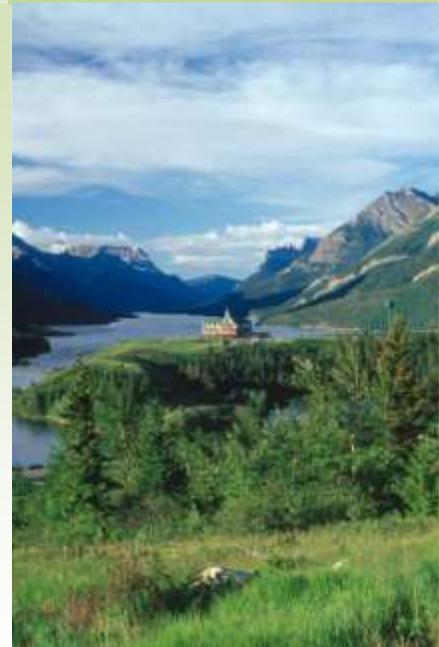




# Waterton Lakes National Park Management Plan Review Concept



## Minister's Message

Waterton Lakes National Park was established in 1895, building on the protected areas idea that originated in Banff in 1885. This idea has grown into a system of national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas that has given Canada a global reputation for leadership in conservation and tourism. Developing a management plan for so special a place is an important responsibility, one that Parks Canada invites every Canadian to share in. I look forward to the results of this important park management plan review on the eve of the 125th anniversary of protected heritage in Canada.

**Hon. Jim Prentice, Minister of Environment and Minister Responsible for Parks Canada**

## Superintendents' Message

I'm pleased to share with you our ongoing work to update the Waterton Lakes National Park Management Plan. Parks Canada spent the spring and summer speaking to Canadians and drafting a document that reflects what we heard. This concept provides you with the current direction in the draft plan. We're interested in knowing your thoughts about how the revision is taking shape.

The updated plan will replace the previous management plan, approved in 2000. The new Park Management Plan builds on the strengths of the previous plan. It emphasizes improving ecological integrity and visitor experience and our important role as the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site.

The plan will outline new direction to better connect our visitors to this special place. We will work collaboratively with others to produce authentic nature-based experiences and meaningful opportunities to experience Waterton's distinctive prairie and mountain culture. Parks Canada's vision is: *"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 execution of this management plan will transform that vision into action.

**Dave McDonough, Waterton Lakes Field Unit Superintendent**

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## Our Task

The Park Management Plan will guide the management of Waterton Lakes National Park for the next 15 years and will:

- outline a vision of the park we want to see in the future,
- describe the results we are working towards,
- integrate the three facets of Parks Canada's mandate - ecological integrity, visitor experience, and outreach to Canadians.

## A New Format

The new park management plan begins with an updated vision for Waterton Lakes National Park - one that showcases what is unique about the park and reflects the aspirations of visitors, residents, Aboriginal people, and other Canadians for the future.

The plan is divided into two sections - key strategies and area concepts. *Key strategies* are broad policy statements that apply to the whole park. Some are shared with Canada's other mountain national parks, others are shared with Glacier National Park, our partner in the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site, and some are unique to Waterton Lakes National Park. *Area concepts* describe objectives and actions for distinctive areas within the park that merit more detailed attention.

## Vision for Waterton Lakes National Park

*As part of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage site, the park is a living example of international cooperation in the protection and stewardship of ecological values. Waterton is an awe-inspiring legacy of mountains, lakes, prairies, forests, alpine meadow and wildlife that inspires a sense of wonder, self discovery, and a heartfelt connection to the landscape and its stories. Waterton's character is welcoming and friendly, encouraging people of all ages and cultures to appreciate, enjoy and celebrate their heritage through a range of experiences, confident that this natural ecosystem and the processes that shape it will remain intact for future generations.*

*The Waterton Community, the heart of the park, retains the character, scale and unique atmosphere that visitors have enjoyed for generations. Waterton's programs, events and festivals are rooted in authenticity and are delivered with the active participation of local and regional residents, the Aboriginal community, tourism partners and other interested parties.*

## Parks Canada's Strategic Outcomes and Performance Targets

Parks Canada's key strategies, management actions and investments are intended to produce specific outcomes that can be clearly evaluated using indicators that demonstrate improvements over time.

