

Parks Canada's Process for Assessing Cumulative Effects in Action:

A Grizzly Bear Case Study

Grizzly bears are identified as an important species, and objectives are set for habitat security in the park management plan.



Managing Cumulative Effects at Parks Canada

Parks Canada's layered system of planning and impact assessment is part of a robust framework to assess the impact of project proposals on national parks, marine conservation areas and historic sites.

This framework ensures the protection of ecological integrity, ecological sustainability and commemorative integrity within our protected heritage areas while providing meaningful services and experiences to visitors.

To learn more about Parks Canada's impact assessment tools, get involved, or become part of the process, visit

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/nature/eie-eia>



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What are cumulative effects?

Cumulative effects are changes to the environment that are caused by a human action, in combination with other past, present and future actions.

A cumulative effect occurs when multiple projects or activities impact a single component of the ecosystem, for example a lake or a population of puffins. Climate change, invasive species or other changes to the environment can add to these cumulative effects.

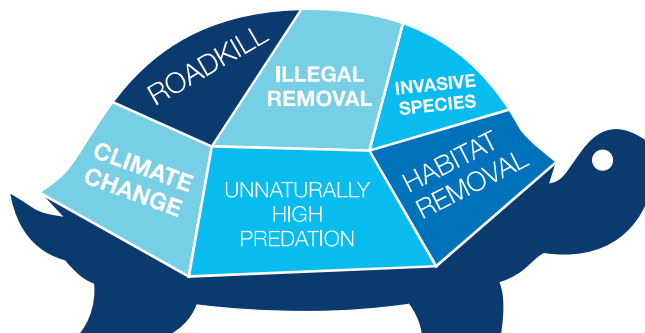
To assess and manage cumulative effects from projects and activities, Parks Canada uses multiple layers of impact assessment.

Example of Cumulative Effects

Turtles can be impacted by a number of human activities and projects. For example, turtles can be hit by vehicles on the road and killed. On top of that, some people illegally take turtles for the pet trade. In addition, projects along shorelines can make it difficult for turtles to reach their nesting areas.

The combined impact of these activities and projects is a cumulative effect on turtles.

Examining the adverse impact of each activity and project individually would not capture the “bigger picture” of their cumulative effect on turtles.



Parks Canada’s Approach

The “bigger picture” beyond individual projects and activities is important, because that’s the scale at which environmental impacts accumulate. Parks Canada’s approach to managing cumulative effects ensures that the “bigger picture” is considered.

To accomplish this, Parks Canada uses a layered approach to impact assessment. Each layer assesses impacts at a different scale.



First layer: Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) of park management plans assess cumulative effects at the broader park and regional scale over the next 10 years. SEA identifies information gaps, key mitigation strategies, and other tools needed to manage cumulative effects. This layer provides analysis and recommendations that ensure Project Impact Assessment is effective.



Second layer: Project Impact Assessment is completed at a more focused scale. The impacts assessed and the scale considered are specific to the project, but by following the recommendations from the SEA, we can be confident the “bigger picture” is still being kept in mind.