIAL VIEW OF WASAGAMING, CLEAR LAKE AND ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT  
..... 40

FIGURE 8: PARK ZONING ..... 60

## Executive Summary

This management plan is an update of the 1998 Riding Mountain National Park Management Plan and includes management considerations for the Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site of Canada.

The management plan was prepared with public consultation and includes a vision for the park and site. The strategic goals and actions are outlined within chapters for each aspect of park and site management and operations. Some of the major challenges addressed in the plan include:

- Threats to natural habitat and processes;
- The protection and presentation of the Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site and other cultural resources;
- Communications and engaging Canadians and residents of the region;
- Opportunities for a range of visitor experiences;
- Wasagaming community; and
- Throughways.

Progressive steps towards understanding, restoring and maintaining intact habitats and natural processes are outlined in the plan and will be approached by:

- Refining a long term research and monitoring program;
- Managing wildlife and preserving habitat on a regional ecosystem basis in cooperation with other agencies and landowners;
- Restoring biodiversity and natural processes to target levels; and
- Enhancing public understanding and support.

The East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site and other cultural resources throughout the park are to be protected and presented and will be addressed by:

- At the historic site, ensuring resources are protected and opportunities exist for visitor experiences;
- Monitoring the status of other cultural resources and improving communications; and
- Working collaboratively with First Nations and other partners to enhance protection and presentation of their culture and history.

The relevance of national parks and national historic sites to residents of the Riding Mountain region, as well as other Canadians, is a major theme of the plan. The idea is to foster understanding and stewardship by:

- Developing a strategy to communicate key messages to key audiences;
- Raising awareness and understanding amongst young Canadians by advancing RMNPC's in-school program, with guidance from the Parks Canada Schools Program;
- Improving working relationships with local Anishinabe First Nations through the Coalition of First Nations with Interest in Riding Mountain National Park; and
- Ensuring continual information exchange with stakeholders, build new partnerships and improve existing partnerships (e.g. Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve).

Understanding and stewardship can be fostered through visitors' enjoyment of the park and site. This will be accomplished by:

- Providing opportunities for a range of appropriate visitor experiences;
- Working with partners to update and implement a heritage tourism strategy;
- Implementing a public safety strategy;
- Managing motorized access;
- Setting direction for the Mt. Agassiz Ski Area;
- Keeping the "clear" in Clear Lake; and
- Providing up-to-date information for visitors.

National Park communities enhance the experience for visitors, have minimal ecological impact, protect heritage buildings and demonstrate sustainable development. This plan provides direction regarding the community of Wasagaming that includes:

- Updating the community plan and ensuring an ongoing community voice in decision-making and planning;
- Minimizing ecological impacts through consistent management of growth and development in Wasagaming and the Clear Lake Subdivision, vegetation management, and improvements to municipal services; and
- Efficiently administering municipal services.

Throughways (Highways #10 and #19) in Riding Mountain National Park of Canada (RMNPC) will be kept open to through traffic and provide a safe, scenic experience while minimizing environmental impacts. The impact of large commercial traffic on the road structure and visitor experience will be reduced.

The Parks Canada system of park zoning is described in the plan. Any changes to zoning from the previous plan are highlighted. These include:

- The former Zone I Special Preservation areas are designated as Zone II; and
- Zone III areas now include 2.5 km<sup>2</sup> that were previously Zone II and two areas (Moon Lake and Lake Audy) which were previously Zone IV.

This plan proposes the majority of Zone II areas be declared wilderness within one year of the tabling of the management plan.

The management plan sets a course of action steered by the vision. RMNPC needs to ensure its operations are financially sustainable. The *Sustainable Business Plan 2006/07 – 2010/11 Riding Mountain Field Unit* outlines the challenges and limitations facing the park. The actions outlined in this management plan are achievable provided Parks Canada funding and funding from other federal government sources can be secured. An integrated monitoring framework has been developed and will be used to track and report progress towards achieving the vision for the national park and national historic site.







## 1.0 Introduction

*On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations.*

– Parks Canada's Mandate

Management Plans are the cornerstone of Parks Canada's commitments to the future. The *Canada National Parks Act* requires each national park and national historic site to have a management plan. These plans reflect the policies and legislation of Parks Canada and are prepared in consultation with Canadians. They are tabled in Parliament and reviewed every five years. The previous management plan for Riding Mountain National Park of Canada (RMNPC) was tabled in parliament in 1998. This is the first management plan for the Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site of Canada (East Gate NHSC). This management plan provides long-term strategic direction for the management of both these special places for the next five years.

The 1998 management plan established the Riding Mountain Round Table (RMRT), a group of 20 individuals representing 35 different stakeholder groups, to work with Parks Canada on issues related to implementing the management plan. This 2006 management plan incorporates a number of

directions developed with the RMRT since 1998. There has been much progress, including completion of an Ecological Integrity Statement (2003), a Commemorative Integrity Statement for the East Gate NHSC (1999) and a Cultural Resource Management Strategy (2000). Other strategic documents developed with the advice of the RMRT include the Recreation Strategy (2002) and the Wasagaming Community Plan (2000).

For this management plan review, there were two primary objectives. The first was to maintain the relationships established during the 1998 Management Plan review, while broadening consultations to include stakeholders from a wider geographic area (the RMNPC region) as well as significantly enhancing the involvement of First Nations. As a result, two main advisory bodies were established and they provided advice throughout the planning program. They were:

- The Coalition of First Nations (CFN), representing the Anishinabe communities in the region; and
- The Riding Mountain Advisory Board (RMAB), a body similar to the RMRT.

The public was consulted during the development of the plan through open houses, newsletters and Parks Canada's website. Additional consultations on specific issues occurred with the TB (bovine tuberculosis) Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the Wasagaming Tenants' Association.

The second primary objective of this plan review was to ensure the plan meets requirements established by Parks Canada in terms of content and provides strategic directions for this park and site.

### **1.1 Role of RMNPC in the National Parks System**

First created with the establishment of Banff more than a century ago, the goal of the national park system is to represent each of Canada's 39 natural regions. There are currently more than 40 national parks and national park reserves in Canada, located in every province and territory, and ranging in size from 9 km<sup>2</sup> to 45,000 km<sup>2</sup>. RMNPC was established in 1929 to contribute to this network of national parks by:

- Protecting an area representative of the southern boreal plains and plateaux natural region of Canada; and
- Encouraging public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this natural heritage.

### **1.2 Role of East Gate NHSC in the National Historic Site System**

The East Gate NHSC contributes to Canada's national program of historical commemoration that fosters knowledge and appreciation of Canada's past. The Parks Canada Agency, on the advice of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, commemorates nationally significant people, places or events. More than 900 nationally significant places have been designated as national historic sites, 149 of which are administered directly by Parks Canada. One of the entry points to RMNPC, the East Gate NHSC, was built in 1933-34 and was recommended for designation by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 1992 with the unveiling of a plaque in 1995. The East Gate NHSC is the only original park entrance from the early 1930s remaining in any of Canada's national parks and remains a place where visitors can learn about the log design, the government's work program during the Depression, and tourism development.

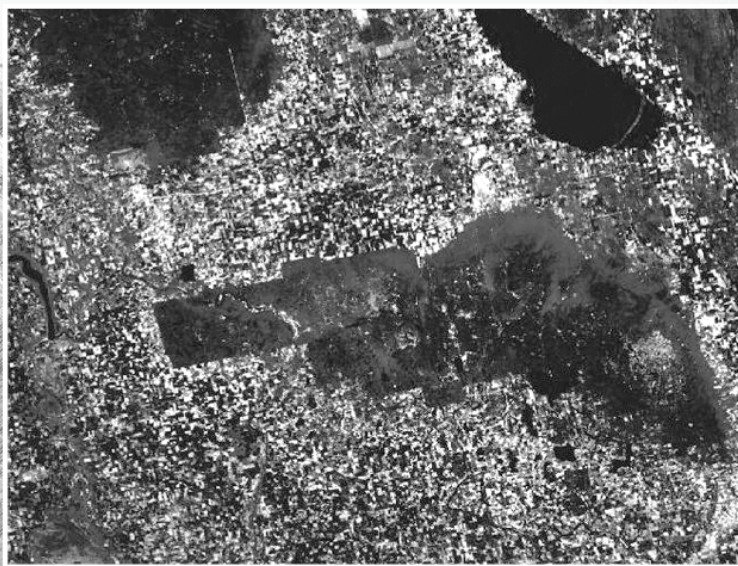
### **1.3 Role of RMNPC Internationally**

RMNPC is part of a network of Biosphere Reserves worldwide, established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). There are 13 areas in Canada designated as Biosphere Reserves. The Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve (RMBR) was designated in 1986 following application to UNESCO from rural municipalities around the park, the Province of Manitoba and Parks Canada. The RMBR consists of a protected core area (RMNPC) and a surrounding area of cooperation governed by 15 rural municipalities. The three functions of a Biosphere Reserve are conservation of biodiversity, sustainable development and capacity building.





# Planning Context



## 2.0 Planning Context

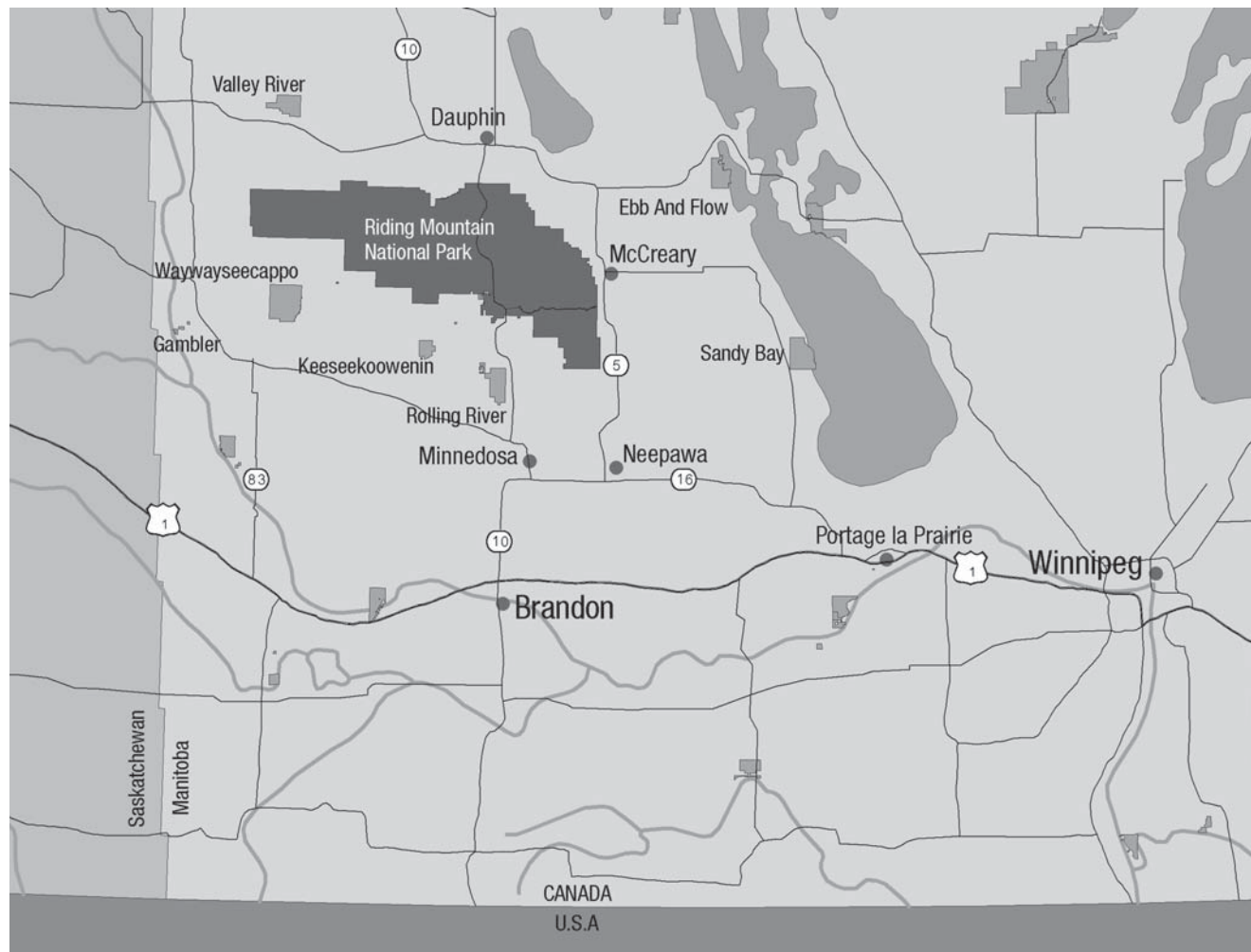
### 2.1 Regional Setting

RMNPC comprises 2,969 km<sup>2</sup> in southwestern Manitoba. Located at the geographical center of North America, the park is situated approximately 274 km northwest of Winnipeg (pop. 627,000), 97 km north of the Trans-Canada Highway and Brandon (pop. 39,700), and 15 km south of Dauphin (pop. 8,000).

Indigenous people were the first to live here. Assiniboine and Cree people, followed in the early 1800s by the Anishinabe (A-ni-shaw-naw-bay) people, lived in the area we now call Riding Mountain. The Anishinabe elders use the term *Wagiiwing* (Wah-gi-wing) when speaking about the area, meaning “a vision of a mountainous landscape that holds everything the many creatures depend upon for survival and sanctuary.” The Anishinabe people were stewards of this area and it provided physical and spiritual health. Parks Canada is now responsible for this stewardship and a cooperative approach is being taken with involvement of Anishinabe communities in the region. There are seven Anishinabe communities with interests in RMNPC, with a total registered population of approximately 12,800.



FIGURE 1: REGIONAL SETTING



The Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve (RMBR - Figure 2) includes the park and the area of cooperation. The area of cooperation consists of 15 rural municipalities adjacent to RMNPC and covers 12,000 square kilometers with a population of approximately 35,500. The RMBR committee is comprised of residents from the area appointed by member municipalities and supported by Parks Canada and provincial government staff. The main economic activities in the area are crop and livestock production with hunting, guiding and eco-tourism also contributing to the local economy. The mission of the RMBR is to foster and encourage a sustainable, community-based, regional economy with high biodiversity, landscape, and social values with Riding Mountain National Park as a key component. This is accomplished through research, information exchange, education and communication. Although many landowners, land management agencies and the RMBR share a common interest in the conservation of nature, ensuring communities in the area are sustainable is also important. RMNPC works with the RMBR to enhance appreciation and support for ecosystem integrity and sustainable communities within the RMBR.

The Riding Mountain Region (Figure 2) is approximately 38,900 square kilometres and extends from the City of Brandon to Duck Mountain Provincial Park to the north. Managing the cross-boundary movement of ecosystem components, including wildlife, disease and non-native species, poses a challenge to the ecological integrity of RMNPC and to the economic viability in the region. Visitors to the park learn about these challenges, enjoy the park and become increasingly committed to conservation. Although there are a number of opportunities for outdoor experiences in the region, RMNPC provides the only large tract of land where motorized activities do not occur.

RMNPC is one of the largest tourism destinations in the Province of Manitoba and welcomes more than 250,000 visitors annually, of which 75% are Manitobans. The park supports 160 direct jobs and the economic impact is estimated to be in excess of \$50 million annually. The two throughways (Highways #10 and #19) in the park are part of the provincial road network. Between May and September, traffic volume on these throughways totals approximately 218,000 vehicles.

## **2.2 Planning in a Changing Environment**

Each management plan review needs to take into consideration recent changes in legislation, policies, plans and studies. The following changes depict a strengthening of Parks Canada's commitment to ecological and commemorative integrity, communicating with and engaging Canadians and providing opportunities for visitor experiences in ways that integrate ecological, social and economic values. Some important legislation and policies providing guidance to this management plan include:

- *Parks Canada Agency Act (1998);*
- *Canada National Parks Act (2000);*
- *Action Plan on Ecological Integrity (2000);*
- *Parks Canada Guide to Management Planning (2000);*
- *Parks Canada Agency Corporate Plan 2005/06 – 2009/10;*
- *Legislation and Policy Framework for National Park Communities (1998);*
- *Redevelopment Guidelines for Outlying Commercial Accommodations and Hostels in the Rocky Mountain National Parks (2006);*
- *Engaging Canadians, Parks Canada's Strategy for External Communications (2001).*



FIGURE 2: RIDING MOUNTAIN REGION



## **2.3 Management Principles**

Based on current policy, plans and legislation, the following principles will be used to guide decision-making:

- RMNPC and East Gate NHSC are integrated with the larger ecological and cultural landscape;
- RMNPC and East Gate NHSC are for all Canadians and visitors from other countries are welcome. Regional residents are critical in maintaining ecological and commemorative integrity;
- Park visitors engage in appropriate uses of the park;
- Ecological integrity is the first priority and the enhancement of public education and visitor experience is fundamental to maintaining or restoring ecological integrity;
- A sound research, monitoring and reporting program supports management decision-making, park management planning and state of park reporting;
- Each park management action considers the values of both ecological integrity and cultural resource management principles and practices;
- Each national historic site management action is based on commemorative integrity requirements, including the protection of identified natural values;
- First Nations in the region have a strong connection to the land and an interest in the park's perpetual well-being, on behalf of future generations;
- RMNPC leads by example in environmental and cultural resource stewardship;
- The park encourages public participation and, in many instances, moves from consultation to public involvement. This builds understanding and is a cornerstone of sound decision-making. The park has strong relationships with traditional partners and seeks new partnerships as a way of connecting with all Canadians;
- Interpretive and educational experiences add intrinsic value to the visitors' experiences. The public gains knowledge and appreciation for our natural and cultural heritage, thereby leading to an understanding of the need to preserve the park for future generations;
- Communication and education are key to maintaining ecological integrity and cultural resource protection;
- RMNPC is the core-protected area of the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve, and both will work together to communicate and mitigate issues in the regional area;
- Wasagaming continues to serve as the hub of activity enhancing the enjoyment and appreciation for visitors to RMNPC and East Gate NHSC;
- RMNPC uses adaptive management, traditional and scientific knowledge and encourages the use of the precautionary principle when the effects on the ecosystem are unknown;
- Parks Canada is accountable to the people of Canada through State of the Park reporting.







### **3.0 Park Vision: Our desired future state**

Management planning invites all Canadians to think about the future of their national parks and national historic sites, to envision what kind of places they should be, and to participate in identifying the actions that will make that vision a reality. This vision was developed in consultation with the public, key stakeholders and First Nations.

