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# Jasper

National Park of Canada

## Management Plan

2022

A UNESCO  
World Heritage Site



2022

# Jasper

National Park of Canada

Management Plan

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JASPER NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2022.

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#### Note to readers

The health and safety of visitors, employees and all Canadians are of the utmost importance. Parks Canada is following the advice and guidance of public health experts to limit the spread of COVID-19 while allowing Canadians to experience Canada's natural and cultural heritage.

Parks Canada acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic may have unforeseeable impacts on the *Jasper National Park of Canada Management Plan*. Parks Canada will inform Indigenous peoples, partners, stakeholders and the public of any such impacts through its annual update on the implementation of this plan.

For more information about the management plan or about  
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## Foreword



From coast to coast to coast, national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas are a source of shared pride for Canadians. They reflect Canada's natural and cultural heritage and tell stories of who we are, including the historic and contemporary contributions of Indigenous peoples.

These cherished places are a priority for the Government of Canada. We are committed to protecting natural and cultural heritage, expanding the system of protected places, and contributing to the recovery of species at risk.

At the same time, we continue to offer new and innovative visitor and outreach programs and activities to ensure that more Canadians can experience these iconic destinations and learn about history, culture and the environment.

In collaboration with Indigenous communities and key partners, Parks Canada conserves and protects national historic sites and national parks; enables people to discover and connect with history and nature; and helps sustain the economic value of these places for local and regional communities.

This new management plan for Jasper National Park of Canada supports this vision.

Management plans are developed by a dedicated team at Parks Canada through extensive consultation and input from Indigenous partners, other partners and stakeholders, local communities, as well as visitors past and present. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this plan for their commitment and spirit of cooperation.

As the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, I applaud this collaborative effort and I am pleased to approve the *Jasper National Park of Canada Management Plan*.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steven Guilbeault', written in a cursive style.

**Steven Guilbeault**

*Minister of Environment and Climate Change and  
Minister responsible for Parks Canada*



## Recommendations

*Recommended by:*



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Ron Hallman  
*President & Chief Executive Officer  
Parks Canada*



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*Senior Vice-President  
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*Superintendent  
Jasper Field Unit*



## Executive Summary

This management plan sets the strategic direction for Jasper National Park for the next ten years. It replaces the 2010 management plan, and provides updated direction consistent with the mandate of Parks Canada and the commitment to stewardship of the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks UNESCO World Heritage Site. Indigenous partners, stakeholder groups and the public were consulted on this management plan and helped shape the future direction of the national park.

Established in 1907, Jasper National Park is the largest and most northerly of the Canadian Rocky Mountain national parks. The park spans 11,228 square kilometres of broad valleys, rugged mountains, glaciers, vast forests, alpine meadows and wild rivers along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Iconic wildlife like grizzly bears, caribou, wolverines, and mountain goats are integral parts of this landscape.

This plan charts the course for Parks Canada to continue to protect this unique ecosystem in the face of ongoing and emerging challenges, including the threats of climate change, invasive species and diseases, and habitat change outside park boundaries. The plan also identifies approaches to protect and present cultural resources in ways that respect their diverse origins and their significance.

This plan acknowledges the vital role and knowledge that Indigenous peoples have on the landscape and presents strategies for how Parks Canada will work together with Anishinabe, Dene-zaa, Nehiyawak, Secwépemc, Stoney Nakoda, and Métis partners in park management. Parks Canada will seek to facilitate Indigenous partners' reconnection with traditionally used lands and waters, create platforms for their voices to share their cultures, histories, and knowledges and increase their participation in initiatives to protect and care for park lands.

Jasper National Park receives millions of visitors each year. This plan sets out a strategy to facilitate sustainable, high-quality visitor experiences that are rooted in the park's distinctive nature and culture. This plan also identifies approaches to foster respectful and responsible use of the park, as well as the long-term support of undisturbed wilderness.

This plan includes six key strategies, which together outline how Parks Canada will achieve the vision presented in section 5. Detailed direction for two management areas, the Community of Jasper and the Tonquin Valley, is also provided. The plan presents detailed objectives and targets to guide park management and decision making for each key strategy and management area. The key strategies of this plan are:

1. Conserving Natural and Cultural Heritage for Future Generations;
2. True-to-Place Experiences;
3. Strengthening Indigenous Relations;
4. Connect, Collaborate and Learn Together;
5. Managing Development; and
6. Climate Change and Adaptation.

The plan concludes with a summary of the strategic environmental assessment completed on this plan. This assessment examined the potential environmental effects of implementation of the direction in the management plan, with a focus on potential cumulative effects. The assessment determined that the implementation of the strategies, objectives and actions of the plan will have positive environmental effects over the life of the plan and no important negative environmental effects are anticipated.



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## 1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada administers one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world. The Agency's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Future-oriented, strategic management of each national historic site, national park, national marine conservation area and heritage canal administered by Parks Canada supports the Agency's vision:

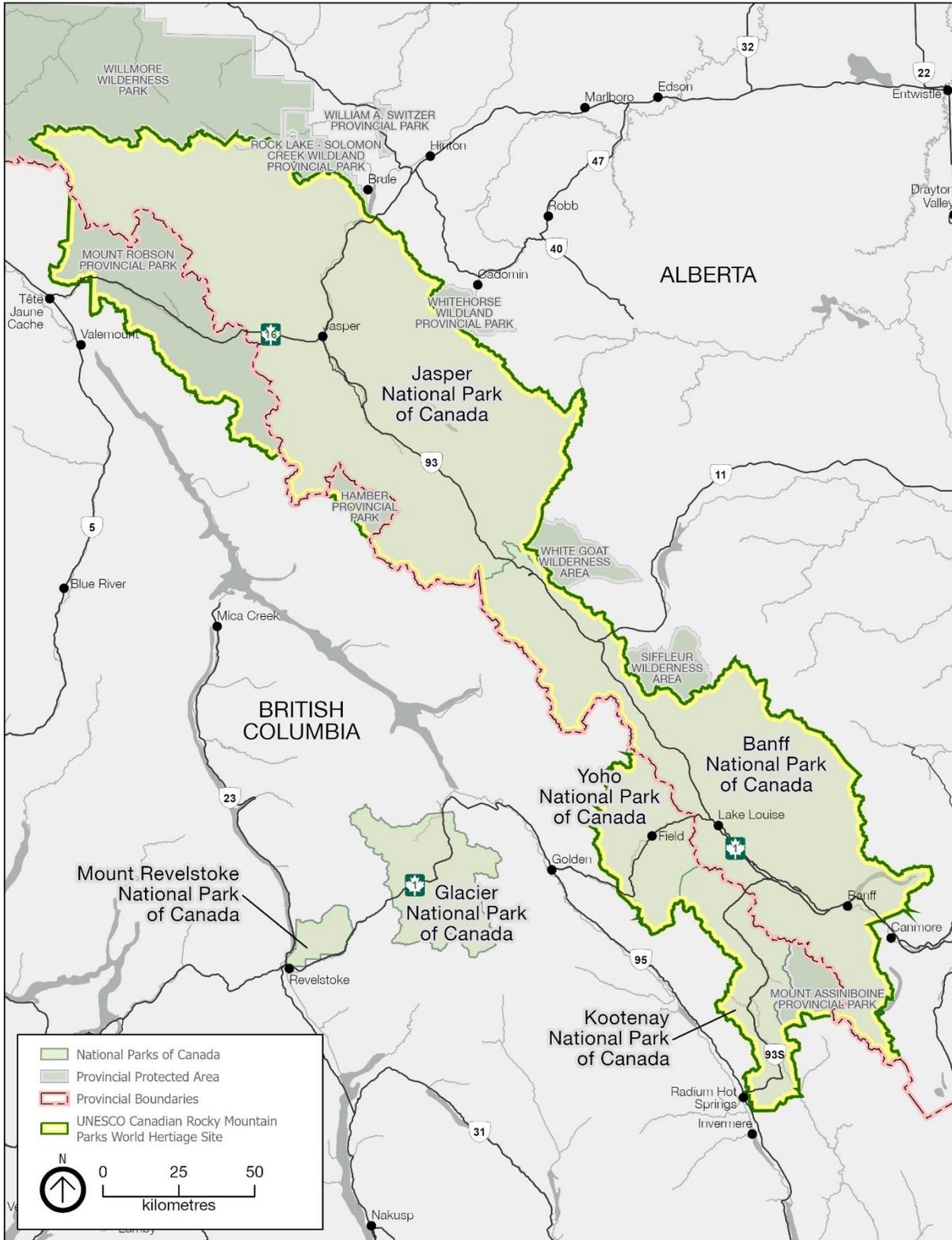
*Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.*

The *Canada National Parks Act* and the *Parks Canada Agency Act* require Parks Canada to prepare a management plan for each national park. The *Jasper National Park of Canada Management Plan*, once approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada and tabled in Parliament, ensures Parks Canada's accountability to Canadians, outlining how park management will achieve measurable results in support of the Agency's mandate.

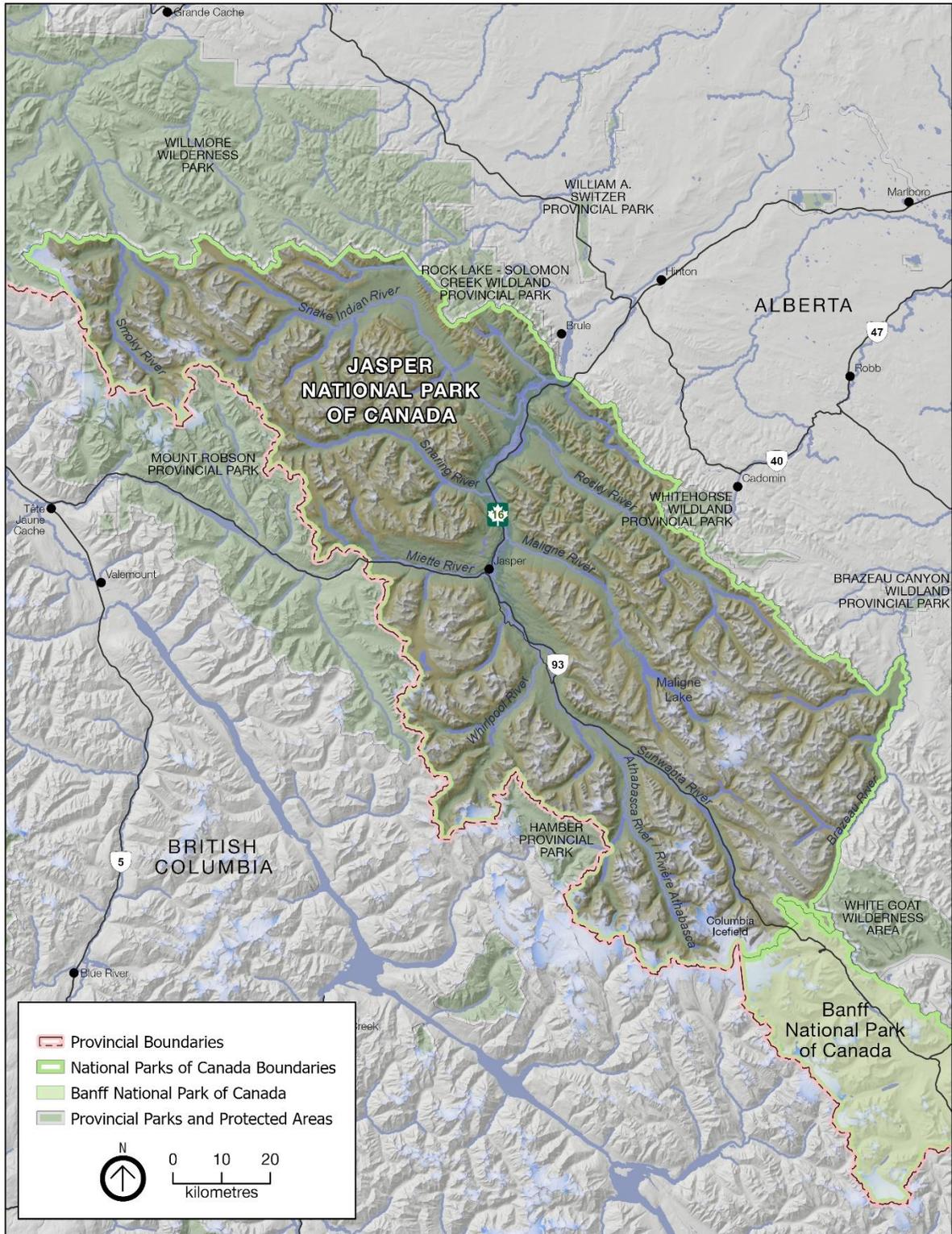
Indigenous peoples are important partners in the stewardship of Jasper National Park, with connections to the lands and waters since time immemorial. Indigenous peoples, stakeholders, partners and the Canadian public were involved in the preparation of the management plan, helping to shape the future direction of the national park. The plan sets clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of Jasper National Park by articulating a vision, key strategies and objectives. Parks Canada will report annually on progress toward achieving the plan objectives and will review the plan every ten years or sooner if required.

