

Guidelines for New Recreational Activities in Jasper National Park

2015

Background

Millions of visitors have experienced Jasper National Park while taking part in a recreational activity. Providing visitors with opportunities to participate in recreational activities is one way to encourage meaningful and enjoyable visits that contribute to a sense of connection to place.

In 2010, Parks Canada concluded national assessments of several new recreational activities to determine whether or not they can occur in Parks Canada’s protected heritage places. The activities were selected for assessment based on interest expressed by the public, stakeholders, and individual national parks and national historic sites. National guidelines for the activities were approved by the Minister of the Environment in September 2010. Individual parks and sites may now carry out local assessments of these activities to determine whether or not they may occur in that park or site and the conditions under which they may take place.

Banff and Yoho national parks conducted the first local assessment of a new recreational activity—interpreted, guided via ferrata tours—in November 2010. Based on feedback from that assessment, the mountain national parks (Jasper, Banff, Kootenay, Glacier, and Mt. Revelstoke, Waterton Lakes and Yoho) assessed and developed guidelines on a mountain park-basis for all the nationally-approved activities, instead of carrying out individual local assessments for each activity. The mountain park guidelines built on and refined the national guidelines. They were further tailored to reflect the unique context of Jasper National Park.

Guidelines specific to Jasper National Park were released for public review on November 15, 2011. The review period ended in January 31, 2012. Since then, Parks Canada team members have been working to revise the guidelines. Further discussions have been held with stakeholders and Parks Canada specialists, which have resulted in this final set of guidelines.

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Roles and Responsibilities in Setting Policy Direction for New Recreational Activities

Timeline	2006 to 2010	Fall 2010 to Spring 2011	Spring 2011 to present
Unit Responsible	<p>Parks Canada Agency National Office</p> <p>External Relations and Visitor Experience Directorate</p>	<p>Mountain National Parks</p> <p>Jasper, Banff, Yoho, Kootenay, Waterton Lakes, Glacier and Mount Revelstoke</p>	<p>Jasper National Park</p>
Policy Developed	<p>Directive for Recreational Activity and Special Events Assessment</p> <p>National Guidelines for Several New Recreational Activities</p>	<p><i>Mountain Parks Guidelines for New Recreational Activities</i></p>	<p><i>Jasper National Park Guidelines for New Recreational Activities</i></p>
Approved by	Minister of Environment	Mountain Parks Superintendents	Jasper National Park Superintendent
Public Involvement	Stakeholder consultations with recreation and environmental organizations and industry representatives about national guidelines for specific activities	Opportunities to comment on draft guidelines provided through public events in Banff and Jasper	Opportunities to comment on draft guidelines provided in Jasper, Edmonton and on-line
Key Decisions	<p>The following activities were approved nationally and can now be considered by individual parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided and interpreted canopy tours, via ferrata tours and aerial adventure parks Non-motorized paragliding and hang gliding Traction kiting Mountain biking Community gardens <p>The following activities were not approved and may not be considered by individual parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand-alone zip lines Trails for downhill mountain biking 	<p>The majority of nationally-approved activities could be considered in the mountain national parks (with the addition of a number of new guidelines), except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided, interpreted canopy tours would only be considered in Mt. Revelstoke and Glacier national parks Via ferrata would not be considered in Zone II (declared wilderness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific locations identified for aerial adventure parks and traction kiting Proposals for via ferrata in zones III and IV will be considered Next steps identified for paragliding and hang gliding Guidelines for mountain biking shaped by decisions taken through Three Valley Confluence Trails Project



Focus on New Recreational Activities

New recreational activities offer the potential to reach segments of the Canadian population that are priorities for Parks Canada: urban Canadians, youth and new Canadians. Young urban Canadians and new Canadians represent growing segments of the population; they may also be less familiar with national parks and national historic sites than previous generations.

Reaching youth and new Canadians and building support for heritage protection is essential to ensuring the future of our national parks. Participating for the first time in a new activity located in the park provides a window to the many other possibilities the park offers. For many, this window may act as a bridge to developing a life-long connection.

New activities can also provide more opportunities for new and current visitors to experience national parks. However, these activities need to be managed with the same care and attention as existing activities.

Visitor Experience: The Big Picture

Jasper National Park is home to a multitude of recreational activities. Some, like horseback riding and canoeing, have a long history in the park that pre-dates its establishment. Others are more recent. Mountain biking and ice walks in Maligne Canyon date back to the 1980s; geo-caching has been permitted since 2007. Many of the larger, commercial facilities, such as Marmot Basin Ski Area and Jasper Tramway were established in the 1960s. A number of policies related to existing recreational activities have been reviewed and updated recently and are priorities for implementation.

