



WHAT WE HEARD: JASPER NATIONAL PARK

Park Management Plan Review 2019-2020

August 2019

The Engagement Process

SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Engagement and consultation activities for the scoping phase of the management plan review for Jasper National Park were held from January 29 to May 14, 2019.

Parks Canada asked Indigenous groups, stakeholders and the public three main questions:

- What should we know about seven key topics identified by Parks Canada? Topics were: Ecological Integrity, Visitation, Wilderness Management, Managing Development, Community of Jasper, Indigenous Relations and Climate Change
- What other topics should we consider during the planning process?
- How can we involve you in the planning process going forward?

Parks Canada reached participants through a variety of activities:

Activity	Number of Participants
Website with feedback forms	1,225 visited the website 651 downloaded documents / visited 2+ pages 184 provided comments
Public meetings (Jasper and Edmonton)	95
Meetings with Indigenous groups	70
Meetings with stakeholder organizations	34

The engagement website was the main venue for public comment submission and was organized around seven key topics: Ecological Integrity, Visitation, Wilderness Management, Managing Development, Community of Jasper, Indigenous Relations and Climate Change.

The seven key topics were also used to frame discussions on management planning at public meetings and meetings with stakeholder organizations. Similar information was presented at three meetings with Indigenous groups, with focused discussions on subject themes that fall under the umbrella of Indigenous Relations, such as access to the park and Indigenous Knowledge.

Parks Canada raised awareness of the engagement website at outreach events outside the park, at public meetings, and through direct communications with stakeholders, a direct mail out in the community of Jasper and social media posts. Thank you to organizations who shared information about the scoping phase on their websites and with their membership.

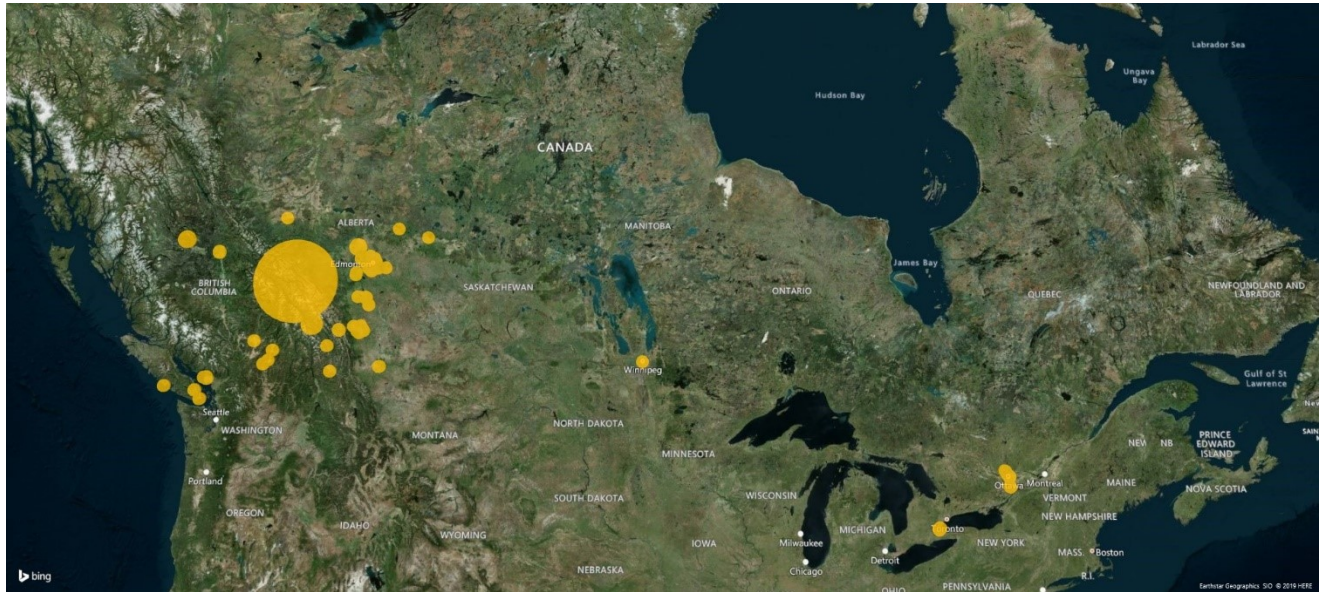
WHO WE HEARD FROM

By the end of the scoping phase of the management plan review, Parks Canada had received:

- 595 comments from the public through the engagement website;
- 5 written submissions from organizations and individuals;
- 500 identical written submissions from members of a non-governmental organization;
- Feedback from representatives of 17 Indigenous groups; and
- Feedback from public meetings in Jasper and Edmonton and from meetings with stakeholders representing four governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Website participants were primarily from Alberta and British Columbia. Residents of Jasper comprised almost a third of all participants with other clusters in the Edmonton and Calgary areas. Approximately 4% of engaged participants were from other provinces in Canada.