This plan is not an end in and of itself. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue on the implementation of the management plan, to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful. The plan will serve as the focus for ongoing engagement, and, where appropriate, consultation, on the management of Jasper National Park in years to come.

Map 1: Regional Setting of Jasper National Park of Canada



Map 2: Jasper National Park Site Map



## 2.0 Significance of Jasper National Park

Long before Jasper was established as a national park, First Nations and Métis peoples lived and made their home on these lands. Some lived in the region year-round, while others came to the area on a seasonal basis for harvest, ceremony, travel or trade.

The park was established in 1907. Shortly thereafter, Indigenous peoples were forcibly removed and excluded from park boundaries, as colonial government policies at the time considered Indigenous peoples to be incompatible with park establishment. Other Government of Canada policies—including restrictions on hunting and gathering, restrictions on leaving reserves, prohibitions on cultural practices and ceremonies and removal of children to residential schools—further prevented Indigenous peoples from travelling through, harvesting and exercising cultural practices in what is now the park. These government practices and policies disconnected Indigenous peoples from their traditionally used lands and waters and caused significant negative impacts to their communities that persist to this day.

Today, Jasper National Park spans 11,228 square kilometres of broad valleys, rugged mountains, glaciers, vast forests, alpine meadows and wild rivers along the eastern slopes of the Canadian Rocky Mountains, making it the largest and most northerly Canadian national park in the Rocky Mountains.

A transcontinental railway and the Trans-Canada Highway now traverse Jasper's mountains through the Yellowhead Pass, following a route once used by Indigenous peoples, explorers and fur traders. The community of Jasper has grown from a railway divisional point to a vibrant visitor centre home to nearly 5,000 people, and campgrounds, lodges, and hotels have replaced horse outfitter camps. Where they were once excluded, Jasper National Park now works together with Anishinabe, Dene-zaa, Nehiyawak, Secwépemc, Stoney Nakoda, and Métis partners to facilitate reconnection to their traditional lands in a spirit of reconciliation.

Jasper is the second most visited national park in the Parks Canada system, supporting a diverse array of sightseeing and recreational opportunities, while maintaining 97 percent of the park as wilderness with little or no development. As a core protected area in the Yellowstone to Yukon corridor of wild lands and waters, Jasper's importance extends well beyond the park boundary.

Jasper National Park includes the following distinctive natural and cultural characteristics:

- The stunning scenery of the Rocky Mountains natural region shaped by the ancient geological processes of mountain formation and the power of water and ice;
- Fast-flowing braided rivers and glacier-fed lakes that form three major river systems: the Athabasca, North Saskatchewan and Peace watersheds;
- Expansive subalpine forests, alpine meadows and a diversity of montane habitats, including aspen stands, montane grasslands and open Douglas fir forests;
- Many of North America's largest land mammals and icons of the Canadian West like the grizzly bear and elk;
- Natural processes, such as wildfires and avalanches, that help to create and maintain the range of terrestrial and aquatic habitats that support a diversity of life;
- Before the park's creation, Indigenous peoples considered Jasper home, and continue to consider it a place of lasting significance;
- Indigenous relationships to the land expressed through traditional and contemporary cultural practices; and
- Tangible historical evidence on the landscape of Indigenous presence, European settlement and nation-building, early tourism development and evolving conservation management, including early camps, Métis homesteads, abandoned railway grades, heritage buildings, old trail networks, and archaeological objects.

Jasper's national and international recognitions and designations include:

- In 1990, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee inscribed Jasper, Banff, Kootenay and Yoho national parks, and Mount Robson, Hamber and Assiniboine provincial parks as the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks UNESCO World Heritage Site for their exceptional natural beauty and classic representation of significant and ongoing geological processes.
- Five sites associated with the fur trade, national transportation corridors and the early development of tourism are designated as national historic sites and are part of the park's unique story:
  - Athabasca Pass National Historic Site;
  - Jasper House National Historic Site;
  - Jasper Park Information Centre National Historic Site;
  - Maligne Lake Chalet and Guest House National Historic Site; and
  - Yellowhead Pass National Historic Site.
- The Athabasca River was designated a Canadian Heritage River in 1989 for its outstanding natural, cultural and recreational values.
- Jasper National Park was designated a Dark-Sky Preserve in 2011.

### 3.0 Planning Context

This plan provides strategic direction for Jasper National Park, building on the foundation of previous management plans approved in 1988, 2000 and 2010. The condition of many of Jasper National Park's natural and cultural resources and program activities was reported in the 2018 *Jasper National Park State of the Park Assessment*.

This plan identifies a future direction for park management. It is not intended to capture or reiterate existing operations, legal commitments or protocols. Park operations and management are guided by a suite of acts, regulations and policies, including but not limited to this plan, the *Canada National Parks Act*, the *Impact Assessment Act*, and the *Species at Risk Act*.

#### **Ecological Integrity**

As stipulated under the *Canada National Parks Act*, maintaining or restoring ecological integrity is the first priority in park management.

Parks Canada's ecological integrity monitoring program assesses the condition of ecosystem components and processes, and the effectiveness of management actions. Monitoring of vulnerable species, like amphibians, can also help to identify new stressors or threats that can impact biodiversity. Data from Parks Canada's monitoring programs is available to the public through the federal government's Open Data portal.

From 2010–2020, nine species occurring in Jasper National Park were listed on Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*. Recovery strategies and action plans are prepared for all threatened and endangered species at risk occurring in the park; these plans and strategies identify conservation measures necessary for the recovery of the species, from habitat restoration to construction mitigations.

The southern mountain population of woodland caribou is an iconic species at risk, which has continued to decline in the park despite conservation actions to address threats to its survival. As of 2020, the Tonquin and Brazeau herds in southern Jasper were at imminent risk of dying out due to their small numbers and the À La Pêche herd in northern Jasper was stable. The Maligne herd had ten or less animals for nearly 15 years and was determined extirpated in 2020.

Managing and adapting to the impacts of climate change represents a significant challenge. Climate change is exacerbating the spread of invasive species and diseases and impacts are expected to worsen in coming years. A mountain pine beetle infestation has brought significant change to forests in Alberta,

including Jasper National Park, with consequences for wildfire risk, public safety, infrastructure management and long-term forest succession. White pine blister rust and invasive plants are already threatening terrestrial species and ecosystems in the park; new threats, such as whirling disease, zebra and quagga mussels, and chronic wasting disease are expanding their ranges toward the park.

The effects of climate change are expected to be most visible in Jasper through glacial retreat, change in the composition and structure of high elevation forests, reduction in alpine meadow habitat, and changes in the distribution and composition of vegetation and wildlife species, including the expansion of invasive species. Many species are likely to be affected by climate change, including grizzly bears, caribou, birds and fish.

Resiliency is used as a guiding principle in conservation efforts, to maintain or improve the ability of ecosystems to adapt to climate change, invasive species, and other potential stressors.

### **Cultural resources**

Jasper National Park protects a wide array of cultural resources, including approximately 700 archaeological sites covering both the pre-contact and post-contact periods, sites of deep significance to First Nations and Métis peoples, and 37 federally listed heritage buildings, the majority of which are in stable condition. Most of the approximately 35,000 artifacts linked to the park are held in Parks Canada collections outside the park. The Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Archives also maintains an important collection and welcomes the public to its permanent and temporary exhibits. Jasper National Park recognizes and respects that there are also archaeological and other significant sites within park boundaries known only to local First Nations and Métis partners.

Cultural resources are protected through national park regulations, a national policy framework and the impact assessment process. A park *Cultural Resource Management Strategy* (2017) sets priorities for Parks Canada's work to manage these resources. Each of the park's five national historic sites has its own management statement, which provides guidance for the management of that site.

### **Indigenous relations**

Parks Canada is currently working with more than 20 Indigenous communities and organizations with connections to Jasper National Park. Throughout this plan, the term "Indigenous" is used to refer to both First Nations and Métis peoples. The park is located in Treaty 6 and 8 territories, as well as the traditionally used lands and waters of the Anishinabe, Dene-zaa, Nehiyawak, Secwépemc, Stoney Nakoda, and Métis. The main park mechanism for engagement with Indigenous communities is through the interest-based Jasper Indigenous Forum, which has met biannually since 2006.

The forced removal and exclusion of Indigenous peoples from the lands that became Jasper National Park as well as other Government of Canada policies that restricted movement, harvesting and physical, cultural and spiritual practices has resulted in a disconnection of these peoples from their ancestral and familiar lands. Parks Canada is committed to working together with Indigenous partners to facilitate reconnection to these lands and strengthen relationships.

Indigenous partners rated Parks Canada's progress in strengthening relationships for the 2018 *State of the Park Assessment*. Partners identified the Jasper Indigenous Forum and working groups as good models of collaboration and partnership. Since the forum was created, access to traditional lands and activities has improved, with the development of a designated area for traditional activities, the introduction of free park entry for partner communities and the issuance of cultural use permits for harvesting of plants and medicines. Going forward, Indigenous partners would like to be more involved in park management, see the weaving of Indigenous knowledges and languages into park initiatives, and have more employment and economic opportunities available for local Indigenous communities.

## **Visitor experience**

Jasper National Park receives around 2.5 million visitors each year. In 2018, 33 percent of park visitors were Canadian, 16 percent were American and 51 percent came from other countries. Visitation grew by 30 percent from 2010–2020. May through September are the peak months for visitation.

Both Parks Canada and the private sector offer a broad range of visitor facilities, activities, services and information that cater to many different interests and abilities. This diverse offer is reflected in the consistently high levels of visitor satisfaction and enjoyment reported in visitor surveys.

Recent capital investment by the federal government's infrastructure program allocated \$312 million from 2015 to 2022 to upgrade facilities throughout Jasper National Park. The funds enabled Parks Canada to address deferred work on park roadways, modernize the eastern entrance to the park, improve trails and bridges and significantly upgrade the largest campground in Jasper's network—Whistlers Campground—to provide new infrastructure and visitor services.

One of Parks Canada's main challenges in delivering quality visitor services and programs is the aging condition of its over 1,000 assets and the volume of visitor use during peak periods. Despite recent investment, maintenance and recapitalization is an ongoing need.

There are various visitor facilities, programs and services offered by third-party operators in the park. These include the Jasper Park Lodge golf course, the Marmot Basin ski hill, the Jasper SkyTram, operations at the Columbia Icefield, Maligne Lake, and Maligne Canyon areas, and diverse outlying commercial accommodations. Parks Canada regulates operators through leases, licences of occupation and business licences, to ensure visitor offers are compatible with Parks Canada goals, policies and legislation.

Learning opportunities in the park take many forms. Frontline services to visitors, informative publications, innovative interpretation programs in campgrounds and the Jasper townsite, roving interpreters at popular visitor areas, and interpretative exhibits and panels all engage visitors in appreciating the park's nationally significant resources and foster a sense of stewardship. Over the next decade, work with First Nations and Métis partners will strengthen visitor learning opportunities on Indigenous cultures.

Despite high levels of visitor satisfaction, increasing congestion at popular sites, growing demand for frontcountry and backcountry campground reservations and increasing human–wildlife conflicts suggest that new tools are needed to minimize the impacts of high visitation levels on the park's natural and cultural heritage. Data on visitor-use patterns and visitor perceptions is needed to develop visitor management strategies.

## **Public appreciation and understanding**

Parks Canada reaches audiences where they live by providing park information through various outreach, partnering and stakeholder engagement initiatives, media relations, and web and social media presence.

The Palisades Stewardship Education Centre brings youth to the park for experiential education programs that blend mountain recreation with environmental stewardship. The current focus of the centre is on youth, Indigenous groups and key audiences from Edmonton, Calgary and other communities closer to the park.

Many different organizations and individuals contribute to and support Parks Canada's work in Jasper National Park, assisting with ecosystem monitoring, raising awareness of caribou conservation, maintaining trails, and other park stewardship initiatives. The Friends of Jasper National Park and the Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Historical Society provide a range of educational programs, events, services and self-guided opportunities. Partnerships with Grande Yellowhead Public School Division, Ski Marmot Basin and others help youth understand, care for and shape the future of their park.

## Community of Jasper

The community of Jasper is the park's main visitor hub and home to nearly 5,000 residents. The Municipality of Jasper provides community services such as utilities, social services and bylaw in the townsite, while Parks Canada remains responsible for land-use planning, development and environmental matters. Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper work together on issues of mutual importance, including emergency preparedness, Fire Smart wildfire prevention and environmental stewardship.

Tourism Jasper, the Jasper Park Chamber of Commerce, the Municipality of Jasper and tourism operators collaborate to support the delivery of visitor facilities and services, promote the park as a destination, and distribute information to visitors and residents.

## 4.0 Development of the Management Plan

This plan was developed concurrently with the management plans for Yoho, Kootenay, Banff, Waterton Lakes, Mount Revelstoke and Glacier national parks, as these places share many of the same challenges, opportunities, stakeholders and visitors. This synchronized approach allowed for landscape level coordination of approaches to protecting resources, managing visitor use and other key aspects of Parks Canada's work.