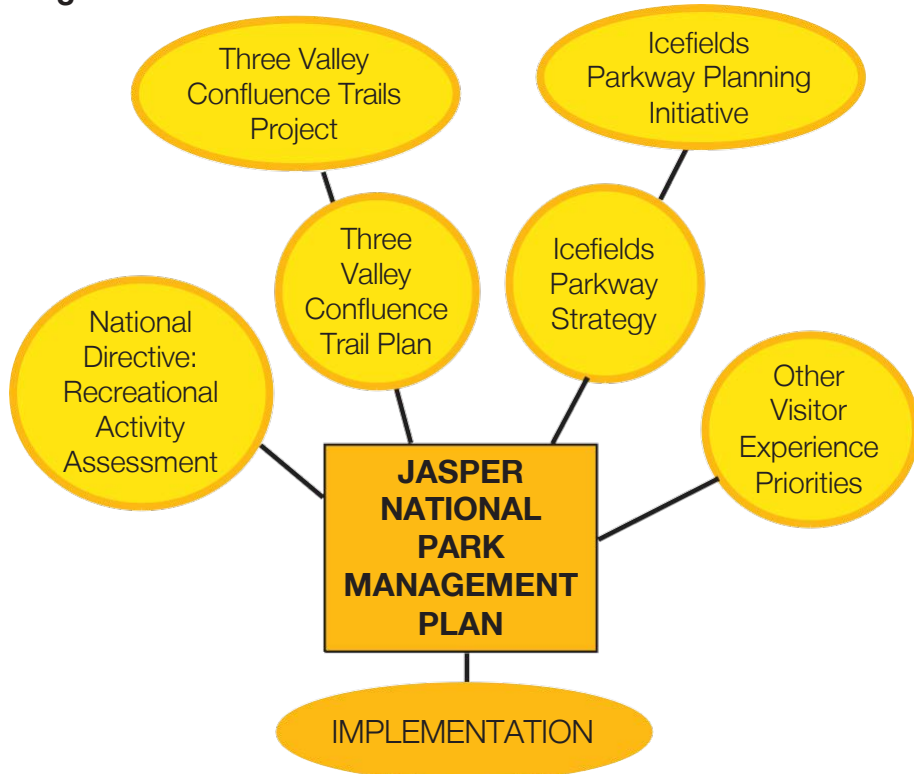
For example, a multi-year planning process for the Three Valley Confluence concluded in 2009 with an approved plan for the multi-use trail network around the Jasper townsite. Trail improvements and adjustments outlined in the plan are being implemented as funding permits.

Parks Canada worked with an Advisory Group to develop the Icefields Parkway Strategy (2009).

Planning focused on enhancing visitor experiences along the roadway and adjacent opportunities, facilities and services. Improvements to the parking lot at the Icefields Centre and the Toe of the Glacier are just a few of the projects that have resulted from this collaborative planning process.

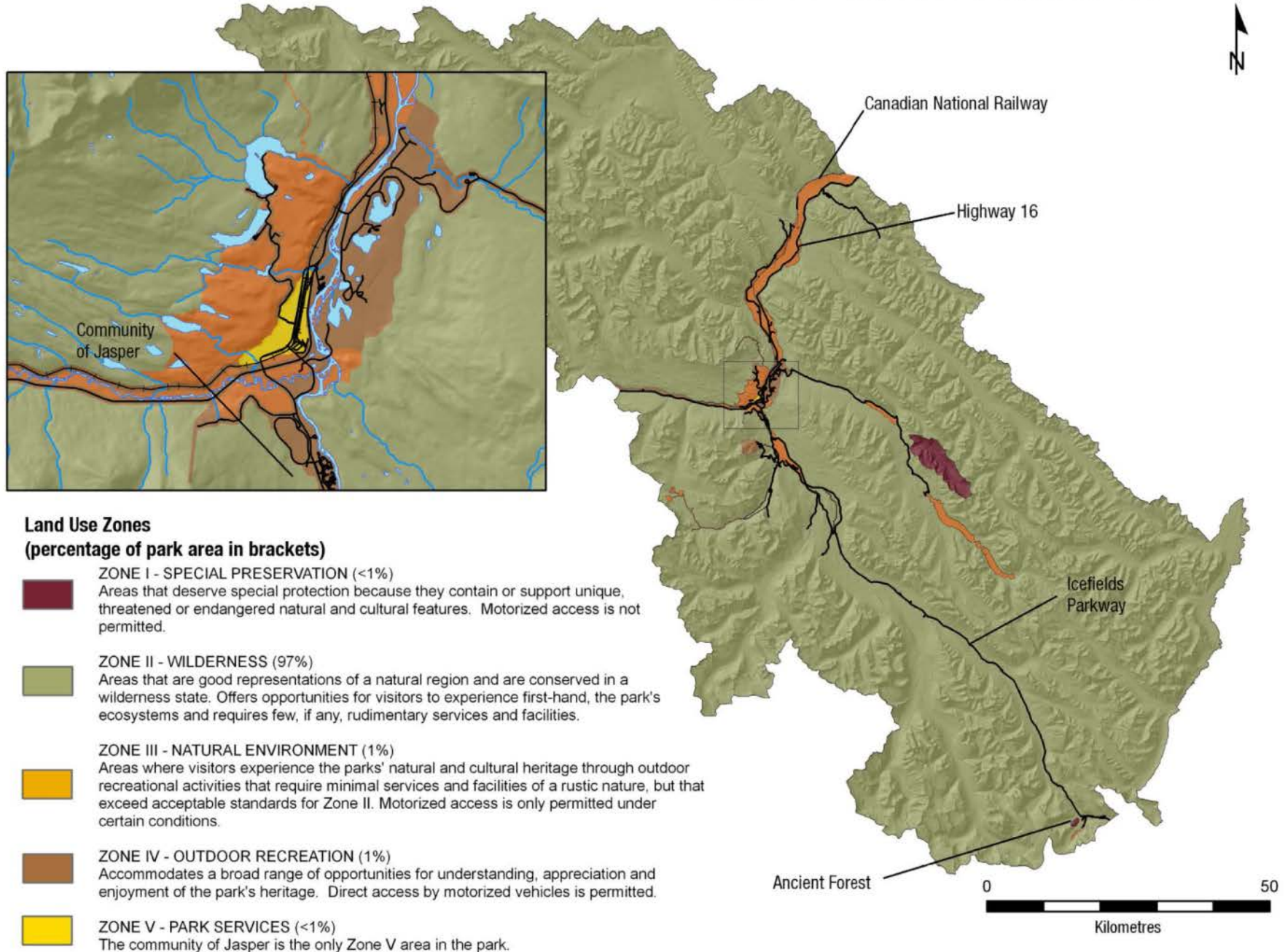
Refreshing existing facilities and renewing existing products will continue to be the focus of the Visitor Experience program in Jasper National Park.