## **A Vision for Riding Mountain National Park and East Gate National Historic Site**

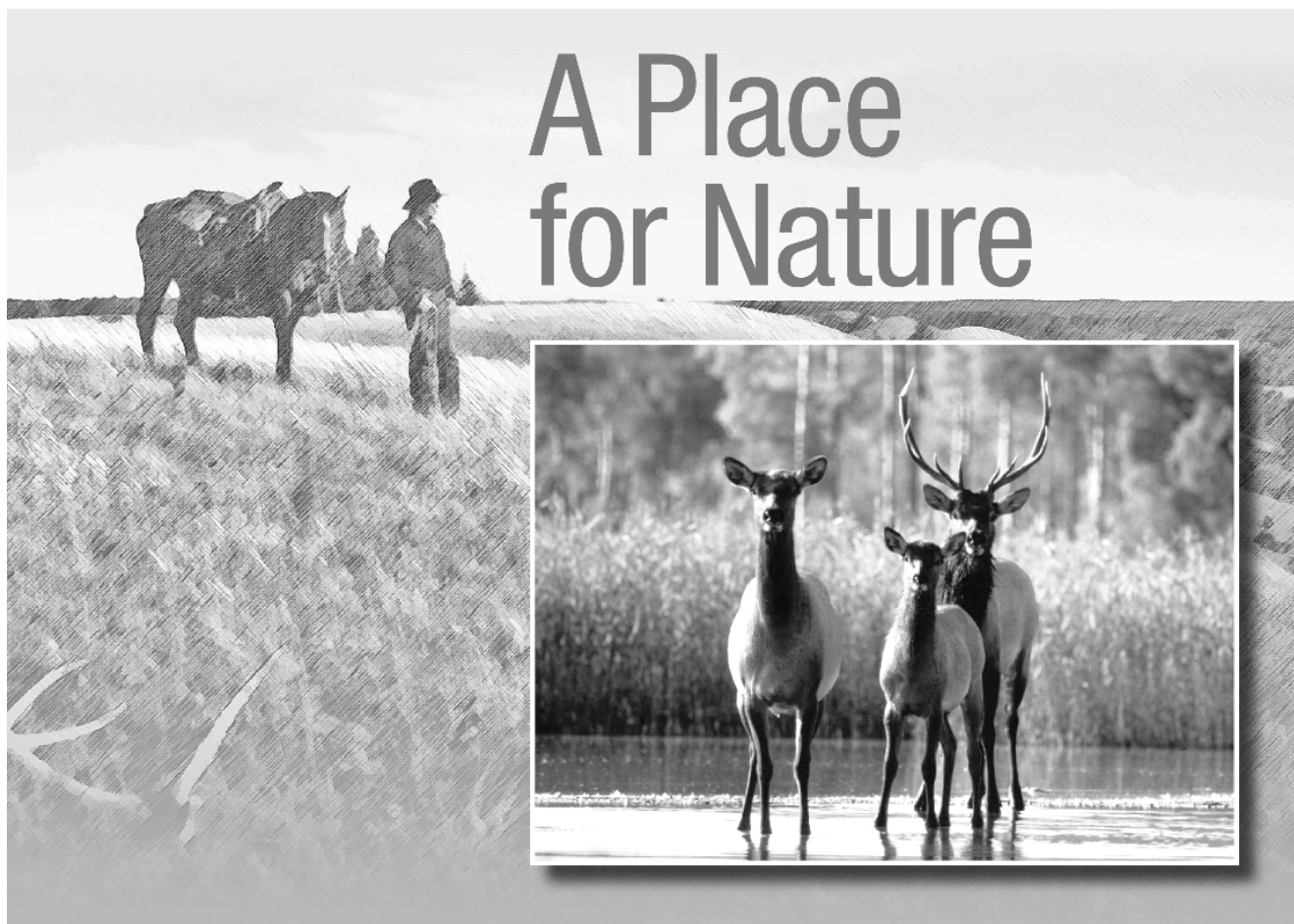
Riding Mountain National Park of Canada (RMNPC) presents outstanding natural features that represent the diversity of Manitoba's landscapes. To the east, the slopes of the Manitoba escarpment rises 300 metres above the adjacent prairie; erosion has sculpted the land into bald hills and deep ravines with rapidly flowing streams. Lush mixed wood forests dominate the area with communities of bur oak woodland clinging to the drier slopes. RMNPC's central and western region is an upland plateau with boreal and aspen forests interspersed with pothole lakes, marshes and open prairie. The intersection of vegetation communities and the diverse topography of the park creates habitat for a variety of wildlife populations, including elk, moose, black bear, wolf and cougar, that range broadly, within and outside of RMNPC.

The East Gate National Historic Site symbolizes RMNPC's early years as a tourism attraction, an entry point to a place of enjoyment and outdoor recreation. This nationally significant example of the rustic design tradition of the 1930s provides an opportunity for visitors to experience the vision of an earlier generation that was moved to protect and preserve RMNPC.

There are many opportunities for visitors to experience the wilderness, the wildlife, the rich human history of the park, and the unique features, such as Clear Lake. Through these experiences, people develop close attachments to RMNPC and are inspired to continue to use, enjoy and preserve their park and their historic site, for future generations.

RMNPC remains a place where natural systems are free to function and evolve; where the mysteries of wild lands and wild life can be protected, studied and explored. Wildlife and vegetation are protected and managed in cooperation with neighbours and with provincial and First Nation governments. The park sustains and is sustained by the natural systems in the greater ecosystem. Stakeholders can see ecological integrity in action in RMNPC; they understand how these actions benefit themselves and RMNPC. The increasing involvement of First Nations in decision-making and sharing of traditional knowledge enhances the protection, management and understanding of this special place.





# A Place for Nature

## 4.0 A Place for Nature: Managing for Ecological Integrity

### **4.1 Introduction**

One of Parks Canada's objectives is to maintain or improve the ecological integrity of Canada's national parks. Building passion among Canadians for the protection of national parks is a key part of meeting this objective. RMNPC will include the development of partnerships, and the provision of educational opportunities and visitor experiences as fundamental components of its approach to managing for ecological integrity.

In 2002, following consultations with the RMRT, an Ecological Integrity Statement (EIS) for RMNPC was completed. The EIS process determined the main challenge to the integrity of RMNPC related to the relatively small size of the park compared to the scale of ecosystem processes (e.g. the movement of water and wildlife) that range across the boundaries of the park. As a forested highland, the Riding Mountain area has always been somewhat distinct from the plains that surround it and in recent times, much of the land around this highland has been converted to agricultural and other economic purposes. Although RMNPC is managed for different purposes than the surrounding area, it is ecologically and socially interdependent with the surrounding landscape. The park cannot attain its goals for ecological integrity without support from the surrounding landscape and the people within

it. Ecological integrity within RMNPC is dependent on wildlife management, terrestrial and aquatic habitat, visitor opportunities, public education and support throughout the region.

#### **4.2 Current State of RMNPC Ecosystems**

The information in this section and section 4.3 is presented using four headings that correspond to indicators from the ecological integrity monitoring program for RMNPC. The four indicators of ecological integrity for RMNPC are forests, grasslands, lakes and streams.

##### **Forests**

- Forest cover between RMNPC and Duck Mountain Provincial Park comprised 51% of the area in 1957 and declined to 16% in 1993, compounding barriers to wildlife movement.
- Road densities around RMNPC are high (approximately 0.7 km of road/km<sup>2</sup>), suggesting that habitat connections are being lost.
- The Parkland Habitat Partnership, of which RMNPC is a member, has facilitated agreements between landowners and the Nature Conservancy of Canada to conserve lands between RMNPC and the Duck Mountains Provincial Park, with approximately 1,000 acres secured in five years.
- RMNPC has worked closely with partners to manage the occurrence of bovine tuberculosis in elk, cattle and deer within the Riding Mountain region. Since 2000, contact between cattle and wildlife has been reduced by fencing hay storage areas and reducing baiting/feeding of wildlife. The Bovine TB Stakeholder Advisory Committee has become an effective forum to enhance dialogue between RMNPC and all interested parties.
- Harvest of forest wildlife species (e.g. elk, moose, black bear and white-tailed deer) on lands immediately adjacent to RMNPC provides a significant contribution to the regional economy. Monitoring shows, at least over the short-term, elk can sustain the current level of hunting pressure. When required, the Province of Manitoba temporarily discontinues hunting around RMNPC (e.g. wolf, moose) until survey numbers suggest the population has recovered. RMNPC and the Province of Manitoba work cooperatively to monitor, research and manage elk and moose populations.
- The absence of fire in the boreal and aspen parkland forests has resulted in a mosaic of forest cover and stand ages that would not have existed with periodic fires.
- Wolves have recovered from a precariously low population of approximately 30 in 1997 to approximately 76 in 2003. Action by the Province of Manitoba to discontinue recreational wolf hunting (during big game season) has helped restore wolf abundance. Research is underway to understand wolf behaviour, travel patterns and diet within RMNPC and area.
- Black bears are baited and hunted adjacent to RMNPC. Limited information exists regarding population trends and the impacts of baiting, hunting and kills in defence of crops and livestock. Within RMNPC, instances of relocating or destroying bears have been greatly reduced due to careful management of human food sources.
- Trapping of furbearers (i.e. wolf, beaver, muskrat, coyote, lynx, and mustelid species) occurs in response to market conditions. Some furbearer species were locally extirpated in the early days of settlement and later recovered. RMNPC reintroduced fisher and pine marten in the 1990's and monitoring suggests that the reintroductions have been successful.
- The trumpeter swan, formerly listed as extirpated from Manitoba, has recently returned to nest in RMNPC. The park is at the northwestern edge of the breeding range of the golden-winged

warbler, which is threatened by hybridization and habitat loss. Breeding bird surveys show RMNPC supports a diversity of species whose distribution and habitat may be affected by climate change.

### Grasslands

- There are approximately 77 species of non-native plants within RMNPC, many of which occur within native grassland and stem from the time when cattle grazing was permitted within RMNPC. Non-native plant species pose a threat to biodiversity by out-competing and replacing native plant assemblages. Research is being undertaken to determine a strategy for management that must occur on the scale of the Riding Mountain region.
- Bur oak woodland and fescue prairie communities have been encroached by woody species over time due to the exclusion of fire from RMNPC. The fire management program has recently reintroduced fire to fire-dependent vegetation communities. A total of 10,000 hectares were burned, in 13 prescribed burns from 1999 to 2005. This represents approximately 20% of the natural fire cycle, which remains below RMNPC's target of 50%.
- The effect of the loss of a key herbivore (e.g. bison) from the grassland ecosystems in RMNPC is unknown.

### Lakes

- Recent research and monitoring strongly suggests that Clear Lake is receiving extra nutrients (phosphorous and nitrogen) from human sources within its watershed, giving rise to concerns that over a relatively short term the lake's trophic status could change and the functioning of the lake ecosystem could become impaired. The source of nutrients may be inadequate sewage treatment within the Clear Lake basin, inside and outside RMNPC. A 'clear' Clear Lake is the focus of visitor expectations in RMNPC, and is an important component of the economy of the region, as well as a unique ecological feature. Part of the shoreline of Clear Lake belongs to the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation; shared management is critical. As directed in the last management plan, shoreline circulation and visitor experience on Clear Lake were greatly enhanced by the restoration of the Wasagaming Pier.
- Sport fishing has occurred on several lakes in RMNPC for many decades. Although harvest has not been regularly monitored and evaluated relative to the integrity of these aquatic systems, actions have recently been undertaken to improve the sustainability of fish populations:
  - 'riffle bars' were placed at the Lake Audy dam to help fish move in and out of Lake Audy;
  - pike have been reintroduced to Deep and Katherine Lakes;
  - fishing limits were adjusted at Lake Audy to enhance spawning success.

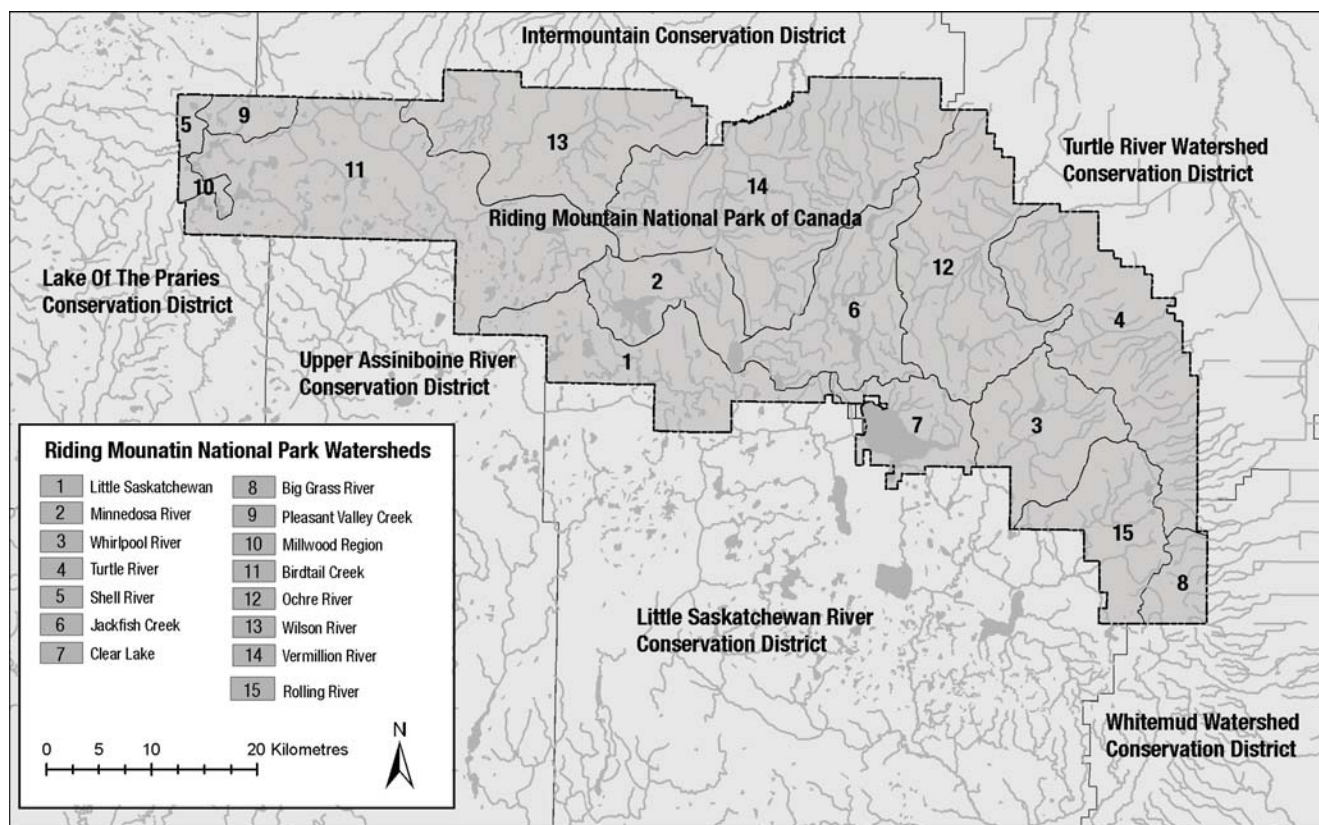
### Streams

- Trails and roads intersect watercourses within RMNPC and improper installation of culverts, on occasion, fragments streams and rivers. Ford crossings and improved installations have reduced this concern.
- A Salt Management Strategy, which includes monitoring of salt application on Provincial Highway #10 and the salt level of streams crossing Highway #10, has recently been implemented.



- Watercourses connect RMNPC to the surrounding region. Parks Canada continues to work with adjacent rural municipalities on the east side of RMNPC to find solutions to the problems caused by erosion and deposition of shale in drainage channels.
- Parks Canada has provided assistance to neighbouring municipalities and landowners to install ‘beaver deceivers’ and ‘beaver levellers’ to mitigate the effects of flooding caused by beaver activity.
- Six watershed conservation districts are adjacent to RMNPC, providing numerous opportunities to become involved in watershed-scale planning and cooperation (see Figure 3).

**FIGURE 3: WATERSHEDS AND CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**



### **4.3 Research, Restoration and Active Management**

RMNPC undertakes research, restoration and active management to address the most significant stresses that impair ecological integrity. The park will communicate scientific information to help build the essential public support required to meet these goals.



### **Strategic Goals**

1. Initiate a long-term research program focused on key ecological integrity concerns that is supported by the research community and partners in the Biosphere Reserve area.
2. Promote inter-agency cooperation to manage cross-boundary wildlife and preserve habitat.
3. Restore native biodiversity and natural processes to target levels.
4. Communicate research, management and restoration activities to promote understanding and support among key audiences.

### **Actions**

#### **Forests**

- a) Use prescribed fire to reach targets specified in Annex 2.
- b) Evaluate the effects of habitat fragmentation on ecosystem integrity, particularly within the Onanole-Wasagaming area.
- c) Develop an inventory of disturbed sites (e.g., old gravel pits, dump sites, contaminated sites) with standards and timelines for rehabilitation/restoration.
- d) Develop a regionally supported strategy for maintaining viable populations of forest-dependent, cross-boundary wildlife (e.g., black bear, elk, moose and wolf).
- e) Actively manage forest fuels in the Wasagaming area to reduce the potential spread of wildfire.
- f) Evaluate the implications of spruce budworm in RMNPC forests. Develop strategies as necessary to manage the occurrence of the infestation.

#### **Grasslands**

- g) Initiate research to better understand the ecological role of herbivores in RMNPC ecosystems, including their links with fire and wildlife management activities, and the loss of bison from the ecosystem.
- h) Use prescribed fire to reach targets specified in Annex 2.
- i) Develop and implement a strategy, with regional partners, to minimize biodiversity loss due to the occurrence of non-native invasive plant species in RMNPC.

#### **Lakes**

- j) Initiate research to understand the nutrient cycle in Clear Lake.
- k) Reduce nutrient loading in Clear Lake to levels that will support the ecological integrity of the lake. As an initial target, reduce anthropogenic phosphorous and nitrogen loading by 50% by 2010.
- l) Establish benchmark lakes and rivers for the purposes of evaluating the impacts of harvest and other management activities on aquatic ecosystems.
- m) Understand the impacts of fish harvest on the integrity of Lake Audy and Clear Lake, the two most intensively harvested lakes in RMNPC. Manage the fisheries to ensure sustainable and healthy populations of native species (i.e., pike, perch and whitefish). Manage fish harvest on Clear Lake in cooperation with the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation.

#### **Streams**

- n) Understand the ecological role played by beaver in sustaining ecosystem processes and shaping aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

- o) Re-establish natural water flow where feasible in selected aquatic ecosystems by reducing or eliminating obstructions caused by trail and road crossings.
- p) Continue to work with regional partners to find mitigations to problems caused by beavers and erosion on lands adjacent to RMNPC.
- q) Work with water conservation districts to protect the quality and integrity of aquatic ecosystems downstream from RMNPC.

**General**

- r) Establish a mechanism to regularly access scientific advice and to communicate research needs, in the Biosphere Reserve area.
- s) Develop and implement a strategy to communicate research results with all Canadians, with an emphasis on communities within the Biosphere Reserve.
- t) Investigate the feasibility of establishing a field station for ecosystem research, with partners.

**Manitoba Bovine Tuberculosis Management Program Long-term Goals**

- To achieve and maintain bovine TB-free status in domestic cattle.
- To eradicate bovine TB in wildlife that may pose a risk to agriculture.
- To minimize wildlife-livestock interactions in the Riding Mountain region, and to minimize unnatural cervid herding behaviour which occurs where cervids feed on agricultural produce, thereby minimizing the potential for disease transmission.

(Manitoba Bovine Tuberculosis Management Program Implementation Plan, June, 2003)

**4.4 Management of Bovine Tuberculosis**

Bovine tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious disease caused by bacteria. It affects cattle, bison, deer, elk, and other species, including humans. Since 1991, the infection has been detected in cattle herds, elk, and white-tailed deer in the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve. In 1986, Manitoba was given certified bovine TB free status, but currently the province is rated as TB accredited and will only regain full bovine TB-free status after a prescribed period of no infections in cattle. The incidence of bovine TB in free-ranging big game in the area is very low.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Manitoba Conservation, Manitoba Agriculture and Food, and Parks Canada (RMNPC) formed a task group for bovine TB, composed of staff from each agency. A five year action plan was developed and annual implementation plans are developed with scientific expertise and stakeholder input.

Parks Canada places a high priority on the management of bovine TB due to the impacts it can have on socio-economic sustainability in the area and in turn, on ecological integrity. An active management and leadership role has been taken by Parks Canada, including the establishment of the TB Stakeholder Advisory Committee to ensure critical, timely information exchange. Progress is being made to understand and address the issue through a collaborative approach.

**Strategic Goal**

Continue to cooperate with partners to meet the goals of the Manitoba Bovine Tuberculosis Management Plan.

### Actions

- a) Parks Canada supports and assists in achieving the goals and objectives of the Manitoba Bovine TB Management Program (see sidebar on previous page).
- b) Provide resources and support the TB Stakeholder Advisory Committee and TB Science Advisory Committee to ensure
  - timely, accurate information sharing;
  - science in decision-making;
  - First Nation and stakeholder involvement.

### 4.5 Environmental Management System

Sound environmental management is an important component of Parks Canada’s mandate and the federal government’s sustainable development strategy. Reducing the footprint of Parks Canada’s operations contributes to restoring the ecological integrity of the park, and fosters public understanding of environmental issues and solutions. RMNPC’s Environmental Management System (EMS) Action Plan is based on Parks Canada’s national EMS framework, and provides a structure for planning and implementing environmental actions and measuring environmental performance.

In recent years significant progress has been made in several areas of environmental management including:

- Identifying and assessing a number of contaminated sites, developing recommendations and estimates for remedial clean up;
- Inventorying and replacing petroleum storage tanks to meet federal and provincial legislation;
- Setting targets for greenhouse gas reduction and implementing actions including
  - reduction in the fleet and establishment of a vehicle pool;
  - use of 10% ethanol fuel blend and biodiesel;
  - use of electric vehicles.

<b>Aspects of the EMS Action Plan</b>
Wastewater Management Petroleum Storage Tanks Contaminated Sites Hazardous Materials Management PCB's Solid Waste Management Greenhouse Gases Pesticides Green Procurement Halocarbons Water Conservation

### **Strategic Goals**

1. Reduce the environmental impact of RMNPC’s operations.
2. Share best environmental practices with partners in Wasagaming and the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve.