This plan was developed through consultation with Indigenous partners, stakeholders, and the public. Indigenous, public and stakeholder consultation ensures the management plan reflects the interests of Canadians on the future direction of heritage places. Parks Canada consults on management plans with Indigenous peoples who may be affected by decisions or activities arising from the management of the park. Indigenous consultation increases Indigenous voices in park management. The objective of consultation is to ensure that management planning is open and transparent, reflects sound financial management, contributes to Government of Canada and Parks Canada priorities, and is results-based to allow for assessment and inform future decision making.

Consultation took place in two phases and was conducted in parallel with the other mountain national parks. Both phases used different approaches based on the different needs, interests and rights of diverse groups. Phase 1 of consultation was held in early 2019. In this first phase, Parks Canada asked participants to identify topics for consideration during development of the draft plan, and to help create a vision for the park.

Activities for Phase 2 of consultation focused on the public release of the draft management plan. Initially planned for 2020, Phase 2 activities were paused at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Phase 2 consultation on the draft management plan was held in spring 2021 and encouraged local, regional and national dialogue.

Over the two phases of consultation, 5,000 individuals visited the consultation website, 22 different Indigenous partner communities and organizations participated in consultation activities, and 17 different stakeholder organizations provided feedback. All input received from Indigenous partners, stakeholders and the public was analyzed and considered in the preparation of this final management plan.

Parks Canada reports annually on the implementation of the park management plan through public meetings and an annual report for Jasper National Park. Parks Canada will continue to engage Indigenous partners, local communities, stakeholders and the general public in discussions about the implementation of this plan on an ongoing basis.

## 5.0 Vision

*The vision provides a picture of the desired future state of Jasper National Park looking ahead 15–20 years.*

The awe-inspiring peaks of the Canadian Rocky Mountains and small-town hospitality welcome Canadians and international guests of all ages, identities, abilities and interests to Jasper National Park. The park's big wild spaces and diverse visitor activities and facilities offer immersive experiences in nature in all seasons.

The park landscape bears witness to ancient and ongoing change. This living landscape is shaped by mountain formation and erosion, the retreat and advance of glaciers, and fast-moving headwaters feeding three river basins. Iconic wildlife like grizzly bears, caribou, wolverines and mountain goats roam widely within and across park boundaries. Wilderness areas, including open-valley grasslands, and montane and subalpine forests are shaped by fire and other natural ecological processes. Freshwater ecosystems such as glacial lakes, wetlands and rivers are connected and resilient in the face of climate change, invasive species, disease and other disturbance. These natural resources and natural processes are protected, ensuring the maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity.

Local Indigenous cultures are honoured and respected and Indigenous stories and languages are alive on the landscape. Diverse First Nations and Métis partner communities collaborate in park management, reflecting their connection to these lands. Indigenous knowledges are incorporated into ecosystem management and conservation by using fire and other Indigenous stewardship practices in the park.

The stories of the past come alive through Indigenous voices, old trails and transportation corridors, historic buildings and rustic mountain architecture. The park is a legacy of the evolution and impact of changes in approaches to conservation and visitor use in Canada's national park system.

Visitors enjoy authentic, quality experiences while minimizing their impact to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the park. Immersive experiences in nature benefit visitor's physical health and mental wellbeing, and revitalize their connections with, and thus desire to protect, the broader environment.

The park is also a home and a place to earn a livelihood. The community of Jasper continues to embrace and exemplify its vision of a small, friendly and sustainable community. Business operators contribute to park stewardship through sustainable tourism products, services and business practices.

The park is adaptively managed in response to changing conditions, and decision making is founded on best available knowledge. A diversity of ways of knowing, from the wisdom of the ancestors to the results of research and monitoring, guide park management to maintain ecological and commemorative integrity, and continue to protect the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Parks Canada collaborates with Indigenous partners, visitors, community residents and local businesses, who all have a shared responsibility as stewards of Jasper National Park. Together, we act with common purpose to protect this place for future generations.

## 6.0 Key Strategies

Six key strategies outline the broad approaches that Parks Canada will use to achieve the vision presented in Section 5.0. These strategies will guide the management of Jasper National Park consistent with the mandate of Parks Canada and the commitment to stewardship of the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks UNESCO World Heritage Site. These strategies are:

1. Conserving Natural and Cultural Heritage for Future Generations;
2. True-to-Place Experiences;
3. Strengthening Indigenous Relations;
4. Connect, Collaborate and Learn Together;
5. Managing Development; and
6. Climate Change and Adaptation.

Each key strategy contains detailed objectives and targets to guide park management and decision making over the next ten years. The objectives describe desired outcomes following implementation of program activities. Targets offer tangible ways of measuring progress toward achieving each objective. In some cases, the targets are derived from indicators or thresholds related to Parks Canada monitoring programs. In other cases, they reflect the desired outputs, or shorter-term results, of park management activities.

The approaches listed in this section take into account Jasper National Park's capacity and available resources. Nevertheless, some undertakings may require additional funding or rely on partnership agreements with external collaborators. Where feasible, time frames for reaching certain targets have been provided. Where no dates have been referenced, the target will be achievable during the lifetime of the plan based on opportunities, Agency priorities and the park's capacity. Progress toward achieving the objectives and targets of this plan will be reported on through an annual implementation update.

The key strategies do not sit in isolation from each other nor in order of priority; they should be considered as a whole in order to understand how the plan aims to achieve the vision of the park and the Parks Canada mandate. In many cases, direction for park management activities is integrated into several different key strategies. For example, elements of collaborative work with Indigenous partners are captured in Strategy 1 (Conserving Natural and Cultural Heritage for Future Generations), Strategy 2 (True-to-Place Experiences), Strategy 3 (Strengthening Indigenous Relations), Strategy 5 (Managing Development), and Strategy 6 (Climate Change and Adaptation).

Policy documents are referenced with their date of approval with the understanding that they are updated from time to time and newer versions supersede the older versions referenced in this plan.

### **Key Strategy 1: Conserving Natural and Cultural Heritage for Future Generations**

The protection of natural and cultural resources and park landscapes are core to the reason for the park's existence, and maintaining and restoring ecological integrity is the first priority in park management. Parks Canada's approach to conserving these important aspects is guided by an understanding of and respect for the significance of place and its natural and cultural heritage. Knowing that uncertainties exist, Parks Canada's ecosystem management, conservation and restoration initiatives will be built on the best available science and Indigenous knowledge in support of a precautionary, adaptive approach that provides for evolution of management policies and practices based on the monitoring of outcomes.

Historical activities and developments have had a strong influence on park ecosystems. Wildfire suppression for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has resulted in forests that are more uniform in age and less diverse. Construction of roads, railways, trails, visitor facilities and a townsite has fragmented montane terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Past wildlife management practices resulted in a legacy of predator-prey imbalances, with negative consequences for caribou.

Parks Canada has been working to address these historical effects. For example, fire is being restored to the landscape. Habitat connectivity is also being improved in both terrestrial and aquatic environments. From 2010–2020, the integrity of wildlife movement corridors around the community of Jasper was

improved and many stream-crossing structures in the Athabasca Valley were adjusted to increase aquatic connectivity.

Cultural resources in the park include human works, objects, places, stories, songs, art, practices, and other elements that are associated with past human use of and relationships with the area. Through reverence for, as well as protection and preservation of these elements, we connect with the places, persons and events that have shaped the history of Canada.

New challenges are emerging: climate change is influencing mountain ecosystems, an increasing number of native species are at risk, and the threat of new invasive species is growing. This strategy establishes priorities and identifies approaches to ensure that Jasper National Park's natural and cultural resources are protected, that its biodiversity is resilient and that ecological processes continue to be the main agents of transformation as global and regional changes affect park ecosystems over the next decade.

**Objective 1.1:** Large areas of the park are managed as wilderness, where minimal facilities and low levels of human use contribute to providing the habitat requirements of wide-ranging species like wolverine, mountain goats, caribou, grizzly bears and wolves.

#### Targets

- The multi-species mammal occupancy measure is rated in good condition with a stable trend in the next *State of the Park Assessment*.
- Grizzly bear habitat security is maintained or improved.
- Wolf and elk densities are maintained at levels which support the likelihood of caribou herds to be self-sustaining, and the natural dynamics of montane vegetation communities are maintained.
- Management of recreational trail connections between neighbouring jurisdictions prioritizes the ecological integrity and wilderness character of large tracts of land and helps secure wildlife habitat.
- The visitor offer on trails in remote areas of the park is reviewed, and actions are taken as appropriate to preserve large tracts of land in the park as wilderness.

**Objective 1.2:** The establishment of new invasive species and diseases is prevented or minimized and existing invasive species and diseases are controlled where feasible, to protect the park's biodiversity.

#### Targets

- The risk of spreading invasive species is reduced through outreach and education programs delivered in coordination with mountain national parks and provincial agencies.
- The invasive plant and integrated pest management strategy is updated as required and is implemented, focusing on species that are the most invasive and the most likely to have lasting negative effects on terrestrial or aquatic ecosystems.
- New and isolated invasive non-native plant infestations are identified and eliminated where possible.
- Prevention programs and capacity for inspection and decontamination of watercraft and aquatic equipment are evaluated and improved.

**Objective 1.3:** The conservation status of local species at risk populations is improved and biodiversity is maintained through conservation measures that contribute to species recovery as outlined in the *Multi-species Action Plan for Jasper National Park (2017)*.

#### Targets

- Site-specific recovery targets and conservation measures are developed for species at risk that are added to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* during the lifetime of this management plan.
- Though cross-park collaboration, a minimum of 50,000 rust-resistant five-needle pine seedlings are planted across the mountain national parks by 2030.
- Local and landscape-level recovery actions are developed and implemented for threatened and endangered species; actions are taken individually or in collaboration with regional partners and stakeholders, as appropriate for species recovery.
- Indigenous knowledge and perspectives are incorporated into actions to conserve species at risk.

**Objective 1.4:** The conservation status of woodland caribou is improved.

Targets

- Threats to caribou persistence are sufficiently mitigated to support caribou recovery as outlined in the *Multi-species Action Plan for Jasper National Park (2017)* and the *Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountain Population (Rangifer tarandus caribou) in Canada (2014)*. The efficacy of these mitigations is reviewed regularly and additional measures are taken as appropriate.
- Subject to review and approval through Parks Canada’s impact assessment processes and consultation with Indigenous partners, provincial governments, and the public, a caribou conservation breeding and herd augmentation program is developed and implemented, with the initial goal of rebuilding the Tonquin herd to self-sustaining numbers by 2032.
- Work with Indigenous partners and collaborate with provincial governments, academic institutions and other stakeholders to protect caribou habitat, promote caribou habitat connectivity and support the presence of self-sustaining caribou herds on the landscape.

**Objective 1.5:** Ecological processes such as fire, flooding and native forest insect and disease outbreaks shape native vegetation communities to the extent possible; where public safety is a concern, techniques that best emulate natural processes will be used to manage vegetation.

Targets

- The *Jasper National Park Fire Management Plan (2007)* is updated, including targets for fire restoration, wildfire management and the reduction of wildfire risk for the Jasper townsite and other valued assets within the park.
- Area burned through both prescribed fire and managed wildfire is at least 20 percent of the long-term fire cycle, taking into account climate change impacts and increasing fire frequency and severity. An average of 1,000 hectares per year of fire occurrence is achieved over any 20-year continuous period.
- Wildfire risk reduction measures around the Jasper townsite are implemented and maintained to address the impacts of climate change, the effects of mountain pine beetle infestation, and natural fire risk. Where feasible, prescribed fire is used to maintain and augment thinned areas and restore open forests.
- The Jasper National Park vegetation management strategy is completed by 2024, including restoration targets for priority habitats such as montane grasslands, Douglas fir and aspen stands, dune ecosystems and riparian vegetation.
- Vegetation mapping is enhanced and a vegetation resource inventory is developed by 2024.
- Forest ecological integrity, including insect and disease prevalence, is monitored to inform forest management.
- Indigenous partners are engaged to include Indigenous knowledges and perspectives in fire-management planning.

**Objective 1.6:** Natural wildlife distribution, abundance and behaviour, is maintained or restored, with a focus on improving human–wildlife coexistence.

Targets

- Actions are taken to monitor and reduce wildlife mortality on highways and on the railway. Opportunities for construction of wildlife crossings, fencing, and/or other wildlife mortality reduction tools on the Yellowhead Highway and the railway are investigated and implemented over time if deemed appropriate.
- New opportunities are investigated and implemented over time to exclude elk from areas with high incidence of human–wildlife conflict.
- New and existing strategies and tools reduce wildlife habituation and more effectively manage visitor–wildlife interactions.
- The number of human–wildlife conflicts are reduced in relation to the five-year average number of conflicts from 2016 to 2020.