Relationship between Visitor Experience Priorities and Park Management Plan





Land Use Zoning for Jasper National Park





Management Plan Direction

The *Jasper National Park Management Plan* (2010) supports the introduction of new activities and facilities subject to specific criteria, while prioritizing the renewal and refreshing of existing activities and facilities. The plan commits Parks Canada to:

Develop, support, and promote new events and recreational activities that:

1. Promote public understanding and appreciation of Rocky Mountain ecosystems and history, and Parks Canada's mandate.
2. Involve a diverse range of the park's partners and stakeholders in their development and delivery.
3. Support outstanding visitor experiences.
4. Respect the park's character and area concepts.
5. Support relevant ecological and cultural resource protection goals.

Proposals may be evaluated through a structured public review process.

Park Zoning

During the 2009 review of the management plan, concerns were expressed about the potential effects of new recreational activities and events on the park environment and other visitors. Parks Canada was urged to better define "non-traditional uses" and set clear boundaries in terms of the types of activities and associated development that would be considered. These guidelines respond to this feedback by setting out what activities will be considered where and the conditions under which they may occur.

Some activities may be appropriate in certain areas of the park, but not in others. Zoning is a key tool used to manage development and recreational use of the park. The national parks zoning system contains five zones. A description of each zone and a map depicting their location in Jasper National Park is provided on page four. The provisional guidelines set out the zones in which recreational activities may occur.

Additionally, the management plan divides Jasper National Park into six distinct areas and sets visitor experience, resource protection and education objectives for each area. New activities must be consistent with the area strategies and general management plan direction.

Summary of locations or zones for new recreational activities in Jasper National Park

Activity	Location or zone where activity can occur	Comments
Aerial Parks	Zones IV and V	
Via Ferrata	Zones III and IV	
Non-Motorized Hang Gliding and Paragliding	Zones II, III and IV for trial period	Activity will be re-evaluated at the end of trial period
Traction Kiting Water-Based (summer) Land-Based (summer) Ice- or Snow-Based (winter)	Jasper Lake recommended Durable surfaces (e.g. pavement, playing fields) in zones III, IV and V Zones II, III, IV and V, except for Mildred Lake	Not permitted on grasslands or alpine meadows Kiters must ensure snow cover is adequate
Mountain Biking Winter Biking Bike Parks	Designated trails in zones II, III and IV Designated trails in zones II, III and IV and Zone III and IV lakes Zone V (Jasper townsite)	



Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the mountain park guidelines for new recreational activities was conducted in accordance with the *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*. Strategic environmental assessment is a tool used to ensure that environmental considerations are systematically assessed before policy decisions are made.

The key findings of the strategic environmental assessment are:

1. New recreational activities have the potential to contribute to visitor experience in ways that are consistent with the character of place that is unique or representative of the mountain parks' natural and cultural environments.
2. Site-specific impacts of new activities to vegetation, wildlife and visitor experience resources and values can be dealt with effectively by considering location, design, management and mitigation measures and visitor education.
3. Cumulative impacts of new recreational activities may be largely addressed through the application of management plan area concepts, park zoning systems and the mitigations of the SEA. The key aspects of managing potential impacts to wildlife and visitor experience are reflected in the provisional guidelines.