MAP – *Geographical distribution of website participants from Western Canada*



What We Heard

WHAT WE HEARD FROM INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Parks Canada received feedback from Indigenous groups about seven key topics, as well as additional topics outlined in the table below.

List of preliminary Indigenous Relations topics identified by Parks Canada	List of additional topics identified by Indigenous groups
Involvement in park management and decision-making Indigenous Knowledge Access to the park and park resources Cultural programming Resource conservation activities Economic and employment opportunities Reconciliation Participation in park operations Indigenous languages	Indigenous presence Spiritual connection and wellness Cultural protocols Co-management Caribou Indigenous science and Western science Cumulative effects United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples & Consultation Other ecological integrity topics

Indigenous presence

Indigenous peoples would like more opportunities for participation in the park and to improve public awareness of their history and cultures.

Parks Canada should encourage public engagement with Indigenous peoples in the park through interpretive programming, signage, and other personal and text-based interactions.

Authenticity of content was a concern, as was ensuring multiple narratives and the distinctiveness of Indigenous groups are presented (“telling our own stories”).

Parks Canada should facilitate Indigenous employment opportunities through field based training programs, entrepreneurship and assistance navigating the Agency’s hiring process.

An Indigenous interpretive or cultural center was proposed.

Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous Knowledge should be incorporated into park operations and management through, for example, field work, community reviews, following cultural protocols, and incorporating ceremony.

Access

There are still barriers to access to traditional resources and locations within the park that are essential for spiritual (re)connection and wellness.

Park management

Involvement in planning throughout the lifespan of projects is desired.

Indigenous groups would like to move beyond an advising role to collaborate on issues such as wildlife conservation and managing development.

Future involvement in management planning

There is strong interest in participating in draft plan development.

Inviting representatives from all the communities with interests in Jasper National Park to meet together was the preferred way of sharing information and discussing management planning.

What We Heard

WHAT WE HEARD FROM STAKEHOLDERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Parks Canada has organized the feedback received from the public and stakeholders under seven main headings, reflecting the seven key topics identified at the outset of the scoping phase. Many of these topics are inter-related and similar comments (or themes) were frequently provided under multiple headings. We have, however, reported on each theme under only one topic heading. For example, comments about limiting development were made under Ecological Integrity, Visitation and the Community of Jasper, but have been consolidated and are described under Managing Development. Generally speaking, there were only slight numerical and content differences between comments received from Jasper residents and non-residents on all seven key topics and sub-themes.

Visitation

Visitor experience

There are a range of perspectives about Jasper National Park, both positive and negative.

Jasper National Park is appreciated for its scenery, wildlife and uncommercial townsite.

The park and townsite are too busy or becoming overcrowded, especially in summer at popular day-use areas and trails.

Parks Canada needs to find a balance between quality visitor experiences and ecological integrity.

Visitor management

Parks Canada should more actively manage visitors and limit visitor numbers.

The target to increase visitation should be removed from the national park management plan.

The ecological and social carrying capacity of the park should be evaluated and visitor use management strategies developed (e.g. consolidating or dispersing use, implementing permits or lottery systems).

Visitor education

Parks Canada should provide more information to visitors about how to behave around wildlife, wilderness etiquette, driving safely in the park, and responsible use of the park.

Meaningful personal interactions with Parks Canada staff, park-operated education programs, and increased responsibilities for tourism operators are the best ways to educate visitors.

Parks Canada presence

More Parks Canada staff are needed to manage wildlife issues, check permits, ensure compliance with park rules and carry out maintenance, particularly in the backcountry.

Transportation systems

Parks Canada should implement transportation systems (e.g. public transit, bike paths) to ease congestion, improve access and reduce carbon outputs.

Affordability and accessibility

Public and private park facilities and services (e.g. accommodation) are too expensive, and this is making the park less accessible to Canadians.

Ecological Integrity

Forest health and wildfire

The visible impacts of the mountain pine beetle outbreak is prompting concerns about the health of park ecosystems and about wildfire risk in relation to townsites and visitor safety.