- Impacts on wildlife from park users and from domestic animals are reviewed and appropriate mitigations are implemented to minimize disturbance.
- Conservation practices based on Indigenous knowledges are incorporated into wildlife management; opportunities for Indigenous partners to sustainably harvest fauna are facilitated in a manner that is aligned with the maintenance and improvement of ecological integrity.

**Objective 1.7:** Maintain or restore aquatic ecosystems for factors such as native biodiversity, water quality, connectivity and flow regimes.

Targets

- The ecological integrity condition measures for aquatic ecosystems have stable or increasing trends in the next *State of the Park Assessment*.
- Barriers to passage of aquatic species in streams are eliminated as opportunities arise in conjunction with road-improvement or infrastructure projects.
- Rivers and streams flow within their natural flood cycles and flood plains without management intervention to the extent possible. Where management interventions are unavoidable, interventions shall be prioritized to occur within existing disturbed areas and rights-of-way or within Zone III or IV areas.

**Objective 1.8:** Cultural resources are identified, documented, protected and communicated in ways that respect their diverse origins and their past and present significance.

Targets

- Jasper National Park’s *Cultural Resource Management Strategy (2017)* is updated and implemented in the context of the *Framework for History and Commemoration (2019)* and other Parks Canada policies.
- Work with First Nations and Métis partners to manage, protect, and where appropriate, communicate their cultural sites and values in the park, while respecting sites known only to them.
- Inventories and record management are updated for archaeological sites, built heritage, objects and collections to align with the Government of Canada Open Data policy and Parks Canada policies.
- The condition of high-priority archaeological sites, Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO) listed structures and national historic sites is monitored through asset inspection and other park programs.

**Key Strategy 2: True-to-Place Experiences**

National parks provide exceptional opportunities for Canadians to develop a sense of connection to their natural and cultural heritage. The opportunity to be immersed in nature, history and diverse cultures while surrounded by wilderness and mountain landscapes is truly distinctive. Maintaining the authenticity and quality of this experience while ensuring that visitors understand its uniqueness is central to Parks Canada’s mandate. Visitor opportunities will be characterized by sustainability and responsiveness to diverse visitor needs and expectations. Activities and communications will be designed to advance understanding and stewardship of natural and cultural resources, encouraging all to share the responsibility of conserving these special places.

This strategy establishes objectives and targets to ensure that visitor experiences in Jasper are authentic and true-to-place. Authentic, true-to-place experiences founded in Jasper’s exceptional natural and cultural values, honour and celebrate the contributions and cultures of Indigenous groups connected to this special place, and showcase the experiences and histories of the many different people who have shaped the park.

Much of Jasper National Park’s distinctiveness rests in its vast protected wilderness. Roughly 97 percent or a little over 10,000 square kilometres of the park is maintained in a natural state with limited infrastructure, to provide wilderness experiences that are true-to-place. Over 500,000 visitors annually enjoy a variety of camping experiences at one of the nearly 100 campgrounds in the frontcountry and

backcountry areas of the park. Recreational activities, including hiking, biking, mountaineering, paddling, snowshoeing, skiing, snowboarding and skating also form key components of the Jasper experience.

This strategy also identifies approaches to ensure that future visitor opportunities in the park are informed by improved understanding of visitor-use patterns, potential cultural and ecological impacts, the physical capacity, condition and characteristics of facilities and infrastructure, and any potential safety issues, to ensure visitor opportunities are sustainable and accommodate people of different abilities, social identities, backgrounds and interests.

Lastly, this strategy aims to ensure that visitor experiences are meaningful and foster a sense of stewardship that leads to respectful and responsible use of the park.

**Objective 2.1:** Visitor experiences in Jasper National Park are rooted in its distinctive culture and nature, and supported by in-person services and visitor infrastructure.

#### Targets

- A range of visitor opportunities are offered by Parks Canada, not-for-profit and commercial operators, allowing visitors to create their own true-to-place experience of the park. These visitor opportunities are grounded in park stewardship and in Jasper's natural and cultural heritage.
- Roadways, including the Icefields Parkway, Maligne Road, Pyramid Road, Miette Road and Cavell Road, are operated and maintained as scenic heritage corridors. Management of these corridors prioritizes visitor experience, visitor safety, and active transportation such as cycling.
- Responsible use of Jasper's waterbodies is promoted, including the introduction of limits on electric boat motor specifications and the development of operating guidelines to manage impacts. Electric boat motor use will not be expanded beyond the current opportunities on Maligne, Medicine, Patricia, Pyramid and Talbot lakes.
- Park infrastructure is maintained and renewed to minimize risks and to ensure visitor infrastructure supports core visitor experiences and operational needs.
- The visitor enjoyment indicator remains in good condition with a stable trend in the next *State of the Park Assessment*.

**Objective 2.2:** Jasper National Park welcomes, includes and accommodates people of different abilities, social identities and backgrounds.

#### Targets

- Accessibility and inclusivity audits are carried out on visitor infrastructure and facilities, with a focus on road-accessible areas, visitor information services and high-use, iconic areas; improvements are identified, prioritized and carried out on an opportunistic and systematic basis.
- Visitors are provided with descriptive and visual information about infrastructure and facilities prior to their visit that allows them to make their own assessment about whether their particular needs will be met.
- New or renovated visitor facilities incorporate accessible and inclusive design principles in accordance with the *Accessible Canada Act*.
- Measures are developed and implemented in collaboration with Indigenous partners to support partners in feeling culturally safe, included and welcome in the park.
- People of different abilities, identities and backgrounds are supported in feeling included and welcome in the park.

**Objective 2.3:** Visitor-use management strategies and tools are developed and implemented to manage visitor congestion, demand, behavioural concerns, and safety issues, to support visitors having quality experiences in a protected heritage area.

#### Targets

- Experiential outcomes and expectations, physical capacity limitations and ecological impacts will be considered when implementing visitor-use management tools. These tools may include reservation requirements, permits, education and awareness initiatives, transportation alternatives and parking management actions, among others.
- Park planning and decision making to guide visitor use is informed by data on visitor demographics, patterns of use and trends in visitor behaviour and motivations.
- Commercial operators manage on- and off-site impacts associated with their operations and ensure that any changes in operations have minimal impact on ecological integrity or Parks Canada infrastructure.
- Improved opportunities for bicycles and other modes of active transportation offer safe, healthy, low-carbon and low-congestion options for touring park roads, including seasonal road closures and designated priority campsites.
- A targeted implementation plan for visitor–wildlife coexistence, covering communications and outreach, staff training and compliance strategies is in place by 2025.
- Information is made available to visitors to empower them to make responsible choices and manage their risk as they enjoy and explore the park.

**Objective 2.4:** The park’s trail network provides a range of opportunities to experience the park and supports harmonious relationships between different trail users and between recreationalists and wildlife.

#### Targets

- Off-road bicycle use is not expanded beyond the existing network of trails where bicycle use is permitted. Adjustments to trails that permit bicycles will only be made to improve the sustainability of trail assets, improve user experiences or to achieve environmental gains.
- The use of e-bikes is reviewed regularly and management actions are taken to minimize their impacts on wildlife and other trail users, while considering accessibility opportunities.
- Commercial and private horse use occurs only in designated areas and is managed in such a way as to allow impacted natural resources to recover, minimize user and human–wildlife conflicts and ensure a sustainable level of trail use. Areas in which horse use is permitted are reviewed and horse facilities and services that will be maintained into the future are identified.
- Asset maintenance and improvements are guided by the Parks Canada trail and bridge priority matrices as well as the trail and backcountry maintenance standards.
- Recreational activities in designated wilderness areas are supported by rudimentary facilities and levels of service.

**Objective 2.5:** The park’s diverse frontcountry and backcountry camping offer is maintained and enhanced to meet the needs, safety and comfort of campers.

#### Targets

- A variety of tools are used to address camper needs, including strengthening education and awareness programs, enhancing infrastructure, and addressing campground services and transportation concerns.
- Existing campground inventories are examined against user demand. Consideration is given to adding new sites to existing campgrounds by increasing the density of individual campsites or by expanding the footprint of the campground as a whole, subject to alignment with environmental, experiential, and visitor-use objectives.
- A vegetation management plan is developed and implemented for frontcountry campgrounds to address natural hazards, invasive species, wildlife attractants, trail rehabilitation and restoration of the forest.

**Objective 2.6:** Visitors act as park stewards and meaningfully connect to the natural and cultural values the park is protecting through a range of learning opportunities.

#### Targets

- Targeted activities and communications advance understanding and stewardship of natural and cultural resources in high-use and sensitive areas of the park.
- Targeted frontline training and programs increase the capacity of Parks Canada staff and tourism operators to present Jasper stories, information and stewardship messages and promote compliance with park regulations.
- In collaboration with Indigenous partners through the Indigenous Interpretation Advisory Group, a group created from the Jasper Indigenous Forum, authentic Indigenous histories, perspectives, values and experiences are woven into park interpretation.
- Storytelling offers an inclusive and engaging approach to understanding history by reflecting the diversity of First Nations and Métis partners and other cultural communities with connections to the park and incorporating multiple narratives, guided by the *Parks Canada Framework for History and Commemoration (2019)*.
- The number of surveyed visitors who say they learned about the natural and cultural heritage of Jasper National Park is rated as good with a sustained or increasing trend in the next *State of the Park Assessment*.

**Objective 2.7:** Jasper is a four-season destination. Winter experiences, such as downhill and cross-country skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, alpine ski and splitboard touring and hiking remain a cornerstone of recreation in the park.

#### Targets

- Parks Canada, not-for-profit organizations, tour operators and other tourism service providers collectively offer a wide variety of winter recreational opportunities to visitors.
- The experience on Parks Canada's trails, including infrastructure and grooming for winter recreation, is enhanced.
- Seasonal area closures will be used as appropriate in the Tonquin, Brazeau and À La Pêche caribou ranges to protect caribou habitat, discourage facilitated predator access, and support caribou recovery.
- Year-round recreational access is maintained in the Maligne caribou range, subject to caribou recovery requirements and visitor safety and ecological integrity objectives.

### Key Strategy 3: Strengthening Indigenous Relations

The Government of Canada has committed to deepen and strengthen relationships with Indigenous peoples. Accordingly, many places administered by Parks Canada are managed through cooperative management bodies or advisory relationships with local Indigenous communities. These structures recognize the important and ongoing roles and responsibilities of Indigenous peoples as stewards of heritage places. With approaches founded on renewed relationships, respect and cooperation, the mountain national parks will continue to recognize Indigenous connections and work with Indigenous peoples to advance priorities of mutual interest.

Jasper National Park is in a period of transition, from a past where Indigenous peoples were separated from their traditionally used lands and waters, to the present, where Parks Canada and Indigenous communities with traditional connections to the park are working together. This strategy seeks to facilitate Indigenous reconnection with their traditionally used lands and waters, create platforms for Indigenous voices to share their cultures, histories and knowledges, increase Indigenous participation in initiatives to protect and care for park lands and create opportunities for the involvement of Indigenous partners in park management. Other strategies of this plan also include objectives and targets about working with Indigenous partners and strengthening relations with them.

Jasper National Park's work with Indigenous partners also supports other broader Government of Canada initiatives, such as the implementation of recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and efforts toward the implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

**Objective 3.1:** Build respectful relationships with Indigenous partners connected to Jasper National Park, honouring their role as traditional stewards of the land and increasing their involvement in park management.

#### Targets

- There is a strong, respectful relationship between Parks Canada and Indigenous partners, the hallmarks of which are listening, sharing perspectives and working together in the spirit of reconciliation.
- Programs and strategies are developed in collaboration with Indigenous partners to advance their interests and incorporate their ideas and perspectives into park management.
- The Jasper Indigenous Forum, along with Indigenous advisory and working groups created from the Forum, are engaged on programming of mutual interest.
- Indigenous youth and Elder programming is provided in collaboration with Indigenous partners.
- Relationship-building between local Indigenous partners, the community of Jasper and business operators is facilitated by Parks Canada.
- Indigenous recruitment attracts and retains Indigenous staff, particularly from First Nations and Métis partner communities.
- Contracting, procurement and other business opportunities for Indigenous partners increases from a 2019 baseline.

**Objective 3.2:** The contributions, stories and languages of Indigenous partners are celebrated and honoured in Jasper National Park.

#### Targets

- Opportunities are facilitated for local Indigenous partners to tell their own stories in their own voices in the park.
- Through collaboration with Indigenous partners, Indigenous languages are incorporated into selected programs, signage and place names in the park.
- Indigenous partner-led training for Parks Canada staff increases awareness and understanding of Indigenous cultures, practices and histories, and is delivered regularly.

**Objective 3.3:** There is an enduring Indigenous presence in the park and Indigenous partners are able to reconnect with the land.

#### Targets

- A long-term strategy for the Indigenous Cultural Use Area is completed by 2025.
- Spaces are identified and created to support Indigenous reconnection.
- The cultural, traditional and spiritual practices of Indigenous partners are alive in the park.