Further to the second finding of the SEA, site-specific impacts of proposals for aerial adventure parks, bike parks and commercial guiding or instruction in traction kiting and mountain biking will be addressed through the environmental assessment process. Some forms of paragliding and hang gliding (e.g. commercial tandem flying), if permitted in future, would also require environmental assessment.

Environmental considerations related to unstructured activities that do not require any new infrastructure (e.g. unstructured traction kiting, paragliding and hang gliding) were evaluated and further guidance (e.g. best practices, locations) is provided directly in these guidelines.

Monitoring and follow-up requirements will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

For More Information about these guidelines, please contact:

Jasper Field Unit
Superintendent's Office
(780) 852-6171
jnp.superintendent@pc.gc.ca



Aerial Parks

Aerial parks belong to a class of guided, interpreted activities that require infrastructure and include via ferrata and canopy tours. They do not currently exist in Jasper National Park.

Description

Elevated paths progress through various obstacles and are equipped with ropes, ladders, suspended bridges, zip lines and via ferrata components. Challenge, adventure and ropes courses belong to this category. Participants use a belay system and move through the course at their own pace.

Guidelines for Aerial Parks

1. Consistency with Policy

Parks Canada may consider aerial park proposals from existing leaseholders or licensees on or adjacent to existing leases or areas under a license of occupation provided that the tours are:

- consistent with the management plan, Outlying Commercial Accommodation guidelines and other relevant policies
- small in scale: sized so that they remain an ancillary service as opposed to the primary attraction at an Outlying Commercial Accommodation or commercial day use operation
- in the case of the Marmot Basin Ski Area, advanced as part of a Long-Range Plan

Tours will only be considered in areas where the activity is consistent with the area management concepts and management plan direction to consider proposals for new facilities required for outdoor recreational activities, subject to:

- the criteria for new recreational activities (p. 24, *Jasper National Park Management Plan*)
- mitigation of any potential site-specific, park-wide or regional impacts, including potential conflicts between user groups
- the use of existing disturbed sites where feasible
- no net increase in landscape disturbance or wildlife displacement at a park scale

Commercial operators may propose playgrounds (small, unsupervised play areas) with characteristics that are similar to an aerial park (e.g. bouldering area, challenge elements close to the ground) under existing environmental assessment and development review policies.

2. Zoning / Location

Aerial parks can be considered in zones IV and V. They will not be considered in Environmentally Sensitive Sites, Zone I, Zone II or Zone III.

New or modified staging areas to support these tours can only occur in zones IV and V.



3. Infrastructure / Footprint

No new roads will be created to support these types of tours.

Tours will make use of existing facilities (e.g. parking, toilets, trails) with sufficient capacity as much as possible.

Where supported by park management plan direction, new or modified staging areas could be considered under license of occupation or other agreement. These would include only basic infrastructure (parking, picnic tables, and toilets). New or existing staging areas requiring modification will be funded, constructed and maintained by operators. Other supporting facilities and operations, such as concession stands and ticketing will be managed off-site in areas already leased or licensed for commercial services.

For proposals that would involve new development adjacent to an existing lease or license of occupation, Parks Canada may work with the proponent, through the development review process, to identify a conservation gain to offset the increase in the development footprint. Potential conservation gains could include rehabilitation of lands to a natural state elsewhere in the park or new interpretive programming.

Zip lines will be considered as minor components of aerial parks as a means to move from one point to another where there is no other feasible alternative means to access the area, and where the area is determined to be critical to the experience.

4. Environmental Considerations

Resource inventories, assessments and monitoring will inform the site selection and ongoing management as necessary. Costs for resource surveys, environmental assessments, ongoing monitoring and active management will be the responsibility of the proponent/operator and will be based on terms of reference provided by Parks Canada.

Seasonal and daily timing of visitor activities will facilitate wildlife life cycle requirements. Site and route selection will be informed by a detailed survey of:

- sensitive vegetation species and communities and associated wildlife habitat values including species at risk, rare and fragile vegetation
- special resources (e.g. fossils, iconic landforms, den sites)
- cultural resources

5. Safety and Risk Management

Commercial operators must obtain appropriate permits and licenses, and adequate liability insurance.

Safety, risk and liability will be considered throughout ongoing management of guided interpreted tours.

The design, construction, operation, expansion, modification and/or maintenance of infrastructure must adhere to industry standards, and national and provincial building codes, where applicable.



Guiding qualifications and requirements include:

- Standard First Aid – St. John’s or equivalent including CPR
- safety and technical skills accreditation will be determined in consultation with the third party proposing the aerial park and will meet current industry or guiding association standards (e.g. High Angle Rope Rescues)

6. Visitor Learning and Enjoyment

Education related to park heritage values will be a core component of the experience.

The focus of guided, interpreted tours will be the opportunity to experience and learn about unique mountain national park landscapes (such as dynamic views, cordilleran geology and montane environments). Infrastructure will not be the primary focus of the activity. Infrastructure will be designed to immerse the visitor in the landscape and provide learning opportunities.

Guides must have Interpretive Guides Association training at the Basic level or equivalent to provide heritage interpretation to participants.