The overall outcome sought by Parks Canada is that: Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas and that these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations. Parks Canada has set performance targets to help achieve this outcome. These include:

- Maintain or improve the overall ecological integrity in all national parks by March 2013.
- Improve the overall average commemorative integrity rating of cultural resources by March 2013.
- Increase the percentage of Canadians that report a personal connection to Parks Canada administered places by March 2014.
- Increase the percentage of Canadians that understand the importance of why Parks Canada protects and presents its administered places by March 2014.



## Waterton's Story

Waterton Lakes National Park was established through citizen action in 1895 and Canadians continue to have a heartfelt connection to the park. This led it to becoming, with Glacier National Park, the world's first international peace park in 1932. Waterton is a meeting place that inspires friendship and respect between nations, among people and with all of nature.

Most visitors to Waterton are from Alberta and British Columbia with about 30% of visitors from the United States. Annual visitation to Waterton is concentrated in the summer months and averages 380,000. Visitors appreciate the character and atmosphere of the park and community of Waterton and many have strong personal connections to the park. The Waterton Community is a focus for visitation as most visitors obtain services, accommodation and information there.

A renewed focus on "visitor experience" will help visitors find the right opportunities to fulfill their expectations for their visit. To achieve this, Parks Canada is using a market segmentation process developed by the Canadian Tourism Commission that uses patterns of visitor behaviour, or "explorer quotients", to plan visitor opportunities.

Most of Waterton Lakes National Park's visitors can be described as "authentic explorers" who enjoy both cultural and natural experiences, and are comfortable journeying independently to all parts of the park. Along with this group, Parks Canada will target other explorer groups who are described as "Cultural", "Gentle" and "Reluctant" explorers. These groups enjoy experiences rooted in cultural events and festivals and are less likely to travel into more remote areas of the park, but certainly enjoy all that the Waterton Community and the parkways have to offer.

While a new focus on visitors' experiences is highlighted in this plan, ecological integrity remains a priority for Parks Canada. The previous *Waterton Lakes National Park Management Plan* identified the ecological issues facing the park and much progress has been made to address them since then. As monitoring programs were developed and implemented, new concerns and initiatives have been identified. In 2008, Parks Canada produced a "State of the Park Report for Waterton Lakes National Park" that provided the foundation for this plan review. Priorities include reintroducing fire into the ecosystem, managing non-native plants, addressing non-native fish species, and protecting species at risk.



### Starting the Discussion

Beginning in March 2009, regional residents received a newsletter outlining some key planning issues and were encouraged to send comments and sign up to receive further information. In spring, community and regional stakeholders participated in workshops. Consultation also included Internet-based participation and public consultation events in Waterton and Lethbridge. Recent market surveys of visitors were also reviewed to help identify planning priorities.

### What We Heard

Visitors are generally very satisfied with their experience. Some of the most popular park activities are camping, hiking, sightseeing and viewing wildlife. Many people described strong family connections to Waterton and how they value the timeless, unchanging nature of the park. Most supported improvements to infrastructure and services that would improve their access into and enjoyment of the park, as long as the park's existing character remains the same.



## Key Strategies

*Waterton's six key strategies are:*

1. *Connecting – Reconnecting*
2. *Celebrating the World's First International Peace Park and Our World Heritage Site Designation*
3. *Providing Opportunities for Unique and Inspiring Experiences for Visitors*
4. *Showcasing Conservation Innovation and Setting Ecosystem Priorities*
5. *History and Culture Within Contemporary Experience*
6. *Improving Infrastructure to Enhance the Park Environment*

# Key Strategies for Waterton Lakes National Park

## 1. Connecting – Reconnecting

National Parks are about connecting and working with others in ways that create meaning and possibilities for the future. Parks Canada will become an externally focused organization involving Canadians in managing, protecting and operating the park. Existing partnerships will be broadened and new partnerships created with groups that have not traditionally been associated with the park, such as immigrant societies and youth groups. Youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians will be targeted with programming that links them to the park setting, stories and experiences. Parks Canada will collaborate with heritage-based agencies, schools and festival organizers to bring outreach education programming into small communities and larger urban centres in western Canada on a regular basis.