## Key Strategy 4: Connect, Collaborate and Learn Together

Jasper's mountain landscapes are connected across and beyond park boundaries. Parks Canada reaches Canadians where they live, work and play with the stories of Jasper National Park, to connect them with the natural and cultural heritage of the area. Through partnerships and collaborations that harness the skills and enthusiasm of others, Parks Canada provides programs, reaches diverse audiences, shares information and best practices, and acquires expertise to advance its mandate in Jasper National Park.

Jasper National Park makes information on park management available to Canadians, and collaborates with regional jurisdictions to increase our capacity to understand, address, and monitor landscape-level issues and opportunities including ecological restoration, emergency preparedness, climate change adaptation, maintenance of wildlife corridors and tourism.

This strategy seeks to connect Canadians with the park, to improve collaborative management of cross-boundary issues, to pilot innovative tools to acquire and share knowledge, and to ensure that the perspectives and views of Canadians are reflected in how the park is managed. By connecting and collaborating with others, Parks Canada will enhance the preservation, protection, and presentation of the park for present and future generations.

**Objective 4.1:** Engaging and informative content and programs link visitors to the park's natural and cultural heritage, fostering a sense of shared stewardship and respect for Jasper that transcends park boundaries.

### Targets

- Quality outreach programs targeting traditional and new audiences across Alberta and British Columbia are implemented.
- Emerging opportunities to better communicate and connect the Jasper National Park experience with Canadians and the world are investigated.
- Canadians and international guests planning to visit the park are aware of the visitor offer, heritage designations, the visitor's role in park stewardship and how best to prepare for a safe and enjoyable experience.
- Web analytics and other tools are used to shape our understanding of how Canadians engage with web and social media content and platforms; a digital content strategy that responds to the expectations and information needs of Canadians is implemented by 2025.
- Volunteer opportunities and active collaborations with other organizations are in place.

**Objective 4.2:** Jasper National Park provides opportunities for youth, Indigenous partners and visitors to connect, collaborate and learn together.

### Targets

- On-site and virtual education programs and resources are provided to youth and educators nationally, regionally and locally to spark passion and appreciation for national parks and national historic sites, and to foster the next generation of natural and cultural stewards.
- The role of the Palisades Centre in delivering education programs, Indigenous partner initiatives and visitor experiences is reviewed with respect to Parks Canada's national priorities.

**Objective 4.3:** Parks Canada collaborates with a variety of land managers and organizations operating on lands adjacent to park boundaries to address shared goals for conservation, connectivity, tourism and cumulative effects management in the regional ecosystem.

### Targets

- Collaboration with regional partners on management of natural resources, cumulative effects and ecological restoration is improved.
- The interests of adjacent land managers are considered when developing responses to invasive species, forest insects and diseases, and there is collaboration on complementary monitoring and management programs.

- Management actions to increase habitat connectivity within and across park boundaries are pursued with regional jurisdictions. Areas where land use pressures and climate change may impact transboundary wildlife populations and natural processes are prioritized.
- A landscape-level connectivity monitoring program is developed with regional partners to support evidence-based conservation.
- Cross-boundary visitor management is improved through work with adjacent parks and communities.

#### **Objective 4.4**

New information, research and tools are developed to inform park management and are used in conjunction with existing practices to share knowledge with Canadians.

#### Targets

- Park research priorities are communicated to and attract collaboration with academic institutions and other organizations on natural, cultural and social scientific research.
- Canadians are able to access up-to-date information and data on natural and cultural resource management on the Government of Canada Open Data Portal and the Parks Canada website.
- New tools are developed and applied to measure and report on cumulative effects and landscape level changes.

#### **Key Strategy 5: Managing Development**

Ecological integrity will be the first priority in park management, including in managing development or redevelopment. Parks Canada's approach will be transparent and consistent, and will continue to respect limits, zoning and declared wilderness designations. Any development considered must demonstrably support the vision and objectives of each park as described in its management plan. Development will facilitate greater awareness and connection to natural and cultural spaces, and aim to protect the qualities that make these places distinctive for future generations.

As the land manager in Jasper National Park, Parks Canada regulates development and land use activity in the park. In addition to protecting a large undeveloped land base, the national park includes various developments that support park operations, visitor uses and the community of Jasper. The park plays an important role in economic sustainability, and includes a national transportation corridor (the Yellowhead Trans-Canada Highway and the Canadian National Railway) and a trans-provincial oil pipeline.

Key commercial staging areas in Jasper National Park include road-accessible outlying commercial accommodation facilities (lodges or bungalow camps), backcountry lodges, facility based tour services, stables and associated trailhead facilities, a golf course and a ski area, among others. Not-for-profit staging areas include alpine huts, cabins and hostels outside the townsite.

A framework of federal laws and regulations, as well as national and regional Parks Canada policies provide the parameters within which new development and the maintenance and operation of existing development may take place. At the park level, zoning, environmental and cultural impact assessments and permitting are key tools for determining where and under what conditions facilities and activities can be approved. Parks Canada also manages licensing processes that allow commercial and not-for-profit groups to provide guiding services. A variety of third-party off-season events provide opportunities for visitors and residents to enjoy the park.

Environmental sustainability is linked to managing development; the redevelopment of facilities and infrastructure can offer opportunities to make environmental gains by improving environmental management. Decision making considers the complete life cycle and cumulative effects of a proposed change and not just the short-term results or impacts.

This strategy encourages creative approaches to managing development that foster park stewardship, incorporate sound sustainability practices and cultivate a strong sense of place through sensitive design, redevelopment and management of activities.

## **Specific Guidance for Managing Development, Business Activities and Events Outside the Community of Jasper**

### ***Commercial Development***

- Changes to designated road-accessible commercial accommodations outside the community of Jasper are guided by the *Redevelopment Guidelines for Outlying Commercial Accommodations (OCAs) and Hostels in the Rocky Mountain National Parks* (2007).
- No land will be released for new road-accessible for-profit commercial accommodation outside the townsite boundary.
- Parks Canada may consider adjustments to boundaries of existing licences of occupation ancillary to existing commercial accommodations outside of the Jasper townsite, or the issuance of a new or replacement ancillary licence of occupation to one of these properties, for the purpose of environmental gains such as facilitating green energy or improving wastewater treatment.
- The *Marmot Basin Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use* (2008), *Parks Canada's Ski Area Management Guidelines* (2006) and any approved Long Range Plan for the Marmot Basin Ski Area are applied. Proposals that are consistent with the growth limits and parameters identified in these documents will be considered through the development review process.
- Parks Canada may consider a proposal from the Jasper SkyTram to redevelop aging infrastructure within the current alignment, or, subject to conditions, an alternative alignment involving a leasehold reconfiguration and related adjustments to zoning and declared wilderness area boundaries. Any alternative alignment will only be considered if it maintains public safety, achieves environmental gains and includes only activities and services that support the core visitor activity of operating a sightseeing passenger ropeway to and from an alpine area. Any proposed Jasper SkyTram redevelopment will be subject to decision making through Parks Canada's impact assessment and development review processes, with Indigenous and public consultation.
- Adjustments to the operating parameters for existing overnight backcountry facilities may be considered to support ecological gains such as caribou recovery objectives and to support visitor experience and learning.

### ***Not-for-Profit Development***

- Minor modification or expansion of existing alpine huts to improve visitor experience and learning opportunities will be considered, subject to alignment with ecological objectives.
- Parks Canada may choose to solicit a third party to convert and operate one or more patrol cabins for public access, on a not-for-profit basis.
- Parks Canada may choose to solicit a third party to convert and operate a road-accessible out-of-service warden station as a public access hostel, on a not-for-profit basis.

### ***Lake Edith***

- Lake Edith cottages will continue to be managed as a seasonal subdivision (occupied from April 1 to October 31), recognizing that several leases allow for year-round occupancy. No seasonal leases at Lake Edith will be allowed to expand in duration. No additional lands will be made available for private cottages.
- Lake Edith's shoreline is managed as a natural landscape and a multi-use trail facilitates public access to it.

### ***Managing Activities***

- Commercial activities are managed through the Parks Canada business licensing process.
- New recreational activities and events are assessed using *Parks Canada Management Bulletin 2.6.10—Recreational Activity and Special Event Assessments*.
- The *Guidelines for New Recreational Activities in Jasper National Park (2015)* guide the management of mountain biking, paragliding and several other recreational activities in Jasper National Park.
- The *Jasper National Park Guidelines for River Use Management (1998)* guide the activities on the Sunwapta, Athabasca, Maligne, Miette and Whirlpool rivers.
- The *Backcountry Operational Guidelines for Jasper National Park (2021)* guide the management of wilderness activities such as random camping and horse use.
- Filming is managed as per Parks Canada's *National Multimedia Guidelines (2005)*.

**Objective 5.1:** Commercial development and redevelopment proposals are evaluated openly and transparently, and are consistent with Parks Canada’s mandate and policies.

Targets

- Established limits to development, realty agreements, and park zoning are respected.
- Environmental impact assessment processes and aesthetic guidelines are applied in the evaluation of a proposed project, and the full life-cycle impacts and benefits of a proposed project are factored into decision making.
- Other heritage designations are considered in the evaluation of proposals, including UNESCO World Heritage, Dark-Sky Preserve and Canadian Heritage River.
- Opportunities are provided for Indigenous and public input for major commercial development proposals outside the Jasper townsite.
- Major development and redevelopment proposals include a park stewardship component that supports conservation.

**Objective 5.2:** New and existing recreational and commercial activities, services and events are managed to ensure ecological integrity, quality visitor experiences and equitable access to business opportunities.

Targets

- The business licensing processes for guided recreational activities and road-based vehicular tours is reviewed by 2025, in collaboration with other field units.
- Guided business opportunities in the park are reviewed regularly, with special attention to high-use areas to ensure that guided activities meet visitor experience objectives and do not compromise the integrity and sustainability of park resources.
- There is equitable access to guiding and business opportunities with improved opportunities for participation of local Indigenous partners.
- Tourism operators participate in third-party employee training or education on park stewardship.
- Tourism partners and operators collaborate with Parks Canada to develop and share wildlife safety and other stewardship messages.
- Businesses, events and activities minimize their impacts on air, water, wildlife, and noise, and demonstrate a commitment to stewardship, a respect for place, and alignment with the Jasper National Park vision and the objectives of this plan.
- Commercial tourism lessees not subject to the *Redevelopment Guidelines for Outlying Commercial Accommodations and Hostels in the Rocky Mountain National Parks* or to *Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use* prepare a long range plan for review and approval by Parks Canada. This long-range plan should include a multi-year framework for operations, environmental management, infrastructure management, and visitor and staff transportation systems.

**Objective 5.3:** Parks Canada works with companies that operate in linear infrastructure corridors such as railway, pipeline, and electrical transmission line operators to reduce the environmental, aesthetic, asset management and visitor impacts of their operations.

Targets

- Mitigation measures for routine operations and maintenance are reviewed, updated and implemented.
- Consolidating and reducing the footprint of corridors and designated access routes in support of conservation gains is explored wherever possible.
- Work with Canadian National (CN) Railway to improve water-management practices and remediate soil and groundwater contamination, reduce grain spills, manage invasive species and reduce wildlife mortality along the rail line. Ensure use of CN lands aligns with legislation and policy guidelines.

**Objective 5.4:** Parks Canada and third party projects incorporate provisions to minimize the footprint of disturbance, restore disturbed areas to a natural state and protect aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

#### Targets

- New lighting meets dark-sky guidelines and operators are encouraged to replace existing lighting that is not dark-sky compliant.
- Wastewater effluent meets Parks Canada standards and/or applicable provincial standards. Effluent does not impact the ecological integrity of the receiving environment.
- Continue to work with third parties to improve and implement environmental best practices and to share information for emergency-management and incident-response situations. Spill prevention, cleanup and contaminated site assessment, management, and remediation is carried out in accordance with applicable legislation.
- Adjustments to lease and licence of occupation boundaries for infrastructure or utility footprint expansions that would result in improvements to environmental management or ecosystem protection are considered.
- Encroachments on park lands and waters are reviewed to improve compliance with the terms of leases and licences of occupation.
- Project proponents are required to contribute to Parks Canada's assessment, regulatory oversight and environmental monitoring costs as a condition of infrastructure project approvals. Where project impacts cannot be reasonably mitigated, project proponents provide financial or in-kind compensation for environmental impacts, restoration and monitoring.
- The Whistlers Hostel facilities are decommissioned and the area is restored.
- An operational review is conducted to assess the long-term need for Parks Canada's Decoigne, Snaring and Cavell warden stations, taking into consideration their current use as staff housing, any heritage requirements and benefits to ecological integrity.

**Objective 5.5:** Park assets, including highways, scenic heritage corridors and day-use areas are well maintained and support Parks Canada's mandate and management plan objectives.