Site and route selection will be informed by a detailed survey of existing visitor activity and values (including viewsapes).

7. Accessibility / Reaching Target Markets

Operators will be encouraged to provide affordable opportunities for youth and families to participate.



Other Guided, Interpreted Activities	
Via Ferrata	
Description	Rationale
<p>Via ferrata typically consist of a combination of ladders, rungs, bridges and other structures that take a visitor onto a vertical rock face. Participants wear a harness and remain attached to a cable at all times while making their way along the route. Via ferrata can offer a unique opportunity for visitors who may not be able to develop the experience or skills to engage in mountaineering and rock climbing to experience a vertical environment.</p>	<p>Parks Canada has determined on a mountain-parks-basis that it will consider proposals for guided, interpreted via ferrata in zones III and IV. Via ferrata will not be considered in Zone II, where only basic user facilities (e.g. trails, wilderness campgrounds) are permitted. Although Parks Canada has not yet identified any feasible locations for a via ferrata in zones III or IV in Jasper National Park, if a third party submits a proposal identifying a feasible location or locations, this activity will be further assessed and local guidelines developed.</p>
Canopy Tours	
Description	Rationale
<p>This activity involves elevated walkways or other infrastructure that take visitors off the ground and allow them to explore the forest canopy.</p>	<p>Canopy tours are most appropriate in national park settings where the height and size of the canopy system support unique assemblages of flora and fauna that do not exist and cannot be readily observed elsewhere, and which, in those situations, provide opportunities for unique exploration and learning. There is little potential for canopy tours in Jasper National Park, due to the absence of suitable trees, however aerial parks, which can be built using poles and other structures, offer a similar opportunity and will be considered as detailed in the previous section.</p>
Stand-Alone Zip Lines	
Description	Rationale
<p>This activity involves an extended descent by gravity from one fixed point to another along a cable. Participants wear a harness attached to a pulley or trolley that travels along the cable.</p>	<p>Stand-alone zip lines are not permitted in any national park under the national guidelines for new recreational activities due to the limited opportunity for learning associated with this activity.</p>

Non-Motorized Paragliding and Hang Gliding

These guidelines, approved in February 2019, replace previously approved (March 2015) guidelines.

Description

Participants launch from a high point and use a chute or rigid wing to catch rising currents of air. They eventually land at a different location.

Guidelines for Paragliding and Hang Gliding

1. Consistency with Policy

Parks Canada implemented a two-year trial program for paragliding and hang gliding in Jasper National Park from 2015 to 2017. Following an evaluation of the trial program, Parks Canada has determined that this activity can continue, subject to the following guidelines, which were revised in February 2019.

Only non-motorized forms of hang gliding and paragliding will be allowed. No motorized or towed launches will be permitted.

Commercial activities (e.g. tandem flying) and special events will not be permitted.

Hang gliding and paragliding are not permitted at Marmot Basin under the *Marmot Basin Site Guidelines for Development and Use*.

HPAC will continue to provide data about flights in Jasper National Park (e.g. date, launch and landing sites) on a yearly basis, so that Parks Canada can monitor the growth of this activity.

Parks Canada will implement a Superintendent's Order to make the procedures for this activity legally enforceable.

2. Zoning / Location

Hang gliding and paragliding will be permitted throughout Jasper National Park. However, take offs and landings will not be permitted in the following areas:

- Zone V (the Jasper townsite)
- Marmot Basin Ski Area
- roadways and associated rights-of-way (e.g. Highway 16, Icefields Parkway)
- within high elevation caribou critical habitat

Pilots must obtain permission from the lessee or licensee before landing on a leasehold or license of occupation.

Pilots must exercise discretion when landing at Parks Canada facilities, such as picnic areas, campgrounds, and facility parking areas, and should avoid these areas during peak season¹ and other busy times of the year.

¹ Peak season in Jasper National Park runs from the May long weekend to the September (Labour Day) long weekend.

Emergency landings will be permitted in accordance with Transport Canada and Parks Canada regulations.

3. Infrastructure / Footprint

No new roads or other facilities will be created to support hang gliding and paragliding.

4. Environmental Considerations

Pilots will comply with *Procedures for Paragliding and Hang Gliding in Jasper National Park* (see Appendix 1), which includes provisions to minimize disturbance to wildlife.

Take offs, landings and flights will avoid disturbing sensitive wildlife (e.g. nesting birds, mountain goats, woodland caribou).

Pilots will use official trails and routes to access areas for hang gliding and paragliding.

Parks Canada will work with HPAC to manage potential impacts to sensitive species (e.g. goats, caribou).

5. Safety and Risk Management

Hang gliding and paragliding will be practiced according to industry/association standards and rules.

Pilots must be members of HPAC² to fly in the park.

Safety, risk and liability will be considered throughout the ongoing management of the activity.

Parks Canada will work with HPAC and local flying clubs to identify necessary safety measures.

6. Visitor Learning and Enjoyment

Parks Canada will work with HPAC and local flying clubs to manage communications with pilots.

