



Parks Canada
Parcs Canada



Maligne Valley Situation Analysis:
*Summary of Written Public
Comments*



In October 2013, Parks Canada launched a public engagement process to support the development of an Implementation Strategy for the Maligne Valley. This engagement process has two phases. Phase I began on October 31 and ended on November 22, 2013. During Phase I, Parks Canada released the *Maligne Valley Situation Analysis* for public and Aboriginal review. The *Situation Analysis* presents Parks Canada's understanding of the current situation in the valley with respect to visitors, wildlife, cultural resources, environmental stewardship and other topics identified in the park management plan.

We received 29 letters during this consultation period. The following is a summary of the key themes and concerns expressed within those letters. Phase II of the public engagement process will commence in April 2014 and will provide the public and Aboriginal communities with the opportunity to review proposed actions for the Maligne Valley.

Please note that from September to December 2013, Maligne Tours conducted a public engagement process for their conceptual redevelopment proposal, and the analysis and reporting of results has yet to be completed. Accordingly, the summary of comments below only represents feedback that Parks Canada received in the context of the *Situation Analysis*.

What We Heard:

The comments from the public were categorized into six areas: visitor experience; resource conservation; winter use in the Maligne Valley; interpretation and communications; governance and policy; and the Maligne Tours Conceptual Proposal. Some comments related to more than one theme area, especially comments regarding the Maligne Tours proposal.

Comments pertaining to **Visitor Experience** focussed on research needs, hiking and trail needs, infrastructure, activity and programming needs, and wildlife and environmental needs:

- more ecological and social science research is needed to properly assess the current situation and visitor satisfaction
- current statistical information in some areas (e.g. visitor survey results, traffic data) is limited
- identification of popular hiking trails that are in need of maintenance
- suggestions for promotion of different activities along certain trails and new trail infrastructure
- the need for upgrades and aesthetic enhancements at many pull-outs, parking lots and picnic areas
- suggestions for new activities with an emphasis on obtaining more information on visitors in order to provide more relevant activities
- making wildlife conservation a priority in the design and delivery of activities



Comments related to **Resource Conservation** included:

- the potential effect of the Maligne Tours Conceptual Proposal on wildlife (especially caribou, grizzly bears and harlequin ducks) and the environment
- the potential impact of increased traffic on wildlife mortality
- the use of the precautionary principle to manage the Maligne Valley in the absence of ecological (and social science) research
- concern that ecosystems in the Maligne Valley are vulnerable and already under pressure
- the need to work toward eliminating existing forms of pollution in the Valley
- recognition that Parks Canada understands its obligations to protect ecological integrity and the management actions required to maintain or restore ecological integrity
- the importance of caribou protection and recovery of the herd in the Maligne Valley (and the entire park)
- support for the development of a winter use-caribou management plan for the Maligne Valley.

Comments related to **Winter Use** in the Maligne Valley fell into three themes:

- reasons for wanting the Maligne Valley open for winter use, including suggested locations for winter activities
- support for closures in the Maligne Valley for caribou protection
- other suggested areas for winter use such as Elysium Pass

Comments in the area of **Interpretation and Communications** fell into four themes: signage; infrastructure upgrades; new historical interpretation; and general interpretation needs. The predominant input throughout was that interpretation (especially signs, panels and personal interpretation) in the Maligne Valley needs to be upgraded or developed.

Comments pertaining to **Governance and Policy** included:

- Maligne Tours Ltd. (MTL) conceptual proposal does not align with the *Redevelopment Guidelines for Outlying Commercial Accommodations (OCAs) in the Rocky Mountain National Parks*, which states that no new OCA's or hostels would be permitted outside the community of Jasper
- specific policy information is missing from the Situation Analysis that could be vital in management decision-making, including mention of the OCA Guidelines
- Identification of current acts, regulations, policies, park management plan and land use documents that should be included in the Situation Analysis and inform the review of the MTL proposal
- Jasper National Park, and specifically the Maligne Valley, is a wilderness area and therefore the should have minimal facilities and management should focus on wildlife conservation

Comments on the **Maligne Tours** concept proposal fell into the following theme areas: the overnight accommodation's potential effects on wildlife and the environment; missing information from the Situation Analysis; maintaining the Maligne Valley as a wilderness area with minimal development; and potential inconsistencies with park policies and regulations. Contributors expressed:

- strong concerns that development, especially an overnight accommodation at Maligne Lake, would adversely affect threatened species and their habitat



- the importance of Jasper's wilderness character to visitors and the need to protect this character
- support for several aspects of the Maligne Tours concept proposal: cultural and heritage preservation; the need for upgrades to the existing day lodge; and the acceptability of some of the new proposed activities

Closing Remarks

Parks Canada appreciates the time and efforts taken by respondents to comment on the draft *Maligne Valley Situation Analysis*. Your feedback is important and will assist us in finalizing the Situation Analysis and preparing the draft management actions for the Maligne Valley, for discussion in Phase II of the public and Aboriginal engagement process.