#### Targets

- Safety and environmental improvements to Highway 16 take into account its dual role as the main access route to the park and as a national transportation route.
- Ecological, asset-maintenance and aviation-safety concerns for the Jasper Airstrip are reviewed to determine if the asset continues to be an appropriate use in the montane grassland ecosystem; recommendations resulting from this review are implemented as appropriate. As long as the airstrip remains open:
  - The airstrip is maintained as a grass runway with minimal maintenance and facilities for private, recreational aviation and emergency and diversionary landings;
  - No commercial flights are permitted; and
  - The footprint of the airstrip runway is not increased beyond its dimensions of 1,216.15 metres by 45.72 metres, as listed in the December 31, 2020 Canada Flight Supplement.
- Aggregate extraction for roadway improvements and maintenance is guided by the *Mountain Parks Aggregate Management Strategy* (2019) and the *Parks Canada Management Directive 2.4.7—Sand, Gravel and other Earth Material: Excavation and Site Rehabilitation*. Gravel pits are restored at a rate equal to new footprint expansion for aggregate withdrawal. Consideration is given to the overall environmental, infrastructure, and visitor experience effects of local aggregate extraction versus long-distance hauling.
- An asset management and maintenance plan is developed to identify strategies, resources and actions to optimize asset performance and sustainability, to minimize risks and to ensure assets effectively contribute to the objectives in this management plan.
- Asset indicators have improving trends in the next *State of the Park Assessment*.

## Key Strategy 6: Climate Change and Adaptation

The mountain national parks were established to protect and represent specific features of Canada's natural heritage. They include some of Canada's most significant landscapes and natural and cultural resources, which are already affected by climate change. As such, these parks offer excellent opportunities to contribute to an understanding of climate change and its impacts over time. Parks Canada is committed to protecting park ecosystems for future generations by demonstrating leadership in sustainable operations and adaptive management in response to climate change impacts. The mountain national parks will continue to collaborate with others on climate change research, monitoring and education. Healthy ecosystems help nature and people adapt to climate change. As a protected area, Jasper National Park conserves biodiversity, protects ecosystem services, connects landscapes, takes up and stores carbon, and builds knowledge and understanding of environmental stewardship.

The effects of a changing climate are highly visible in Jasper National Park. At the Athabasca Glacier, one of the world's most accessible glaciers, millions of visitors can witness firsthand evidence of the rapid retreat of a glacier over the past century. Updated interpretation at the Columbia Icefield is helping tell the story of climate change, but there are many other opportunities to increase visitor awareness and link local challenges to this global issue.

Climate change is also affecting other aspects of Parks Canada's work, such as the longevity of built assets and cultural resources in the face of more extreme weather events, more frequent and intense wildfire seasons, and changing visitation patterns. This strategy seeks to expand collaboration and monitoring to anticipate and understand the effects of a changing climate, and to take action to reduce our carbon footprint and increase sustainability.

**Objective 6.1:** Improve our understanding of how climate change is affecting park ecosystems, cultural resources, built assets and visitor facilities, and implement appropriate management responses and adaptation strategies.

### Targets

- Jasper National Park's network with institutions and organizations with climate change expertise is strengthened, and collaborative analyses and communications on the effects of climate change are undertaken.
- The ecological integrity monitoring program is reviewed in advance of the next *State of the Park Assessment* to identify data gaps and opportunities to strengthen the program. This review will examine opportunities to incorporate Indigenous knowledges into monitoring efforts, and explore avenues to better understand the effects of climate change on the park's ecosystems.
- Ecological components and cultural resources are assessed for vulnerability to climate change impacts.
- Management actions aimed at addressing the effects of climate change are implemented to enhance ecosystem resilience; Indigenous knowledges and perspectives are woven into the development of these initiatives.
- Risk assessments are completed, mitigations are implemented where appropriate, and emergency preparedness plans are in place for built assets, visitor facilities and access routes that may be vulnerable to damage from extreme weather events and impacts of climate change.

**Objective 6.2:** Investigate and employ technologies and systems that improve building design and construction, energy and water conservation, solid waste and wastewater management, and fleet management.

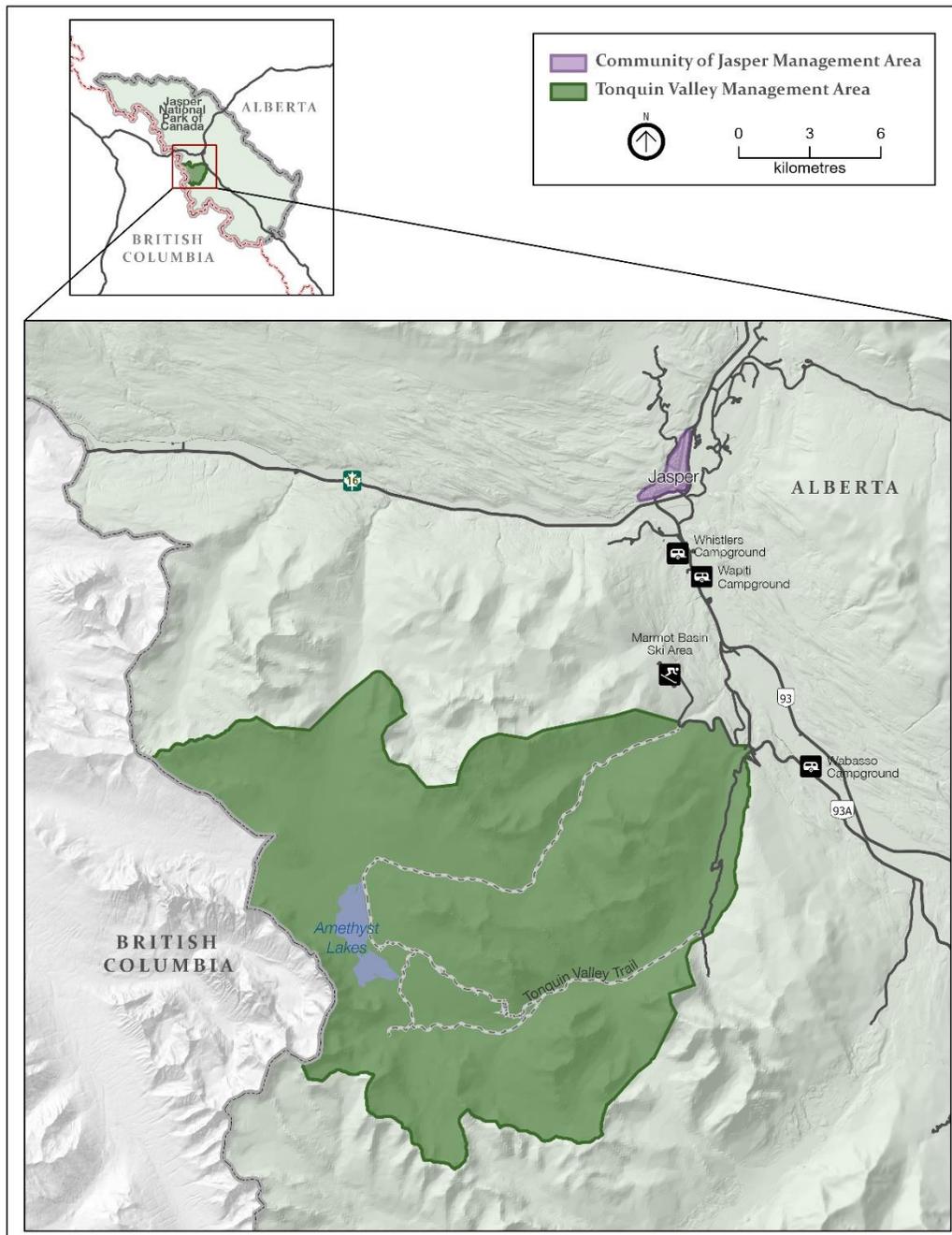
### Targets

- A transition strategy for greening operations is developed and launched. It includes transitioning the park fleet to a higher percentage of zero-emission vehicles or hybrids, increasing the energy efficiency of existing facilities, improving waste reduction and diversion practices, and constructing all new buildings to be low-carbon.
- Site management of the Waste Transfer Station is improved and cost recovery is pursued.

## 7.0 Management Areas

Area management focuses on specific areas of the national parks that have complex management challenges—including important natural and cultural values, high visitation, public interest, significant infrastructure and multiple visitor experience opportunities. These areas often require greater consideration for maintenance of ecological integrity and to ensure quality visitor experiences. Two areas have been identified that require specific management objectives and targets in this management plan: the community of Jasper and the Tonquin Valley.

Map 3: Community of Jasper and Tonquin Valley Management Areas



## 7.1 Community of Jasper

Nestled near the confluence of the Athabasca, Miette and Maligne rivers, the community of Jasper is a small, friendly town set in the natural splendour of Jasper National Park. Jasperites, as residents and regular users of the park, are important stewards of its natural and cultural heritage.

Parks Canada's authority over land use planning and development matters for the community of Jasper is set out in the *Canada National Parks Act* and other applicable regulations and policies. The *Canada National Parks Act* designates Jasper as a park community and contains several important provisions in relation to the community's future development:

- The townsite boundary is fixed;
- The amount of commercial floor area is capped at 118,222 square metres; and
- The size and configuration of the area zoned for commercial development is set.

The *Town of Jasper Zoning Regulations* (1968), which are currently under review, and the draft *Town of Jasper Land Use Policy* (2005) contain zoning provisions as well as permitting and process requirements.

The *Jasper Community Sustainability Plan* (2011), prepared jointly by the Municipality of Jasper and Parks Canada, provides a vision for the community and policy direction for achieving that vision. All residents of Jasper must meet the eligible residency requirements under the *National Parks of Canada Lease and Licence of Occupation Regulations*.

With the majority of park visitors spending time in the townsite and surrounding area, there are excellent opportunities to reach them with park messages and engaging programming, and to showcase a community that embraces park stewardship and environmental sustainability. However, care is required to ensure that the community and its guests do not have a negative effect on the park's ecological and cultural resources.

The direction outlined in this management area strategy will ensure that the community vision is achieved, while continuing to welcome park visitors, sustain the community's quality of life and enhance the role of the community as a platform from which visitors experience and learn about the park and contribute to its stewardship.

**Objective 7.1.1:** The Municipality of Jasper and Parks Canada collaborate on issues of mutual importance and share information regularly about individual areas of responsibility.

### Targets

- The effects of visitation on the community are better understood and a plan is developed collaboratively to manage visitation growth and visitor events and activities staged from the townsite.
- Environmental sustainability measures are developed, promoted and implemented through collaboration between Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper.
- Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper collaborate on emergency preparedness for the townsite.
- Fire Smart program activities in and adjacent to the townsite continue to be carried out collaboratively.
- Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper continue to monitor storm water quality and adopt best practices to improve storm water management, where feasible.
- Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper collaborate on improving the transportation of visitors to and within the community using public transit and active transportation solutions when possible.

**Objective 7.1.2:** Decisions about development, operation and management of the community are guided by the approved community plan for Jasper, which must be consistent with this park management plan and other applicable policies and legislation.

Targets

- The *Jasper Community Sustainability Plan* is reviewed and updated by 2025.
- The local policy framework for townsite land-use zoning is reviewed and updated.
- The development of new land use planning regulations and policies to modernize Parks Canada's planning permit process is supported.

**Objective 7.1.3:** New affordable housing is developed that is suitable for all stages of life and takes into account Jasper's socio-economic characteristics.

Targets

- Parks Canada and the Jasper Community Housing Corporation collaborate to release residential reserve lands to the Municipality of Jasper for affordable housing projects.
- All new commercial developments in the Jasper townsite provide staff accommodation units as specified in applicable land use policies and regulations. In consultation with the Municipality of Jasper, reduced parking may be considered where active transportation options are available.
- A long-term housing strategy continues to be implemented to address the housing shortage for Parks Canada staff.

**Objective 7.1.4:** New community development and redevelopment projects respect the existing townsite boundary and limits to development, preserve Jasper's small mountain community and distinctive built heritage, contribute to environmental sustainability and provide for local participation.

Targets

- Residents are involved in community planning initiatives.
- There is transparency and openness in the development review process.
- Parks Canada works with lessees to resolve non-conforming uses.

**Objective 7.1.5:** Residents, community organizations and businesses are stewards who protect the park environment at work and at home.

Targets

- Parks Canada community outreach programs include Jasper residents and local tourism businesses as target markets.
- In consultation with the Municipality of Jasper, Parks Canada encourages and facilitates the removal of wildlife attractants from residential and commercial properties, the elimination of places of refuge for wildlife created by fencing or other means, and promotes and enforces the management of domestic animals to minimize their effects on wildlife.
- New lighting meets dark-sky guidelines, and residents and businesses are encouraged to replace existing lighting that is not dark-sky compliant.
- Residents and businesses are aware of and act to limit the spread of invasive species, and work to protect species at risk in construction projects and other activities.
- As active users of the trail network surrounding the community, Jasper residents are partners in addressing and preventing damage caused by unofficial trails.

## 7.2 Tonquin Valley

The Tonquin Valley is one of the most popular destinations for wilderness recreation in the park. Renowned for its stunning vistas of Amethyst Lake at the base of the mountains known as the Ramparts, the area's popularity is a testament to its pristine landscapes, excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing and alpine lakes.