Parks Canada will work with HPAC to manage potential impacts on other visitors and iconic viewscales.

Approved by:

Alan Fehr
Superintendent, Jasper National Park of Canada

Date

² HPAC has secured the authority from Transport Canada to self-regulate hang gliding and paragliding activities, subject to Canadian Aviation Regulations. HPAC membership ensures that pilots have third-party liability insurance and that they have sufficient skills to fly unsupervised safely. Pilots from outside of Canada can obtain temporary HPAC membership, including liability insurance, based on International Pilot Proficiency Information cards.



Traction Kiting

You may already have seen this activity in Jasper National Park. Traction kiting does not require any specialized infrastructure, relying instead on existing access and facilities.

Description

Kite surfers or skiers harness the wind's energy with a large kite to propel themselves across snow, ice, water or land.

Land-based participants stand on a buggy, skateboard or roller skates. Water-based participants use a board similar to a wakeboard or a surfboard.

Traction kiting on frozen surfaces is commonly called kite skiing or snow kiting. Kitters use the power of a kite to glide over snow or ice while strapped to a snowboard, skis or skates.

In open terrain, kitters are able to travel significant distances, particularly over open water or frozen lakes and snowfields.

Guidelines for Traction Kiting

1. Consistency with Policy

Special event proposals will go through normal park approval processes (e.g. business licensing, environmental impact assessment, special events process).

2. Zoning / Location

In Jasper, Jasper Lake is recommended for water-based traction kiting (e.g. kite surfing).

Land based traction kiting (e.g. traction kiting using a buggy or skateboard) can take place on durable surfaces (see Environmental Considerations) in zone III, IV and V areas.

Snow- and ice-based traction kiting can take place in zone II, III, IV and V areas, with the exception of the Mildred Lake (where skating is regularly offered in winter).

Traction kiting cannot take place in Environmentally Sensitive Sites or in zone I areas.

New or modified staging areas to support traction kiting can only occur in zones III, IV and V.



3. Infrastructure / Footprint

No new roads will be created to support traction kiting.

Commercial operations will make use of existing facilities (parking, toilets, trails etc.) with sufficient capacity as much as possible.

Where supported by park management plan direction, new or modified staging areas could be considered for commercial traction kiting operations under license of occupation or other agreement in zones IV and V. These would include only basic infrastructure (parking, picnic tables, and toilets). New or existing staging areas requiring modification will be funded and maintained by the proponent/operator. Other supporting facilities associated with commercial operations, such as concession stands and ticketing, will be managed off-site in areas already leased or licensed for commercial services.

4. Environmental Considerations

Participants will use existing trails and routes to access areas for traction kiting and will respect any existing/new closures or restrictions.

Kiting in any season will be limited to durable surfaces (i.e., snow, ice, water, gravel, parking lots, playing fields in communities), including the consideration of appropriate depth of snow/ice cover. Traction kiting on grasslands and alpine meadows will not be permitted.

Water-based traction kiting will avoid direct disruption to areas known to be important to waterfowl lifecycle requirements. Parks Canada will develop web-based information for users to identify areas and/or time periods to be avoided.

Winter kiting will avoid disturbance to important ungulate wintering and subnivean wildlife habitat, including consideration of adequate snow or ice cover.

In areas that have high amounts of traction kiting, Parks Canada will work with local organizations in order to:

- avoid impact to sensitive species and important resource values
- avoid impact to, or alteration of, cultural resources
- avoid disruption of iconic views

Resource inventories, assessments and monitoring will inform ongoing management as necessary. Costs for resource surveys, environmental assessments, ongoing monitoring and active management of special events or commercial operations will be the responsibility of the proponent/operator and will be based on terms of reference provided by Parks Canada.



5. Visitor Safety

Safety, risk and liability will be considered throughout the ongoing management of the activity.

Traction kiting will be practiced according to industry/association standards and rules.

Commercial operators must obtain appropriate permits and licenses, and adequate liability insurance.

Guiding qualifications and requirements include:

- Wilderness First Aid (40 hours) including CPR
- technical and instruction skills accreditation by the
- International Kiteboarding Organization (IKO), Professional Air Sports Association (PASA) or equivalent organization
- ACMG Certification (Ski or Alpine Guide), for guiding and/or instruction in technical terrain (i.e. glaciated or avalanche terrain)

6. Visitor Learning and Enjoyment

In areas that have high amounts of traction kiting, Parks Canada will work with local organizations in order to manage communications with participants and avoid physically displacing or diminishing the value of other established uses.

Guides/instructors must have Interpretive Guides Association training at the Basic level or equivalent to provide heritage interpretation to participants.



Mountain Biking

Mountain bikes have been a part of Jasper's landscape for thirty years. Emerging aspects of the sport, such as downhill biking, the use of technical trail features and the establishment of bike parks, had never been formally reviewed by Parks Canada.

Description

Cross-country is the main form of mountain biking in Jasper and will be the principal form of mountain biking offered in national parks.