Prescribed fire is the preferred tool for reducing forest fuels and restoring vegetation communities.

Caribou

Caribou conservation is important and more action is needed to recover caribou numbers.

Human activities in caribou habitat may be impacting caribou; winter travel restrictions are supported by the majority of respondents.

Extirpation may be inevitable; Parks Canada should focus its resources elsewhere.

Wildlife

Wildlife habituation and conflicts with people (e.g. illegal feeding, unsafe photography practices) are key concerns.

Parks Canada should be attentive to wildlife displacement and habitat connectivity / fragmentation.

Parks Canada should collect more data on human-wildlife conflicts, and include human-wildlife conflict reporting and mitigation in the management plan.

Wildlife would benefit from more wildlife management staff, greater enforcement of park rules, and periodic trail or area closures to maintain wildlife corridors or secure habitat.

Other themes

Ecological integrity should be the first priority in park management.

There are concerns with the effects of industrial development and activities on lands adjacent to the park, grain spills on the railway, invasive species, pollutants in waterways, other aquatic issues, species-at-risk, and the management of rare or sensitive ecological areas.

Managing Development

Limits to development

Development should be carefully managed, especially large commercial developments, in order to maintain ecological integrity.

Parks Canada should maintain or shrink current limits, such as the fixed townsite boundary, the developed footprint and existing commercial development (within and outside the townsite).

Upgrading facilities or making better use of existing spaces is preferable to expanding or building new facilities.

Other themes

More emphasis should be placed on low-impact, nature and culture-based activities instead of infrastructure-based activities.

Certainty, for example, around lease tenures and infrastructure maintenance, is important for commercial operators.

Parks Canada should consider adding some facilities to the park, particularly accommodations (e.g. more campsites, campgrounds, backcountry lodges).

Parks Canada should encourage tourism development in gateway communities instead of in the park.

Wilderness Management

Backcountry maintenance

Parks Canada needs to improve the maintenance of trails, bridges, campgrounds and other facilities in the backcountry.

Access to some wilderness areas is becoming difficult because of damaged bridges and trails in poor condition.

Camping reservations

It is difficult to secure reservations for popular campsites (the majority of comments were about backcountry sites but this also applies to frontcountry campgrounds).

Parks Canada should consider holding some locations back from reservation until closer to the time of visiting, requiring campers to check in before departing on their trips, and providing better incentives for cancelling reservations.

Other themes

Jasper's wilderness is important and appreciated, even by those who do not regularly visit the backcountry.

Parks Canada should provide more information on trail options and increase promotion of less popular trail alternatives.

Community of Jasper

Housing

Housing pressure is a central issue for the community of Jasper.

The supply of affordable housing could be increased by, for example, reducing land release fees; capping private home accommodations; rezoning areas of the townsite to facilitate infilling; and updating policies to encourage the creation of Accessory Dwelling Units.

Environmental stewardship

Parks Canada should work to improve waste and water management, mass transit, bike-ability, and other environmental stewardship measures.

Other themes

Increased funding for municipal infrastructure and services is needed.

The Municipality of Jasper and Parks Canada should share accountability for municipal decisions.

Indigenous Relations

Education

Respondents would like to know more about how Jasper National Park works with Indigenous peoples.

Parks Canada can improve public awareness about Indigenous activities through more online communication, by increasing Indigenous content in interpretive panels, and by fostering a visible Indigenous presence in the park through visitor programming.

Other themes

Respondents support efforts towards reconciliation for all Indigenous groups who have historic ties to what is now Jasper National Park.

Indigenous Knowledge and land use should be incorporated into park management.

Climate Change

Green initiatives

Environmental stewardship should be part and parcel of Parks Canada's commitment to protect natural heritage; Parks Canada should take action to become a leader in green initiatives, especially around fossil fuel use.

Planning

Park management should take into account climate change, how to mitigate its effects, and how to make the park more energy efficient and operationally sustainable in the face of a changing environment.

Other themes

Parks Canada has a role to play in engaging and educating the public on climate change; retreating glaciers can be used as a teaching tool for visitors.

Parks Canada should encourage commercial operators to introduce climate change narratives into their offers and reduce their environmental impacts (e.g. replace high fuel use vehicles with green alternatives).

Future Involvement in Management Planning

Online participants selected "taking an online survey" as the top way to be involved, followed by "receiving updates" and "reviewing a draft management plan."

Parks Canada should consider creating working or advisory groups, and involving local stakeholders, to assist with management planning.

Parks Canada should be transparent about how public and stakeholder feedback influences the plan.