The valley has a long history of human use. The area is significant to Indigenous partner communities, and recreationalists have been hiking, skiing, snowshoeing and horseback riding in the area since the early 1900s. Presently, the valley offers one primary 47-kilometre point-to-point trail, which follows the Astoria River up to Amethyst Lake before descending through Maccarib Pass and along the banks of Portal Creek out to Marmot Road. Wet conditions in the Tonquin's alpine meadows and frequent rockslides on Astoria Mountain make trail maintenance an ongoing challenge. As of 2021, built infrastructure in the valley included seven backcountry campgrounds, two overnight commercial lodges run by private operators, a hut operated by the Alpine Club of Canada and a Parks Canada patrol cabin.

Caribou have roamed the peaks and valleys of the Tonquin area for centuries. Historical records indicate the Tonquin caribou herd was once much larger, but today this herd, one of the few remaining in Jasper, has declined to the point where it is facing imminent extirpation. Caribou in the Tonquin Valley numbered over 180 in the early 1960s and over 100 as recently as 2008; however, as of 2021 Parks Canada estimated there were fewer than 45 animals and only ten adult females remaining.

A suite of actions to protect the herd was initiated in the mid 2000s, including implementing seasonal access restrictions, but these actions on their own have not been successful in stopping the decline, as the herd population is too small for it to recover on its own. The biggest issue facing caribou in the park has been predation levels, which are now at a level which could favour the recovery of the caribou if conservation breeding is implemented.

### **Objective 7.2.1**

The ability of keystone species like caribou and grizzly bears to thrive in the valley is improved, while respecting the long history of human use of the area.

#### Targets

- The measures to support caribou recovery outlined in Strategy 1 are implemented.
- In alignment with the *Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountain population (Rangifer tarandus caribou) in Canada (2014)*, the efficacy of current measures to support the recovery of the Tonquin caribou herd are reviewed and additional measures are considered on an ongoing basis.
- The impacts of recreational use, especially horse use, on vegetation, species at risk, visitor experience and infrastructure in the Tonquin Valley and associated trails is reviewed and measures are taken as needed to address concerns.
- Habitat security for wildlife is improved; actions taken include the continued implementation of seasonal access restrictions, with the possibility of evidence-based adjustments as required.
- Subject to requirements for caribou recovery and ecological integrity, visitors continue to access the Tonquin Valley in the summer months and improvements are made to the hiking and camping experience.

## 8.0 Zoning and Declared Wilderness Area

### 8.1 Zoning

Parks Canada's national park zoning system is an integrated approach to the classification of land and water areas in the national parks and designates where particular activities can occur on land or water based on the ability to support those uses. The zoning system has five categories:

- Zone I – Special Preservation
- Zone II – Wilderness
- Zone III – Natural Environment
- Zone IV – Outdoor Recreation; and
- Zone V – Park Services

This plan incorporates minor adjustments to improve the zoning from the 2010 Jasper National Park management plan. The zoning changes ensure consistency in how zoning is applied throughout the park and resolve minor geospatial inaccuracies in previous mapping layers. Map 4 illustrates the zoning changes. The overall percentage of the park occupied by each zone has not changed.

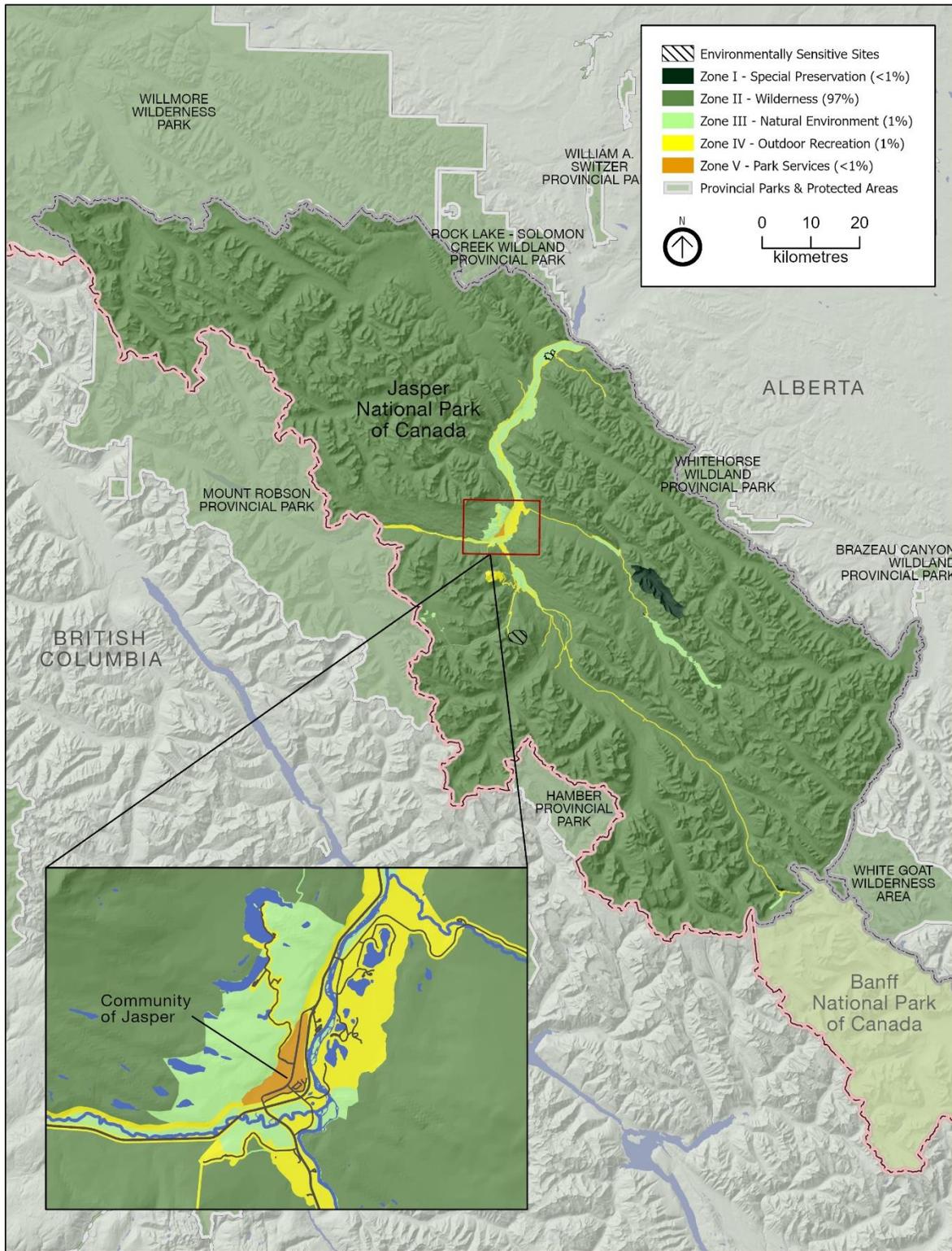
Zoning Area Changes from Jasper's 2010 Management Plan

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Area in 2010 (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Area in 2020 (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Change from 2010 (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>	<b>% of Park Area 2010</b>	<b>% of Park Area 2020</b>
<b>Zone 1</b>	47	47	0	0%	0.42%	0.42%
<b>Zone 2</b>	10,923	10,926	3	0.03%	97.27%	97.30%
<b>Zone 3</b>	141	141	0	0%	1.25%	1.25%
<b>Zone 4</b>	116	113	-3	-0.03%	1.03%	1.01%
<b>Zone 5</b>	2	2	0	0	0.02%	0.02%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,229</b>	<b>11,229</b>				

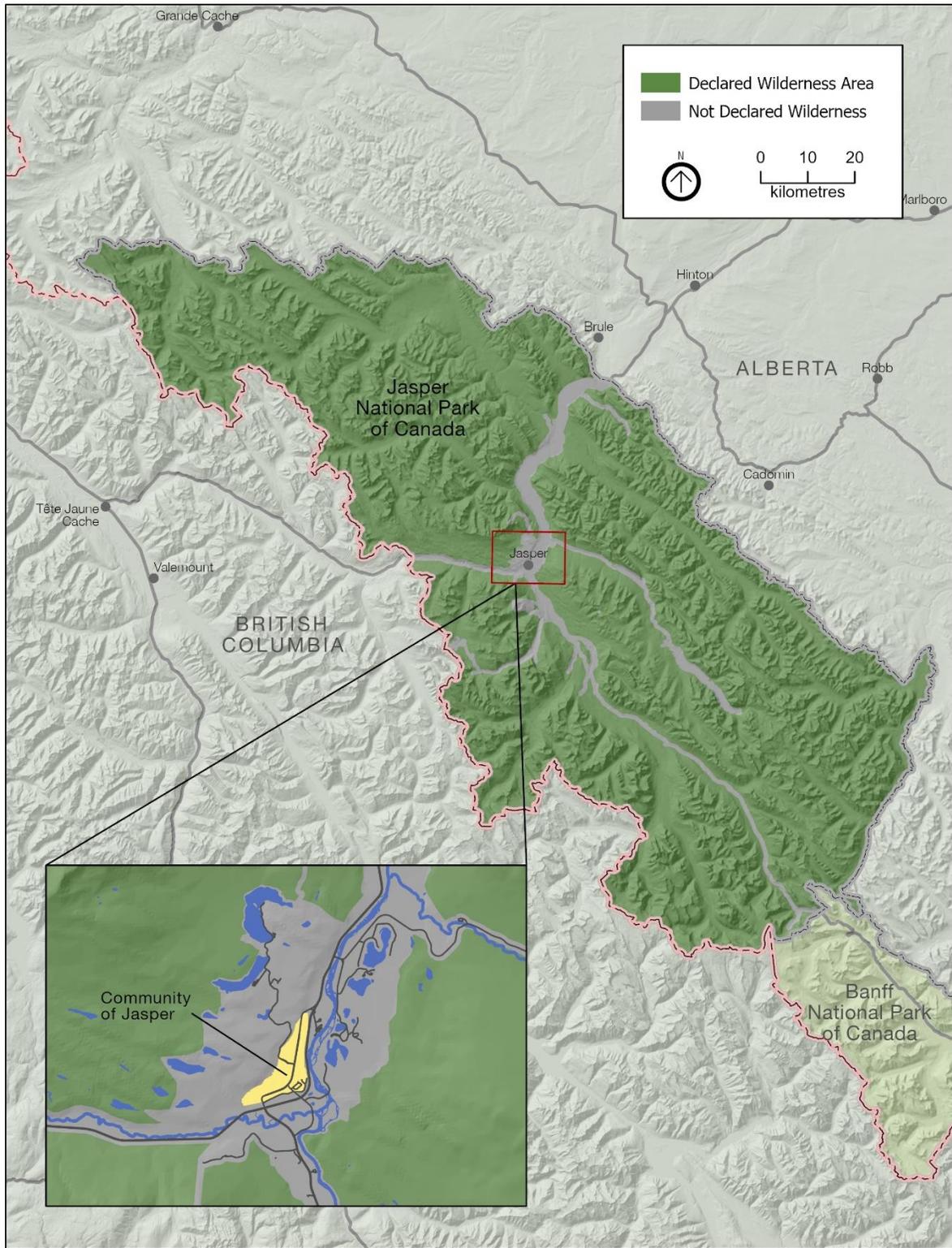
Parks Canada may consider adjustments to zoning and declared wilderness area boundaries in conjunction with the conceptual proposal for the redevelopment of the Jasper SkyTram, provided these adjustments result in net ecological gain.

Suitable land in Zone II (and within the Declared Wilderness Area) may be used for temporary caribou captive breeding and release facilities, provided it can be returned to a wilderness condition following the project (see Objective 1.4).

Map 4: Jasper National Park Zoning Summary



Map 5: Jasper National Park Declared Wilderness Area



## **Zone I — Special Preservation (less than 1 percent of the park)**

Zone I lands deserve special preservation because they 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. Preservation is the key consideration. Motorized access and circulation are not permitted.

### *Ancient Forest and other climate study sites*

This Zone I area is comprised of several study sites that have contributed to scientific understanding of past climates and glacier retreat in the Rocky Mountains overall, and at the Columbia Icefield specifically. The forested stands within the zone contain very old—in some cases 500- or 600-year-old—living specimens of Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*). Dead timbers in the area mark two Little Ice Age maximum advances of the Athabasca Glacier, at approximately 1714 and 1841–1843. Old trees and dead wood at these sites have been used to produce a 1,000-year long summer temperature record. Due to the scientific value of these sites, the park will not encourage access to the area and will interpret its resources off-site.

### *Surprise Valley*

Surprise Valley is part of the Maligne karst system, one of the largest underground river systems in North America, and is designated as a Zone I area for some of the best examples of surface karst features in the park. The valley, located above the Maligne River, is drained entirely underground through limestone of the Upper Devonian Palliser Formation. The valley contains deep sinkholes in glacier drift, sink lakes and some of the finest examples of rillenkarren in North America. An unmaintained trail provides access to the valley; no restrictions on access are required at the present time.