### Actions

- a) Implement and report annually on progress of the EMS Action Plan.
- b) Complete the contaminated site assessment program and prioritize all sites by March 31, 2006. Remediate priority sites as funding permits.
- c) Close the former Grey Owl waste disposal site, and rehabilitate as funding permits.
- d) In accordance with national targets, reduce RMNPC’s greenhouse gas emissions by at least 5.2% from the 1998/99 base line by 2010/11.

- e) Develop and implement a water conservation plan for park facilities and operations.
- f) Develop a strategy, in consultation with the Wasagaming Tenants' Association and other stakeholders, to manage ozone-depleting substances in compliance with the Federal Halocarbon Regulations.
- g) Develop a strategy to enhance the waste reduction (i.e. recycling/composting) system in Wasagaming, in cooperation with regional partners by 2009.
- h) Share ideas, concepts and best practices with communities in the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve (e.g. regional waste management, wastewater effluent standards and greenhouse gas reduction).

#### **4.6 Monitoring and Reporting**

A national monitoring and reporting framework for evaluating the health of national parks, as well as the effectiveness of management actions, will enhance the understanding of Parks Canada and its partners with regard to biodiversity, ecosystem functions and processes and the stressors. The Parks Canada Agency will implement this integrated monitoring and reporting program to support decision-making, park management planning and state of the park reporting. The program will incorporate traditional knowledge within the body of ecological knowledge. The set of indicators of ecological integrity (Annex 2) will be refined, measured and reported so that Canadians are able to understand the state of ecological integrity in their national parks.

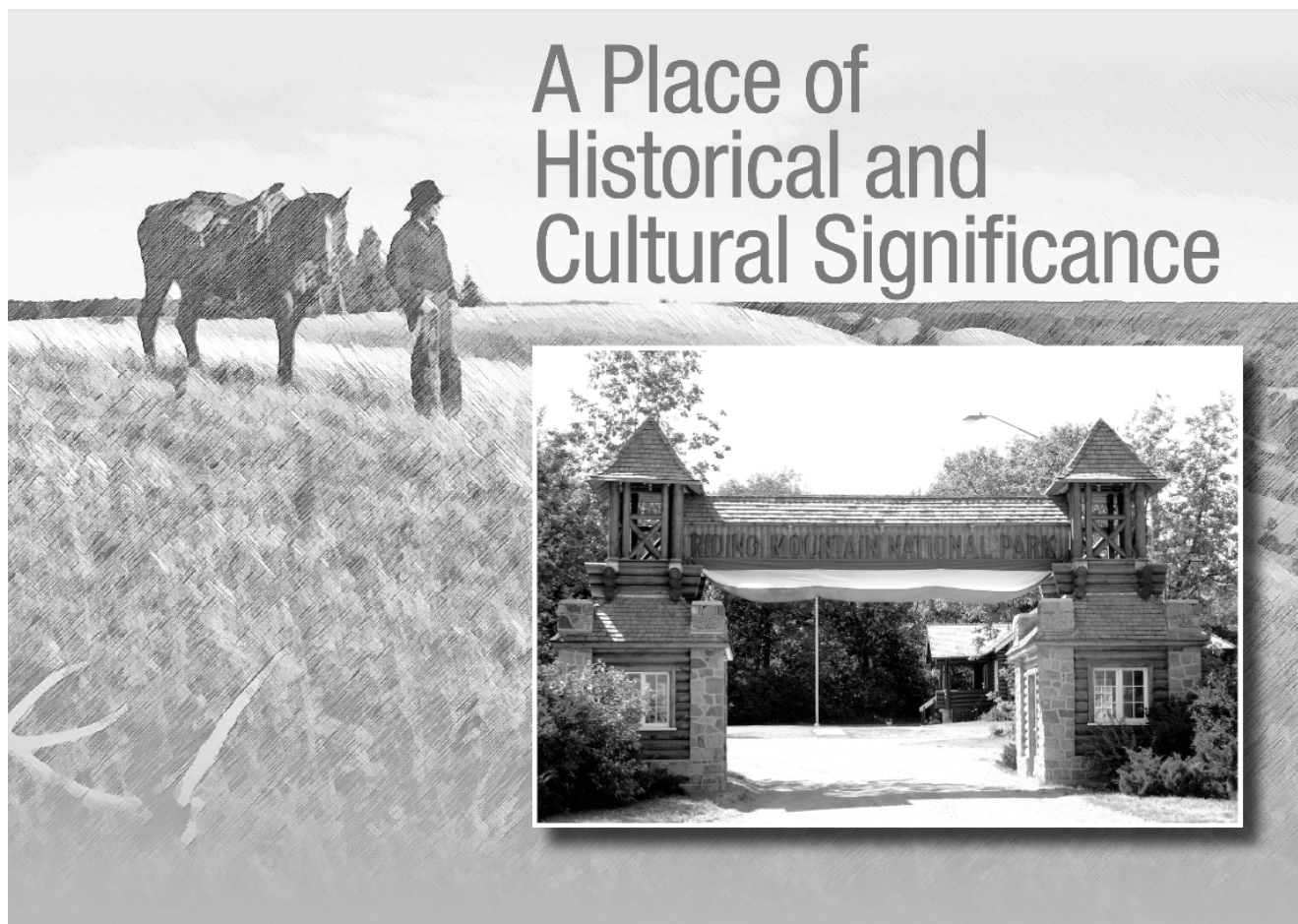
#### **Strategic Goal**

Monitor, assess and report to Canadians the condition of RMNPC ecosystems and the effectiveness of management actions.

#### **Actions**

- a) Refine the ecological monitoring and reporting framework and indicators of ecological integrity for RMNPC (see Annex 2). Wherever possible, link with established provincial and national indicators.
- b) Provide opportunities for the public to contribute to monitoring by implementing or supporting citizen monitoring programs.
- c) Develop and implement a strategy to communicate monitoring results to the public on a regular basis.





## 5.0 A Place of Historical and Cultural Significance: Management of the National Historic Site and other Cultural Resources

### 5.1 Introduction

In RMNPC, there are a variety of cultural resources. The Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site is a place of *national* historic significance. The significance of other cultural resources is related to their regional or local association with the history of the area.

East Gate NHSC	Other Cultural Resources of RMNPC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Commemorated as a national historic site in 1995.</li> <li>➤ Commemorative integrity statement completed in 1999 and an evaluation done in 2005.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Built heritage - 19 federal heritage buildings, main beach pier.</li> <li>➤ Archaeological sites.</li> <li>➤ Curatorial artifacts and documents.</li> </ul>

The practice of cultural resource management requires that four elements be in place to facilitate decision-making:

1. The inventory of resources;
2. The evaluation of resources to determine which are to be considered as cultural resources and what it is that constitutes their historic value;
3. The consideration of historic value in actions affecting conservation and presentation; and
4. Monitoring and review to ensure that conservation and presentation objectives continue to be met effectively.

Cultural resource management is a shared responsibility and involves everyone whose actions affect cultural resources. The principles and practices of cultural resource management apply to Parks Canada operational activities, and to those contracts, leases, licences, concessions or agreements that affect cultural resources administered by Parks Canada. Involving key stakeholders, First Nations and members of the public is critical to establishing shared responsibility to ensure the protection and presentation of these resources.

## **5.2 Current Status**

Parks Canada protects 19 federal heritage buildings in this park and site, all but two are in fair to good condition. The two buildings in poor condition will be restored within the life of this plan. The East Gate NHSC is in good condition but needs improved access and presentation. A monitoring program for archaeological sites in RMNPC that are at risk has been implemented for added protection. RMNPC recognizes the need to have compatible partners to help manage and protect cultural resources.

### **Commemorative intent of the National Historic Site**

East Gate Registration Complex, which consists of a registration building and two staff cabins, is a nationally significant example of the Rustic Design tradition of the 1930s in Canada's National Parks. In accordance with this tradition, the complex was constructed of indigenous materials by skilled local craftsmen hired through the federal government's Depression Relief program. The East Gate Complex is associated with tourism development and outdoor recreation, and gives a distinctive sense of identity to Riding Mountain National Park.

*(East Gate Registration Complex, RMNP Commemorative Integrity Statement, 1999)*

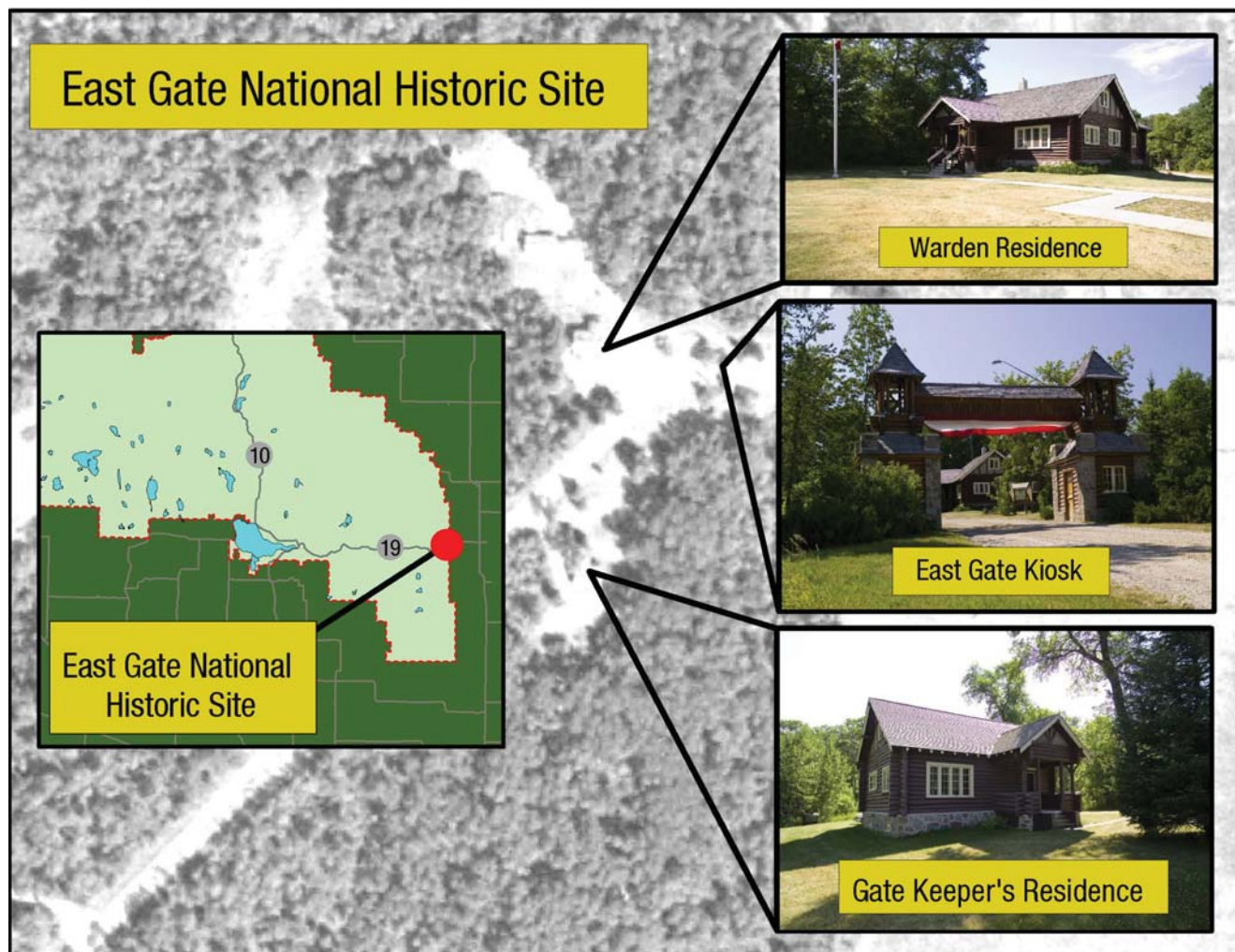
## **5.3 Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site**

Some of the objectives for National Historic Sites are:

- Foster knowledge and appreciation of Canada's past through a national program of historical commemoration;
- Ensure the commemorative integrity of national historic sites administered by Parks Canada by protecting and presenting them for the benefit, education and enjoyment of this and future generations, in a manner that respects the significant and irreplaceable legacy represented by the places and their associated resources.



**FIGURE 4: RIDING MOUNTAIN PARK EAST GATE REGISTRATION COMPLEX NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA**



According to the Guide to the Preparation of Commemorative Integrity Statements (2002), a national historic site possesses commemorative integrity when:

- The resources directly related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site are not impaired or under threat;
- The reasons for designation as a national historic site are effectively communicated to the public; and
- The site’s heritage values (including those not related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site) are respected in all decisions and actions affecting the site.

The evaluation of the commemorative integrity of the East Gate NHSC (2005) identified the following:

Principal Strengths

- Buildings and structures are sound, only need on-going monitoring and maintenance.
- View planes are intact, the East Gate NHSC is a visible landmark greeting visitors to the park.

- Park staff are committed to the preservation of the cultural resources and have a good understanding of the reasons for designation.
- All buildings and structures have been evaluated and inventoried.

#### Principal Challenges

- On-going occupancy of the Gatekeeper's Cottage and the Warden's Residence is crucial to the protection of the site.
- Messages of national significance are not being effectively communicated.
- Funding to implement landscape and communications plans has not been identified.

#### **Strategic Goals**

1. Ensure the commemorative integrity of the East Gate NHSC.
2. Improve visitor infrastructure to facilitate on-site experiences.

#### **Actions**

- a) Develop and implement a cultural resource conservation plan for the Site that includes:
  - a landscape/viewscape plan;
  - wildfire and structural fire protection;
  - a monitoring/reporting framework.
- b) Incorporate the East Gate NHSC in RMNPC's communication strategy (see Part 6.3) to enhance staff, stakeholders' and partners' understanding and appreciation of commemorative integrity, through communications both on and off-site.
- c) Ensure visitor experiences at the site are included in RMNPC's recreation strategy (see Part 7.3).
- d) Collaborate with municipal, regional and provincial tourism organizations to raise awareness of the site and develop mutually beneficial opportunities.

#### **5.4 Cultural Resource Management (CRM) Strategy**

RMNPC's Cultural Resource Management Strategy (1999) was developed in consultation with the Riding Mountain Round Table. The strategy provides direction for the inventory, evaluation, monitoring and conservation of cultural resources that represent RMNPC's rich cultural heritage. Enhancement and protection of First Nation heritage and culture is a key objective of the strategy. A significant component of the Strategy focuses on the commemorative integrity of the East Gate NHSC. RMNPC will continue to seek partnerships in the region to protect and present cultural resources that contribute to an understanding of the cultural history of RMNPC (see Part 11.3).

#### **Strategic Goal**

Protect and present cultural resources as directed in the CRM Strategy.

#### **Actions**

- a) Implement and update the Cultural Resource Management Strategy.
- b) Inventory and evaluate the following sites to assess their cultural significance and determine priorities for further action: central park area in Wasagaming; Strathclair Trail; shepherds cabin in the Birdtail Valley; and the Whitewater POW camp area.
- c) Improve communications of cultural resources by identifying themes and key messages in

RMNPC's communications strategy (see Part 6.3).

### **5.5 Anishinabe Heritage**

Inclusion of Anishinabe traditional knowledge and the involvement of communities in the management of related cultural resources in RMNPC is a priority (see Part 11.3).

#### **Strategic Goal**

Work collaboratively with the Coalition of First Nations to enhance the protection and presentation of Anishinabe cultural heritage in RMNPC in ways that respect Anishinabe traditions and values.

#### **Actions**

- a) Facilitate the involvement of local First Nation communities in the protection and presentation of cultural resources.
- b) Collect, manage, and exhibit historic objects in cooperation with Anishinabe communities to ensure cultural sensitivities are respected.
- c) Work with local First Nation communities to explore possibilities for designation by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of persons, places and events of national significance.

### **5.6 Federal Heritage Buildings**

RMNPC has evaluated 243 buildings in the park since 1996 and another 100 are to be evaluated over the next five years to determine whether they qualify as federal heritage buildings. RMNPC will continue to work with partners to achieve the following goals.

#### **Strategic Goals**

1. Manage heritage buildings according to the federal Policy on the Management of Real Property, Parks Canada's Cultural Resource Management policies and any current legislation.
2. Develop partnerships to occupy and maintain federal heritage buildings not required for park administration or operations.

#### **Actions**

- a) Develop evaluation principles and/or criteria to make decisions regarding third parties' use of heritage buildings. Any third party agreement to include requirements for maintenance as well as protection and presentation of important features.
- b) Strengthen built heritage protection by offering private owners and contractors technical support and information on good conservation maintenance practices.
- c) Raise public awareness, understanding and appreciation of built heritage resources through the development of interpretive signs and/or other media.
- d) Maintain heritage buildings in good condition, subject to resource availability.

### **5.7 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of RMNPC**

RMNPC was established in 1929 through Order-in-Council with the official opening of the park in 1933. The 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries were important local events. The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008 is greatly anticipated by the local community.

**Strategic Goal**

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in July, 2008 will be a platform to celebrate the federal government's decision to add RMNPC to the national park system.

**Action**

In consultation with stakeholders and First Nations, plan and sponsor a variety of celebration events.

**5.8 Monitoring and Reporting**

A conservation plan is to be developed for the East Gate NHSC which will be used to refine the indicators (Annex 2) with details of what needs to be measured and the standards to which the assets will be maintained. Federal heritage buildings throughout RMNPC will have an annual inspection and reporting system to address any problems. Isolated cultural resource sites will be assessed and documented. A monitoring system for sites that are at risk will be inspected and reported on annually. See Annex 2 for the monitoring details for communications, partnerships and visitor experience. These monitoring indicators, measures and targets may require refinement.





## 6.0 Engaging Canadians: Opportunities for Learning

### **6.1 Introduction**

From their inception, national parks have always been a place for people and Riding Mountain National Park is no exception. The park provides the opportunity for Manitobans, other Canadians and visitors from foreign countries to see, enjoy and understand a different aspect of the prairie province of Manitoba. It's important to successfully communicate ways to enjoy and appreciate the park and respect the park's natural and cultural history. Quality learning opportunities raise awareness, promote understanding and a sense of ownership that strengthen emotional connections to RMNPC. These learning opportunities are fundamental to maintaining and restoring ecological and commemorative integrity.

### **6.2 Current Situation**

RMNPC is in the initial stages of developing a communications strategy. The process will involve consultation with staff, partners and stakeholders. It will incorporate direction provided in Parks Canada's *Engaging Canadians Strategy* (2002). As a starting point the following key audiences and key messages will be used:



Key audiences	Key message topic areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students and teachers in the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve</li> <li>➤ Visitors, including local and regional residents, Manitobans, Canadians and international visitors</li> <li>➤ Virtual visitors</li> <li>➤ First Nation communities</li> <li>➤ Key stakeholders</li> <li>➤ New Canadians</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ RMNPC and the East Gate NHSC in the Parks Canada system</li> <li>➤ Commemorative integrity highlights</li> <li>➤ Ecological integrity highlights</li> <li>➤ A collective responsibility that extends beyond the boundaries</li> <li>➤ Public safety</li> </ul>

The heritage presentation program in RMNPC has not been renewed significantly for several years and does not always relate to the current issues facing RMNPC. Implementing the proposed communications plan will ensure a better linkage between the current issues and the interpretive program. Recently the visitor guide format has been upgraded to adapt to the needs of visitors and to convey, more efficiently, some of our key messages and current issues.

The main asset related to the interpretive program is the Visitor Centre. The building is in excellent condition but the display inside is reaching the end of its useful life. New informative/interpretive kiosks were built throughout Wasagaming and additional kiosks will be erected throughout the park in the near future. Future investments will include the exhibits in the Visitor Centre and the administration building, upgrades of the self-guided trails and the fire circle/amphitheater in the Wasagaming campground.

Schools around RMNPC do not use the park sufficiently as a source of experiences and knowledge although they have access to good quality resources and activities. Therefore, the connection with the education communities is still to be reinforced.

Finally, RMNPC cannot reach all of these audiences through its programming alone. Some connections are only possible through partnership with others. Partnerships are already established with Friends of Riding Mountain National Park, the Keesee Sharing Lodge, the Pinewood Museum and with some concessions (golf course and marina). Additional partnerships will be pursued in the future (e.g. with the Coalition of First Nations).

### **6.3 Communication Strategy**

A communication strategy focuses on active involvement and interaction with all Canadians with an emphasis on communicating Parks Canada’s challenges related to improving ecological and commemorative integrity. Due to a range of audiences, messages and outcomes for communication, the park and site need a strategy to ensure efforts are coordinated and effective.