Our presence on the web will be enhanced; content will be continually refreshed and renewed to provide learning, sharing and experiential opportunities for Canadians and others so that they can experience the excitement of virtually being here. Parks Canada will collaborate with provincial education authorities to tie park themes, and messages into school curricula at all levels. Products and programs will be developed that encourage and support children and families to make nature and outdoor experiences part of their lives.

Parks Canada will actively consult the aboriginal community on how to facilitate their involvement and to honour and restore their cultural connection to the park. We will seek the involvement of regional Aboriginal partners on an advisory committee. Parks Canada will also consult to determine how the aboriginal communities could participate in delivering new and existing experiences related to Aboriginal culture and history, and in documenting and presenting their cultures in ways that respect their traditions and values.

Parks Canada will actively engage regional organisations in the Crown of the Continent ecosystem, such as Glacier National Park, the Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association, the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium, the Waterton Front and regional tourism providers in planning and implementing programs, and in celebrating and telling shared stories to visitors. Parks Canada will work with adjacent land managers to maintain and, where possible, improve habitat connectivity through secure high quality corridors, allowing genetic exchange and population connectivity between adjacent wildlife populations. We will continually re-evaluate all program activities to identify and advance, in collaboration with interest groups and tourism providers, new opportunities for the development of "volontourism" products and volunteer opportunities for those who wish to participate actively in stewardship of Waterton Lakes National Park.



## 2. Celebrating the World’s First International Peace Park and Our World Heritage Site Designation

In 1932, in response to a proposal initiated by regional Rotary clubs, the *Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park* was created - the world's first. In 1995, the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park was designated a World Heritage Site due to its scenic values, abundant and diverse wildlife and wildflowers, and its distinctive climate and landforms.

The natural beauty of the International Peace Park is enhanced by the friendship and cooperative relations shared by Canada and the

United States. Building from this foundation, Waterton Lakes National Park now regularly cooperates beyond its borders, including organisations such as the Waterton Biosphere Reserve, The Waterton Front Project, Aboriginal communities, urban and rural municipalities, and two provinces.

This strategy focuses upon ensuring that visitors and Canadians understand, appreciate and take pride in the significant role Waterton Lakes National Park plays as an ongoing symbol of Canadian values, and in international conservation leadership. Waterton will be positioned as being unique among Canadian national parks by integrating World Heritage Site and International Peace Park messages into communications to ensure that visitors and people around the world are aware of, understand and appreciate its globally significant designations. We will seek to work with other world heritage sites in the region, such as the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks, Head Smashed in Buffalo Jump and Dinosaur Provincial Park world heritage sites, on joint initiatives. While Peace Park and world heritage site messages will be delivered throughout the park and in external communications, the community of Waterton will be the focal point.

Parks Canada will seek to enhance our strong working relationship with Glacier National Park. We will discuss with Glacier National Park how we can best achieve this goal and advance our shared ecosystem conservation and world heritage site objectives. Parks Canada will also look for opportunities to celebrate and make people aware of this successful model of international ecosystem conservation. We will continue to work with organisations and agencies in the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem such as the Crown Manager’s Partnership, Rotary International, The Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association to pursue shared ecological and sustainability objectives, to offer authentic visitor experiences, and to communicate the importance and benefits of cooperative resource management across boundaries.





## Refreshing Product Offer

A comprehensive range of recreational and leisure opportunities will be offered to visitors by continually reviewing and refreshing the product offer.

We will consider both internal and external proposals for authentic new recreational activities.

Assessments of proposed new activities will take place in a transparent process involving stakeholders.