### *Archaeological cave site*

In Jasper National Park, there is one known cave site that contains pictographs and other culturally and archaeologically significant material. Due to its cultural sensitivity and the importance of not disturbing the archaeological material, the area is not identified on the zoning map and access to the cave will be strictly controlled.

### *Jasper House*

Jasper House, a national historic site because of its significant role in the fur trade, is rich in architectural features, artifacts and faunal remains. Archaeological remains are intact and are very important in understanding the history of the site. There is also a cemetery on site. Off-site interpretation of the site's heritage values is provided at the Jasper House trail and platform along Highway 16.

## **Zone II — Wilderness (97 percent of the park)**

Zone II contains extensive areas that are good representations of a natural region and are conserved in a wilderness state. Much of this land consists of steep mountain slopes, glaciers and alpine meadows. The perpetuation of ecosystems with minimal human interference is the key consideration. Zone II areas offer opportunities for visitors to experience the park's ecosystems first-hand, and require few, if any, rudimentary services and facilities. In much of Zone II, visitors experience remoteness and solitude. Motorized access and circulation are not permitted. Facilities are restricted to trails, backcountry campgrounds, alpine huts, trail shelters and patrol cabins. Most of Zone II will continue to have no facilities.

## **Zone III — Natural Environment (1 percent of the park)**

In Zone III areas, visitors experience the park's natural and cultural heritage through outdoor recreational activities that require minimal services, and facilities of a rustic nature. Zone III applies to areas where visitor use requires facilities that exceed the acceptable standards for Zone II. For example, snowmobile access routes and land associated with commercial backcountry lodges are zoned as Natural Environment. Utility corridors may also be located in Zone III.

Motorized access and circulation in Zone III are permitted in limited circumstances and controlled through regulatory permitting and realty instruments (for example, leases, licences and easement agreements), including:

- Snowmobile or helicopter use to service backcountry facilities;
- Off-highway vehicle use to maintain and operate linear infrastructure, such as power lines and pipelines;
- Motorized commercial tours on Maligne Lake and on the Athabasca Glacier as authorized through a valid lease; and
- Seasonal use of signed Zone III or IV lakes by boats with electric motors, within established parameters.

#### **Zone IV – Outdoor Recreation (less than 1 percent of the park)**

Zone IV includes limited areas that are capable of accommodating a broad range of opportunities for understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the park's heritage values and related essential services and facilities, in ways that impact the ecological integrity of the park to the smallest extent possible, and whose defining feature is direct access by motorized vehicles. In Jasper National Park, Zone IV includes frontcountry facilities and infrastructure, such as park roadways, road-accessible campgrounds and overflows, day-use areas and visitor facilities like Miette Hot Springs. Commercial operations such as the Marmot Basin Ski Area, Jasper Park Lodge, bungalow camps and hostels outside of the townsite are also located in Zone IV. Several more intensive land uses related to park operations, such as gravel pits, power generation facilities and the waste transfer station are also located in Zone IV.

#### **Zone V – Park Services (Community of Jasper—less than 1 percent of the park)**

The community of Jasper, with its concentration of visitor service and support facilities, is the only Zone V area in the park. Specific activities, services and facilities in this zone will be defined and directed by the approved community plan.

#### **Environmentally Sensitive Sites (ESS)**

This designation applies to areas with significant, sensitive features that require special protection, but do not fit the zoning described above. This designation complements the zoning system and is important to the protection of the full range of valued resources.

##### *Edith Cavell Meadows*

Many significant plant species grow in the upper subalpine and alpine meadows near Mount Edith Cavell. The meadows are also an important caribou calving and rutting area.

Use of the meadows will be consolidated on the day-use trail in the northeast corner of the meadows and climbing access along the east ridge of Mount Edith Cavell; visitors will be encouraged to stay on the formal trail.

##### *Athabasca Ponds*

This area of small ponds and stream channels in the Athabasca floodplain near the junction of Highway 16 and Miette Road is very important to wildlife. Critical winter range for elk and moose, the area is also important to small mammals. These prey species in turn attract carnivores. Numerous bird species occur in high densities, many of which are not found elsewhere in the parks. Raptors, such as osprey and bald eagle, nest here. The area also provides habitat for the river otter, a species that is rare in the park.

Any major construction in the area (for example, utilities and roads) could change patterns of sedimentation and erosion. Future development in the vicinity of the ponds will be managed to ensure that it does not have a negative impact on the area's special resources.

##### *Maligne Lake Outlet*

Since the 2000 management plan, Parks Canada has managed the Maligne Lake outlet and mid-Maligne River to provide secure habitat for harlequin ducks. The outlet is particularly important for harlequin ducks during their pre-nesting period, and is also part of the mid-Maligne River movement corridor

between Maligne and Medicine lakes for harlequin duck broods. Harlequin ducks have narrow ecological requirements, low reproductive potential and are sensitive to human-caused disturbance.

To protect harlequin ducks and their habitat, human activity and development in the vicinity of the outlet will be managed in conjunction with the seasonal closure of the mid-Maligne River to instream recreational activity.

## **8.2 Wilderness Area Declaration**

The intent of legally designating a portion of a national park as wilderness is to maintain its wilderness character in perpetuity. Only activities that are unlikely to impair the wilderness character of the area may be authorized within the declared wilderness area of Jasper National Park.

Large tracts of protected wilderness are becoming a scarce and valuable resource in Canada and the world. From an ecological perspective, their importance lies in their ability to support natural processes and to serve as benchmarks. They are critical for animal species with large home ranges and for migrating wildlife.

Most of Jasper's Zone II has been declared as wilderness under the *National Parks of Canada Wilderness Area Declaration Regulations*. Only limited development required for park administration, public safety and provision of basic visitor facilities—such as trails, backcountry campgrounds, alpine huts, trail shelters and patrol cabins—is allowed in Jasper's designated wilderness. Public motorized access is not permitted in designated wilderness areas.

Any revisions to declared wilderness area boundaries must go through a formal regulatory process with public review. Parks Canada may consider minor adjustments to these boundaries and Zone II boundaries for infrastructure projects that would result in clear environmental gains (for example, water supply, wastewater treatment, utilities and communications projects at outlying commercial accommodations, the Marmot Basin Ski Area and other operations) that are consistent with the intent of the *Canada National Parks Act* and Regulations.

## 9.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment

All national park management plans are subject to a strategic environmental assessment to understand the potential for cumulative effects. This understanding contributes to evidence-based decision making that supports ecological integrity being maintained or restored over the life of the plan. The strategic environmental assessment of the management plan for Jasper National Park considered the potential impacts of climate change, local and regional activities around the park, expected increases in visitation and proposals within the management plan. It assessed the potential impacts on different valued components of the ecosystem, including aquatic communities, forest vegetation, montane and alpine habitat, whitebark pine, terrestrial birds, carnivores, woodland caribou and mountain goats.

To address the cumulative effects of climate change, visitation, invasive species and diseases, and impacts to regional connectivity, the management plan identifies objectives and targets including developing responses to climate change impacts, instituting visitor-use management tools to protect the park's ecological resources, and allowing ecological processes to shape native vegetation communities.

Glaciers, forest vegetation, montane grasslands and dunes, and woodland caribou are rated as poor in the 2018 *State of the Park Assessment*, and are likely to be further impacted by climate change, invasive species and disease, and regional activities outside the park. The management plan identifies objectives and targets to address these effects.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment identified expected impacts on the following valued ecosystem components:

- **Glaciers** – Climate change is the primary stressor impacting glaciers. Parks Canada is taking action to minimize the contributions of park operations to greenhouse gasses and seeking to understand the impacts of climate change and share this knowledge with visitors and Canadians. The implementation of the management plan is not expected to contribute additional negative cumulative effects on glaciers.
- **Hydrology** – Climate change will impact hydrology over the next ten years. The implementation of the management plan will address the main threats to water connectivity and is not expected to contribute additional negative effects on water flows.
- **Water quality** – Climate change could contribute to cumulative effects on water quality. The management plan indicates that wastewater in the park must meet Parks Canada standards and/or applicable provincial standards. The implementation of the management plan is expected to maintain water quality in the park.
- **Aquatic communities** – The management plan provides direction on managing aquatic communities by preventing or minimizing the establishment of new invasive species and diseases, and controlling existing invasive species where feasible. The implementation of the management plan is expected to improve aquatic communities in the park.
- **Wetlands** – Climate change and invasive species are the main sources of cumulative effects on wetlands. The management plan provides direction on reducing knowledge gaps and protecting sensitive habitats. The implementation of the management plan is expected to maintain the condition of wetlands in the park.
- **Forest vegetation** – The main sources of cumulative effects on forests are fire suppression, insect and disease, and climate change. The management plan includes targets to complete a vegetation resource inventory, to use fire strategically to protect key habitat, and to conduct regular monitoring of invasive and alien plant species. This will improve understanding of the extent of landscape-level changes from the mountain pine beetle infestation and facilitate evidence-based management decisions, improve forest vegetation, and allow for prioritization of efforts to achieve ecological integrity goals.

- **Montane grasslands and dunes** could be further impacted by climate change and by maintenance and operations of existing highway and utility infrastructure. The management plan includes a suite of targets to limit new disturbance in the montane ecoregion, including inventories, monitoring, finalizing the *Jasper National Park Vegetation Management Strategy* and identifying restoration targets for priority habitats. Improved vegetation mapping will help to ensure that impacts on montane habitats are minimized during project-level impact assessments. The implementation of management plan directions is expected to maintain montane grasslands and dunes in the park.
- **Alpine habitat** – Climate change and visitation are the primary cumulative effects impacting alpine habitats. The management plan aims to promote visitor stewardship behaviour and is not expected to contribute additional negative cumulative effects on alpine habitats.
- **Whitebark pine** – The main sources of cumulative effects on whitebark pine include white pine blister rust, climate change and wildfires. The implementation of the management plan, the recovery strategy and *Jasper's Multi-species Action Plan* will collectively address the main threats to whitebark pine inside the park and provide best efforts for recovery.
- **Terrestrial birds** – Climate change is the primary stressor for terrestrial birds. Updating and implementing the *Multi-species Action Plan* will improve resilience for bird species that are particularly susceptible to climate change. The implementation of the management plan is expected to support the landscape conditions needed to maintain the status of terrestrial birds in the park.
- **Human–wildlife conflict** – High levels of road and rail traffic, a variety of natural and artificial attractants, and increasing visitation have the potential to contribute to cumulative effects on carnivore mortality and human–wildlife conflict. The management plan provides direction to proactively and reactively manage these sources of wildlife stress and mortality, and aims to restore more natural wildlife behaviours and distributions.
- **Connectivity** – The main sources of cumulative effects on carnivore connectivity are the existing roads, highways and rail line, visitation, trails and infrastructure. Management plan objectives include approaches to increase connectivity within and across park boundaries where land-use pressures and climate change may impact transboundary wildlife populations and natural processes.
- **Carnivore habitat** – Increases in visitation and climate change will impact carnivore habitat security. The management plan provides direction for visitor-use management, the implementation of which will ensure habitat security is maintained.
- **Woodland caribou** – Two of the remaining three herds in the park are facing extirpation. Regional activities, activities within the park, predation and climate change all contribute to cumulative effects experienced by caribou. Following the direction provided by the *Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountain population (Rangifer tarandus caribou) in Canada* (Environment Canada 2014), the management plan includes a number of actions to address these effects. Parks Canada will make a decision about pursuing conservation breeding and herd augmentation. The implementation of the management plan is not expected to cause significant negative effects to caribou.
- **Mountain goats** – The implementation of the management plan is not expected to cause additional negative cumulative effects on mountain goats, which generally use well-defined ranges. Mitigation measures for mountain goats are best addressed through park operations and project-level impact assessments for future initiatives.

The management plan will result in many positive impacts on the environment, including maintaining or restoring natural wildlife distribution, abundance, and behaviour; ensuring visitation levels do not harm the park's ecological resources; and preventing the establishment of invasive species and diseases.

Jasper National Park is part of the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks UNESCO World Heritage site. The world heritage values for which it was designated were evaluated to ensure that the implementation of the management plan will adequately protect them.

Indigenous partners, stakeholders and the public were consulted on the draft management plan and summary of the draft strategic environmental assessment. Feedback was considered and incorporated into the strategic environmental assessment and management plan as appropriate.

The strategic environmental assessment was conducted in accordance with the *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* (2010) and facilitated an evaluation of how the management plan contributes to the *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy*. Individual projects undertaken to implement management plan objectives at the site will be evaluated to determine if an impact assessment is required under the *Impact Assessment Act* (2019), or successor legislation. The management plan supports a number of *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy* goals, namely:

- Greening government;
- Sustainably managed lands and forests;
- Healthy wildlife populations;
- Connecting Canadians with nature; and
- Safe and healthy communities.

Many positive environmental effects are expected and there are no important negative environmental effects anticipated from implementation of the Jasper National Park management plan.