### **Strategic Goal**

Communicate effectively and efficiently to key audiences to raise awareness, foster understanding, enjoyment, sense of ownership and emotional connections to RMNPC and the East Gate NHSC.

### **Action**

Develop and implement a communication strategy for RMNPC and the East Gate NHSC that:

- has a regional scope;
- identifies key themes and audiences;
- outlines tactics and tools for communications;
- incorporates a partnership approach.

## **6.4 Engaging Schools**

RMNPC will improve the working relationship with Manitoba's education community to advance the in-school program, with the guidance of the Parks Canada Schools Program. The intended outcomes are to raise the awareness and understanding of young Canadians about their natural and cultural heritage and to create a sense of ownership and responsibility among youth for these special places.

### **Strategic Goal**

Parks Canada becomes personally relevant to each school child in Manitoba during their academic career.

### **Actions**

- a) Develop and maintain an educators database for Manitoba.
- b) Work with partners to develop lessons and educational opportunities (e.g. Biosphere Reserve, an Eco-Science Camp for educators).
- c) In partnership with the educational community, develop school programming, including pre-visit and post-visit kits, for delivery by both Parks Canada staff and teachers.
- d) Develop lessons for the national teachers corner on the Parks Canada website.

## **6.5 Heritage Presentation**

People learn about national parks, national historic sites and marine conservation areas through different methods and through different media, personal and non-personal. Since visitation to the park is comprised of approximately 86% repeat visitors each season, there are some opportunities and challenges to build on visitors' previous experiences. The communication of key messages to all Canadians and visitors is crucial so they understand, appreciate, experience, and enjoy the park and site.

### **The Visitor Centre**

This Federal Heritage Building was built in 1933. It was designed to be a visual focal point as well as a social centre of the community. It was built in the Tudor Rustic style and contained a natural history museum and a lecture hall. Parks Canada wishes to keep the vitality of this historically significant building as it is a focal point and the information hub of RMNPC.

### **Strategic Goals**

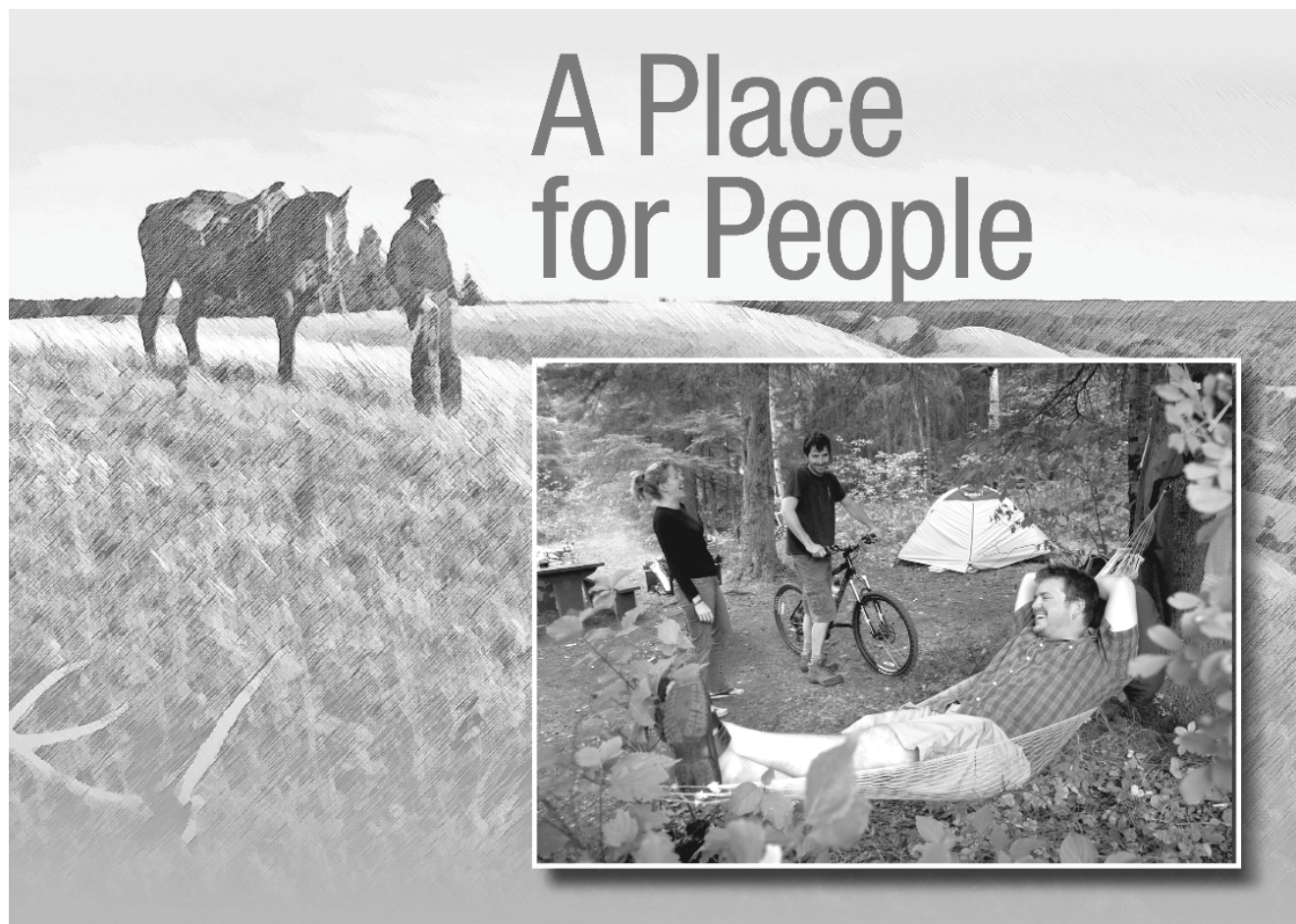
1. Develop and deliver interpretive programming for park visitors that communicates key ecological and cultural history messages.
2. Work with partners to enhance the interpretive programming.

### **Actions**

- a) Integrate interpretive programs with the ecological and cultural aspects of the park, by:
  - identifying and focusing on key locations, audiences and issues;
  - working with researchers, local residents and First Nations from the surrounding area, learn and share their knowledge and/or have their participation in interpretation programs;
  - improving non-personal media in areas where visitor use is high;
  - integrating orientation, interpretation, safety and ecosystem information.
- b) Create opportunities to present messages that link the park to the Biosphere Reserve and regional ecosystem, and the national park system.
- c) Ensure RMNPC partners, such as Friends, Pinewood Museum and Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation include key park messages in their communication and activities.
- d) Develop at least one totally new activity each year to make sure returning visitors can benefit from the interpretive program.
- e) Design innovative, year-round, self guiding opportunities.
- f) Use the park's website as a tool for interpretation.
- g) Keep the Visitor Centre as the main catalyst for interpretation and develop interpretation locales such as Wasagaming Campground and Lake Audy.

### **6.6 Monitoring and Reporting**

The heritage presentation indicators are found in Annex 2. They are interim and will be adjusted to harmonize with emerging national indicators, measures and targets. These indicators will be reported on in a State of the Park report to be prepared prior to the review of this management plan.



## **7.0 A Place for People: Opportunities for Visitor Experiences**

### **7.1 Introduction**

A visitor experience is unique and personal. It includes many aspects, such as gliding across a lake in a kayak, an interpreter pointing out claw scratches in the tree bark, going to a website to find out trail conditions, learning more about First Nations history in the area, getting the perfect campsite, and knowing about other attractions in the area. Most visitors are satisfied with their experiences, however, RMNPC faces challenges such as having current information to meet the emerging interests of visitors and maintaining or replacing aging visitor facilities.

### **7.2 Current Situation**

RMNPC offers a wide variety of camping experiences from pull-through full service sites to primitive backcountry camping. There is one serviced campground with 512 sites, two group campgrounds, four outlying campgrounds, and 19 backcountry campgrounds. The occupancy of the campgrounds follows the national trend and has been declining between 1999 and 2005. The assets, especially Wasagaming campground, are deteriorating and some components have reached the end of their life.



Trails in RMNPC fall into four categories; accessible (for disabled persons); self-guided; day-use; and overnight. Many of the 400 km of trails were developed on an old road system. As a result, they do not always offer the experience expected by the visitors and in many cases they do not lead to a particular point of interest. Day users represent the majority of trail users and cyclists are increasing. Also, the number of trails accessible from Wasagaming is limited.

Various types of day-use areas are dispersed in the park. Fifteen picnic sites, four boat launches, one observation tower and one main beach are among the opportunities offered to visitors. Some of the assets, especially boat launches, need improvement to be suitable for the current demand.

In addition to the opportunities directly offered by the park, three concessions are also active - the golf course, the tennis court and the marina. Many other partners are also offering visitor opportunities: Friends of Riding Mountain National Park; Pinewood Museum; Keesee Sharing Lodge; and others. In addition, tour operators and commercial partners use park facilities to offer a wide range of experiences.

Visitation to RMNPC has been decreasing for the past five years but seems to have stabilized at approximately 250,000 visitors annually. In the most recent visitor survey (2001), the level of satisfaction was high except for some aspects of the interpretation program.

Some major investments have been made between 2000 and 2005: the pier at the main beach was rebuilt; new site furniture was added in Wasagaming campground; road and trail signs have been upgraded throughout the park; uniforms have been upgraded; and solar powered lighting was provided to the washroom building at Moon Lake campground. Although some investments have occurred, many assets remain in poor conditions. Some have clearly reached the end of their useful life and will become safety hazards. Annual reviews of the long-term capital infrastructure plan assist in setting priorities to upgrade assets.

One way to enhance the asset condition is to continue application of the pricing policy and seek a high level of compliance with the personal user fee. In 2005, the level of compliance was 87% which was 5% lower than RMNPC's target of 93% compliance. This is a loss of about \$50,000 per year.

### **7.3 Facilitating Opportunities for Visitor Experiences**

In 2002, a recreation strategy for RMNPC was developed in consultation with the Riding Mountain Round Table. Included in this strategy, is a process to evaluate existing or emerging outdoor recreation activities to ensure these activities support the three key elements of Parks Canada's mandate: protection, education and facilitating meaningful visitor experiences.

#### **Strategic Goal**

Tailor opportunities for visitors to experience the natural and cultural wonders of RMNPC and the East Gate NHSC by offering a range of appropriate activities provided by Parks Canada and others.

### Actions

- a) Implement the RMNPC Recreation Strategy to improve opportunities for visitor experiences. Update this strategy with stakeholder and First Nation input. Consider opportunities, facilities and services within RMNPC and the East Gate NHSC that will complement those within the regional ecosystem.
- b) Continue to assess the appropriateness of existing and proposed outdoor recreation activities, taking into account Parks Canada's framework to assess recreational activities, which is under development, and by utilizing the Appropriate Activities Review Tool (AART) as outlined in the RMNP Recreation Strategy. Evaluate the AART, with stakeholder input within three years.

### **7.4 Heritage Tourism**

RMNPC and the East Gate NHSC will be places where visitors can discover a variety of opportunities to enjoy, understand, appreciate and take part in the preservation of the natural, cultural heritage education and scenic features. Parks Canada and its tourism partners, such as Parkland Tourism, Travel Manitoba and the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), will promote sustainable tourism in cooperation with environmental stewardship, human use management and sensitivity towards wildlife and landscapes.

#### **Strategic Goals**

1. Foster a well-informed, sustainable tourism industry that respects the ecological, cultural and recreational values of RMNPC, the East Gate NHSC and the region.
2. Ensure visitors enjoy high quality, authentic learning and travel experiences provided by Parks Canada and others.

### Actions

- a) In consultation with provincial, regional and national tourism organizations, revise and implement the tourism and marketing strategy for RMNPC, incorporating Canada's code of ethics and guidelines for sustainable tourism (TIAC, 1990) and harmonizing the strategy with Travel Manitoba's classifications:
  - Leisure and Touring;
  - Culture and Heritage;
  - Adventure Travel and Ecotourism;
  - Emerging Experiences.
- b) Continue to encourage sustainable, environmentally-sensitive tourism in RMNPC, the East Gate NHSC and the Region by:
  - working closely with the tourism industry to ensure park visitors receive park and site information/messages and respect the ecological and cultural values of RMNPC and the East Gate NHSC; and
  - initiating a program to recognize businesses that incorporate heritage tourism principles, environmental stewardship initiatives and a code of ethics for sustainable tourism.

## 7.5 Trails, Campgrounds and Day Use Sites

RMNPC's main trail system has evolved from a system of roadways that were closed to vehicle traffic in the 1960s. Many of the trails, and associated campsites, need improvement to enhance the visitor experience and appeal to current and potential visitor markets. Improvements will need to be phased in to ensure RMNPC can operate within its budget. In addition, the local First Nation communities are interested in having cultural camps and similar activities.

### Strategic Goal

Provide a system of trails, campgrounds and day use sites that provide a range of experiences for visitors to RMNPC that are located in the best possible locations, from an experiential, ecological and regional offer perspective using the capital asset principles (Figure 5) as a guide.

### Actions

- a) Develop and implement a long-term vision and plan for backcountry camping and the trail system that addresses current and future user market needs and provides a range of opportunities to experience both the natural and cultural heritage of RMNPC.
- b) Develop an area plan for the west end of the park to provide opportunities for a variety of visitor experiences. Consult with stakeholders and First Nations throughout the process.
- c) Maintain and improve frontcountry camping opportunities with no increase in ecological footprint.
- d) Develop, with the Coalition of First Nations, the best means for First Nations to use the park for their cultural camps and similar activities.

### FIGURE 5: CAPITAL ASSET PRINCIPLES

Development and investment programs are to be based on a sound, consistent and transparent management approach.

#### Capital Program Management

- Directed towards attaining Parks Canada's mandate, the Corporate Plan and RMNPC's Management Plan
- Follows all Parks Canada's guidelines, standards, applicable legislation and regulations
- Needs to be a manageable program

#### Stewardship and Environmental Leadership

- Based on an integrated approach (i.e. ecological and commemorative integrity, visitor experience and education)
- Reduces negative environmental impact and, wherever possible, reduce the existing footprint
- Exhibits cultural and environmental leadership, promotes public appreciation and understanding of Parks Canada's values
- Considers the visitor experience, social science research and innovative service alternatives
- Does not cause degradation or loss of cultural assets

#### Financial Sustainability

- Ensures full operational and financial sustainability over the proposed life of the investment
- Minimizes any net increase in Parks Canada's assets
- Designed to meet average, rather than peak demands
- Consideration given to leveraging investments through partnerships and cost sharing

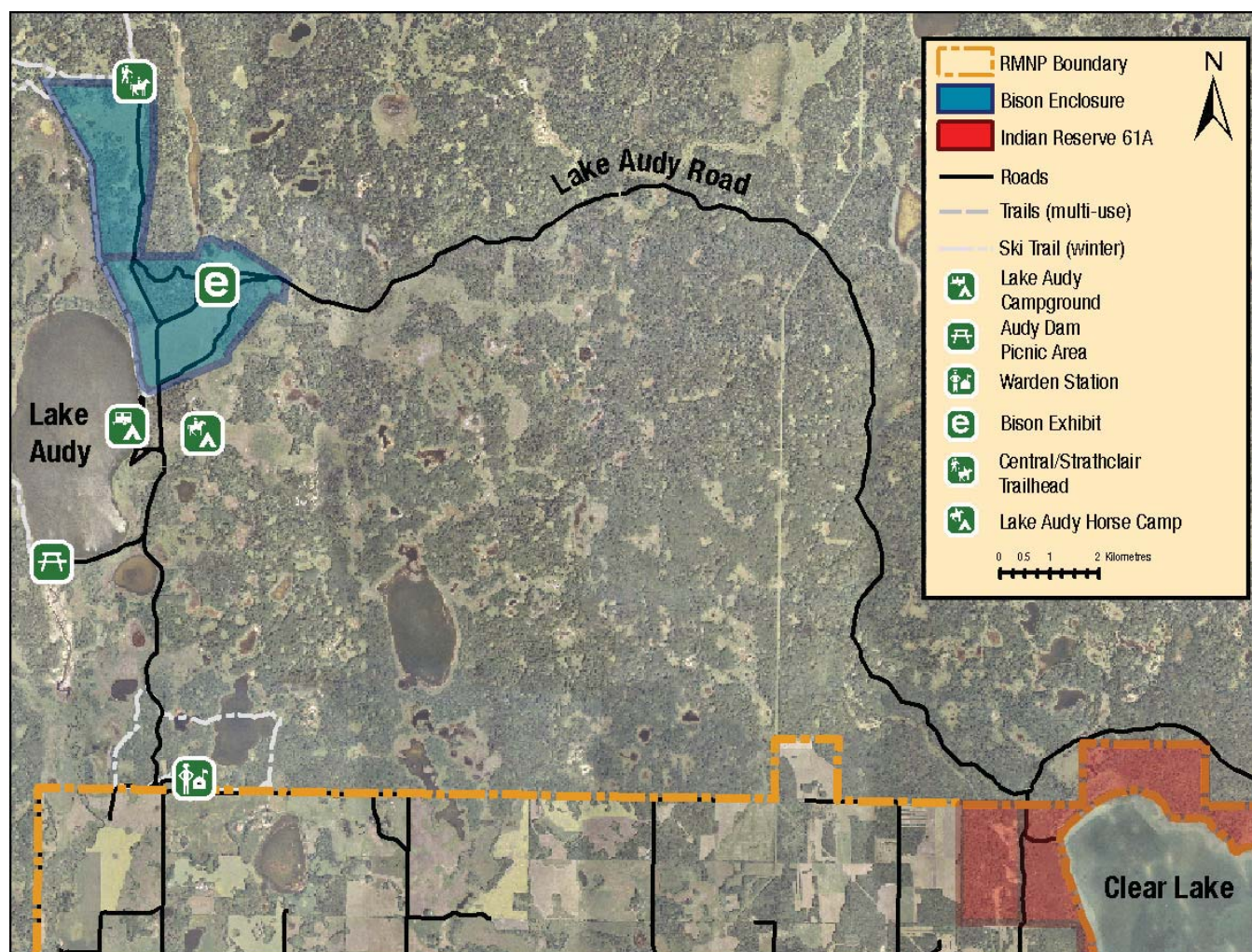
(adapted from *Parks Canada Capital Planning Process Directive, 2005*)



## 7.6 Lake Audy Area

The Lake Audy area provides a variety of visitor experiences (Figure 6). The area also holds significance for the local First Nation communities and their interests need to be considered in the management of this area. There is a captive bison herd at Lake Audy that enhances conservation, viewing and educational opportunities. Management of the herd is linked to the management of bovine TB. There is also a plantation of spruce, a cultural feature that is not compatible with maintenance of the fescue grassland biodiversity.

FIGURE 6: LAKE AUDY AREA



### Strategic Goals

1. Improve opportunities for visitors to understand and appreciate the ecological values and cultural history of the Lake Audy area.
2. Understand visitor and stakeholders use and First Nations' interests in the Lake Audy area.



## Actions

- a) Develop and implement a Bison Management Strategy, coordinated with other national parks, that:
  - improves conservation and biodiversity of Plains Bison and grassland;
  - addresses impacts of the bison enclosure on wildlife movement;
  - initiates cooperative programs with Anishinabe communities, through the Coalition of First Nations;
  - enhances viewing and educational opportunities.
- b) Implement communication of the Lake Audy plantation history and develop strategies for spruce budworm infestation and the plantation area.
- c) Gather information on cultural history, visitor use, stakeholders' and Anishinabe communities' interests within the next five years.

## 7.7 Public Safety

RMNPC has an approved Public Safety Strategy (2005) which outlines a program of due diligence to manage the degree of risk that the public is exposed to while enjoying various outdoor pursuits in RMNPC. Parks Canada relies on cooperation with external partners/experts such as Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization, the RCMP, volunteer search and rescue groups, and others to implement the strategy. To ensure visitors are aware of the risks and their responsibilities for self-reliance, ongoing communication is required.

### **Strategic Goals**

1. Ensure visitors have safe experiences because they are aware of risks and their responsibility for personal safety.
2. Manage visitor risks through due diligence.
3. Maintain a readiness, with park staff and other agencies, to respond to public safety incidents.

## Actions

- a) Implement the Public Safety Strategy, with annual reviews and updates, as required. Report on progress.
- b) Develop and implement a potable water strategy to include:
  - testing and treatment for frontcountry campsites;
  - decommissioning or installing alternative treatment methods at backcountry wells;
  - options for horse watering at campsites with horse facilities;
  - communication.