Successful proposals will integrate all of the following principles:

- advancing natural and cultural resource protection goals,
- facilitating opportunities for enjoyable and meaningful national park experiences,
- promoting understanding and appreciation of the park's natural and cultural heritage and Parks Canada's values and objectives,
- valuing and involving local communities,
- respecting the character of place and area concepts.

## 3. Providing Opportunities for Unique and Inspiring Experiences for Visitors

Connecting Canadians to an inspiring and authentic range of park experiences is integral to the successful delivery of Parks Canada's mandate.

Parks Canada will facilitate opportunities for the following experiences.

- A **"virtual experience"** is for those who are interested in mountain and prairie ecology, culture and history, but who may never visit the park. An expanded Internet program offer will provide a strong sense of Waterton for those who visit electronically.
- A **"view from the edge"** experience appeals to perhaps the largest group of first-time park visitors, those who tend to stay close to the community and the parkways. Through entertaining programming and events with heritage based themes, programs will be created for visitors seeking hassle-free travel, rejuvenation, relaxation, or fun in the outdoors.
- A **"step into the wild"** experience typically appeals to visitors who stop and stay in the park for more than a few hours or overnight, likely in the community of Waterton, but do not venture physically or perceptually too far from developed areas. This type of explorer has more time for personal reflection and in-depth learning, has high hopes for encountering wildlife and may participate in a guided experience. Their park experience provides renewal and an authentic connection to nature and local culture.
- A **"mountain wilderness"** experience is for those with a strong affinity for the wilderness, and who are willing to fully immerse themselves physically in the park, engaging all their senses. Their personal experiences may include long unguided hikes and horseback trips in remote areas of the park. Their experience will be enriched by information and opportunities which deepen their relationship with the park and encourage helping with its care.

To facilitate authentic visitor experiences and learning at all four levels of engagement, Parks Canada will maintain, improve and promote outstanding visitor experiences by:

- applying a consistent visitor experience perspective through the trip cycle, from helping people imagine their trip to remembering their experiences,
- using social science and marketing research to constantly improve products and services for visitors,
- working with stakeholders and partners to provide and improve outstanding experiences for visitors who look for wilderness and learning experiences, with a focus on products for the "view from the edge" and "step into the wild" experiences,
- connecting with visitors who look for more social, relaxing or gentle experiences and encourage them to deepen their connection to the park,
- engaging Canadians who may shy away from "mountain parks" because they believe only wilderness adventure activities are available. Parks Canada will work with stakeholders and partners to improve existing experiences and explore new activities for this type of visitor.



Parks Canada will respond to the changing demographics in southern Alberta by working with partners to expand our presence with new Canadians and urban audiences in order to inform them of appealing frontcountry visitor experiences in Waterton. Our operation of the three vehicle accessible campgrounds will provide a range of visitor experiences. The Townsite Campground will offer the highest level of service with showers, washrooms, and RV hook-ups; Crandell Mountain Campground will feature a more traditional level of camping as well a new Tepee camping opportunity; and the Belly River Campground will provide a vehicle accessible primitive “wilderness” camping experience.

We will encourage partners and stakeholders to help present Waterton’s natural and cultural heritage by developing innovative new programs and special events. Park staff and partners will create volunteer opportunities to engage visitors and the public in ecological and cultural resource monitoring, restoration, protection and stewardship activities.

Marketing of new and existing visitor experiences will be improved and special events in the shoulder seasons (such as cycling the Red Rock Parkway and Chief Mountain Highway, bird counts, festivals, etc.) will be encouraged and promoted. Through initiatives which integrate elements of protection, visitor experience and education, Parks Canada will increase visitation to the park from the current 380,000 to 400,000 by 2012.



#### **4. Showcasing Conservation Innovation and Setting Ecosystem Priorities**

This strategy focuses on sustaining the critical analysis, creative thinking and innovation that are needed to resolve conservation challenges through adaptive management. This includes ensuring that regional stakeholders, park visitors and broader communities of interest are fully engaged in the development of new conservation solutions and making conservation successes a part of the national park visitor experience and of the story we tell the world.