Cross-country riding is off-road cycling using specially adapted bikes, typically on dirt, gravel, or natural surface trails, from wide gravel roads to narrow "single track" paths.

Implementation of the Three Valley Confluence Trail Plan will address the needs of mountain bikers and other recreational users around the Jasper townsite and is a priority for implementation. Parks Canada will continue to focus on designing, creating and managing sustainable multiple-use trails.

Guidelines for Mountain Biking

1. Consistency with Policy

Cross country will be the principal form of mountain biking offered. Parks Canada will not offer downhill-specific trails for mountain biking due to visitor safety concerns and potential wildlife conflict.

Special event proposals will go through normal park approval processes (e.g. business licensing, environmental impact assessment, special events process).

Parks Canada will not consider competitive mountain bike races, but non-competitive mountain bike rallies may be possible. Parks Canada will consider competitive biking events only on existing roads.

Parks Canada will only consider cross-country mountain biking proposals at Marmot Basin Ski Area that are consistent with the *Marmot Basin Site Guidelines for Development and Use*.

2. Zoning / Location

Mountain biking is permitted on trails in zone II, III, IV and V areas that have been designated and identified (e.g. signed) by Parks Canada.

In winter, mountain biking is also permitted on zone III and IV lakes.

Mountain biking is not permitted in Environmentally Sensitive Sites or zone I areas.



3. Infrastructure / Footprint

No new roads will be created to support mountain biking.

Commercial operations will make use of existing facilities (parking, toilets, trails, etc.) for staging purposes.

Other supporting facilities associated with commercial operations, such as concession stands and ticketing, will be managed off-site in areas already leased or licensed for commercial services.

4. Environmental Considerations

Resource inventories, assessments and monitoring will inform trail selection and ongoing management of mountain biking as necessary. Costs for resource surveys, environmental assessments, ongoing monitoring and active management of special events or commercial operations will be the responsibility of the proponent/operator and will be based on terms of reference provided by Parks Canada.

Trail development and improvements will be informed by an analysis of vulnerable species and seasonal habitat use and importance.

Active restoration measures will be employed to prevent erosion and restore vegetation in areas affected by informal trail development activities.

Parks Canada will work with local bike organizations to create an attractive cycling experience and help manage potential impacts associated with cross-country mountain biking, including:

- avoiding impacts to sensitive species and important resource values
- avoiding impact to, or alteration of, cultural resources
- discouraging the development of informal trails and illegal trail building
- fostering respect for existing or new closures or restrictions

5. Visitor Safety

Safety, risk and liability will be considered throughout the ongoing management of the activity.

Mountain biking will be practiced according to industry/association standards and rules.

Commercial operators must obtain appropriate permits and licenses, and adequate liability insurance.

Guiding qualifications and requirements include:

- Wilderness First Aid (40 hours) including CPR
- International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) certification at Level 1 (includes group management training) or equivalent

6. Visitor Learning and Enjoyment

Parks Canada will work with local bike organizations to help reduce potential impacts, such as trail conflict with other users.



Heritage interpretation, educational messaging and etiquette and safety information will be incorporated into the mountain biking offer.

Guides/instructors must have Interpretive Guides Association training at the Basic level or equivalent to provide heritage interpretation to participants.

In addition to the general guidelines, the following specific guidelines apply to bike parks and technical trail features.

Bike Parks

1. Zoning / Location

Parks Canada will consider proposals for bike parks in Zone V. Priority will be given to locations with existing supporting infrastructure and to disturbed sites.

Bike Parks are generally a variety of natural obstacles such as rocks and logs, constructed features such as ladder bridges, pumptracks and mounds of dirt for jumping over, all arranged in a controlled and defined area.

Technical Trail Features (TTFs)

1. Consistency with Policy

The development or construction of technical trail features (TTFs) may be considered where impacts to sensitive vegetation or soils can be avoided or where technical features may be determined to provide more effective protection.

The development of TTFs or other trail enhancements must be sanctioned by Parks Canada through a formal review and approval process.

2. Zoning / Location

TTFs can be created using existing natural features, enhanced natural features or engineered / human-made structures:

- The use of existing natural features can occur in zones II, III, IV and V.
- The use of enhanced natural features can only occur in zones III, IV and V.
- Engineered or human-made structures can only be used in zones III, IV and V. Higher maintenance, cost and liability must be taken into account when considering their addition to a trail or bike park.

Technical Trail Features are obstacles or design elements on a mountain biking trail that improve trail flow or add difficulty in order to challenge the skill of trail users.

Natural features already exist along a trail. Examples include the use of rock slabs, boulders, rock gardens, and fallen trees.

Enhanced natural features involve moving natural materials such as rocks, logs etc. to create drop-offs, rock gardens, boulder rides, log pyramids and log rides.

3. Visitor Safety

The design, construction, operation and maintenance of TTFs must adhere to applicable industry standards and codes as necessary.

Engineered or Human-Made TTF are constructed structures, including ladder bridges, wooden ramps, teeter-totters, etc.