## 7.8 Motorized Access

Visitor access by motorized vehicles (e.g. cars, motorboats, over-snow vehicles) occurs so there can be onsite opportunities that facilitate visitor understanding, enjoyment and appreciation. RMNPC is seeking a better understanding of how some activities and facilities affect ecological integrity, meet visitor expectations and contribute to visitors' national park experience.

The Rolling River Road (Figure 8) receives low levels of use, approximately five vehicles per day during the visitor season. There is limited information on how people use the road and it is not known to what extent the road is used for park-related experiences or as a throughway. There is one visitor facility along the road, the Muskrat Lake trailhead. A small group of local users would be affected by any proposed changes and need to be involved in developing options.

The public has raised concerns over motorboat use on park waters and the resulting negative impacts on the environment and the experiences of other park visitors. To address the issue of air and water quality, a phased approach to reducing outboard motor emissions has been initiated. In addition, a decision was made in 2002 to prohibit personal watercraft (e.g. Jet Skis) from RMNPC waters and this prohibition will continue.

Over-snow vehicle use (e.g. snowmobiling) occurs on some portions of the park boundary and on the ice surface of Clear Lake. This use is not consistent with the *Canada National Parks Act* and Regulations and has not been actively managed or enforced in RMNPC in recent years. The amount of public use on the boundary varies from an average of 40 machines per day in some areas to zero on other sections. Parks Canada staff occasionally use over-snow vehicles on the boundary for park management purposes. RMNPC will minimize over-snow vehicle use that is contrary to the *Canada National Parks Act* and regulations.

The over-snow vehicle use on Clear Lake, a Zone IV area, is primarily for fishers to access and move their ice fishing shacks. There are a small number of designated areas on the lakeshore for fishers to access the lake using over-snow vehicles. This activity involves a small user group of approximately 12 users.

### **Strategic Goal**

Provide motorized access, in Zone IV and V areas, to support a range of visitor experiences while maintaining the ecological and cultural integrity of those areas.

### **Actions**

- a) Continue to collect information on use of the Rolling River Road and the experiences it provides. Involve stakeholders in a process to determine the future of the road, using the capital asset principles (see Figure 5) as a guide, and implement within five years.
- b) Develop and implement an outboard marine engine emission strategy to ensure boaters in RMNPC understand and comply with 2006 U.S. EPA standards by May, 2007.
- c) Minimize over-snow vehicle use of the park boundary so the majority of the park boundary will meet requirements of Zone II Wilderness (see Part 12.2). Work with local First Nations and with willing rural municipalities to plan and promote alternative over-snow vehicle routes within the Riding Mountain region and to identify areas along the RMNPC boundary where over-snow use might be permitted.
- d) Parks Canada will evaluate and adjust the maintenance and management of the boundary for park management purposes.
- e) Develop and implement, in consultation with stakeholders and First Nations, a strategy that ensures all over-snow vehicle users on Clear Lake and specified sections of the park boundary

possess a valid over-snow vehicle use permit issued by the Superintendent. Continue to monitor and mitigate impacts of over-snow vehicle use on RMNPC ecosystems and evaluate prior to the next management plan process.

### **7.9 Mount Agassiz Ski Area**

A wide range of year-round visitor activities are available on the east side of RMNPC. These include the East Gate NHSC (see Sec. 5.3) and road access in the Agassiz area to trailheads for cross-country skiing and hiking, backcountry camping and until the year 2000, the Mount Agassiz Ski Area (Agassiz).

Agassiz was operated as a downhill ski area within RMNPC. The Mount Agassiz Ski Area is designated as a commercial ski area under subsection 36(1) of the *Canada National Parks Act*. Development of the ski hill began in 1958, when 141.6 hectares were leased and Mount Agassiz opened to the public in 1961. Agassiz was one of three downhill ski areas in the RMNPC region, with the other two being Ski Valley near Minnedosa and Asessippi Winter Park near Russell, which opened in 1999.

The Agassiz lease has been in receivership with the last operating season being 1999/00. A Receiver Trustee was appointed in April, 2000 on behalf of secured creditors for the purposes of liquidating business assets in order to settle the debt owed. The Receiver Trustee offered the assets for sale. A number of interested parties made inquiries and offers to purchase, however, no sale has been finalized.

#### **Strategic Goal**

Foster visitor experience opportunities, other than downhill skiing, on the east side of RMNPC in ways that ensure opportunities for learning and maintenance of ecological and commemorative integrity. Link these opportunities with others in the region outside the national park and national historic site.

#### **Actions**

- a) Following termination or expiry of the current lease:
  - no new leases will be granted for the purposes of downhill skiing in RMNPC; and
  - a rehabilitation plan for the Mount Agassiz Ski Area will be developed and implemented that includes the removal of the ski hill infrastructure as a first priority.
- b) Involve key stakeholder groups and First Nations in discussions about other opportunities for visitor experiences on the east side of RMNPC and then develop an area plan. Implement the area plan as resources are available.

### **7.10 Clear Lake Basin**

Clear Lake, adjacent to the seasonal community of Wasagaming, is a source of many and varied experiences for the majority of people who visit RMNPC. The lake is also important to the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation who have re-established ownership of 440 hectares adjacent to Clear Lake that includes approximately 6.4 km (22%) of the shoreline. In the 1998 RMNPC

Management Plan, the desire of Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation to initiate the development of an agreement for the cooperative management of fishing in Clear Lake was expressed but has not been initiated to date.

Due to concern over the lake's water quality, a workshop with stakeholders was held in March 1993 where a vision for water quality was developed. In subsequent years, research and monitoring programs were initiated to provide information for decision-making. To intensify the effort to manage for ecological integrity, a study was commissioned that identifies priorities for action (*Securing the Integrity of Clear Lake and Area, 2005*). The priorities for action involve a number of other jurisdictions, including collaboration with Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation regarding Clear Lake's ecological integrity.

### Strategic Goal

Keep the "clear" in Clear Lake, maintain the quality of visitor experiences and protect ecosystem integrity by developing and implementing a holistic approach to basin management in cooperation with Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation, other jurisdictions and stakeholders.

### Actions

- a) Facilitate the development of a Clear Lake Basin management approach with governments, Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation, landowners, and stakeholders that also links management of the Clear Lake Basin with Little Saskatchewan River watershed planning.
- b) Conduct research to better understand:
  - the role of groundwater in the Clear Lake's nutrient budget;
  - factors that limit the use of phosphorous by algae in Clear Lake;
  - baselines levels and monitoring targets for whitefish and slimy sculpin.
- c) Complete a suite of indicators and targets for water quality, ecological integrity and visitor experiences.
- d) Complete the design for the boat launching facility at Boat Cove with the objective to consolidate boat launching at this location (e.g. close/re-habilitate some boat launch sites).
- e) Develop a cooperative management agreement for the fisheries of Clear Lake with Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation.
- f) Complete an analysis of options and design for Wasagaming storm water management. Implement as resources become available.
- g) Complete the design for wastewater treatment infrastructure upgrades that incorporate leadership standards for effluent based on capacity of the receiving waters. Pursue partnership with the Rural Municipality of Park. Implement as resources become available.
- h) Work with the North Shore (Clear Lake Subdivision) cottage owners, church camp operators and others to formulate guidelines for wastewater (similar to No Net Negative Environmental Impact in Wasagaming).

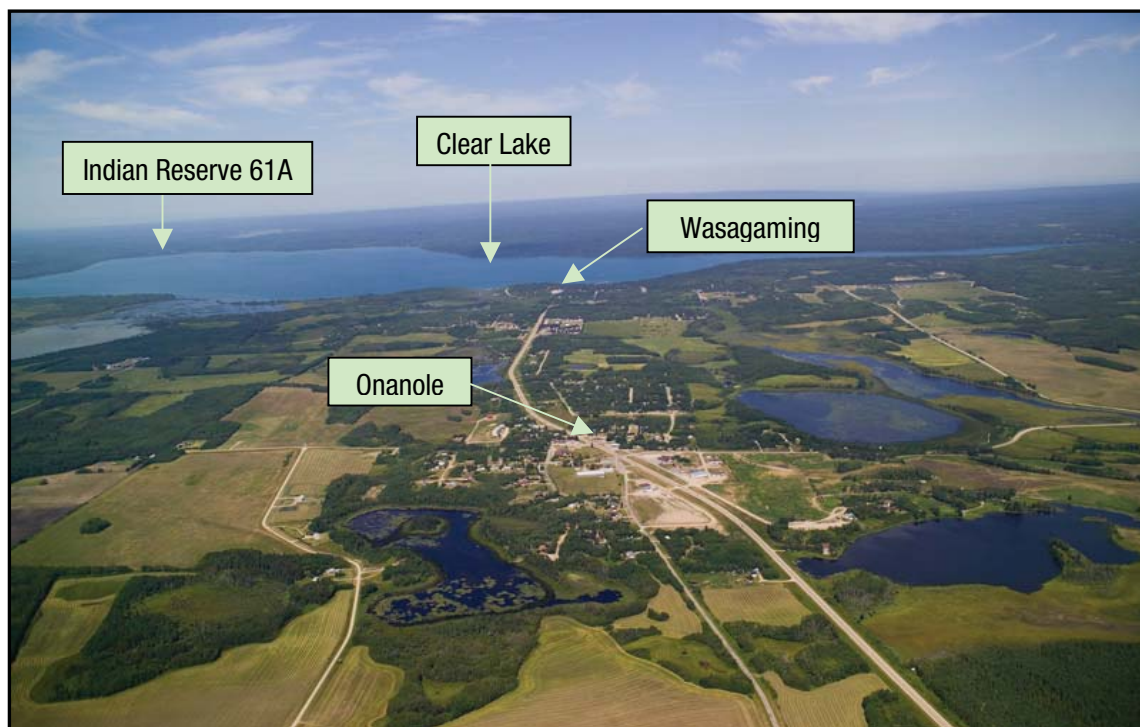
### Ecological Integrity Statement for the Clear Lake Basin

Keeping the "Clear in Clear Lake" is the fundamental management goal for ecological integrity. The clear, blue water must be maintained. Clear Lake must be safe for public swimming and boating. Native fish must be sustained for their respective ecological functions and recreational angling opportunities. Boating and shoreline use must continue to benefit from the natural forest cover, shoreline and scenic qualities.

*(Securing the Integrity of Clear Lake and Area, 2005)*



**FIGURE 7: AERIAL VIEW OF WASAGAMING, CLEAR LAKE AND ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT**



### **7.11 Public Information**

The visitor experience begins prior to arrival at the park or the East Gate NHSC. The provision of information that helps to influence visitor expectations will help facilitate a high quality experience.

#### **Strategic Goal**

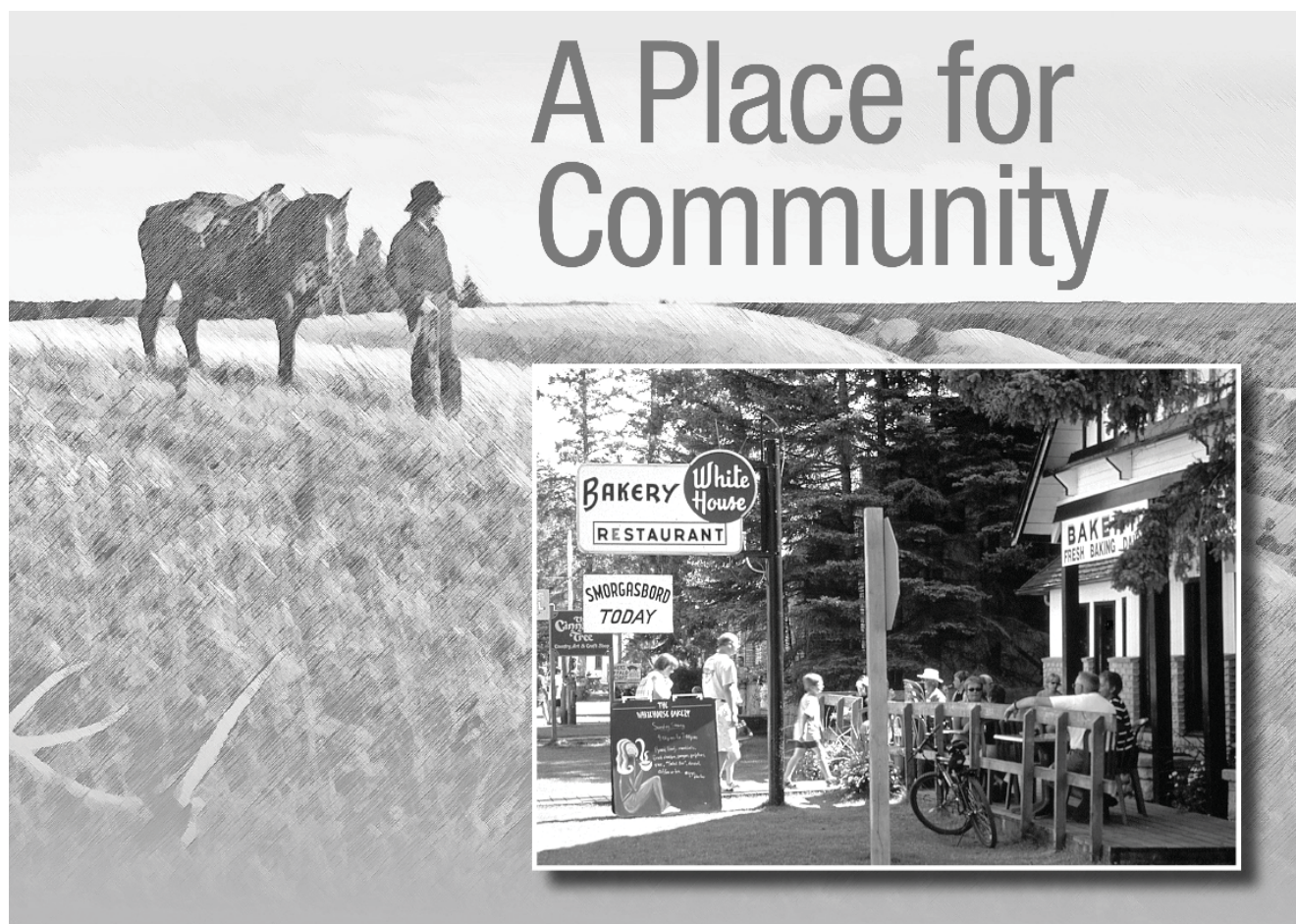
Have up-to-date information available to help visitors make informed choices.

#### **Actions**

- a) Use the internet as a tool to reach people and provide real-time information about the park for pre-trip planning, by:
  - building a virtual tour of campgrounds in RMNPC on the website for campers;
  - providing an online park experience for people who are unable to visit the park.
- b) Enhance pre-trip information for visitors to advise them on ecological and public safety issues.

### **7.12 Monitoring and Reporting**

Indicators to track improvements in opportunities for visitor experiences have incorporated the current national indicators for visitor experience. Some targets need to be set and other refinements made over the next five years. The park will regularly collect information, with partners, on market characteristics, patterns of visitor use and satisfaction in RMNPC, the East Gate NHSC and the region. These indicators, measures and targets will be tracked in a State of the Park report to be prepared prior to the review of this management plan. The visitor experience indicators are found in Annex 2.



## 8.0 A Place for Community: Wasagaming

### 8.1 Introduction

Wasagaming is a seasonal resort situated on the south side of Clear Lake. This national park community and the adjacent community of Onanole, located outside the park boundary, provide services to visitors and seasonal residents. The Visitor Centre for RMNPC, a federal heritage building, is located in Wasagaming. It is Wasagaming's unique character and nostalgia that most residents and visitors feel should be preserved and maintained.

A review of the community plan took place in 1998/99. The legislative and policy framework for national park communities (1998) provided the guideline for the review and was completed in consultation with the Wasagaming Tenants' Association and the Riding Mountain Round Table. The Wasagaming Community Plan was approved

#### Community Vision

Wasagaming will continue to serve as the hub of recreational, educational and cultural activity, enhancing the enjoyment and appreciation of Riding Mountain National Park. The facilities and services provided in Wasagaming will serve the needs of visitors.

The community will preserve its village-like atmosphere into which nature and recreation are integrated. It will promote nature- and people-oriented activities while building upon and strengthening the cultural, architectural and natural heritage that makes Wasagaming a unique and inviting place.

*(Wasagaming Community Plan, 2000)*

by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada in 2000 and provides direction on the following components:

- Legislated boundaries for the community and the commercial zone;
- Legislated limits and caps on commercial growth and development;
- Cottage/cabin areas – limits and caps on growth;
- Re-release of five cabin permits and eight cottage lots;
- Re-investment in water and sewer systems;
- Application of a Cultural Resource Management Strategy;
- Promotion of non-motorized means of travel through a designated trail system;
- Improvements to the appearance of public parking area and the main commercial street;
- Basic and essential services that support heritage tourism;
- Framework of no net negative environmental impact;
- Establishment of a Development Review Board; and
- Other key items such as appearance guidelines.

## **8.2 Current Status of Wasagaming**

The various zones within the community include cabin, cottage, commercial, park services and campground. There are 525 cabins in the Clear Lake Cabin Area. Cabin owners pay a seasonal camping permit annually and have a number of common services (e.g. kitchen shelters, washrooms, firewood). There are 254 cottages within the community and 33 cottages on the north shore of Clear Lake called the Clear Lake Subdivision. There are approximately 46 businesses in the commercial area, with three concessions and five not-for-profit organizations. Approximately 125 business licences are issued for those businesses operating in the community although many of these are based outside the park. Many cultural features and buildings are located within the community as well as numerous Parks Canada facilities including staff housing, administration office, Visitor Centre, and the main campground with 509 sites. Infrastructure that needs improvement includes parking areas, lakeshore walk, wildlife-proof garbage bins, storm sewer system, and wastewater treatment.

The Wasagaming Tenants' Association (WTA) is the key advisory body to Parks Canada in the management of community issues. Recently, in consultation with the WTA, a Development Review Board was established to manage appeals and minor variances.

Since the most recent community plan, emphasis has been placed on environmental stewardship of Parks Canada's facilities and operations in the community. Progress continues in those areas (see Part 4.5), however there needs to be increased involvement by the Wasagaming residents in the establishment and promotion of Wasagaming as a "green" resort community. The WTA needs to play a major role in this area.

The community is located along the southern park boundary in close proximity to Onanole, a community on adjacent provincial lands, creating an extended community with an additional 664 summer residences and 294 year-round residences within walking distance of Wasagaming. There are also numerous businesses and a major resort/timeshare hotel along the boundary. The park presently shares numerous municipal services with its neighbours and is negotiating additional arrangements to reduce costs.



Virtually all visitors to RMNPC, approximately 95%, visit Wasagaming as well. There are many activities in Wasagaming with the most popular focussed on Clear Lake (e.g. time at the main beach and pier), shopping and restaurants.

### **8.3 Responsible Growth Management**

The review of the community plan will not involve changes to the current limits and caps on growth and development in the cabin, cottage or commercial areas. However, there are 33 cottage lots in the Clear Lake Subdivision on the north shore that are not within the boundary of the community of Wasagaming and for which direction was not provided. The Wasagaming Vegetation Management Strategy was completed in 2006. The purpose of this strategy is to involve the residents of Wasagaming and the North Shore Subdivision in planning and implementing vegetation management initiatives that address public safety, ecological integrity and scenic values.

#### **Strategic Goals**

1. Efficiently administer municipal services in the community (100% cost recoverable).
2. Minimize the environmental impact of the community.
3. Work toward achieving the community vision by completing strategic actions outlined in the currently approved community plan.
4. Consistently manage growth and development in Wasagaming and the Clear Lake Subdivision.

#### **Actions**

- a) Update the Wasagaming Community Plan (2000) in consultation with the Wasagaming Tenants' Association (WTA). The review will include, but not be limited to:
  - examining other governance models for communities;
  - alternatives to annual permits for the Clear Lake Cabins; and
  - essential services in Wasagaming with consideration to existing and potential services in the Wasagaming/Onanole corridor.
- b) Implement and communicate the Wasagaming Vegetation Management Strategy.
- c) Enhance responsible growth management and environmental stewardship in the Clear Lake Subdivision (north shore cottage area) including:
  - confining the footprint to existing size, approximately 22,032 sq. m. / 237,152 sq. ft.;
  - setting the maximum lot development as per the *National Parks Cottages Regulations*;
  - retaining the maximum number of cottage lots at 33;
  - applying other development guidelines and design parameters such as lot density, roof lines, parking and noise considerations as specified in Annex I of the Wasagaming Community Plan;
  - setting other limits (e.g. shoreline use limits) to be developed as required;
  - developing and implementing a strategy for water and sewage.