During the first 5 years of this new plan, Parks Canada will focus its efforts on protecting and restoring its Foothills Parkland and Montane ecoregions. Waterton is the only protected area in the national park system which represents the Foothills Parkland ecoregion, which includes the rare fescue grasslands for which Waterton is notable. These areas receive about 95% of park visitors, have the most park infrastructure, and are the most affected by invasive plant species and exclusion of historic fire. Key actions will include reintroducing fire, restoring disturbed areas of fescue grasslands, actively reducing invasive plants, communicating the importance of protecting native species and natural processes and engaging citizens in restoration activities.

This strategy focuses on collaborative efforts to protect and restore natural heritage. We will approach conservation challenges as opportunities to engage a variety of interested stakeholders, collaborate to implement solutions, communicate rationales and needs to those affected, and use restrictions only as a last resort to protect sensitive resources.

Parks Canada will continue to maintain a high level of cooperation with adjacent land managers such as the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, adjacent land owners, municipalities, the State of Montana, and Glacier National Park through partnerships such as the Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association and Crown Managers Partnership. In collaboration with stakeholders, Parks Canada will implement proactive measures that will help keep other species from being added to Canada’s list of threatened and endangered species. We will continue to participate in ongoing research and programs relating to large carnivores and ungulates, in cooperation with adjacent land management agencies, to ensure the continued viability of these wide ranging populations in the shared ecosystem.

Parks Canada will focus efforts on protecting riparian areas and alluvial fans from development and mitigating impacts from existing development. Actions will be taken to restore the natural function and health of aquatic ecosystems, including eliminating or reducing populations of non-native fish species that pose a risk to native fish populations and aquatic communities.



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Protecting species at risk will be a priority. Working with Glacier National Park, academic researchers, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, British Columbia Ministry of Forests and Range and park volunteers, Parks Canada will take action to restore species at risk such as whitebark and limber pine.

Scientists, regional resource managers, local people and park visitors will be engaged in initiatives aimed at understanding and restoring the ecological processes that sustain Foothills Parkland and Montane ecosystems.

We will engage and involve interested stakeholders, park visitors, students, community members and regional residents in monitoring programs, data collection, and the application of science findings by:

- designing relevant citizen science programs around ecological monitoring programs and other ecosystem studies,
- creating opportunities for scientists, volunteers and visitors to intermingle and discuss park ecosystems and facilitate a variety of learning and experience opportunities,
- sharing the stories of citizen scientists widely,
- sharing ongoing research and monitoring findings at high visitor-use locations in the park and to schools and homes around the world, to enable others to share in the continuing excitement of discovery.

We will continually seek to expand and improve the use of environmental technologies such as renewable energy, waste composting, recycling and water and energy conservation in campgrounds, day use areas and, through development review, in built facilities.

## 5. History and Culture Within Contemporary Experience

The aim of this strategy is to increase the profile of the national historic sites and cultural resources in the park. Two national historic sites are located in the park – Prince of Wales Hotel National Historic Site and First Oil Well in Western Canada National Historic Site. To honour connections with our past, we will focus on the following actions.

- To keep national historic sites alive and relevant, link their stories to the broader park landscape and to contemporary visitor experiences.
- Animate places where visitors concentrate with live theatrical performances, interpretation, special events and new media that brings the history of Waterton Lakes National Park into the contemporary experience of the park's key attractions.
- Collaborate with the Waterton Natural History Association, tourism partners, local museums and other regional cultural attractions to develop heritage-themed festivals and events, products and learning opportunities to increase visitation to National Historic Sites.
- Protect and communicate about the park's irreplaceable cultural resources, including its built heritage, archaeological resources, historic objects and documentary records.