4. Visitor Learning and Enjoyment

TTFs will be designed in a way that respect the heritage area’s character of place and will appeal to different skill levels.

Technical trail features will be designed to facilitate the convenient passage by all trail users.

Elements of Mountain Biking that will not be considered in Jasper National Park	
Mountain Bike Racing	
Description	Rationale
A competitive event where mountain bikers are timed on a circuit.	Parks Canada will not consider mountain bike races, due to the potential for soil erosion, impacts to vegetation and conflicts with other trail users. This would not preclude non-competitive rally where bikes are used primarily as a mode of transportation and in small numbers.
Downhill Mountain Biking	
Description	Justification
This gravity-assisted discipline involves manoeuvring a sustained descending trail. The terrain for this trail can be steep and often includes jump, drops, rock gardens, and roots. Participants are seeking challenge and speed. Due to the bikes’ heavy frames, it is very difficult to bike uphill. Bikers tend to seek road access for a vehicle shuttle, or locations with a lift or gondola, to bring them to the top of a downhill trail.	Parks Canada will not offer downhill-specific trails for mountain biking due to visitor safety concerns and potential wildlife conflicts.

Community Gardening

A community garden is a publicly owned parcel of land used by individuals and groups for growing ornamentals or produce for non-commercial use. The community of Jasper has a long tradition of gardening. A community garden already exists in the townsite. The national guidelines apply to Jasper National Park; no further local direction is provided in these guidelines.



Implementation Strategy

Parks Canada is now able to consider proposals for new recreational activities that are consistent with these guidelines. Funding priorities will be set during annual business planning for the park.

Aerial Parks

Proponents may submit proposals to Parks Canada for consideration. Proposals that are consistent with these guidelines will enter the Environmental Assessment and Development Review processes.

Via Ferrata

If Parks Canada receives a proposal from a third party identifying a feasible location or locations for via ferrata in zone III or IV, this activity will be further assessed and local guidelines developed.

Hang Gliding and Paragliding

Parks Canada will initially permit this activity on a two-year trial basis for personal use only (i.e. no commercial or special events permitted). During this time, monitoring will provide Parks Canada with information on the nature and frequency of potential impacts associated with these activities. At the end of the trial period, the activity will be evaluated and the long-term approach determined. Depending on the outcome of the trial period, Parks Canada may develop guidelines for structured flying, commercial tandem flying and/or special events.

Traction Kiting

Web-based information will be developed to orient traction kites to the guidelines for this activity.

Mountain Biking

Parks Canada will continue to implement the priorities of the Three Valley Confluence Trail Plan. Mountain biking is permitted on designated trails the park. Commercial operators and other organizations may submit proposals for commercial guiding and bike parks to Parks Canada for consideration.

Approval

Approved by:

Alan Fehr
Acting Superintendent, Jasper National Park of Canada

Date

Appendix 1: Procedures for Paragliding and Hang Gliding in Jasper National Park

Jasper National Park is a special place. Paragliding and hang gliding are permitted under specific circumstances. The procedures outlined in this document will help pilots minimize their impact on park wildlife and other environmental values, and avoid conflicts with other park visitors. Please familiarize yourself with this document and the *Map of Areas Closed to Launching and Landing by Paragliders and Hang Gliders* (<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/ab/jasper/activ/activ-experience/ete-summer/parapente-paragliding>) before flying in Jasper National Park.

General

- You must be a member of HPAC to fly in Jasper National Park. Please maintain your membership or acquire temporary HPAC membership if you are a visitor to Canada. Please carry proof of membership when flying in the park.
- Emergency landings are permitted in accordance with Transport Canada and Parks Canada regulations. Please report emergency landings to Jasper Dispatch (780.852.6155) and to HPAC, as per the established HPAC protocol.
- HPAC reports annually to Parks Canada on flights in the park. Please record your flight on the Leonardo website (www.paraglidingforum.com).
- Use your discretion when launching or landing in public areas. If it looks too busy, choose another location to launch or land.
- Get permission from the property owner before landing at a lodge, hotel or bungalow camp.
- You are welcome to use a helmet camera or other mounted camera during your flight, however drone use is not permitted anywhere in the park.

Protecting the Park Environment

- Use official trails to access launch and landing sites.
- Avoid disturbing wildlife—if wildlife is observed, fly away from the area immediately.
- If it is impossible to leave the area, increase your distance from wildlife to 1,000 m or greater, especially if the animals are reacting to you.
- Follow the *Recommended Flight Guidelines for goat, sheep, and caribou ranges in Jasper National Park* (at <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/ab/jasper/info/plan/survols-flight>).
- Raptors and other birds have been known to fly with paragliders. If a bird approaches you while you are flying, do not interfere with its flight or chase it.
- Plan your flight to avoid caribou critical habitat (see *Map of Areas Closed to Launching and Landing by Paragliders and Hang Gliders* for more information). Fly away from critical habitat in higher elevation areas of the park, towards valley bottoms.