### **8.4 Stewardship**

Parks Canada and the community of Wasagaming work in partnership to make decisions that are consistent with the national parks mandate and the vision for Wasagaming and RMNPC.



**Strategic Goal**

Ensure a community voice in land use planning and development decisions by Parks Canada.

**Actions**

- a) Continue to implement the Community Plan in consultation with the Wasagaming Tenants' Association (WTA).
- b) Ensure the Development Review Board is informed of all appeals and variances. The Board provides strategic advice and guidance to Parks Canada.

**8.5 Municipal Services**

Due to the proximity of Wasagaming to the community of Onanole, opportunities to share services will assist RMNPC to reach financial sustainability and address resource limitations that exist within the Parks Canada Agency.

**Strategic Goal**

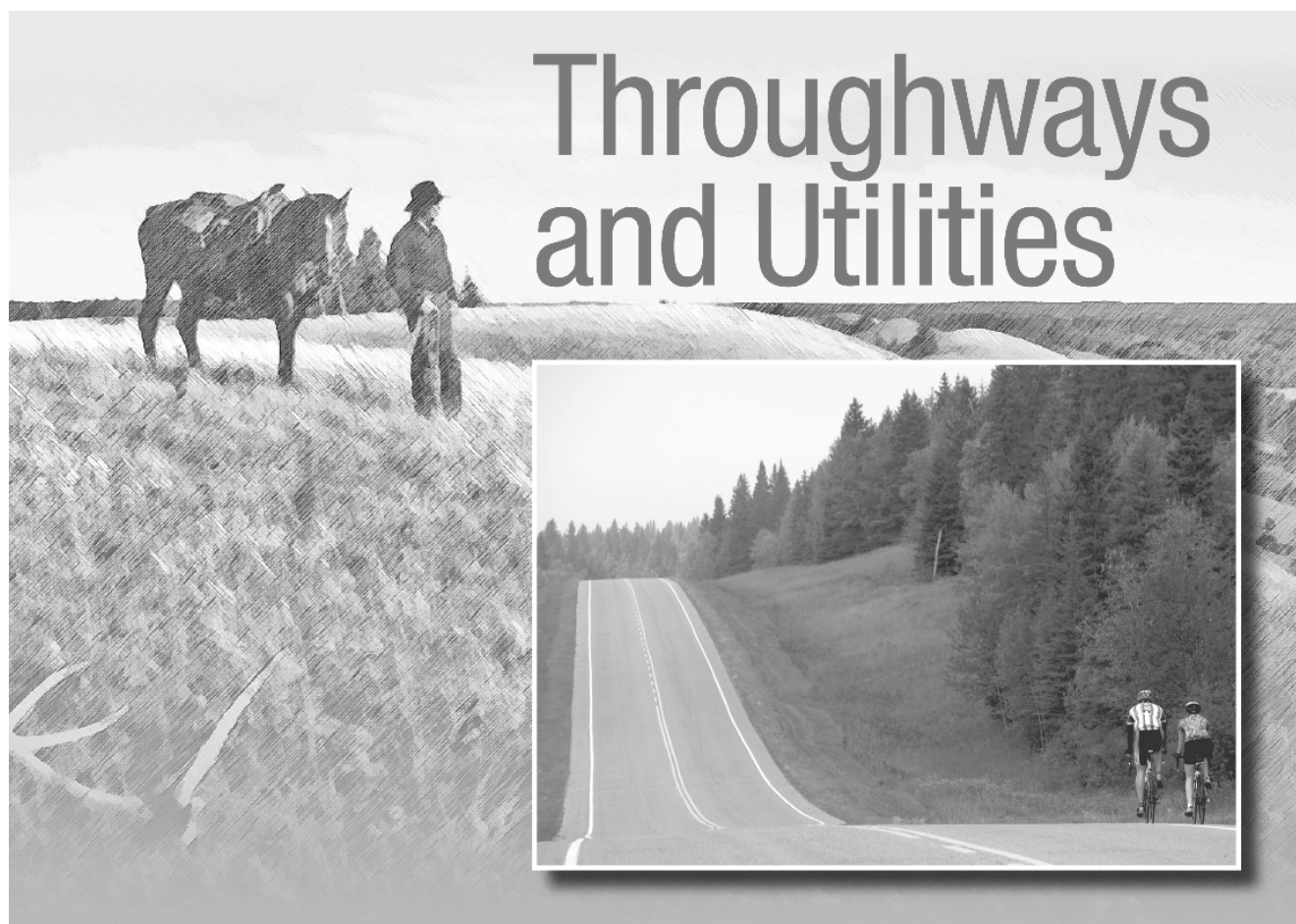
Ensure the community has access to municipal services that are financially sustainable, have no net negative environmental impact and impacts to ecosystem function are mitigated.

**Actions**

- a) In partnership with the Rural Municipality of Park, pursue modified or additional shared municipal services (e.g. water, wastewater treatment, solid waste disposal, development review).
- b) As part of the next community plan update, review options for water and sewer in the Clear Lake Cabin Area.

**8.6 Monitoring and Reporting**

To ensure that communities are run in an effective and efficient manner, national standards for measuring no net negative environmental impacts and municipal standards are being developed. These indicators will be reported on in State of the Park and community reports. The indicators and measures are found in Annex 2.



## 9.0 Throughways and Utilities

### 9.1 Introduction

Throughways in RMNPC include:

- Highway #10, a 54 km paved, two lane high way;
- Highway #19, a 31 km gravel road that extends from Highway #10 to the East Gate NHSC.

These are numbered highways, part of Manitoba's transportation network. Approximately 200,000 vehicles use Highway #10 between May and September. Highway #19 is a secondary route with approximately 22,500 vehicles during the same period. Both highways are categorized to be in fair condition, although Highway #10 has some poor sections and is deteriorating. Recapitalization has not been carried out recently due to financial limitations and repairs have been made on an emergency basis. Public safety is a priority and road maintenance during the winter months is key. To address public safety and the adverse effects that salt has on the environment, a Salt Management Plan (2005) for RMNPC was developed that strives to minimize the amount of salt entering the environment by including best salt handling practices, and using new technologies to ensure its most effective use on the throughways.

Utilities covered in this chapter include the main electric transmission line, distribution lines and communication towers.

## **9.2 Throughways - Highways #10 and #19**

Highway #10 and #19 are categorized as Class 2 roads by Parks Canada. Class 2 includes highways in national parks that are linked to regional transportation networks and function as throughways. Parks Canada is responsible for maintaining these roads by virtue of their location within national park boundaries; immediately outside the park, they are the Government of Manitoba's responsibility. Parks Canada received some new funds in the 2005 budget to partly address this issue and will continue to seek emergency and long term funding from Treasury Board to mitigate unacceptable health and safety risks. Because visitors use these routes to access facilities and driving for pleasure is a popular activity for a majority of park visitors, RMNPC strives to manage these highways for their dual functions, as throughways and as "parkways."

Commercial truck traffic through the park is a concern and the following issues are being addressed in this plan:

- environmental risks associated with hazardous goods transportation;
- highway maintenance costs and recapitalization costs;
- compliance with weight restrictions, especially in spring, summer and fall;
- changes in volume and type of traffic over time;
- providing a safe, positive visitor experience;
- providing information on highway conditions due to weather and alternate routes.

### **Strategic Goals**

1. Maintain a safe, scenic parkway experience for park visitors and where possible, enhance the visitor experience.
2. Minimize environmental impacts.
3. Keep highways open to through traffic. Reduce the impact of large commercial traffic on the road structure and visitor experience.

### **Actions**

- a) Ensure RMNPC's Communication Strategy evaluates and sets direction to enhance visitor experiences along the highways.
- b) Develop and implement strategies to reduce the impact of heavy truck/commercial traffic in cooperation with Manitoba Highways and the Manitoba Trucking Association by collecting data on truck usage on Highway #10, improving communications to truck drivers on road classification (weight restriction) information as well as enforcement.
- c) Evaluate, develop and implement strategies to reduce the risk of a hazardous material spill.
- d) Implement the RMNPC Salt Management Plan.
- e) Evaluate and develop strategies to:
  - reduce non-native species occurrence on roadsides;
  - reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions;
  - monitor impact of roads on aquatic species.

- f) Maintain throughways, with minimal capital investment, to the appropriate standards taking into consideration the Salt Management Plan and any parkway elements. When funding becomes available, re-capitalize to the appropriate standards and incorporate parkway elements.

### **9.3 Utility Corridors and Communication Towers**

Manitoba electric transmission lines and the right of way bisect the park from north to south to deliver electricity between their stations on each side of the park. In addition there is a transmission line off the main line to serve a Manitoba Telephone System (MTS) microwave tower in the vicinity of Moon Lake. There are other distribution lines in the park near the community of Wasagaming, on the east side to Agassiz Ski Hill and servicing a communication tower off Highway #19. The park is in the process of negotiating Licenses of Occupation for the two towers (MTS microwave tower and communication tower off Highway #19) to cover a term of ten years.

#### **Strategic Goals**

1. Limit infrastructure for utilities and develop operating agreements for existing infrastructure to reduce ecological footprint, minimize social/aesthetic impacts and any impacts related to maintenance activities.
2. Minimize social/aesthetic and other impacts of towers and work towards having alternatives to towers within RMNPC.

#### **Actions**

- a) Complete the Land Use Agreement with Manitoba Hydro for the main electric transmission line and right-of-way and implement mitigation measures as per the environmental assessment.
- b) Rights-of-way along existing roads may be considered for additional utilities. No new rights-of-way will be developed to accommodate utility corridors.
- c) Limit ecological impact of existing towers by establishing agreements with communication companies. Do not exceed the current number of towers (two); no new towers to be permitted. Investigate and encourage alternatives to towers in the park within 10 years and phase out existing towers when feasible.

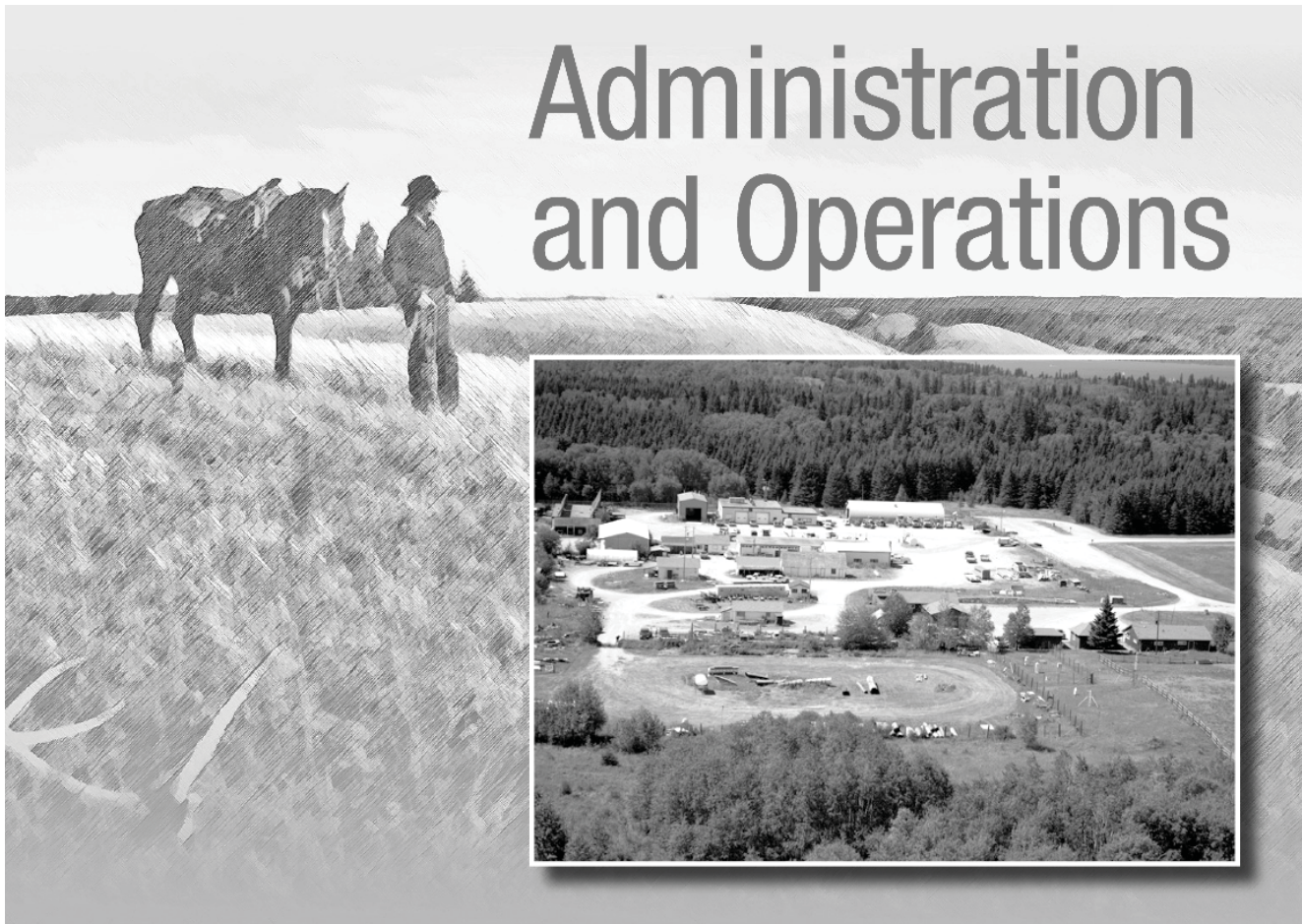
### **9.4 Monitoring and Reporting**

Annex 2 includes interim indicators, measures and targets for the management of the throughways that will be harmonized with indicators being developed nationally. Interim indicators include environmental impacts, safety incidents related to asset condition and maintenance within Parks Canada's control, and level of visitor satisfaction.

Monitoring and reporting requirements for the utility corridors and communication towers will be outlined within the specific agreements and related environmental assessments.







# Administration and Operations

## 10.0 Administration and Operations

### 10.1 Introduction

Park assets and operations will be addressed in this section, as will realty issues, including development outside Wasagaming and federal lands adjacent to RMNPC.

### 10.2 Park Assets and Operations

Staff housing, park operations and maintenance facilities are managed in an environmental and culturally sensitive manner with minimal impact on ecological and commemorative integrity. Opportunities are continually being sought for ways to make enhancements in this area and to meet the objective of financial sustainability. RMNPC has recently decommissioned some assets including some staff housing, the water tower and pumphouse building in Wasagaming, as well as the Vermillion Warden Station.

**Strategic Goals**

1. Reduce the ecological footprint, impact and costs of infrastructure in the park that is not integral to the mandate of Parks Canada.
2. Enhance socio-economic opportunities in the region by locating or using more services outside of the park that are not essential to be located in, or provided by, RMNPC.

**Actions**

- a) Determine basic requirements for staff housing in the park. Divest surplus staff housing and maintain required staff housing in good condition.
- b) Reduce ecological footprint and operational costs by consolidating existing and future park operation buildings where feasible. Divest surplus operation buildings and maintain required buildings in good condition.

**10.3 Non-scheduled Lands**

Non-scheduled lands, also referred to as non-gazetted lands, are parcels of federal crown land adjacent to RMNPC, in the Clear Lake area. Parks Canada acquired these lands, approximately 1,100 ha, between 1950 and 1970. The road rights of way and mines/mineral rights are still held by the Province of Manitoba, however there is a willingness to transfer these rights to the federal Crown. These lands cannot be included in the legal description of the park within the *Canada National Parks Act* until these rights are transferred. The addition of these lands to RMNPC would support and enhance ecological integrity, education and quality visitor experiences.

**Strategic Goal**

Incorporate all non-scheduled federal lands adjacent to RMNPC into the national park, with inclusion in the *Canada National Parks Act*.

**Actions**

- a) Complete negotiations with the Province of Manitoba for the transfer of road allowances, surface and sub-surface mines and mineral rights.
- b) Initiate research/information gathering and develop a strategy to address zoning and other management decisions for these lands.

**10.4 Realty Agreements**

Realty agreements assist with the management and use of land in the national park by others. These uses require supporting agreements to ensure impacts are minimized and there is a fair return to the Crown, on behalf of the people of Canada, for the privilege of land uses. The community of Dauphin used RMNPC as a source of drinking water before the park was established and continues to do so. The main water source is the Vermillion River, however the city wants to maintain rights to use Edwards Lake as a reservoir and maintain the dam and outlet channel.

Three not-for-profit church camps (Anglican Church Camp Diocese of Brandon, Canadian Covenant Heights Christian Camping Association, United Church Camp Wasaga) are located on the west shore

of Clear Lake and have been operating under a Licence of Occupation since 1951. The operating season for the church camps extends from late May through early September with church group use typically occurring in July and August. The camp facilities are available for public use when not required by church members during the operation season. As a term and condition of the License, licensees must meet all applicable federal and provincial guidelines, standards or regulations related to visitor safety and environmental protection.

**Strategic Goal**

Ensure agreements, permits and guidelines take into account the capital asset principles (see Figure 5).

**Actions**

- a) Collect information on current water uses and where necessary, issue permits or develop agreements.
- b) Complete negotiations and finalize a water use agreement with the City of Dauphin that includes related infrastructure and use of Edwards Lake/Edwards Creek.
- c) Create an inventory, develop and implement a strategy to address boundary encroachments and other realty anomalies (e.g. Vermillion Reservoir, wells in the Clear Lake Subdivision, Edwards Lake).
- d) In consultation with Church Camp operators, develop and implement a strategy for environmental management that is consistent with Parks Canada policies on managing outlying commercial and not-for-profit developments.







## 11.0 A Place for Open Management: Strategy for Regional Cooperation

### **11.1 Introduction**

National parks and national historic sites belong to all Canadians and Canadians have the right to participate in their management. Parks Canada is committed to meaningful public involvement in planning and management of protected heritage areas across the country. Parks Canada also sees the need for partnerships within the regional ecosystems around protected heritage areas. The value of local, traditional knowledge and the contributions of regional residents to ecosystem conservation, presentation and visitor use is recognized by RMNPC. The public helped to develop this management plan and Parks Canada is responsible to share information and report progress over the next five years as the plan is implemented. To achieve the goals outlined in the plan, RMNPC needs to build upon its collaborative partnerships with First Nations, other government agencies, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations to build support and better manage the park. Parks Canada can also play a leadership role in many areas to help build capacity with partnering organizations.

### **11.2 Consulting on Plan Implementation**

On-going consultation over the next five years is essential to ensure that local residents are informed and involved in the implementation of this management plan. Such consultation will ensure that the

next management plan review process is inclusive and carries forward the cooperative principles and practices developed in co-operation with stakeholders, residents, First Nations and other governments within the region. Consultation will continue during the implementation of this plan, with First Nation communities through the Coalition of First Nations, and with local stakeholders through the Riding Mountain Advisory Board.

### Strategic Goals

1. Respect and recognize the inter-relationship between non-aboriginal and local Anishinabe communities in the Riding Mountain area.
2. Improve the working relationship between local First Nation communities and Parks Canada in the areas of ecological integrity, commemorative integrity, and tourism.
3. Increase local First Nation communities' opportunities and roles in influencing management decisions.
4. Improve decision-making processes by involving affected stakeholders and ensure that stakeholders have opportunities to influence management decisions in the implementation of the plan.
5. Promote continuous information exchange among stakeholder groups and between stakeholder groups and RMNPC.

### First Nation and Parks Canada Interests

- Commemoration of First Nations History
- Presentation of Culture and History (e.g. displays, programs, place names in RMNPC)
- Tourism
- Caring for the Land (Traditional Knowledge, use of resources for tradition and/or commemorative purposes)
- Employment/Economic Development
- Improved working relationship between First Nations and RMNPC
- Improved decision-making

### Actions

- a) Complete the Riding Mountain Forum Agreement between the Coalition of First Nations with Interests in RMNP and Parks Canada.
- b) In partnership with the Coalition of First Nations, develop and implement initiatives for each of the interest areas (see sidebar, "First Nation and Parks Canada Interests").
- c) Organize annual meetings of the Riding Mountain Advisory Board (RMAB) to report on progress in implementing the park management plan and obtain ongoing advice. Consider adjustments to the membership and operation of the RMAB.
- d) Maintain existing focussed stakeholder groups such as the Wasagaming Tenants' Association and the Bovine TB Stakeholder Advisory Committee.
- e) Meet on a biannual basis with municipal governments to share progress in implementing the management plan and to receive information, concerns and advice.