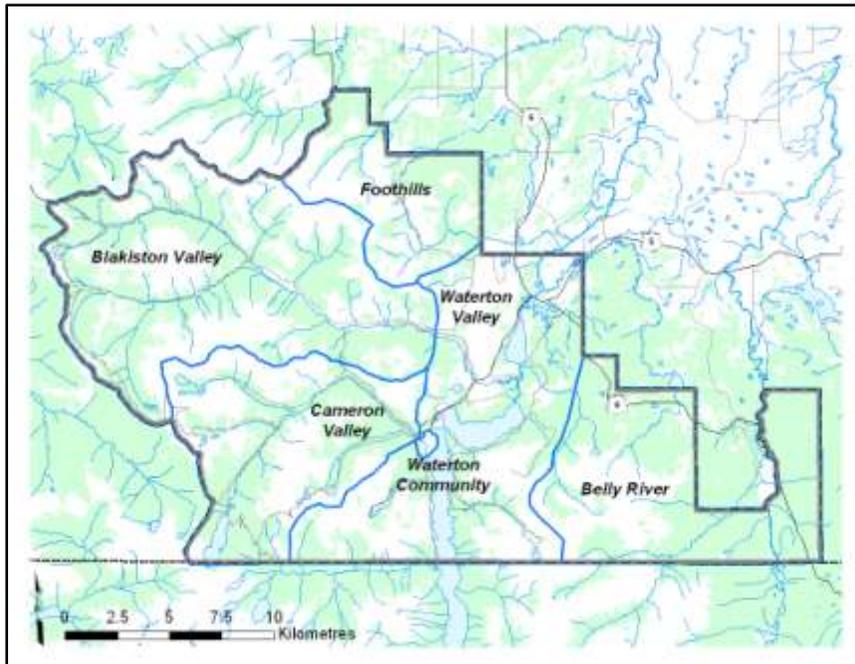
## 6. Improving Infrastructure to Enhance the Park Environment

The Park's infrastructure plays an important role in creating positive visitor experiences. These facilities offer opportunities for Parks Canada and its partners to demonstrate sustainable operations by:

- operating roadways, culverts, utilities and the sewage treatment plant to minimize their impact on the landscape and waterways,
- continuing to seek options to reduce the impacts of park and community operations,
- improving visitor orientation and information infrastructure,
- continuing to improve community assets rated in poor or fair condition and to prevent the further decline in the current condition of remaining assets,
- improving roads, picnic sites and other visitor facilities, while maintaining their current character. The Red Rock Parkway will be redeveloped first, followed by the Akamina Parkway. We will maintain the Hay Barn and Marquis Hole roads at their current standard.



# Area Concepts for Waterton Lakes National Park



## Area Concepts

*Each area concept has a distinct identity defined by its landscape, ecological characteristics and visitor experience. Key actions are identified for each area.*

*Waterton Lakes National Park is divided into six areas.*

1. *Waterton Valley*
2. *Waterton Community*
3. *Blakiston Valley*
4. *Cameron Valley*
5. *Belly River*
6. *Foothills*

## Waterton Valley

The Waterton Valley will be managed to highlight the park’s main theme “where the mountains meet the prairie”. The classic view of rolling grasslands and the sparkling Waterton Lakes embraced by colourful mountains will remain unchanged save for the natural processes of wind, water and fire.

The focus for the Waterton Valley will be to provide “a view from the edge” and “a step into the wild” experiences which appeal to visitors less likely to travel to more remote areas of the park.

The key elements of the Waterton Valley Area Concept will be to:

- improve the entrance gate area so it creates a positive sense of welcome and arrival,
- provide a new visitor opportunity and improve public safety by developing a multi-purpose trail between the park gate and the community which links existing features such as picnic areas, interpretive displays and accessible beaches,
- work with business owners, tourism providers and the Waterton community to refine and improve visitor experiences, with an emphasis on presenting the story of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site,
- better package and communicate to visitors the full range of recreational opportunities, including wildlife viewing and winter recreation,
- ensure the natural processes of fire, erosion and deposition will continue to shape the valley and invasive plants will be controlled,
- retain the Bison Paddock and improve the existing overlook and interpretive displays to deliver additional messages about bison and their ecological role,
- assess the Wishbone trail to identify possible improvements that would lead to reducing potential conflicts between mountain bikes and wildlife,
- amend the Park Zoning Plan to increase Zone II wilderness/declared wilderness areas within the Waterton Valley to provide an additional level of protection to rare and sensitive habitat on the Blakiston alluvial fan while leaving existing road corridors and Alpine Stables and the Camp Columbus youth camp unaffected.





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## Waterton Community

For most visitors, the community in Waterton is the gateway to broader national park experiences and in many ways is the heart of the park. It will be managed so it remains a significant part of the visitor experience. Functionally, the community will continue to provide services and facilities to visitors, be a major centre for information and interpretation, celebrate international peace and cooperation, and demonstrate Canada's ongoing efforts towards achieving sustainable development.

Waterton's community will remain that of a leisurely paced village. It will be low density, small scale and respect its historic character. Redevelopment is encouraged and will respect existing and historic patterns of development.

The community will be festive and active in the summer months, quiet and more relaxed in the shoulder seasons, and nestled down for rest and renewal in the winter months.

The community will be the focal point for interpretation and communications activities, particularly those relating to the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site. Programs for multi cultural and multi generational audiences that focus on the park's nature, history and culture will be created. The community will also remain the main staging area for visitors going into the park for hiking, camping and other experiences. The Townsite Campground will be operated at the highest level of service in the park.

*The Waterton Community Plan 2000* will be updated. This plan will consider both aesthetic improvements and services to visitors in all seasons by:

- creating better signs to inform visitors of points of interest and services,
- improving visitor information relating to services in the community,
- improving facility appearance and landscaping standards,
- improving outdoor gathering places and washrooms,
- encouraging common seasons and hours of operation for park businesses.

The current community boundary will be maintained and limits to commercial development confirmed. Parks Canada will work with commercial operators in the park to identify and develop opportunities for additional staff housing in the community. Parks Canada will continue to work with commercial operators, cottagers, Improvement District #4, the Community Association, the Waterton Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Association, the Leaseholders Association and the Community Green Team to work towards the community being a model of sustainability.

## Blakiston Valley

Management of the Blakiston Valley will ensure that a wide range of experiences are available to visitors in its signature prairie and mountain landscape - from viewing wildlife and colourful wildflower displays, to cultural sites, to activities such as mountain biking, scrambles and hikes that range in length from easy to challenging. The valley best encapsulates the diversity that Waterton has to offer, from fescue grasslands, to snow forests, to alpine meadows and all the species that depend upon those habitats. As the major destination in the valley, Red Rock Canyon will become a key gathering place for sightseeing, photography and short walks. It will also serve as a major staging point for extended hikes, mountain biking and horseback trips.

Improvements to the Red Rock Parkway will enhance its existing winding, low speed driving experience which features prime wildlife and scenery viewing. The valley will continue to provide a quiet, family-oriented, nature experience where learning is possible through exhibits, guided walks and other interpretive events – focusing on “*a view from the edge*” and a “*step into the wild*” experiences. However, for those who desire to partake, “*mountain wilderness*” experiences are readily available. The Blakiston Valley experience appeals to all visitor explorer types.





The following actions will be undertaken.

- Create arrival nodes at the start of the Red Rock Parkway and at Red Rock Canyon that provide visitors with information to ensure they have a safe, enjoyable and memorable experience.
- Improve the road surface, while retaining its current undulating, winding character.
  - Improve pull outs at scenic points and interpretive opportunities.
  - Consider actions to improve cycling, particularly regarding safety.
- The Crandell Mountain Campground will offer a semi primitive experience to campers. A new tepee based experience will be developed.
- Redevelop the Day Use Area at Red Rock Canyon.
  - Redevelop the washroom facilities.
  - Improve parking and vehicle circulation.
  - Renew signs and interpretive media.
  - Promote the Blakiston Valley as an area for wilderness and overnight hiking.
- Maintain the winter restriction on motorized access but promote shoulder season cycling and walking, and winter season skiing and snowshoeing.



## Cameron Valley

The Cameron Valley, with its mix of higher altitude subalpine and alpine recreational opportunities, will be managed to appeal to all visitor groups. It will remain as one of the most visited valleys in Waterton, offering hiking, boating, fishing, skiing, snowshoeing and ice climbing, as well as wildlife and wildflower viewing in spectacular mountain scenery.