### 11.3 A Partnership Approach

As Riding Mountain National Park strives to work cooperatively in the regional ecosystem, active and equal partnerships are becoming more important. Through these partnerships, the entire region benefits as First Nations, local residents, the provincial and local governments, and Parks Canada

share the tools and responsibilities of managing activities over the larger landscape. It is a priority of RMNPC to support the Coalition of First Nations as they develop their capacity to take on leadership roles.

### **Strategic Goal**

Continue to work with federal, provincial, municipal and First Nation governments, non-governmental agencies and landowners to protect regional ecosystems and cultural resources, enhance educational opportunities and quality visitor experiences in the region.

### **Actions**

- a) Develop, with regional partners (Coalition of First Nations, provincial departments, Biosphere Reserve, municipalities and conservation districts) a regional-scale approach to ecosystem research, restoration and active management.
- b) Develop a regional approach with partners to assist with protecting/presenting cultural resources in the region.
- c) Continue to be an active member of the Parkland Tourism Association, and continue to work closely with Tourism Manitoba, with the objective to promoting tourism activities in the region that result in quality visitor experiences.
- d) Meet annually with tourism operators and guides to provide messages and information of interest to their clients related to ecosystem and cultural resource management.
- e) Facilitate or play a leadership role in the development of a regional strategy to improve communication with regional residents, municipalities, and conservation districts that will improve access to information/data about ecosystems.

### **11.4 Strengthening Capacity**

Managing for ecological and commemorative integrity and related visitor experiences requires participation and support from people within the area surrounding RMNPC. In order to foster that support, RMNPC must become engaged in sustainable actions within the region that are compatible with the park's vision.

### **Strategic Goals**

1. RMNPC will act as a catalyst to support the Biosphere Reserve in its mission to foster sustainable communities within the Biosphere Reserve area.
2. With partners in the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve area, develop the capacity to coordinate planning and programme delivery so that residents can more directly experience the social, economic and ecological benefits that RMNPC and partners can provide to the region.
3. Re-orient staff roles and responsibilities to emphasize achieving success at ecological integrity, commemorative integrity, visitor experience and heritage presentation at the scale of the Biosphere Reserve.
4. Improve access for regional partners to information and research about ecosystems, and broaden participation in the scientific process to residents of the Biosphere Reserve area.



### **Actions**

- a) RMNPC, with the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve (RMBR), will develop and implement a strategy for strengthening the capacity/resources of the RMBR with more involvement from municipal, provincial governments and industry.
- b) In partnership with the RMBR and First Nations, establish an advisory board to guide social and natural science research activities and share results at the scale of the Biosphere Reserve. Integrate traditional ecological knowledge within the program of research and management.
- c) Develop, with regional partners, a conceptual approach for coordinating Parks Canada's management plan process with regional planning processes.

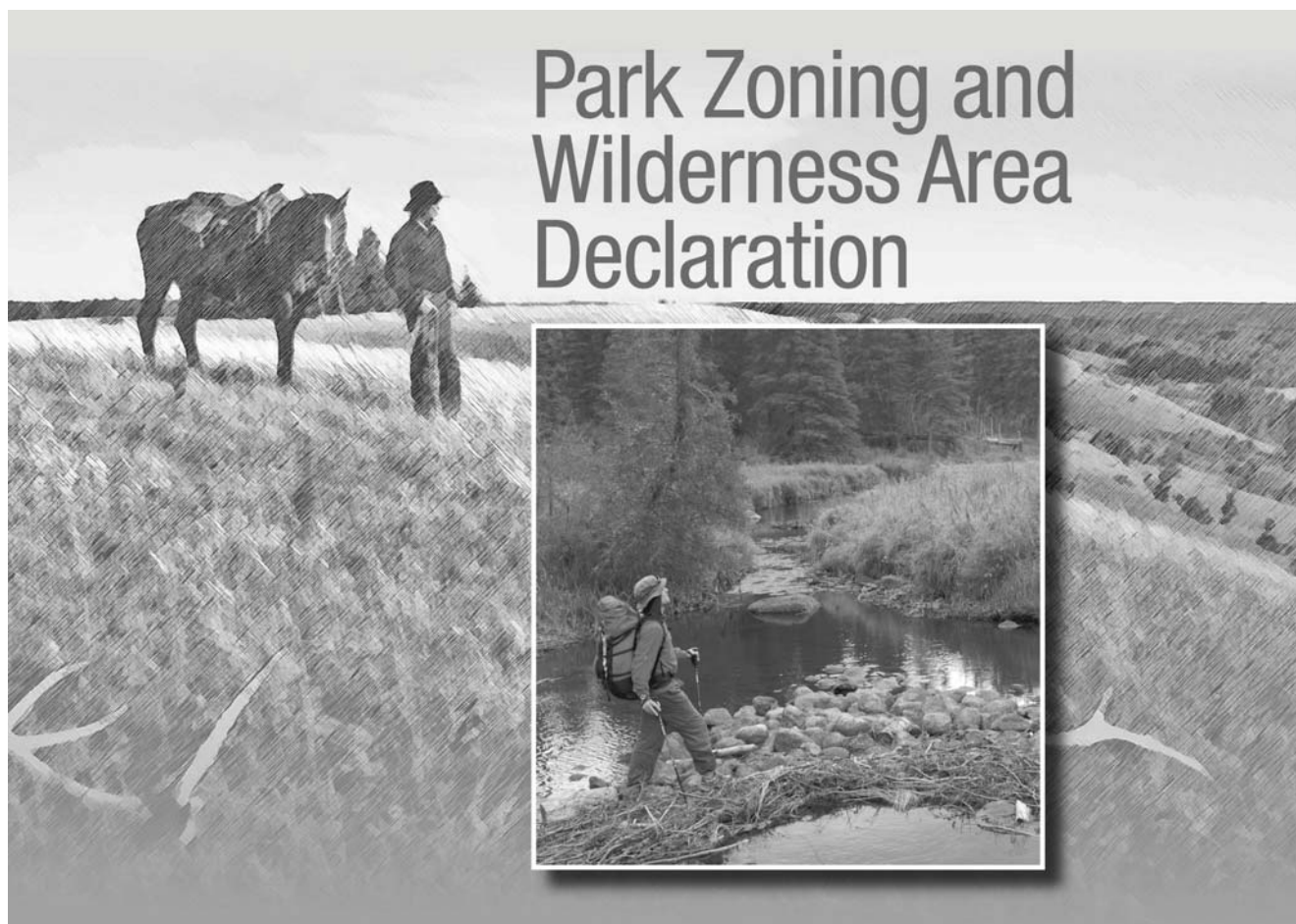
### **11.5 Monitoring and Reporting**

#### **Strategic Goal**

With regional partners, develop the capacity to report accomplishments in delivering on shared ecosystem objectives.

#### **Action**

Develop indicators to measure and report on the success of regional integration of RMNPC within the Biosphere Reserve area. Harmonize provincial and federal indicators as much as possible.



## 12.0 Park Zoning and Wilderness Declaration

### 12.1 Introduction

Parks Canada's zoning system classifies areas in national parks according to their need for protection. The suitability of these areas for visitor activities is a consideration in zoning decisions. The zoning system has five categories: special preservation; wilderness; natural environment; outdoor recreation; and park services. Figure 8 outlines the zones for RMNPC.

### 12.2 Park Zoning

#### **Zone I – Special Preservation**

Special preservation lands are zoned when lands contain or support unique, threatened or endangered natural or cultural features, or are among the best examples of the features that represent a natural region.

The previous management plan identified four Zone I areas: Fescue Prairie, Shoal Lake Marsh Community, Manitoba Escarpment and a Snake Hibernacula. Although these areas are examples of features within this natural region, they do not contain unique, threatened or endangered features.

The former Zone I areas, which amount to approximately 40 km<sup>2</sup>, are designated as Zone II and will be managed to ensure they are protected for the future.

### **Zone II – Wilderness**

These extensive areas represent and conserve the natural region in a wilderness state. Protecting ecosystems where human influence and visitor facilities are minimal is the key consideration. Zone II areas offer opportunities for visitors to experience the parks' ecological characteristics firsthand with few, if any, rudimentary services and facilities. Facilities are restricted to trails, backcountry campgrounds, backcountry huts, trail shelters, and warden patrol facilities. Motorized access is not permitted.

Changes to Zone II Wilderness from the previous management plan include the addition of 40 km<sup>2</sup> (i.e. former Zone I lands) and the exclusion of 2.5 km<sup>2</sup> that are now Zone III. The wilderness zone in RMNPC comprises 97% of the total park area.

### **Zone III – Natural Environment**

In Zone III areas, visitors discover the park's natural and cultural heritage through recreational activities that require few rustic services and facilities. Controlled motorized access can be permitted. Zone III applies to areas where visitor use and facilities exceed the acceptable standards for Zone II.

The previous management plan did not include Zone III areas. The wilderness declaration process requires a detailed examination of facilities and uses. This led to the establishment of Zone III in RMNPC because some areas could not be included in Zone II wilderness. They include the electric transmission line corridor, Vermillion Reservoir, Edwards Lake channel and dam because they include infrastructure or uses that exceed acceptable standards for Zone II. Moon Lake and Lake Audy were changed from Zone IV to Zone III because:

- the motorized use is at much lower levels in comparison to Clear Lake;
- the level of development on these lakes is more suited to the natural environment zone.

Public motorized access will not be permitted on the electric transmission line corridor. Zone III comprises approximately 11 km<sup>2</sup>, less than 1% of the park.

### **Zone IV – Outdoor Recreation**

Outdoor recreation zones are limited areas capable of accommodating a broad range of opportunities for understanding, appreciating and respecting the park's heritage value. Opportunities for visitor experiences and related essential services and facilities are provided in ways that have minimal impact on the ecological integrity of the park. Direct access by motorized vehicles is permitted.

Zone IV areas remain consistent with the previous plan with the exception of Moon Lake and Lake Audy which were re-zoned as Zone III. Zone IV includes all public road corridors and related developments such as day use areas, trailheads, and campgrounds. Clear Lake and the warden stations are Zone IV as well. Zone IV comprises approximately 2% of the park.

### **Zone V – Park Services**

Park communities, operations and administration, visitor services, and support facilities are concentrated in park service zones. In RMNPC, the Zone V areas are consistent with the previous plan and include the community of Wasagaming whose boundaries are defined in the *Canada National Parks Act*, the park's maintenance compound located off Highway #10, sewage lagoons located southwest of the community and the Clear Lake Subdivision (North Shore cottage area). Zone V comprises less than 1% of the park, approximately.

### **12.3 Declared Wilderness**

The *Canada National Parks Act* provides for areas of a national park to be declared, by regulation, as wilderness areas. The intent of this legislation is to enhance protection and maintain a high level of ecological integrity. In these declared wilderness areas, the legislation only permits development and activities required for essential services and resource protection. Wilderness designation is one of a range of tools to ensure the preservation of wilderness values.

Declared wilderness areas are to be legislated within one year of the plan's approval. In RMNPC, either all, or the majority of the land classified as Zone II in RMNPC will be included in this legislation. Portions of the park boundary that are Zone II may be excluded from the legislation. This is being determined through consultation with First Nations and rural municipalities around RMNPC as they plan an over-snow vehicle route in the region (see Part 7.8). With the exception of over-snow vehicle use, visitor use in declared wilderness areas will not change. A map of the wilderness areas will be available to the public before the declaration occurs.

#### **Strategic Goal**

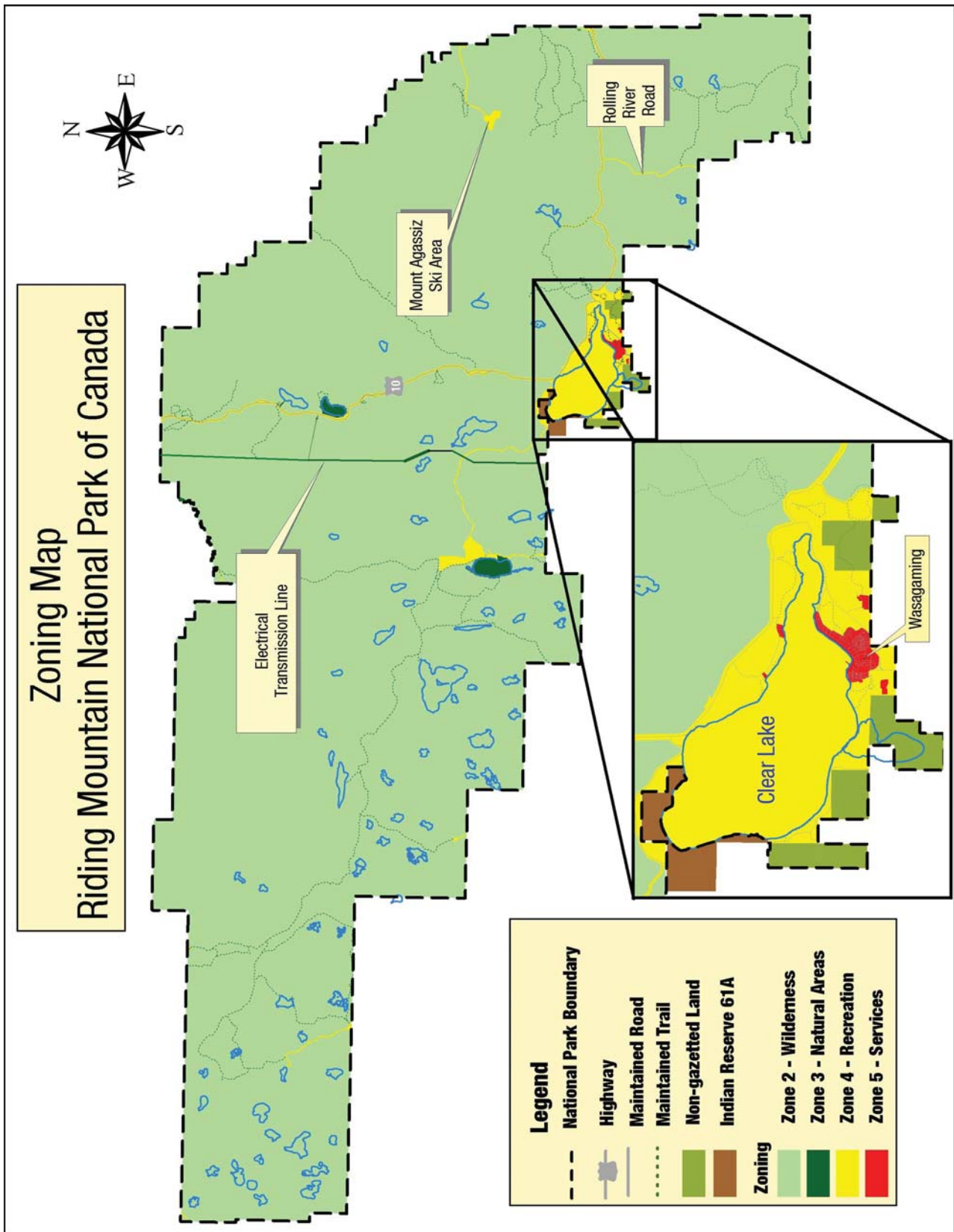
Manage activities in the park in accordance with zoning and ensure long term protection of wilderness areas.

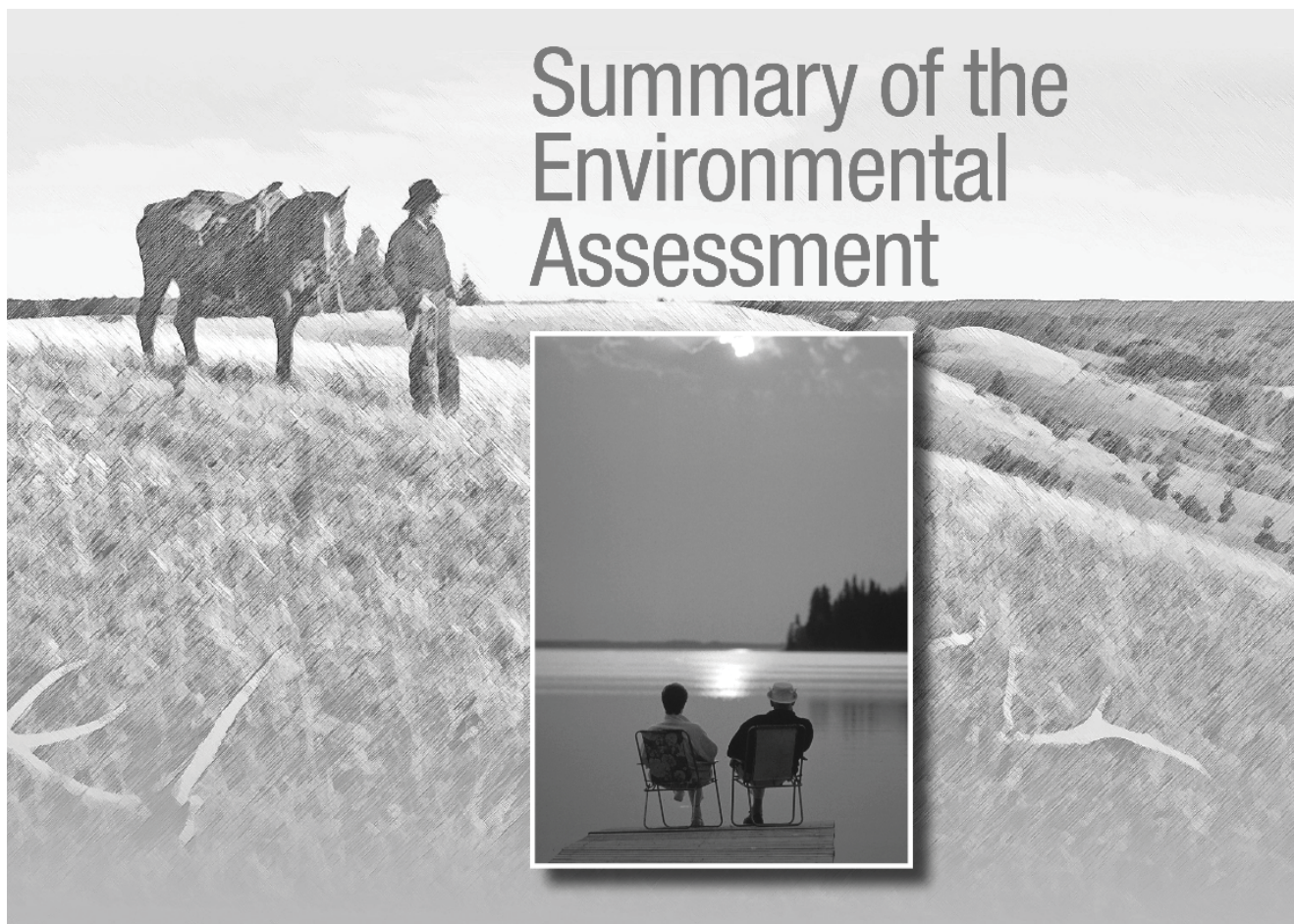
#### **Action**

Initiate the process to have Zone II areas, identified in this plan, be declared wilderness within one year of the tabling of the management plan.



FIGURE 8: PARK ZONING





### 13.0 Summary of the Environmental Assessment

The "Riding Mountain National Park of Canada and Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan" was subjected to a strategic environmental assessment according to the 2004 "Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals". The strategic environmental assessment was conducted to ensure that the environmental effects of the initiatives contained in the plan were fully considered before any irrevocable decisions had been taken.

The environmental assessment focused on the cumulative effects of management actions on the following environmental aspects: wildlife, vegetation, aquatic ecosystems, visitors, and cultural resources. Many of the proposals in the Management Plan will require assessment under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* when specific project descriptions have been developed. The mitigation identified in the project assessments will address many of the impacts to the environment. However, the strategic environmental assessment identified areas where project assessments were insufficient or where extra emphasis should be given within the project assessment to ensure cumulative effects were addressed adequately. The following were some of the key findings and recommendations:

- although the Bison Management area and Lake Audy area are included in the park fire management plan, the role of fire should be considered in the Bison Management Strategy and Lake Audy Strategy to ensure proper integration;
- for those actions that may involve new activities or new locations, the impacts on the prescribed fire program should be considered because the implementation of the prescribed fire program is critical to the maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity;
- any new activities in the bur oak woodland and fescue prairie should have an environmental assessment conducted with an extensive analysis of the potential cumulative effects on these ecosystems at a park wide scale;
- as the major projects that could affect water quantity are in separate watersheds, project specific environmental assessments of those projects will be suitable for identifying appropriate mitigation;
- the Management Plan commits to completing the design for wastewater treatment infrastructure upgrades that incorporate leadership standards for effluent. Ultimately, funding must be pursued so that these upgrades can be constructed;
- the Plan also commits to working with the North Shore cottage owners, church camp operators and others to formulate guidelines for wastewater. It will be critical to ensure that these guidelines provide sufficient protection for water quality;
- project level assessments of applicable projects should give special attention to the impacts on wildlife movement because of the uncertainties around cumulative effects.