In summer, visitors will easily enjoy picnics and cultural sites, hike high quality trails such as the Carthew-Alderson, paddle Cameron Lake, and see bears, river otters and moose in their natural habitat. In winter, skiers and snowshoers will travel through a true snow forest to the continental divide and beyond.

While vehicle-based experiences appeal to visitors who seek the Cameron Valley's rich mountain, lake and waterfall scenery, more experienced visitors will also find abundant opportunities to experience "*mountain wilderness*."

Parks Canada will work with partners to communicate the area's recreational opportunities, safe practices and its natural and cultural features through use of a variety of media. We will improve the road surface and signs along the parkway, all trailheads will be assessed and enhanced where required, and we will address safety and ecological concerns associated with spillover parking at the Akamina trailhead.

We will also work with British Columbia Parks to improve visitor experiences and coordination of ecological projects between Akamina-Kishinena Provincial Park and Waterton Lakes National Park.

## Belly River

The Belly River area will be managed to present to visitors a tranquil, rustic experience which reflects its wilderness character. It is imbued with an atmosphere that makes one feel as though you are a long way from civilization. Visitors can experience wetlands, montane and sub alpine environments that possess abundant, stable wildlife populations. Visitors travelling the highway from Glacier National Park will feel welcomed as they take in a scenic drive rich in natural and Aboriginal history.

For most visitors, the Belly River Valley is a vehicle based experience that allows the visitor to see a less travelled part of the park. The focus will be on providing "*view from the edge*" and "*step into the wild*" experiences. In that sense, the Belly River area will appeal to all explorer types. Hiking opportunities such as Vimy Ridge, will appeal to the more adventurous.



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Parks Canada’s presence at the border crossing area will be reviewed to improve the sense of welcome and arrival and to communicate opportunities in the park. The pullouts, improved signs, picnic areas and viewpoints on the Chief Mountain Highway will be reviewed for their visitor experience, safety and interpretive opportunities. Opportunities available in the Belly River area will be more clearly communicated to park visitors.

We will market the Belly River group camp to regional school and youth groups as a setting for learning. The Belly River Campground will be promoted as an opportunity for a vehicle accessible introduction to a primitive camping experience in a wilderness setting. Parks Canada will investigate skiing and cycling opportunities when motorized access restrictions on the highway are in effect during the shoulder seasons and winter.

Parks Canada will continue to work with the Kainai on issues of mutual interest associated with the Blood Timber Limit and will discuss opportunities to develop aboriginal cultural programs in the Belly River area.

## Foothills

The Foothills represent a unique opportunity for visitors to experience solitude in a rarely visited area. As the land transitions from prairie to mountain slopes, hikers and equestrians will see intact, native fescue prairie, limber pine, and the wildlife that dwells there. Significant wildlife populations will continue to frequent the area, including bears, deer and elk.

With its remoteness and lack of roads, the Foothills area will appeal to visitors who embrace self-propelled recreation. Opportunities for equestrians will be promoted here. The remote wilderness experience will be protected, trails maintained at their current state, and no new facilities will be developed. The qualities of the area and its recreational opportunities will be communicated to the public. Waterton will work with adjacent jurisdictions to resolve issues of mutual concern such as invasive plants, access, adjacent industrial activities, and stock grazing.

### Waterton Lakes National Park

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### How Can I Participate?

Background information on the plan review is available on-line at: [www.pc.gc.ca/waterton](http://www.pc.gc.ca/waterton) (click on the “Park Management” link on the left side of the main page)

Obtain a copy of the draft updated Park Management Plan by contacting Janice Smith at [janice.smith@pc.gc.ca](mailto:janice.smith@pc.gc.ca) or 403.859.5127

Talk to us in person, mail or e-mail us your comments:

[janice.smith@pc.gc.ca](mailto:janice.smith@pc.gc.ca)

### Timelines

The final public review period will run from early November to December 11, 2009.

Following the public review period we will revise the draft plan.

The plan will be submitted to the Minister for approval early in 2010.