Positive cumulative effects include greater knowledge of the ecosystems through research and monitoring and improved visitor experiences. In addition some of the actions in the Management Plan commit to identifying ways to minimize the impacts of ongoing activities and infrastructure.

The strategic environmental assessment determined that the potentially adverse environmental effects from the proposals in “Riding Mountain National Park of Canada and Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan” can be mitigated to insignificance.



## Annex 1 – Glossary of Terms

### **Adaptive Management**

A policy framework that recognizes biological uncertainty, while accepting the mandate to proceed on the basis of the best *available* scientific knowledge. An adaptive policy treats the program as a set of experiments designed to test and extend the scientific basis of management.

### **Appropriate Activity**

Parks Canada defines an appropriate activity as an activity that is:

- consistent with [Parks Canada Policies] and the protection of ecological and/or commemorative integrity of protected areas;
- especially suited to the particular conditions of a specific protected heritage area; and
- provides the means to appreciate, understand and enjoy protected heritage area themes, messages and stories.

### **Biodiversity**

The variety of life forms, the ecological roles they perform, and the genetic diversity they contain.

### **Biosphere Reserves**

Representative examples of landscapes, each with their characteristic plants, animals and human uses, which have been given an international designation under the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), launched in November 1971. Each biosphere reserve is made up of a protected "core" of undisturbed landscape (such as a national park), together with nearby areas showing some of the ways in which once-similar landscapes are being managed to meet human needs.

### **Conservation District**

A conservation district (CD) is a group of neighbouring rural municipalities in the Province of Manitoba working in partnership with the provincial government to develop programs to effectively manage the natural resources of their area. Conservation districts are established under the authority of *The Conservation Districts Act* in Manitoba. Currently, there are 16 CDs covering over 60% of the arable area of Manitoba. Individual conservation district boundaries may vary, however they are usually based on the drainage basin or watershed of the major river in the area.

### **Cultural Resource**

A human work or place which gives evidence of human activity or has spiritual or cultural meaning, and which has been determined to have historic value.

### **Cumulative Effects**

The combined impact of human-caused stressors, that is greater than the sum of individual impacts due to their interaction.



### **Ecological Footprint**

A calculation that estimates the area of Earth's productive land and water required to supply the resources that an individual or group demands, as well as to absorb the wastes that the individual or group produces.

### **Ecological Integrity**

With respect to a park, a condition that is determined to be characteristic of its natural region and likely to persist, including abiotic components and the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities, rates of change and supporting processes.

### **Ecological Integrity, Maintenance of**

Managing ecosystems in such a way that ecological processes are maintained and genetic, species and ecosystem diversity are assured for the future.

### **Ecological Threshold**

An ecological threshold is a condition beyond which there is an abrupt change in a quality or property of the ecosystem. It is the point at which an effect can be seen.

### **Ecosystem**

A community of organisms, including humans, and its non-living environment interacting with one another and intimately linked by a variety of biological, chemical and physical processes. Ecosystems are often embedded within other, larger ecosystems.

### **Herbivore**

An animal that feeds chiefly on plants.

### **Trophic Status**

The level of growth or productivity of a lake as measured by phosphorus content, algae abundance, and depth of light penetration.

### **Mitigation**

The elimination, reduction or control of the adverse environmental effects of a project, use, or activity.

### **Mustelid**

Mustelids are mammals that belong to the weasel family. Mustelids include 65 species (and 25 genera) of weasels, badgers, ferrets, fishers, martens, otters, minks, wolverines, and more.

### **Over-snow Vehicle**

A vehicle that is designed to:

- be driven by any means other than muscular power;
- run on tracks or skis or both; and
- operate on snow or ice.

**Population**

Group of individuals of a single species.

**Precautionary Principle**

When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.

**Watershed**

An area of land, which may or may not be under forest cover, draining water, organic matter, dissolved nutrients and sediments into a lake or stream (Dunster 1996). Usually a height of land marks the dividing line between adjacent watersheds. In RMNPC there are 10 major and three minor watersheds. The 10 major watersheds in RMNPC are: Turtle River (10.8% of park area), Ochre River (11.5%), Vermillion River (15.4%), Wilson River (8.7%), Birdtail Creek (16.7%), Minnedosa River (18.1%), Clear Lake (3.9%), Whirlpool River (5.5%), Rolling River (4.9%), and Big Grass River (1.8%). The three minor watersheds are Shell River (0.5%), Millwood Region (0.7%), and Pleasant Valley Creek (1.2%).



## Annex 2 - Indicators and Targets

Ecological Integrity			
Measure	Target <sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> Target to be determined	Reference section	
<b>Indicator: Forests</b>			
Forest structure	<sup>1</sup> Define forest type and age class targets for boreal mixed wood and aspen forest	4.6	
Condition of bur oak woodlands community	<sup>1</sup> Establish targets for long-term restoration of bur oak woodlands including percentage of park area, condition, biodiversity, patch size range and number of patches	4.6	
Fire in aspen and mixed-wood forests	~50% of the median long-term fire cycle :	4.3	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aspen forest: minimum average annual burned area of 16.6 km<sup>2</sup> (1660 ha.) 2006 – 2016.</li> <li>Boreal mixed-wood: minimum average annual burned area of 6.2 km<sup>2</sup> (620 ha.), relying where possible on natural fire to achieve targets.</li> <li>Continue to evaluate and refine targets as capacity and knowledge increases.</li> <li>Fuel management program to reduce the threat of wildfire to public safety and property in the Wasagaming community implemented.</li> </ul>	4.6 8.3 8.6	
	Role of predators	Minimum abundance of wolves in RMNPC initially set at 70% of the current RMNPC population of 75. Re-evaluate target based on regional population abundance and genetic analysis (by 2011).	4.3 4.6
	Sustainability of harvested wildlife populations	Regional elk population maintained at 2500 +/- 20%, or as determined by the MB Bovine TB Management Program. (Target range under non-disease conditions is 2500 – 4000).	4.3 4.4
Habitat connectivity.	<sup>1</sup> Common goals, objectives and indicators/targets established by 2010/11 for habitat connectivity between RMNPC and Duck Mountain Provincial Park. Percent forest cover in the corridors between RMNPC and Duck Mountain P.P. remains the same or increases.	4.3	
Wildlife disease	Outbreaks of bovine tuberculosis in cattle are nil. Number of sites where domestic animals and wildlife may come into close contact are reduced.	4.4	



Eastern deciduous forest structure	<sup>1</sup> Effects of Dutch Elm Disease	4.6
Human use	<sup>1</sup> Monitoring of backcountry campsites.	7.12
<b>Indicator: Grasslands</b>		
Structure of fescue prairie	Maintain grasslands at minimum total area of 24 km <sup>2</sup> , increase grassland area by 10% over 30 years. <sup>1</sup> Establish targets for condition, composition, patch-size variability and number of patches.	4.3
Fire in grassland.	Minimum average annual burned area of 7.5 km <sup>2</sup> (750 ha.) in grassland, 2006 – 2016. (~50% of the median long-term fire cycle)	4.3
Invasive non-native plant species.	<sup>1</sup> Number of invasive plant species and/or spatial extent maintained or reduced. At present there are 77 invasive species in RMNPC.	4.3
Breeding bird diversity/distribution	<sup>1</sup> Track species counted (over time) in breeding bird survey plots. As baseline data, the spring 2004 survey resulted in 97 species observed.	4.6
<b>Indicator: Wetlands</b>		
Water quality	<sup>1</sup> Nutrient and contaminant (phosphorus and ammonia) levels in the snow pack and aquatic systems.	4.6
Structure	<sup>1</sup> Extent of wetlands in selected park areas (to be developed).	4.6
Natural functions: beaver populations	<sup>1</sup> Number of active beaver caches in RMNPC. The historic range is 2,000 – 4,000 over 30 years. Present estimate is 1,773 caches within RMNPC.	4.3 4.6
Deposition of atmospheric pollutants	<sup>1</sup> Baselines for deposition of atmospheric pollutants established.	4.6
<b>Indicator: Lakes</b>		
Sustainability of harvest	<sup>1</sup> Harvest of native fish species (pike and whitefish) on Clear Lake and Lake Audy. Sustainable harvest levels to be established. Citizen monitoring program implemented.	4.3

<p>Water quality in Clear Lake Basin.</p>	<p>Phosphorous measures to be refined, interim targets are: Total phosphorous &lt; 54 micrograms per litre, and Total Dissolved Phosphorous &lt; 26 micrograms per litre.                      Chlorophyll a target level &lt;7 micrograms/litre                      Secchi disk visibility &gt;3.7 m.                      Monitor phosphorous loading through Octopus Creek/South Lake and groundwater.                      Reduce Phosphorous loading to Clear Lake by 50% from present levels.  <sup>1</sup> Slimy sculpin and whitefish monitoring program and targets established.</p>	<p>4.3</p>
<p>Benchmark Lake water quality</p>	<p><sup>1</sup> Productivity, oxygen and chlorophyll-a baseline and targets to be established in selected benchmark systems.</p>	<p>4.3</p>
<p>Clear Lake Basin stewardship/use</p>	<p>A cooperative management agreement with the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation completed.                      100% compliance with outboard marine emission program by 2008.  <sup>1</sup> Monitoring program and targets for oversnow vehicle use established.</p>	<p>7.10 7.8</p>
<p><b>Indicator: Streams</b></p>		
<p>Fragmentation and water flow</p>	<p><sup>1</sup> Establish baseline (maximum) for number of watercourses fragmented by roads, culverts and dams. Set targets and deadlines, by watershed, for enhancing the integrity of streams.</p>	<p>4.3</p>

Environmental Management		
Measure	Target	Reference section
<b>Indicator: Greenhouse Gas Emissions</b>		
Percent reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions	RMNPC's annual GHG emissions reduced by 5.2% by 2010 from 1998/99 baseline.	4.5
<b>Indicator: Contaminated Sites</b>		
Number of contaminated sites remediated.	Remediate high priority sites according to a prioritized schedule prepared by March 31, 2009 (as funding becomes available through the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan)	4.5
Number of sites risk managed.	Risks managed for lower priority sites according to a prioritized schedule prepared by March 31, 2009.	4.5
<b>Indicator: Petroleum Storage Tanks</b>		
Number of tanks in compliance with Federal Technical Guidelines and proposed CEPA legislation (once passed).	All petroleum storage facilities upgraded and operated to meet or exceed the Federal Technical Guidelines, according to a prioritized schedule. Anticipate requirements of draft Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) legislation.	4.5
<b>Indicator: Use of Halocarbons</b>		
Weighted average ozone depleting potential (ODP)	Action plan to reduce weighted ODP in refrigeration and cooling equipment through equipment replacement and use of safer replacement substances developed and implemented by 2010.	4.5
Amount of ozone depleting substances released	Releases of ozone depleting substances are nil.	4.5
<b>Indicator: PCB's</b>		
Total mass of PCB material (>50ppm) in service.	Equipment containing PCB's in Parks Canada's facilities and operations is nil by 2010.	4.5

Cultural Resources - East Gate NHSC		
Measure	Target	Reference section
<b>Indicator: Protection</b>		
East Gate NHSC – resources related to commemorative integrity	Not impaired and not under threat	5.3
Federal Heritage Buildings at the East Gate NHSC	Good condition Residences occupied	5.3
<b>Indicator: Communications – awareness and stewardship</b>		
RMNPC’s visitors’ awareness of the East Gate NHSC	85% of visitors aware of the East Gate NHSC	5.3
<b>Indicators: Experience</b>		
Satisfaction with the East Gate NHS and communications	50% of visitors are very satisfied 85% of visitors are satisfied	5.3

Cultural Resources - Other		
Measure	Target	Reference section
<b>Indicator: Protection</b>		
Sites inventoried and evaluated	Assess one/year average	5.4
Resources protected	Not impaired and not under threat	5.8
Federal Heritage Buildings condition	Good condition	5.6
<b>Indicator: Communications – awareness and stewardship<sup>1</sup></b>		
Visitors’ awareness of PC’s mandate to protect and present cultural resources	85% of visitors	5.4



<b>Indicator: Partners in Stewardship</b>	
Number of collaborative partnerships	20% of identified heritage buildings occupied by others (4 buildings) 5.6
<b>Indicator: Experience<sup>1</sup></b>	
Satisfaction with cultural resource communications	50% of visitors are very satisfied 85% of visitors are satisfied 5.4

<b>Engaging Canadians</b>		
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Reference section</b>
<b>Indicator: Reach - Awareness of Program Offer<sup>1</sup></b>		
Visitor awareness of the various programs and resources available to them in the park.	85% of visitors to the park are aware of the programming available for them	6.5
Teachers are aware of on site school programming offer and of Parks Canada in Schools program.	85% of teachers in the target audience are aware of the program offer	6.4
The public is aware of third party programs available in the park.	50% of our visitors are aware of the third party programs available in the park	6.5
<b>Indicator: Use – Program attendance and use of resources<sup>1</sup></b>		
Visiting public attend programs and make use of heritage presentation programs (non-personal).	10% of visiting public attend heritage presentation programs 50% of visiting public use heritage presentation non-personal programs	6.5
Teachers bring their classes to on site school programming and use Parks Canada educational materials in their classrooms.	50% of teachers in the target audience attend in-park school programming 50% of teachers use educational materials in their classrooms	6.4
Participation levels of school programs in-park.	5,000 contacts per year	6.4
The use of the Visitor Centre as a method of planning the visitor experience.	50% of park visitors use the Visitor Centre as a planning tool	6.5
Visitors attend third party programs in the park.	10% of our visitors attend third party programs in the park.	6.5

<b>Indicator: Satisfaction with Program Offer<sup>1</sup></b>	
Percent satisfaction of participants who attended onsite heritage presentation programs and non personal HP resources.	85% overall satisfied with the program offer 6.5
Teachers are satisfied with the programs attended and with the learning material they use in their classrooms.	85% overall satisfied with the program they attended and with the material they used. 50% are very satisfied with the programs they attended and with the material they used. 6.4
Visitors are satisfied with the third party programs offered in the park.	85% overall satisfied with the program they attended. 50% are very satisfied with the programs they attended. 6.5
<b>Indicator: Understanding<sup>1</sup></b>	
Level of understanding of key messages	Top 5 key messages will be identified and elaborated on website, in visitor guide and in programs and the understanding question should relate to these key messages. 6.3 6.5
Students learn about their natural and cultural heritage	85% of students exposed to Parks Canada programs and resources understand why we have national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. 6.4
<b>Indicator: Engagement<sup>1</sup></b>	
Visitors exposed to HP programming in the park become engaged.	50% of the visitors exposed to our HP programs take concrete action to preserve the environment. 6.5
Students become engaged in conservation activities	50% of students exposed to Parks Canada learning material take concrete actions to preserve the environment. 6.5
<b>Indicator: Program Offer<sup>1</sup></b>	
Originality of heritage programming	At least 25% of the programming will be newly developed programs as to mirror the high repeat visitor of our park. 6.5
Diversity of programming	Programming will reach a broad range of audiences with various themes and methods. Monitor the number and type of audiences, number of themes touched upon, number of methods used in program planning. 6.5

Balance between ecological integrity and commemorative integrity in heritage presentation programs.	Maintain a balance between ecological integrity and commemorative integrity in heritage presentation programs (75% / 25%).	6.5
Quality of the third party program offer.	Monitor the quality, diversity and balance of the third party programs. Parks Canada programs and third party programs are complimentary.	6.5

Visitor Experience		
Measure	Target	Reference section
<b>Indicator: Management decisions influenced by visitors' needs and expectations<sup>1</sup></b>		
Extent to which the park management plan integrates performance indicators	Park management plan includes indicators and targets with associated actions	Annex 2 7.12
Investment decisions respond to the needs and expectations of strategic target audiences	All investment decisions respond to needs and expectations of audiences	7.5, 7.8, 7.12
<b>Indicator: Participate in opportunities targeted to needs and expectations<sup>1</sup></b>		
Level of participation by the target segments	To be developed	7.12
<b>Indicator: Service quality<sup>1</sup></b>		
% overall visitor satisfaction, % very satisfied.	85% overall visitor satisfaction, including at least 50% very satisfied	7.3, 7.12
<b>Indicator: Connecting Visitors Personally with the Place<sup>1</sup></b>		
Level of understanding and importance of these special places Likelihood of return visit (repeat at local and within system)	To be developed	7.12

Community of Wasagaming		
Measure	Target	Reference section
<b>Indicator: Aquatic Ecosystems</b>		
Sewage effluent quality	Total Phosphorus (mg/L) <1.0 Total Ammonia (mg/L) <10.0 TSS (mg/L) <10.0 Apr. 1 – June 15, <25 June 16 – Mar. 31 BOD <sub>5</sub> (mg/L) <20.0 PH 6.5 - 9.0 Total Aluminum (mg/L) <0.1 Fecal Coliforms (MPN/100 mL) <200.0	7.10 8.3 8.5
Sewage effluent quantity	To be developed	8.6
Surface water quality	To be developed	7.10 8.6
Water conservation	To be developed	8.6
<b>Indicator: Terrestrial Ecosystems - Vegetation</b>		
Non-native invasive species	To be developed	8.3, 8.6
Landscape composition	To be developed	8.3, 8.6
<b>Indicator: Terrestrial Ecosystems - Wildlife</b>		
Trail proliferation	To be developed	8.6
Wildlife movement	To be developed	8.6
Human/wildlife encounters - bears	To be developed	8.6
<b>Indicator: Solid Waste Diversion</b>		
Percent diversion from landfill	To be developed	8.3 8.6
<b>Indicator: Contaminated Sites</b>		



Number of contaminated sites remediated	Remediate high priority sites according to a prioritized schedule prepared by March 31, 2009 (as funding becomes available through the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan)	4.5
<b>Indicator: Leadership in Heritage Conservation</b>		
Built Heritage – inventory, condition rating, and designation activity	Inventory - 100% of the heritage buildings included Condition rating – good Designation – target to be developed	5.6 5.8 8.6
<b>Indicator: Responsible Growth Management</b>		
Growth Limits – commercial floor area	28,586 m <sup>2</sup> maximum commercial floor area	8.3
Quality of Life – housing, crime, sense of community	To be developed	8.6
Economic Vitality - # visitors, \$ spent, employment	To be developed	8.6
<b>Indicator: Quality Visitor Experience and Promoting Visitor Understanding</b>		
Character – community’s conformance with architectural and other guidelines	To be developed	8.6
Understanding visitors – decisions influenced by visitor needs/expectations	To be developed	8.6
Providing opportunities – participation by target segments	To be developed	8.6
Quality service - % overall visitor satisfaction, % very satisfied.	85% overall visitor satisfaction, including at least 50% very satisfied	8.6
Personal connection - level of understanding and importance of these special places, likelihood of return visit (locally and within the Park/Site system)	To be developed	8.6
Knowledge, understanding and support	To be developed	8.6
Participation levels	To be developed	8.6
Number and types of opportunities	To be developed	8.6

Satisfaction with learning opportunities	85% overall visitor satisfaction, including at least 50% very satisfied	6.6 8.6
<b>Indicator: Effective and Efficient Administration</b>		
Asset Condition Rating	Fair to good condition	8.6
Operating Costs – cost recovery	100% of direct costs for water/sewer/garbage services	8.6
Responsibility for Stewardship – shared decision-making	To be developed	8.4

<b>Throughways Management</b>		
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Reference section</b>
<sup>1</sup> To be refined based on corporate direction		
<b>Indicator: Environmental Impacts<sup>1</sup></b>		
Wildlife mortality	Decrease in number of incidents.	9.4
Chloride levels (selected watercourses Hwy. 10)	Chloride levels < 600 ppm (present highest value is 132 ppm)	9.2
<b>Indicator: Safety Incidents<sup>1</sup></b>		
Number of safety incidents related to asset condition	Decrease in number of incidents related to asset condition	7.7, 9.2
<b>Indicator: Level of Satisfaction<sup>1</sup> – (parkway experience)</b>		
Percent satisfied	85% satisfied 50% very satisfied	7.12, 9.2